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RECEIVED:
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This last evening I have witnessed a funny story that had happened at Eladi Trading Centre: two women were fighting because of a man.

At Malosa, a certain lady gave me a letter so that I can deliver it to her daughter who lived in Eladi village. She wrote the letter to let her daughter know that she is at Mtambo Hospital with her brother who has been admitted and I decided to deliver it before sunset.

When I was coming from where I went to deliver the letter I decided to pass through the trading centre with the intent of seeing my old friend who sells tomato at the Trading centre.

Upon reaching the trading centre I heard people making a lot of noise and others were laughing loudly, then I hurried to the trading centre where I found two women quarrelling.

I recognised one woman as a wife of a certain man who has a hawker at the trading centre whose name is Ishmael but I did not know the other lady.

I heard that the other lady has got three children and is pregnant and that Jaulani is the owner of the children and the pregnant too.

The wife was selling things in the hawker and the girl friend has come to buy some dried fish at the trading centre.

While the wife was selling in the hawker, a certain man came and bought cooking oil for forty kwacha, salt for twenty kwacha, and some sweets for his son for ten kwacha when adding all the money was amount to seventy kwacha and the man produces a five hundred kwacha.

The wife was asking the people if one can have the change of five hundred kwacha and the girl friend answered that she can change the money but the wife tell her that she can not allow her to change the money because she is not her friend and went to another hawker to look for the change and the owner of that hawker, Mr. Tumeyo, changed the money.

But the girl friend did not hold her heart and she was telling her friend that (usamanyade) she should not take herself as superior because the husband is not hers and that she has

only borrowed the husband [and she is] going to marry the husband.

The wife did not answer anything and when the girl friend saw that the wife was not answering her she went straight and started the battle. She blows her friend at the neck and the wife did not let the girl friend to beat her. She also started fighting the girl friend and there were a great battle.

[Some people] were shouting and jumping up and down, others were clapping hands supporting the fighting. Most people were supporting the wife because she was the one who was winning the fighting. Unfortunately, the wife fell down and the girl friend found the chance of beating the wife at the face and the wife shouted for her brother to tell her mother to witness the fighting.

When the fighting reaches at its highest point, the wife bit the girl friend at the thigh and because of the bite blood was coming from the wound and because of the pain the girl friend felt, she cried very loudly, [then] men who were selling dried fish came and tried to stop the battle.

The girl friend was crying because of the pain and was talking about their friendship she said that although she lost the battle, her sexual partnership [with Jaulani] will not end because she has got three children from Jaulani and that she will conceive another child who will need Jaulani's help.

She said that she has been in need because the wife is the one who makes Ishmael to fail marrying [her], but now she will win Jaulani as a husband because she has been beaten and bitten by his wife.

She was talking while crying that people were laughing at her because she was not going back to apologise or promise that she will stop having sex with Jaulani and more over she has lost the battle.

There were a great noise of the trading centre and people were still coming to support the battle.

The wife challenged the girl friend that she can not beat her although she is talking more things about Jaulani and she told the girl friend that Jaulani cannot marry her because she is very black like the outside of the pot and that she is very tall like a bamboo and this makes her to look unbeautiful.

Every one laughed and laughed which gave the wife more power to go in with her rude[ness] to the girl friend.

She said that if Jaulani failed to marry her when she was a girl she should know that she

is not [worthy] to be married by Jaulani. She said [she] has got three children she should forget that she will be married. She told the girl that is why she is always sticking to Jaulani and not any other man. She said that there is something wrong with her which makes her fail to win any other man and that she should go the African Doctor to get medicine so that men can look at her as a beautiful young lady and that may be one man can propose and marry her.

The girl friend did not answer but only crying while going home.

The wife did not stop speaking although her in law asked her to stop. Then arrived her mother, sister, and her elder brother who asked her what she was going on.

She started telling then them what had happening but her in law joined by saying that the wife is taking herself as a boss of her husband that's why the husband goes for other women. She also condemns her mother that she has nothing to do that's why she has come to witness the battle.

She told her in law and her relatives that she will tell her brother to marry the girl friend who lives at Mangalala. She said that the wife has no respect and that her husband will walk with his face down because of what had happened and that his friends will be laughing at him because he has married a rude wife so it is better for him to marry the Mkuta girl so that he can give enough support to the children.

The wife's mother asked her in law to explain actually what happened. She did not tell her, but said that she should take her daughter and find a man of such behaviour of the wife.

The wife was so angry that she closed the hawker and told her in law that she should not worry she is going to pack her belongings and that the Mangalala girl should come and replace her.

Many people were still at the trading centre talking and murmuring then I went where my friend was selling tomato. She greeted me and asked me that why I was there I told her that I come to witness the incident.

She laughed and laughed that tears comes out from her eyes. I asked her that she should escort me because it was getting dark so I need to stay more time.

I asked her to tell me how actually the battle started.

She told me that the girl friend was the one to be proposed while she was in standard seven and the wife was in standard four at that time Jaulani did not propose the wife because she was a little girl.

And within their friendship (Jaulani and the girl friend) the girl friend was pregnant and Jaulani wanted to marry her but Jaulani's parents told him that he should continue with education (secondary level) but he promised that he was going to help the girl friend.

After the girl friend gave birth to a baby girl, their friendship continues that the girl become pregnant again and gave birth to a baby boy and at that time Jaulani tell her girl friend that he want to marry her now but the girl's parents told her not to marry such boy because he has already refused her at first.

Jaulani went for another lady and marry her when she was in standard eight. Jaulani lied to his wife that the relationship with the Mkuta girl has now ended but it did not end.

Jaulani's wife has got two children.

My friend told me that Jaulani's wife always tells her that her husband is still continuing a sexual relationship with the girl and that she has got three children and that they used to quarrel with her husband about sexual partners but the husband still continues with it but his wife always advise him because of AIDS.

She told her husband to stop such life because one day he will get the disease of AIDS and die and their children will be orphans and have nobody to support them but the husband always tells his wife that she should not worry because the disease of AIDS has come to the world and people should suffer it and not animals.

She said that Jaulani is a challenged man who doesn't care about his life and the future for his children but the wife always think and prepare the future of their children and that the wife has opened an account with commercial Bank of Malawi (Stanbic Bank) so that the children should have enough money to pay for their school fees in the future.

Then a minibus stopped and I say good bye to my friend and started the journey to Mbakwindi.

6/07/04

Today I decided to spend the whole day at home. In the afternoon two women arrived one was my friend who lives at Kadewere and the other one was a stranger that I have never seen her before.

My friend (Agnes) addressed the other one by saying that she is Graddy Ncheto from Denja village in Balaka but she is at the hospital caring for her young sister who has been admitted with TUBERCULOSIS.

Helena said that don't say Tuberculosis but just say AIDS. She said that she can not hide that her young sister is suffering from AIDS because she wants to give an example to those people who hide the disease that hiding will not help them and that people will continue spreading and getting the disease of AIDS.

She said that we should not hide so that most young people should know that the disease of AIDS is a killer and has no cure. She said that other young people does not know that AIDS is a killer and does not know that the virus of AIDS can be in the body of a health people.

Agnes told her friend that she is wearing time and that she want to tell me their aim of arriving at my house.

But Graddy told her friend that she has come to ask for assistance and before tell me her request she must tell me the whole story of her sister's sickness.

She said that her sister was a beautiful [one] in their family of three brothers and four sisters and most people liked her young sister even her parents was favouring her.

She said that her father always buy beautiful dresses for her and her sisters used to wear clothes that their father bought from other people (second hand clothes).

Her sister was jealous of her but their jealousy was not successful because their father did not mind of the jealousy and continued buying new good clothes for her and the parent loved her very much because she was the last born daughter and due to her complexion she was very attractive.

Because her parents shows her much love she saw that she is loved more than her sisters and brothers she takes herself as a queen of the family. She was not allowed to do any work of the family but only playing with her friend. She said that her sister was brought up in the life of wealthy family that has got everything even servants are plenty but their family was one of the poorest families in their village.

Since the girl was loved by many people men used to have sex with her when she was a girl because she was brought with the life of having money and expensive things. She accepted any man who promise to give her more money and she then become a servant of sex at the age fourteen.

She used to go out with older men of her fathers age who has more money and she got the disease from these men. She did not enjoy her life when she was a girl because she started suffering at the age of fifteen and now she is eighteen and she wondered if her sister will be fine again because she is unable to eat any thing or to get up.

She is just sleeping and failed even to cover herself with a blanket. She needs somebody to do anything for her and that she is failing to go to the toilet so they used a chamber which is a difficult and a great job.

I told her that she must not worry much because it's only God who can cure anybody.

Agnes added that God is the great doctor and Saviour who can cure any disease and save anybody in times of trouble.

She said that her sister likes prayers so much that three hours can not pass without a prayer and she said that if the disease of AIDS was not a killer God had already cured her by now.

Agnes told me that she has come with her friend to ask for help. She said that her friend wants help. She has come to the hospital yesterday after a sudden illness of her sister. She said that her sister was unconscious after hearing that the man who was her boyfriend has died so they left home without anything thinking that her mother will follow them in the next morning with any thing such as cooking pots, plates (utensils) but they were sent at Mwendo hospital before receiving any treatment.

She said that at the hospital they knew nobody so they find it difficult to borrow even a plate for receiving food that she fortunately met Agnes who told her that she will try to help but her home is at a far distance and that's why she has come to me so that if possible I can help them.

I promised to help them with utensils hundred kwacha and some flour.

Then she thanked me and told me that the utensils will be back after her mother's arrival.

I told her not to worry because I will go to see her sister tomorrow so I will take the materials.

8/07/04

Early this morning I went to the mill where I wanted to grind my maize but I failed because electricity is not coming and I just left the maize at the mill and I will go in the evening if the electricity will be coming. On the way to the mill, two men were following me.

The other one told his friend that he has eaten enough food so that he will not go again.

His friend said that he was busy with prayers and singing. He said that he likes singing during night and that the songs were so nice that one can not miss to sing.

Another man joined them from a certain path and asked them where they are coming from.

The other one said that didn't know that there was Kaswida at Lobiamu village.

Then he said that what do you mean by Kaswida? I had never heard it before.

His friend told him that [when] one dies, it takes forty days to mourn for her/him and on the fortieth day, they cook several delicious foods such as meat, rice, nsima, potatoes which is cut into pieces and cooked mixed with ground nuts, flour, in Chichewa we call it futali, and sometimes cassava can be used instead of sweet potatoes.

He said that during the night before fortieth day, people go and sing songs of praise to their God (Allah) to ask him to forgive the sins of the one who has died and make people to forget the person completely and if people come and ate the food prepared that means that the spirit of the dead one will be happy and that he will not come and trouble those who have left.

This ceremony in Chiyao we call it Sadaka where people remembers one who has passed away and in Chichewa we call it chikumbutso.

The other one asked his friends that what would happen if they failed to do the ceremony of sadaka.

The other one said that it is their custom to respect a dead person so they believe that if they failed to do the ceremony, the spirits of the dead one will punish them, maybe by killing another person or by making someone suffer with a certain disease which can be cured after the sadaka ceremony has been conducted.

He told his friend that he also have some spirit beliefs but they did not conduct a sadaka ceremony as they do is that to those who want and not everyone as a custom they used to conduct a chikumbutso in Chichewa which means remembering a dead person.

Another one told him that in addition to the sadaka ceremony if the one who died is a man or a woman who has no children or if the children are all grown up persons and have got their own house during that same time, they destroy the house or everything which was his/her property to avoid his spirit to come and hide in the house.

The told his friends that then you have got a great job when one dies.

Then one answered that indeed it is great job for we want to be free from the spirits and also to respect their custom.

I then took a certain path going to the mill.

At the mill I found many people who were waiting for the mill to start if the electricity will come soon. I sat behind some women who were chatting.

The other one supported her friend that she has done a good thing to leave her husband and start living herself with her children because the disease of AIDS has left no place and that everyone can suffer from AIDS.

She told her friend that she has tried her best to advise her husband not to marry another lady but he refused saying that no man can plan for his future but it is himself who plans for the future and that he had a plan of marrying more than one wife so he must fulfil his plan.

Another one said that she has made a big mistake to divorce her husband because men who want marriage are [few] but those who go for sex only are [many]. So what she could do is going back to her husband and apologise and renew their marriage.

She told her friend that she can not do that and it is better for her to die other than going back to her husband. She said than there is no unmarried grave where she will be buried if she dies so she can not put her life on danger. (The actual words she used there was a proverb which says “Kuika moyo pa chiswe” <Chichewa, literally: “put life on termites;” translates to “risk/gamble/jeopardize.”)

At a far distance sat a certain man who was listening to the women. He asked the woman if he can comment on their story.

The owner of the story told him that it is not a secret story and so he can join them because she needs advise from other people but for everyone who will try to encourage her to turn to her marriage has written in the water so that nobody can read but only frogs can read.

There was a great laughter and the man took a piece of a brick and came to sit near the ladies.

He said that nowadays everybody should do what he/she thinks will help her/him because other men when they saw that they are getting a lot of money they began to have sexual partners.

The women agreed by clapping hands. Another one said that it is true that when a man gets a lot of money he finds it easy to have a sexual partner because most women go for money without thinking for their precious thing which is life.

The man continues by saying that he has experienced his friend who had lost his life because of his own money.

He said that his friend was a mere farmer who gets money once a year after selling some of his crops such as maize, groundnuts, and vegetables and one year he had so many crops to sell and got a lot of money and with the money he opened a hawker in his village and little by little he managed to open a shop and things were going well with him.

Since he began to get enough money to support his family with expensive things and have extra money, he used [it] to open an account with the savings bank at Balaka post office. He began to have sex with other ladies apart from his wife.

At that time the use of condoms were not common and to hear one talk about condoms was a strange thing and AIDS was not a common disease it was heard on the radio but not frequently so people were just having sex without worrying about AIDS.

He said that the man enjoyed with his sexual partner for only a short time maybe three to four years and began to suffer with the disease but he did not recognise that he is suffering from AIDS.

He spent most of his time with traditional doctors because a certain traditional doctor told him that his friend has bewitched him because of the wealth he had and that friend if he came to ask for assistance he is always refused. That's why he has made him sick through magic.

The traditional doctor told him to be careful with that friend because he will try to do anything to him (to kill his friend through magic or make him fail to see). The owner of the [wealth] was going to die.

But the traditional doctor told the owner of the [wealth] that he had medicine to punish the jealous friend, but to cure him will be a great difficulty, so he must go to other traditional doctor to seek for medicine which can cure his disease.

With this advise he spent more money seeking for traditional doctor to cure his disease but the traditional doctors were just demanding a lot of money but failed to cure him that all his wealth was finished with this already traditional doctors.

He had goats, cattle, chicken, plots, two shops and a car. But all were no where to be seen for he sold everything so that he can get a doctor to cure him. After falling to recover from his sickness with the traditional doctors, he decided to go to a private hospital in Ntcheu where he believes that he will be fine because at this hospital the treatment that one could receive there it may be helpful.

He supported the hospital because Ntcheu was his District of origin. The doctor at the hospital tests his blood and found that he is HIV positive. The doctors advise the man's relatives not to tell him that he is HIV positive because if he tells him then his sickness will be increased with the worries he will have and after a month in hospital he died.

Her relatives worries very much because he had left a wife and four children without anything to support them for he had sold everything he had, and now the wife and children are in trouble because they have nobody to support them. They were very rich people in the family but now they are the poorest people in the village and the wife is not feeling better most of the times. She got sick and she always refused to have her blood tested for HIV. She is afraid of knowing what she is suffering but she will not live long for her health has already changed.

Then the owner of the story told the man that she doesn't want to die with AIDS because she knows that she is HIV negative.

She told the man that men of today can not be faithful because there are more beautiful young ladies who knows how to attract women with their big buttock sawy [?] in the air.

She said that before getting married, her brother told her not to be married to that guy because he is a thief and she has so many sexual partners but she refused. She even told her aim was to marry with a person who is a worker employed by the government and so she has found a Health Surveillance Assistant who wants to marry her so there is no reason for abandoning such man.

She said that her brother swore that he will never chat with his in law and that he will not visit her but this did not make her turn back what she did was going high and high with her love and because many of her relatives did not allow her to be married with that man.

She had a plan [to] ask her boy friend if he can accept her to be locked in the man's house so that her relatives should not see her.

She stayed in the house for a month without going out she does everything inside the house and that during night times she finds a chance of going out and sometimes they could have a chat outside the house during night and after a month they agreed to go to her parents so that they should know where their children had been.

After arriving at the girl's parents they were chased away by her uncle who told them that she did not listen to their advise so there is no need for her to arrive at the house.

The uncle asked them if they need to take anything so that they can provide them but they

did not say any thing other than going away.

She said that at first she saw that marriage is a very good thing and that she has been late for listening to some of her parents advise and at that time her husband loved her very much. They left the boy's house and rented a house at Usiku Wonse where her husband was working.

She said that things began to change when she gave birth to her first born son. At that time her husband used to go out to drink beer with his friend. Then he started having more sexual partners who makes him to fail to visit his family maybe for three days or more.

She said that she will not forget a certain incident happened. She said that a certain night (around two o'clock in the morning) the hour that her husband used to arrive at the house. After the arrival of her husband with a young lady who told his wife that she is his niece but she did not accept such introduction and asked her husband to tell her the truth and because her husband was totally drunk and he was speaking with difficulties he failed to tell his wife the truth, instead he began to fight her and his girlfriend joined in helping the husband and his wife was beaten and failed to do anything even to sit down and in addition his girl friend took a holding of a hoe (mpini wa khasu in Chichewa) and hit her on her forehead and the wife was suffocating and her husband and the girlfriend slept in the house and left her outside while suffocating and after a long time the wife gets her breath again and started crying with pain and her crying woke up her neighbours who helped her by taking her to the hospital where she was admitted for three weeks.

Shje said that after recovery she prepared her belongings so that she can go home but her relatives advise her to forgive for her husband and the husband promised to stop having more sexual partners.

So at that time she did not go home but continued with her marriage.

She said that when she was pregnant (her fourth born), her husband told her that she is not worthy to be an HSA's wife and that he has married another lady for him to be satisfied but he was not satisfied because he has other sexual partners apart from his two wives and she used to tell her first lady that she is not a lady because she doesn't know how to speak and write English and so he can not be busy with such lady.

He used to spend many days without visiting his family.

And at this point she failed to control herself and start speaking rude things to her husband and at last she went to the village headman and then to the Traditional Authority where she divorced her husband but her husband did not accept the divorce by saying that the marriage has not ended for he has got three children and the wife is also pregnant but

due to the wife's request and difficulties she had met the Traditional Authority saw it good to put the marriage to an end.

Then she asked her friends that if it was you what could you have done divorce or continue staying with the husband?

No body answered then the man said that the lady [should] not worry because marriage is where one expects to be happy and not to wear the troubles.

Another lady joined by saying that she tried her level best but the husband is a cruel person and that the one who had married with this man should prepare that one day she will be chased away.

Another one commented that indeed the one who is now a wife of that cruel man should know that she is not married but what she must know is that she is an instrument for pleasure for he has married her with the aim of making him[self] happy.

After a long time sitting there I decided to go back home and come again in the afternoon when I will see that people had started grinding their maize.

THE END!!!!