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I knocked off from Mawenda Motel noon hours to take lunch. It was today, June 7, 2001. I had lunch at the restaurant, then I went to a certain shop to buy biscuits.

As I was arriving at the shop, I heard News from the shop, and the news announcer stresses the seminar which was taking place in a certain country (I forgot the country because it was just mentioned as I landed on the veranda of the shop. I am not sure but it could be the Netherlands. The news continued saying members from various countries including Malawi went to attend the seminar, as well as diplomatic women. The news said the issue of the seminar was to train the women living with AIDS to lactate their children properly and live long. Then no sooner had I concentrated my ears to grasp everything, the news ended.

The man who was selling in the shop started, "Medicine for AIDS has already been found." (He was speaking to some of his friends, I found them there chatting). The other man added "True", and the other man added "So why are they not distributing the medicine, they are leaving us to die, Why?" the shop keeper said "The world wants to benefit a lot first, and then start to distribute the medicine to poor people like us. The medicines are so expensive, it's a lot of money, we can't even afford to die. And it will come to us when the majority of us have already died, for AIDS is harvesting people (*ikukolda*)." I didn't answer anything. They were just talking on their own. Off I went to Mawenda to work.

June 8

I was chatting with my friends, just after I got off the minibus at 6 pm. It is at Mphula Trading Center. It was at *Kanyenya* (fried fish) small fish always sold in the evening to be used with *nsima*, or eaten without *nsima* but with salt and pepper. People always gather around, women, young men and women, buying while the lamps are shining. I wanted to buy *kanyenya* as well, and my friends also asked me to buy some for them. We went there where I stood waiting to choose, among the people gathered there with my friends. Lamps were shining faintly, a seller could always lifting it with his hand to make the surroundings shine bright.

Among the people gathered there was Augustina, a young beautiful girl, schooling at Malata Private Secondary School. Also my friend Admon (well known by this short form of name, but in full he is Admonson). Augustina was coming out from the group, wanting to go home with a small handful of *kanyenya*. Admon called "Augustina, Augustina, Augustina" (3 times). She stopped and Admon ran after her. They stand at Mr. Matikwo's mill, right at the dark corner. When Admon came he said "Now give me money, I have to buy *kanyenya*, she has requested it." I gave him MK10.00 and he bought 10 small pieces of fish and ran after her and gave them to her. He came back and I was waiting there still. I said "Admon, are you not going to eat *kanyenya*, you preferred to give it to her?" He answered "Yes, I agreed with her that tomorrow this time we have to meet here again if I want to have sex with her." And I said "Did she accept?" "So I am telling you what?" (He

questioned.) 'I don't understand this soon soon, hook a lady as a strong-minded one (hard to accept sexual friendship).\* Admon said 'You are the one thinking that. You think because she has dread hairs [dreadlocks? Braids?] and wears such pretty clothes or her mother is a madam (boss) that she can't even accept? I proposed her and she accepted, and tomorrow definitely I will have sex with her. I will go plain [no condom], she will understand that I am Admon. I liked her ever since she came here from where they were living.' (I know Augustina but not her father's name. Indeed she is beautiful and her mother is a pay mistress in MASAF project which is planting trees around our home area. Indeed, she comes at least from a well to do family).

Simon: But have other people tried to have sex with her?

S: (Laughing) So many, she is beautiful but an 'easy goer'. And if you can remember last summer she wasn't here, her mother forced her to get married with a certain old man who goes to South Africa.

Simon: From where was this old man you are talking about, Admon?

S: You didn't know any of this?

Simon: Knowing means you heard or saw that, and if you my friends you are not telling me important things like this before we ourselves get involved as well, how can I know?

S: I heard the man was from Mulanje, but Augustina was refusing, but because the gentleman came with money then she (the mother) forced her daughter. Look, they had only stayed for I think 7 months and divorced and she had started schooling again at the Private (Malata Private School). And the majority are sleeping with her and she doesn't ask for money. And me, I want also."(He said *zithele mwaine*, (should it end on me, meaning 'should I be a failure?').

Simon: No, she is in love with whom?

S: Chikalema had slept with her. (Chikalema has a video show, screening around the Mphula trading Centre and boys and girls go to watch at night.). And most of the time, she is with a certain young man who sings in the church choir with her (Catholic church, Kalumbu mission). And I believe they have sex with each other.

Simon: She isn't afraid of the world?

S: Afraid of what? But you know what happens, these people who move a lot, who are mobile (*woyenda yenda*), are staying long. But those who are afraid, for example about AIDS disease which people nowadays are afraid of, for example if they say 'Let me today have sex with this one, she seems not to be mobile and I have stayed a long time without having sex, for you know we men we can't stay long without having sex.

Simon: Indeed, it's hard.

S: Yes, I mean if you are indeed a real man you must exercise (\*\*? *Wbadwa masiku atakusana chithere*). (He laughed, I laughed as well).

S: Yes, and don't be cheated, Simon. Everyone nowadays has AIDS. One gets AIDS even before being born. So you will find those who don't go for girls often are the ones who are dying. And those who go for girls a lot are the ones staying long.

Simon: Admon, why is this so? (He was now escorting me for it was dark).

S: There is a secret which God makes. God is wonderful. And not all who die die because of AIDS, no, their time has come. Everyone will die. We are no longer limited in this world, that's why you see many diseases including AIDS killing many people. And if I can see the world, there is no way to run out of it \* [or to escape it?] (no way to refrain).

Simon: Indeed Admon.

S: Sure, sure, but for example me, I don't mind whether I have it or not. But I know I don't have it, and for example this Augustina I will go (*ndi lowa mckhichese*, go is in English) no matter what, and I can't even take condoms then it will mean I wasn't serious for her. For I want her to be my real girl friend and I heard Chika (short for Chikalema) (saying 'she refuses condoms, so I can't go, temptations what?')

Simon: Therefore there is no need to go with condoms.

S: And Simon, if I can tell you the truth, I have never used a condom ever since the government has started to make them.

Simon: Indeed?

S: Yes, and I don't dream of using condoms, they burst, so what have I benefitted? Nothing.

Simon: And tomorrow by this time?

S: (laughing) Tomorrow, and she can't fail for I threatened her, saying 'If you fail you will see'. She is a silly girl, she will come.

Simon: Are you saying she is silly because she had accepted you?

S: No, but she doesn't refuse whenever she is proposed, and you can see most of the men go after her. And with her beauty, then indeed if she has AIDS she will kill many. *Ukulu wine, kupata kwine* (this is the name of a shop and well known to our \*\*\* as sexual fighters. They own a big shop, in this shop there are a brother and his young brother, *ukulu wine* is known for the older brother).

Simon: Indeed there is nothing special we men can do apart from having someone to entertain us.

S: You are saying the truth, but I will try to hide this, I don't want my wife to come to know this. Please keep a secret of this, o.k.!

Simon: Indeed, Admon, you will hear nothing of this, and if you hear maybe you have disclosed to another friend perhaps?

S: I will not to avoid the issue circulating and reaching my wife.

Admon then returned from escorting me.

June 10

It is today, Sunday, I went to church. And after I knocked out from church I entered the market where I met Admon. I asked him why he did not go to church and he replied that he was not feeling well, he was feeling malaria and he had come to the trading centre to buy medicine as a treatment. Then I asked him what had happened when he met with Augustina. Admon replied that Augustina kept the appointment and indeed he had sex with Augustina and said Augustina is a nice girl, not one who is so dry, she was totally willing to have sex with Admon. And when I asked Admon where he had sex with Augustina, he replied that he went with her to Kalumbu Primary School and said it's a good place and she slept in a class room without even laying down a cloth. Admon said that "I tempted her, that 'Augustina I am going to have sex with you with a condom'and she said that she can't feel anything, and if it is so it could have been better if she could not come and meet with him". Then Admon said to her 'I am doing this because I am afraid to get you pregnant since you are schooling', when Admon said that then Augustina replied that she had just finished her monthly period yesterday, so how can she become pregnant? And she said she knows biology and said that she is sure she can't be impregnated. And she said it's better if I didn't use a condom. Then Admon said to her

"I was just cheating you, I can't have sex with you using a condom, you are so beautiful and need to feel real sweetness, you can't eat a sweet while it's wrapped in its plastic paper, you can't feel sweet."

And eventually Admon said it was a nice night and when he went plain to her then she stood up and said 'You have made me pregnant.' And Admon said "How? You said you can't" and she said 'I was cheating you, I just wanted you to impregnate me and marry me.' And I said 'I will since you are beautiful.' She was just laughing. "I asked Admon "what time was that?" And Admon said, "she ran out from her compound past 9 o'clock so I was waiting for her at Mr. Matikwo's Mill and then I saw her covering herself with a *chitenje* and we didn't hesitate but went straight to the class room and I did 3 rounds (three rounds means having sex with her 3 times on the same day)" And I said "Indeed, plain?" And Admon said "Indeed, I did it plain, I was just cheating that I wanted to use condoms. I can't, for ever since the condoms were introduced I have never ever tried to use one and I have slept with many girls. And if it is the case of AIDS then I have already got it because the girls which I had being doing sex with, gathering them all together can occupy a *yanu-yanu* bus, were all safe? Then why use condoms that I prefer not to use?" And Admon said "I even told the girl (Augustina), saying that 'Look, if it is AIDS, even the radio says one can only get it through what we have done and the result is dying. So if you have AIDS you have given it to me and if I have it I have also given it to you. So it's better than our love should not end.' And we promised that if everything goes well we are meeting today as well (meaning Sunday)."

And I asked him "The girl said she was cheating you so that you should impregnate her. Do you think this is a good girl if she prefers lying to the truth?" Admon replied "I don't mind that. It's her fault, but because she's beautiful then if I see that it's me that has gotten her pregnant then I can marry her. And today I am going to meet her at the same time, 9 o'clock, when her mother has gone to bed (she stays with her mother alone) and I am going to have sex with her today and I believe she is coming for she loves me." I said "O.k.! How do you know she loves you?" Admon said "She came last night while it was very cold and slept on the cold floor of the classroom showing her love to me, and moreover the date that we have to meet today she proposed. Look, does that not prove that she loves me?" And I said to him, "She loves you indeed." And Admon said "And another thing which I witnessed that she was willing to have sex with me that she came only wearing a shirt and a blouse with a *chitenje* hiding her face, and moreover she didn't even wear underpants. She didn't wear underpants, then I just know that she was thinking of me all day." Then Admon concluded that "Indeed, friend, if Augustina has AIDS, she has given it to me, I couldn't resist her attractions." And I said "She doesn't have, she is so young for that." And Admon concluded saying "you are saying the truth, she is young indeed, and moreover her body is fat and healthy. Had it been she had AIDS I would have noticed that her body had become thin, but she is fat. So we are meeting any day, even tomorrow." And I said "Well, we are meeting even today." And Admon said "Right now I am going to sleep for I feel married \* as I said, but no matter what evening, I will come and meet her, I can't fail. So we separated, each his own way. I was going home.