

Wednesday 28th September, 1983 9am.

Marondera, Zimbabwe.

My dear Robin, Judy, Francis & all wonderful friends in Lesotho,

I've written all of you two letters one from Maputo & the other from Lusaka one especially for my friend Gunther (big). Each day brings with it certain responsibilities & I get down to doing something about it & that takes so much out of a day & the task of coping with a whole day is minimised. Here a jigsaw has been thrown at me of 1500 pieces & we look at each in battle lines drawn. Luckily I go to Harare today & perhaps I shall see it no more. The other problem is that the only space to fix it on is the dining table & my hosts demand standards here. The English visa has not come & so I came here to try for a job, if it works out then I shall be seeing you guys sooner than you think, certainly Gerd should be here & perhaps Gunther for a golfing weekend. Hey hey lets wait & see whether they will have me first. No I have not lost my confidence only getting more cautious.

I'm here with Robin & Geetha, both SANS, he white & she of Indian extraction. Her mother is here as well a little lonely & wanting to go home to SA all the time. She who has such poor & depraved surroundings, & who hit the bottle to cope finds she is a "madam" here & bullies the gardener & housekeeper (looks + 60) mercilessly. In fact it offends me so that I've had to call her to book several times. She does not have any confidence in their ability to do the chores, nor does she trust them. I would have beaten the hell out of her if I were in their position. But they grin & bear it & make fun of her as they need their jobs. But also she is lonely & they are the only ones she can chat with & so occasionally you hear her laughing heartily with them.

Her daughter who is 24 has had no formal education; cannot count, read or write -- signs her name though & who was brought up as one of three kids for her mother, says that she is not the child of her father as she has never been sent to school while her sister & brother have had a smattering of schooling. She is both protective of her mother & very critical. Her life would have excited Dickens as it does me. At 8 she was doing chores for women in Glendale a little sugar compound about 100 miles from Durban to the North. She was beaten for her misdemeanours. She & beatings seemed to have been bedfellows until she found a good "AUNT" who took her in & brought her up as her "child". The Aunt's own seven daughters (& 7 sons) were prostitutes & Geetha at 12 kept house for these ladies of leisure. Yes the Aunt worn out dies & leaves G with this bunch of hoodlums & Uncle who was a cripple & was possessed of a disability grant & she took care of him until she was 16 & left "to make her own way in life".

She became an attendant at a shop. Lots of skirmishes with the police - she has never stolen a thing in her life. From her description she appears not to have taken to the roads for her keep. From store assistant she went to work at Wimpeys where they gave her a uniform as well. It was here that Robin met her about 5 years ago.

She is an accomplished cook, she sews, knits crochets, she has a garden at the back of the house with vegetables of every description, Fruit trees that she has picked up from friends, a beautiful flower garden which she started on her own (This place was bush) Orchids on a tree trunk, roses of every description & colour. It is only lately that she has all this help. Until December last year she did all this herself.

She married Robin here (He is a divorcee with two children) Robin is a prosecutor & she has opened up a restaurant & manages it with two ex-combatants. She is ill today & they are running it for her. She is unlike her mother. She is called comrade by people around her.

These are my beautiful hosts generous as the day is long. I want to go to Harare & she is not keen for me to leave, but I must leave or else I shall not get anything done here.

Harare is huge & the splendour in which the settlers lived here is something else. Each house has more than an acre some 4 to a house. Wide roads and every facility you can imagine. Poor Maseru. Must go now. I love you

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