

SUNDAY AFTERNOON 4.30pm 7th May, 1978.

No visitors from home, no family, no Bas, no nothing. Came home from work yesterday at 12.30pm, slept, read RDM, Times, Newsweek, have not read this since I sat in Navis office. It was Gabs reading material. Saw Kojac do his thing, & the news, more explanations for SWAPO attacks if indeed they were. I seem to recall loud & protracted news of operation Quicksilver, followed by the news that SA was going to send into Angola thousands of refugees that purportedly came from those parts without any negotiations with the Angolan authorities. How could they return to Angola without papers. It all sounded most peculiar, and now this invasion of Angola?

Today after getting the papers, and delivering eggs to Ruth, I came home to this empty flat which last Sunday was filled with Eileen getting aches over her heart & Rons alarmed face & Regs medical matter of fact face & Bas/s matter of fact analysis, Ron saying not to worry darling I'll put you into a lovely coffin, no sound no nothing I read the papers, made cups of coffee & smoked profusely, till the rains came. Then put on the heater & did the cuttings. Just finished and I thought I would write to my lovely family of which I am the head and therefore some cognisance should be given to what I have to tell all of you.

The subject is very simple. It has to deal with giving you a few pointers on the subject of dealing with this dastardly cold weather, which it has been my misfortune to be shouldered with. Mind you our baby sister whose experience is far more profound & protracted has not thought fit to share her experiences. But being the eldest among you I give myself that prerogative.

My boss has one of those homes that is heated. Lucky him, but my flat has had heaters brought by Bas. One each in the two bedrooms and a large asbestos one in the lounge cum dining room. I have placed it in the centre. These three rooms one copes with a little ingenuity, but the kitchen, the bathroom & Loo are disaster areas.

One has to bear in mind at all times the cost of electricity, which is the source of all our heat. We are dependant on SA for this source of power & pay far more than you folks at home. My summer light bill is about 30.00 rand, but in Winter it can reach anything up to R80.00 & more. Today I have had the heater & light on from about 1pm, I shall probably go to sleep at midnight. Parrafin heating & lighting is just as costly, more time consuming, one has to get parrafin sealed from the railway station or one finds it is mixed with water, eslewhere. The kitchen is fairly simple when you are alone. Fill kettle with hot water from the geyser, switch on, quickly get cup off the shelf, holding you stomach in for these are aides to slimming which is another civilised preoccupaition these days, Jane Austin never bothered about this if you recall her novels, nor Tolstoy. However flick the cup under the hot tap, not for long, watch that bill, and listen to the kettle. Mine thanks to Hoosen is a whistling one. Take one teaspoon of coffee powder, brewing coffee is for the birds here. You have to get out of this place quickly. One teaspoon milk powder, Cremora but this is an expensive powder, get the powder that Gigi brought me no label nothing but a good powder none the less. Should recommend it to Doc. To save on the light bill you might think of not putting on the light as I do especially when the balcony is lit as is mine. A saver for sure. But if your eyesight is poor you will find difficulty filling up the cup. Most times it will overflow, then you have a messy cup & a messy table top. More work. Once the cup is filled, move out sharply from here. Dont open the fridge for the cold air that meets you is not worth the contents of the ruddy box. If you are bored with coffeewhich is never my problem then an oxo cube with hot water is most nutritious and time consuming.

The next disaster area is the bathroom. My geyser hails from the kitchen about some 15 metres from the bathroom, via the hot water pipe. So the

Bas
Dava
Reg.
Ron
Sandra
Magora
Sha

tap is turned on bearing this in mind, namely to get the hot water you have to let out 15metres of cold water first. Also when you use this hot you have to know when you close the tap you have left in the pipe 15m of hot water which is a waste. So I use cold water most times to wash my hand & use hot water when I bathe. The bathroom & Loo do not have windows. I resented this when I got here in Summer. But it is welcome in Winter. They have a suction device which gets rid of odours. Could you imagine the catastrophe in the loo after my sons have been there, or brother Ron?

You should fill in the hot water in the bath for this warms the room as well. Start filling up before you go in. Too bad the dolls who want the mirror as an aid to titivate in the interim. This is clouded with the steam. However you can clean your teeth while the cold water runs in. Gladly one does not need a mirror for this operation. It is as well to have a bath in the evenings just before bed and one in the morning before you go to work. My sons wont be happy about this for it is some time now they have limited themselves to a single bath per day. If they can evade that, they do with great alacrity. The lights went out just a minute ago. The darkness is complete. That is another horror of this wasteland.

The loo, this area is extreme, no hot water like the bathroom. The picture of the two nude girls though pictured in warm beach sands does very little for one crouched over the pan doing the needful. Here ones ingenuity has to be skilled. Despite the seat covering, which has no effect on the seat on the pan, pretty though it may be, one has to endeavour not to sit on the cold seat for immediately one has a retraction and this does not endear itself to the excretary functions of the body. One contrives to draw over the seat the warm pantie or underpants. This is a skilled operation. Not too far over then one gets up with a wet pantie. I dont think you fellows will have similar problem cause your anatomy is better equiped to deal with that problem. Then dont make the fatal mistake of sitting squarely back, remember that portion of the seat is frozen. You have to sit an angle. The angle is also determined by the fluidity of the excreta. A little toilet paper thrown into the pan is vital. This reduces the splash that may reach your bottom. Unlike Devas loo, where when you wipe & have to watch that you are pretty removed from the pan or else you will get water only on your hand if lucky, my pan is deep & there is no danger of this. Grateful though I am to Ben for the ton of toilet paper he sent, one has to watch the roll carefully for woe betide you if you pick up the paper when it is diminished in width to $\frac{1}{2}$ " and you have not noticed. A gory affair... You move out fast with not only dirty hands but the nether end has not been attended to & there you are not being able to pick up your pants which has by wended its way to your knee & you walk out most unceremoniously. God help you if you have company around. Much diligence is required in this area, and I sincerely trust that you benefit from my ghastly experience.

My lovely family I have been ^{with} you for some time, it is so cold here that the bathroom & bed is most sensible. Oh I do wish one of ^{them} you were here to ease the coldness & ache which is by far the wore than I have dealt with above. I wish I were in Deva's lounge with my lovely girls sprawled all over, & Mama listening to the service which Vorster provides on TV and Reggie making a cuppa. Keep well & strong for me.

Love, Phyllie.

Phyllie