

THE SIMPLE HARD

by B.J. Radebe

a South African drama of loss

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CHARACTERS

BHEKSISA- a lead actor

MIKE-his stepfather

MASI-his mother

THATO-his girlfriend

And

BHEKSISA'S Friends and co-artists

THANDO

LIZO and

TEBZA

Genre: Dramatic Theatre

Duration of a Play: 45minutes

This play was first performed at the Johannes Stegman Theatre in Secunder at the

SANCTA's Festival 2011

Written by:

B.J Radebe

The Simple-Hard

By:

B.J Radebe

Bright light

Outside Newcastle Court

Scene 01

*{Lizo and Tebza are standing in anticipation, they seem gloomy.
Thando enters sadly, as they turn to her she shakes her head tearfully.
While in shock to realize what has transpired, Bheksisa enters heart
brokenly. He is well dressed, humble, but fretful. Hands on the face
covered with his hat. They all come closer to comfort him. They
pause as he starts to address the audience}*

BHEKSISA

{bold but hurtfully} After we arrived in Newcastle court, I regretted the entire manner I had treated my mother. I cursed my soul. I craved to see her - to tell her 'I'm sorry for hurting you, for not listening to your awful experiences when I had to.' But she was no more. She collapsed after they sentenced *Mike*-my stepfather to 15 years in prison for being in possession of human body parts.

My mother never woke up from there. If it wasn't because of alcohol I could've made a different decision prior that day. Since then I never touched the bottle in my life. I hate beer like I never tasted it before. I only realized then how much time I wasted for a simple thing, forgive and forget. My name is *Bheksisa*. It means 'Watch all that you do, for everything has consequences in due time.' It was beyond any reasonable doubt to hold a grudge against my mother. But today I look back and say what a waste of time.

Blackout

Lights bright up

Three years before-Newcastle

Scene 02

{Mike is at the pulpit addressing his congregation. The wall behind him is written, "The last Supreme of God's Evangelic Church-established 1980 by Rev M. Dube. By his side stands his wife, far left there is a church choir singing}

MIKE

{to the choir as it stops singing} Grace to the lord. You sing marvelously, my children. *{To the audience}* I greet you all in the name of the highest above, *Jesus Christ!* I shall state it in record that I expelled our son away from home. When the lord has spoken with me I've always listened. Now my obedience to him has left us without our son today. You all know him and the details of his actions. Hence, I shall not talk about them.

This church has never embraced any sort of immorality, so it couldn't with him. It is sad that the girl involved passed away. *{Wipes his face with a hankie}* Forgive me for the tear on my face. However this situation compels a tear drop such as mine which is well registered before you today.

For I've expelled a son. A boy this church loved for his singing!
With his voice we had witnessed a star created by God himself. I
expelled him from my house as he chose to spit on the house of the
lord, *hey man!* I as the guard of that house had to discipline him for
his actions. If I acted differently how were you going perceive me?

Were you not going to label me as the priest who prays against
immorality but embraces it when it is on his door step? If any among
you finds me wrong, let it show for I shall seek for his forgiveness!
{Pauses} I assure you that all I do and have done is but for the grace
of God. You've seen the sick healed by these hands but I've told you
the hands may be mine, but the power comes from God. Amen!

Lights up Three years later in Joburg-Duduza Scene 03

{In Bheksisa's shack. The song is playing on the background. He is staring at the photo. He is topless, a hat pulled down on one side and a beer on his hand. Tebza is on the chair preparing his dagga (cannabis) with a beer before him}

BHEKSISA

{away from the photo} Mfo! That was my girl. She played this song and sung it through the fabric of my heart.

TEBZA

{stumping his zol} Through the fabric of your heart *bru!*

BHEKSISA

Exotic flowers displayed around the room made the mood erotic. The fragrance in the house meant that paradise was with us. She came closer and wrapped me in her warm hands.

{They sing and dance Tebza miming the girl in the picture}

{The dance and music breaks} As I felt her angelic body our feelings erupted like waving clouds. With her warm lips she gave me a deep loving kiss that introduced me to the absolute pleasure of a life time. As my eyes descended down to her gorgeous body, bright as the sand of the ocean, dressed only in the ropes of wonder, my heart quivered.

TEBZA

Asuka madoda! Ropes of wonder!

BHEKSISA

{imitating her, song on the background} Baby, I've always respected the values your family set for you. But I've spoken to my gods and they agree that tonight we share our love together. I know that by your religion sex before marriage is a sin, which I'm prepared to carry for us no matter what the price may be. So please let's allow this night to fade with memories of love.

Let me submit myself to you as my heart wants with the only stars and the moon as witnesses. *{The song fades, now as himself}* Then she kissed me, slowly undressed me before leading me to bed. I forgot my father's preaching what it meant for me as a son of reputable priest to do what I was doing.

TEBZA

You got through her golden spot, flash into flash. What an ecstatic moment *bru!*

BHEKSISA

She can never astray from my mind *mfo!* Pity I broke our bond when I pushed her six feet under ground. Today I only have this beer and my veins pregnant with death. This beer is the only thing that allows me to carry on living after all that has happened. It is how I'm able to live with a wounded heart and forget that my blood is diluted with death and to never mind people like my stepfather. Three years ago he disowned me in the face of my mother. *{Holding it to his chest}*
This beer is me, it's my life.

TEBZA

{They toast with their beer bottles} It's you *bru*, they got to know that.

BHEKSISA

Because of it I'm able to override my heart swollen with hatred and anger against my mother. That woman is a callous unsympathetic *bitch*. I say *uyinja nje! isifebe esingcolile!*

{Enter Lizo and Thando}

LIZO

What is this you on about? And you are drinking before our rehearsal.

THANDO

For really guys, heartless *bitch!* You're not helping yourself by such festering we told you yesterday.

BHEKSISA

What festering? I was just lashing out.

LIZO

With such insults! You need to loosen up a bit. Maybe I should tell you the story of myself here. You see, back in jail I used to address beautiful girls existing in my own world, different kinds I tell you, the big ones, the small and the rest *uyadlala wena*.

THANDO

What does that has to do with everything we here for? I say we start rehearsing now as we are performing tomorrow.

LIZO

{interrupts as they prepare to rehearse} Just a second please, *Thando*.

{She boycotts his suggestion but submissively} As I was telling you I

was completely in control. I'd decide when I wanted it and the type of a girl to get it from; any time and anyhow *uyadlala wena!*

BHEKSISA and TEBZA

Any time and anyhow!

THANDO

{dispiritedly} You guys are hopeless, you know. You entertain shit at the expense of our rehearsal.

LIZO

One girl that gave it to me until my mouth went dry was *uBuhle*. She positioned herself well on me. Her hands took control over my chest. She rode me like she was riding a racing horse. Up and down she went. Sideways and otherwise she moved, fast and slowly, I tell you she went on and on and on.

With her tongue she explored every avenue available in my mouth until it went wet again. Her natural aroma pervaded my entire being. Her thighs bright as a golden egg purified my soul. I tell you that was the only night I woke up without regrets for wetting my underwear.

BHEKSISA and TEBZA

Your underwear!

{Thando bursts out of laughter}

BHEKSISA

You're telling us about your jail masturbations. I say *fuck wena!*

LIZO

I'm trying to help you. That woman in *Tsakane* could be your mother. As I told you yesterday she was married to a priest who is now facing the law. She is here looking for her son all the way from *Newcastle*. Don't you think you need to hear what she has to say?

BHEKSISA

Whoever she is, I don't care. If my mother defended me that night I wouldn't have gone to *Thato* with that rage and accused her of destroying my life.

LIZO

I don't want you to make my mistakes my friend. Because of anger I invaded the home of a white man who killed my father claiming that he thought he was a baboon, hence I wasted my life in prison. My mother never recovered from the stroke after hearing that I shot a mother and her girl. I destroyed my life for revenge.

TEBZA

But why kill them instead of the man who killed your father?

LIZO

I had to raise the stakes by taking the only family he had, his wife and his daughter. But the daughter survived. When *Van Niekerk* entered the court room, tears all over his face, I felt proud of what I did to his family. I regretted nothing. But at the end of the video of his daughter's testimony which was played in court, I was a broken man.

Her words struck me down as she said. *'I hold no grudge against the man who shot me into a wheel chair. I forgive a man who shot my mother dead at my presence. I pray that for whatever motives he had, God forgives him for his deeds.'*

THANDO

Ja! The price of hatred is but a waste of time and emotions. Meet that woman in *Tsakane* you might find your peace.

LIZO

My father is dead and I had avenged him as planned. But still I'm not happy. See her and close this chapter, don't repeat my mistakes.

BHEKSISA

{skeptically} The mistake I made was to turn my back on the only woman who ever loved me dearly. *{Takes out the letter under his hat on the head}* Nobody has read this letter since given to me except me. But today you shall read it. *{He hands it to Thando}*

THANDO

{taking it} Read it?

TEBZA

Ja, just read, *Thando* we want to hear.

THANDO

{clears her throat} Dear *Bheksisa*.

You're the only one I've loved ever since I gave myself to a man. I've felt from only your flesh how it feels when a woman's body is touched by that of a man. I vowed to myself that I shall love no man on earth if he is not you. Therefore since you cannot love me anymore, I

cannot love anyone. If I cannot love again I cannot live. By that I'm saying Goodbye my love. I've chose death as a price of hurting you.

I hope you'll forgive me for loving you, falling pregnant with your baby and testing HIV+ in a most questionable manner. Here my life shall end. I hope you'll never regret choosing to blame me as you had. Yours-that shall forever love you. Thato

TEBZA

Wow! So this is how you pushed her six feet underground bru.

BHEKSISA

Circumstances blinded my sight, covered my mind with a coat of condemnation. You know what, let us go outside. I'll take you back to all that happened before I came here.

{They grab their chairs and exits}

Blackout

Dark light

Three years before

Scene 04

{During the night in Newcastle at Bheksisa's home. Mike has just arrived. Roughly he throws his briefcase on the couch and paces up and down. Masi enters from the other room dragging a shoulder bag. She is in a gown seeming shameful and sad. She drops the bag on the floor and stands shying away from him}

MIKE

Where's he? For God's sake I've got no time to waste woman I've made myself clear on the phone!

MASI

Still in his room but coming, I've already woke him up.

MIKE

You didn't tell him anything, did you? That is for me to do.

MASI

As instructed I said only what I had to, nothing will take away your satisfaction of expelling him.

{Enter Bheksisa dazed and confused in his pajamas}

MIKE

{to Bheksisa immediately} You're a disgusting disgrace to this family, an embarrassment to my dignity and legacy. Damn you! I'm the highly respected priest, the only epitome of God's true servant around here. How can you embarrass me like that!

BHEKSISA

Sorry, *baba*. I promise to explain everything in the morning.

MIKE

Explain!

BHEKSISA

Yes! To let you know what happened.

MIKE

Shut up! Slima ndini! Do you know how hard I've worked to earn my respect? What am I suppose to say to my congregation when they find out that I'm keeping a child with dirty blood in my home? Are you going to explain that to them as well? Talk damn you!

BHEKSISA

Please! Forgive me I didn't plan to disgrace you. *{To his mother}*
you got to let him understand, mama! *{She looks away}*

MIKE

A boy who's able to impregnate a woman is no longer a child, worse when his veins got poisoned with death from that process.

BHEKSISA

I didn't expect this to happen. It was an accident.

MIKE

Accident! What a fool who doesn't know what happens when a man sleeps with a woman unprotected? You need to leave this home in peace and now! That's not an accident my boy.

BHEKSISA

But it's freezing outside and the night has settled. Please when the sun shows up tomorrow I'll be gone I promise.

MIKE

You leave now! My church knows that I'm the only man who's constant in his position as the mountain. Never allow God's rules to be diluted by political correctness. A sin is a sin to my church no

matter how immorality is justified today. In a bible they're no misinterpretations of any circumstances, no democracy, no mistakes! What you've done conflicts with the principles of my church.

MASI

{tearfully} Mike has spoken, my son. His words should be honored. There's your bag and some of the stuff you'll need.

{After a moment of silence, Bhekisisa takes the bag and walk to the door}

MIKE

{while at the door; calmly} You acted against my teachings, the only principle my congregation respects me for embracing so strongly, abstinence! You disobeyed my orders, disregarded my rules because you're a boy of charm. Did you really have to humiliate me like that?

BHEKSISA

{coming back} No baba I'm but also a victim in all this.

MIKE

A victim! When you sealed your ears against my preaching that God does not endorse sex before marriage!

BHEKSISA

She persuaded me into making love to her. She assured me it wouldn't cause problems but make our love strong. You've got to believe me *mama...!* *{Masi looks away}*

MIKE

{spitting} An embarrassment to my church that's the cost of it today! I've always preached about good values, ethics and morals and now my own stepson disapproves of what we stand for as a church. My own stepson! Get the hell out my house, now!

MASI

Go now my son. God will guide you.

{After a moment Masi burst into a tearful sigh but holds herself from crying. Mike has a grin of satisfaction on his face.}

MASI

Are you happy now? Are you happy? You've managed to send my son away leaving me as a bad mother who could not say a word on his defense. All because you want to punish me for knowing your cunning secrets!

MIKE

Shut up! I told you I'd do anything to keep you quiet but you didn't listen. You were not supposed to interfere with my business!

MASI

Killing innocent people for rituals aimed to help you maintain your dignity and business then hide behind your church position. Is that what you call business?

MIKE

If you didn't like what you saw in my prayer room that night why threatened me with the police? You're my wife for god sake! That boy's act of immorality came at the right time to use him punish you.

MASI

Can you at least tell me how you got them to believe they are infected with *HIV*? How did you do it *Mike*?

MIKE

What's there that a man with money can't do? Tomorrow morning you shall clear my name woman. You'll tell that detective you were mistaken about what you told him about me. Tell him you'll not give evidence as promised, that all that you told him was fabricated and

evoked by a bad dream you had. In that dream you saw mutilated human dead bodies in a freezer packed in my private prayer room.

MASI

{she slaps him} The price of your actions will have to be paid one day

Mike!

{She walks away}

MIKE

You'll do it woman! You'll do it! *Damn* you! Or more is yet to come! More is coming! *{He follows after her}*

Blackout

