



PSYCHO CHICKTM

I am Impi

PART 2:
SOMAHLAYA



MATURE READERS

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I am Impi
Part 2: Somhlaya

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***Somahlaya (Soma•ghla•ya) :**
A comedian, a funny girl

***“Even when caught by its tail, a monkey will still turn around and laugh at
how ugly the hyena is.”***

~ African Proverb

Black.

**A shadow cast ominously. A void. Nothing but the
four walls in your mind.**

Black.

**Open your eyes. A void. Nothing but the noise.
Completely confined.**

Black.

**They stalk us. Hunter becomes hunted. Nothing
but prey.**

Black.

**The absence of light. Hiding the lie that we hold
sway.**

Light.

**Fire. Hope in the black. Blinding. Limited. Who is
more afraid?**

Light.

Fangs and claws. Torches flicker. Flesh and blade.

Black.

A growl. A scream. Snatched from the limited light.

Light.

**Back to back circling. They come out, out of the
night.**

Black into the light.

**Lioness of beast. Lioness of woman. Man cowers.
Lioness against lioness.**

The void fills.

**Blades slash, claws gash. Fire singes. Beast yelps.
They run; we breathe. We are now one less.**



**Night time is not a time to travel in Africa but to
the King we must proceed.**

**To his plans to marry us off to older men, whom
we do not know, we do not concede!**

**Nerves are bow-string tight, trying to escape its
confines; energy pulsing.**

**Our silence in the dark is broken with laughter
convulsing.**

**Somahlaya, of course, she starts sharing her joke.
We look on unimpressed, now is not the time on
your own amusement to choke.**

"Did you see the envoy?" she enacts the setting.

**"He was the Inhloli (hedgehog)" she falls on the
ground mimicking a hedgehog, to the envoys this
is upsetting.**

**She rolls in a ball, sucks her thumb and "Mommy!"
she incessantly cries.**

**We all burst out laughing, nerves released, tears
stream from our eyes.**

**The remaining envoys are hardly impressed, their
faces turn a red shade.**

**Somahlaya is undeterred by their visible anguish,
as she continues laughing until she like a dirt-
angel is splayed.**



Somahlaya, daughter of an induna* - an advisor to
the monarch.
Her Father often helped us out of trouble with the
King, he was our final ark.
Because of her better upbringing she would be our
political coach,
Teaching us etiquette and how diplomatically a
matter to broach.
Her family carried a certain amount of sway being
higher born,
But our dear jokester was a rebel who brought her
family some scorn.
Her story did not only to glamour and prosperity
attune,
To heart ache and treachery, she was not immune.

**a tribal councillor or headman*



**It was one of those stifling hot days in the African
spring.**

**Where every living creature waits for the rains - the
dusty heat to you does cling.**

**In this heat walks a young woman - she is a bronzed
fluid sunset – beautiful - her eyes a little wild.**

**Restlessness surrounds her, restlessness inside her
belly – the mother of Somahlaya is on her last, she is
large with child.**

**Although already married to his first wife; Somahlaya's
father fell head over heels for this stunning maiden.**

**His first wife was an arranged marriage, but
Somahlaya's mother was the one he wanted, so he
made her his second wife and with all his love and
doting, he her did laden.**

**On this day, Mama Somhlaya could no longer stay
cooped up in her hut.**

**The heat was suffocating and to the bush she escaped
from the tribe's rut.**

**Something was wrong, the pain stabbing at her was as
if the infant had a knife and was trying to cut itself
out!**

**If only she could get to the river, to taste its cool
waters, she would not blackout.**

**She needed water. She expelled water. She expelled
blood. She let out an agonising shriek.**

**The pain unbearable, collapsing to her knees, she
needed to push and at every exertion she became
more weak.**



**Mama Somahlaya was giving life but she in turn
was dying.**

**A life for a life, blood flowed, baby's head showed,
Mama could not stop trying.**

**Her cries for help and shrieks of pain did not go
unheard.**

**Somahlaya's father's first wife appeared. Mama
Somahlaya, relieved gave the final push – baby slid
out, she collapsed, eyes blurred.**

**She stretched out a bloodied hand toward wife
number one,**

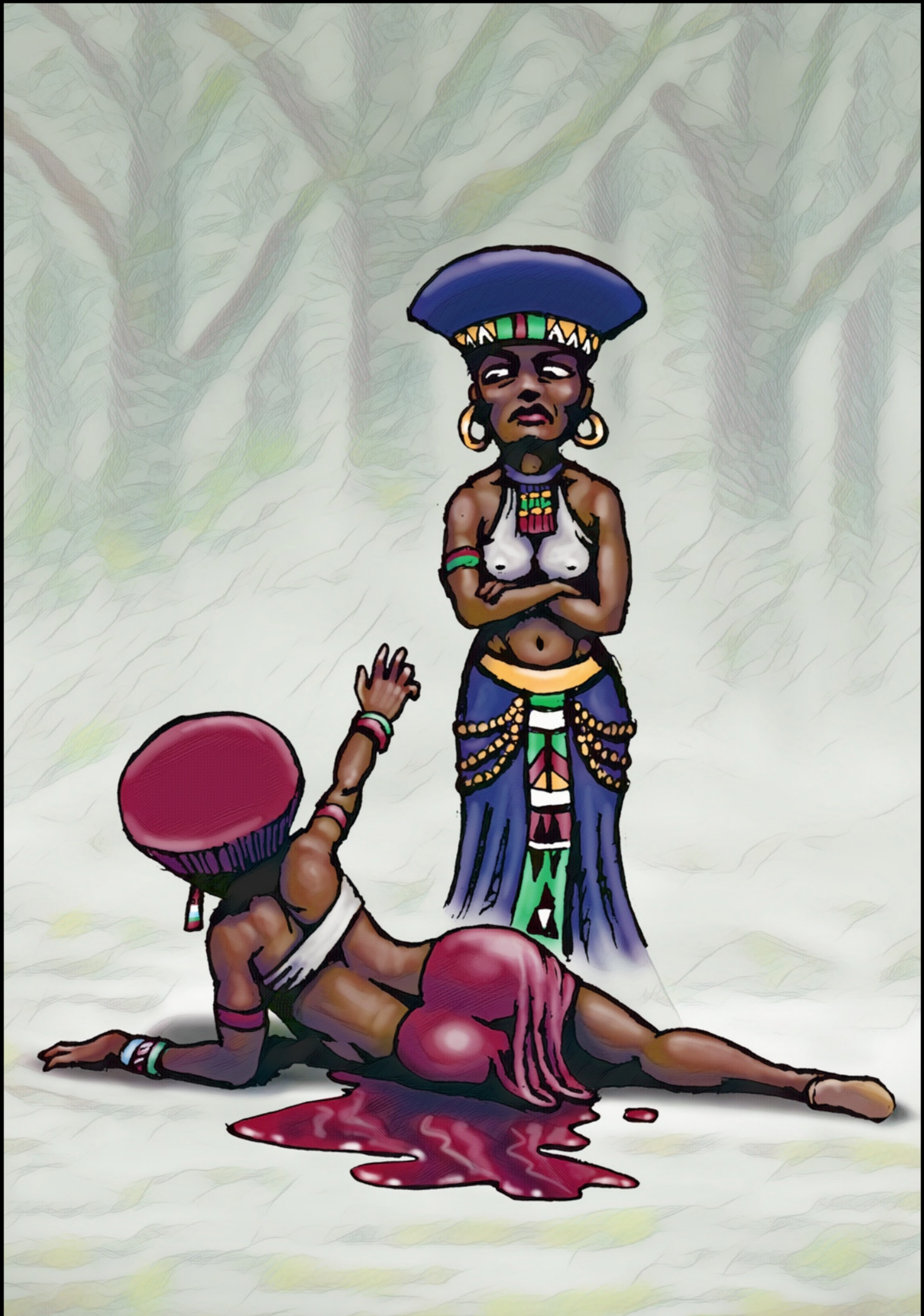
**However, refraining from coming to their aid, First
Wife whispered before Mama Somahlaya's life was
none:**

**“You stole him, my one true love, he WAS all
mine!”**

**“Now with you finally gone, I will get my husband
back for myself, this time!”**

**First Wife faded into the bush; Mama's young life
was bleeding slowly away between her legs.**

**Baby, a girl, cried; covered in her mother's fading
crimson life, with her last few moments of breath
to the Ancestors, Mama now begs.**



**Someone else did hear - Mother Nature, so called
for a reason, you know.**

**She put in motion a course of events that for this
blood sacrifice, upon the family a gift would
bestow.**

**A troop of vervet monkeys watched events unfold.
They heard the baby's cries and they First Wife
leaving they did behold.**

**One of the monkeys had recently lost her new
born baby.**

**To shut the crying human infant up or due to
maternal instinct maybe;**

**The monkey left the safety of her shade tree and
pulled the baby, still attached by the umbilical
cord;**

**Around to the dying human's breasts, Mama
pulled up her top in a last effort, on her own
accord!**

**Revealing breasts still engorged, Monkey put the
baby on the teat.**

**The little one latched on immediately, sucking on
the stored milk, ending her miserable bleat!**



**Over the next few hours or maybe a day or so;
when Mama eventually passed away, baby kept
finding the life-giving breasts -
Because of monkey, she lived through those fatal
hours, her survival this miracle suggests!
As if this was not miracle enough – another God-
send!**

**The infants Father found his baby after many
hours of searching. To his wife's dead body, he
could with grief attend.
Father was surprised to see monkey footprints
near his child and wife.
Following the story written in the tracks, he was
able to tell that the monkey probably saved his
daughter's life!
One small act of uncharacteristic perception and
insight
Could only be accredited to the guidance of a
higher power, of maybe the Ancestors, right?
From that day forward, Father put out food for all
monkeys, no matter the troop,
As an offering of thanks, for although he lost the
love of his life, another love he could in his
daughter recoup!**



Father named his daughter Somahlaya, for even though fate had brought him great grief, the story of the monkeys showed even fate has humour. She filled his heart with love and laughter but he never conceived any other children thereafter causing quite a scandalous rumour.

As Somahlaya grew, she was spirited liker her mother –

Free and wild, Father loved her like no other! First Wife felt slighted as Father with her did not want to conceive!

His heart was divided between his dead second wife and his child, this her did aggrieve! Her anger she projected on Somahlaya, very cruel. The more father doted on his daughter and spoilt her, the more her vengeance and jealousy would fuel.

When Father would go for long periods away to perform his duties and pay to the King his dues. First Wife intensified her hate for Somahlaya, until one day as a teenager, she could not take the abuse!



**So, it was in her 16th year that Somahlaya began
to raise all hell.**

**First Wife was not her mother, it was time to
rebel!**

**Gaining courage for her rebellion, she first drank
all her father's beer!**

**Once intoxicated, she the monkeys her father fed,
into First Wife's hut did steer.**

**Quite enjoying the shenanigans, the monkey's
ripped the place apart and in First Wife's stew did
defecate.**

**Somahlaya just stirred in the excrement, further
chaos she was determined to create.**

**Monkeys seemed to cheer her on with jovial yowls
and whoops!**

**She swirled and twirled and set First Wife's
possessions alight and nearly the hut too, oops!
Somahlaya proceeded to go and pass out under a
tree.**

**While the whole village ran around trying to put
out a fire and the hysterical monkeys from the hut
to free!**

**First Wife was mad with anger but without
knowing sat and ate the poo stew!**

**A story which later Somahlaya often told people in
a hilarious revue!**



**Father was angry. The anger a bull elephant has
when someone unexpectedly crosses his path.**

**It was the first time he raised his hands to his
darling child, out of pure wrath!**

**Somahlaya fled, sobbing more at the shock of the
discipline than the actual chiding.**

**To her favourite spot behind the huts she went
hiding.**

**It was while she lay feeling sorry for herself that
First Wife appeared moaning with another woman
friend.**

**She revealed how she should have rather killed
infant Somahlaya when she watched how Second
Wife's life slowly did end!**

**She let out an evil laugh when she exposed the
fact that she could have probably spared
Somahlaya's mother's life, if she had got
assistance;**

**But she hated them and if it wasn't for this luck of
fate, would have personally put them out of
existence!**

**It was at that moment First Wife discovered the
teenager in her hideout,**

**She grabbed a panga* and at Somahlaya she
charged with a bloodied shout.**

**Somahlaya dodged, pushed First Wife over, her
adrenalin kicking in, she just ran.**

**Into the dark, the unknown, without thinking,
without a plan!**

***machete**



**Somahlaya crashed through the bush and into the
dark, like a scared hunted antelope.**

**Crushed with betrayal, the grief kept her running
with little hope.**

**When sweat turned red and gashes opened all
over from the evil nails of the thorn tree.**

**She eventually crumbled into a heap of flesh, no
longer carefree.**

Her heart a temple of confusion and hurt.

**Crying until she fell asleep, bloodied and
encrusted in dirt.**

Fitful sleep was disturbed by a sharp prod.

**Around her stood women dressed as soldiers, how
odd!**

**Reflexes pulled at her like strings, she recoiled
with fear and suspicion.**

**Reassuringly the women helped her up, explaining
that she was lucky to find their secret coalition!**

**Upon a tour of the camp she had stumbled on, she
realized in dismay;**

This was an all-women army, freedom fighters!

She knew she had to stay!



**Over the next few weeks and months, Somahlaya had
to work harder than she ever had,
Training in this female army, becoming a soldier and
comrade!**

**The teachings of their leader strengthened her mind -
Frivolities and childish temperamentality soon were
left behind.**

**However, she knew to her father she would have to
return.**

**Retribution needed to be met, of the betrayal of First
Wife he needed to learn.**

**So, it was the passing of many moons, Somahlaya with
her new friends returned- a new woman, a different
daughter.**

**Ecstatic was Father, First Wife quivered like a goat
knowing it was being led to the slaughter.**

**A meeting was called and after accusations made, it
became a trial.**

**First Wife unwittingly admitted her evil because of sly
questioning and Somahlaya's new found guile!**

**Somahlaya's Father was exasperated with grief, he
passed a punishment many would feel severe:**

**First Wife was to be tied spread-eagle down in the hot
sun for a week, a carcass of an animal placed near -**

Fate would determine her survival but in the wild

Mother Nature leaves nothing to chance!

**The circling vultures could not resist the free meal and
after eating on the carcass began at the very much
alive First Wife's flesh to rip, doing their greedy jostling
dance.**



**Although Father begged, Somahlaya did not return
to her community,
She knew her new life was important, the injustice
in their land could no longer be treated with
impunity.
Her Father's love was so great that he allowed his
daughter to go against all custom.
He often acted as a go-between us and the King
for to an all women army nobody could accustom.
Somahlaya is now an invaluable member of our
cause,
From her privileged upbringing and favoured
treatment, she took pause!**



**As we were about to continue our journey to the
King of our Zulu empire;
I am reminded how women always a new way of
thinking will inspire.
I, Psycho Chick, now turn to the ancestors to see if
they their favour on us will bestow.
I call for the bones to be thrown by our spiritual
advisor and sangoma*, Sango.**

***traditional healer/ shaman**

