Zisanda Solwandle

Transition to Womanhood: paper edit

Ukuthwalwa

Time out	Source	Target language
00:22	Narration	**It is one of those warm mornings of September. I am standing outside of the gate at Amanda Mbulawa's house in Qokoloweni location. A village in the Eastern Cape of South Africa. If it was a weekend, I would have shouted her child's name to come and open the gate for me, but I cannot because the yard is empty as it is a school day. So, I let myself in**
00:28	Ambience	*Sound of the gate opening*
00:52	Narration	**I have come to speak to Amanda about the events leading up to her marriage. She got married two years back, in August 2019. When she was 30 years old. This is not the typical story of two people who decide to get married, where the husband goes to the bride's family to ask for the bride's hand in marriage. Amanda's story of getting married includes abduction, a condoned culture in the Nguni tribe.**
01:22	Amanda	I was not ready to be married. I was at the river with my sister doing laundry since we live in the villages when my then, boyfriend's family, now husband family called me to come over to their home. I thought they were calling me over to come for

		something else since the family knows me. But when I got there, the whole family was there, and they told me that I am marrying into the family. 'We will send a letter to your home.'
1:47	Narration	**In Amanda's culture, this form of taking a wife is called *ukuthwala*. It is a tradition that is practiced amongst the Nguni people for girls in the childbearing age. *Ukuthwala* involves the abduction of the 'bride to be' by the man who has intends to marry her. This abduction is conducted by the peers of the man, the man only accompanies his peers to identify the woman that he wants to marry.**
1:57	Amanda	Apparently since my husband's mother had just passed, the family had spoken and decided that my now husband should take a wife.
02:18	Narration	**The purpose of abduction is to force the woman's family to allow their daughter to into marriage. That is, to accept the groom's lobola. This typically happens in cases where the bride's family does not approve of the marriage or when they are not ready to let their daughter to marry, even though the bride wants to get married.** **Some abducted brides do agree to marriage, and Amanda is one of females who agreed to marry.**
02:33	Amanda	Every girl wants to get married, so I did not have a problem with the way things were conducted. Also, I had known my husband since 2007, and we have a child together that was conceived when he was still my boyfriend. I love him.
02:50	Narration	**Even though Amanda's abduction did not involve the man who wanted to marry her and his peers kidnapping her, the way she got married is categorized as *ukuthwalwa* because the groom and his family did not ask Amanda's family for her hand in marriage.**
03:03	Amanda	My late father did not approve at first. I heard from other people that he was saying the way I got married is not the right way to propose marriage. But as time went by, he agreed.
03:11	Zisanda	**On the same day a girl gets abducted, the grooms family declares the girl a wife and subject her to wifely duties.**
03:36	Amanda	I was given bridal outfit late on that day, we first had to go and buy the clothes; me, my sister-in-law, and his brother. After that, I made tea for everyone, then I went to sit

		behind the door as the groom's family taught me how to behave as a wife. They told me that wife does not have friends. A wife does not go around telling people her home affairs.
04:27	Narration	**After the abduction of a girl, the groom's family sends a letter to the family of the 'bride to be'. This letter is taken to the girl's family by *abakhongi (Marriage negotiators).* After the abduction of a girl, the groom's family sends a letter to the 'bride to be' family. This letter is taken to the girl's family by *abakhongi* (marriage negotiators). The girl's family then sends a messenger to the girl, asking for her consent to start lobola negotiations. If she agrees, the lobola negotiations proceed.** ***Abakhongi* pay a fine cow and then the lobola. But if she does not agree, the negotiators only pay the penalty fee (*inkomo yokuthwala*) and leave then the girl returns home. This is what happened in Amanda's case, because Amanda was ready to submit herself to the grooms teachings from the grooms family and she felt ready for these duties because her grandmother had already taught her what it means to manage a a household.**
05:05	Amanda	There is really nothing standing in my way because at home we grew up with tour grandmother who told us that a girl could help around the house with cooking and cleaning. She told us that this would help us when we grow older and have our own homes. So now in my own home I can cook, clean, and maintain my house. So, the teachings I received from in my childhood have come in handy in my adulthood. So as a wife I use the teachings that I received from the groom's family to complete my duties as a wife and the teachings I have received from home to maintain my household
05:15	Narration	**Even though Amanda has undergone the process of *ukuthwalwa*, she does not think it is a good thing to happen to girls.**
05:32	Amanda	I do not see Ukuthwala as something good because I believe people still have things that they want to complete. So being a wife limits you because you have to maintain the dignity of your household.

5:48	Narration	*Ukuthwala* is not always mutual or gentle as Amanda's. Some girls undergo forcible abductions which causes them trauma. In the Eastern Cape such abductions have become the rule rather than the exception.
06:02	Ambience	*A car sound*
06:05	Narration	**I am in Mpange village, eXhora in the Eastern Cape. I am meeting Bomkazi Ndlelani. A 27-year-old lady who was forcibly abducted when she was 21 years.**
06:17		I am Bomnkazi Ndlelani from eXhora. I was abducted when I was 21 years old.
06:27	Narration	**Bomkazi's abduction is also not the typical one where the groom and his peers abduct a girl from wherever she is without the consent of the girls' family'.** **Her mother consented to her abduction, but Bomkazi did not know about the abduction**
06:47	Bomkazi	My mother told me and my brother's wife to go my father's home to and take some beans with. She said that we will come back with pumpkins. Little did I know that she is sending me there to get married. When I got there, my father's sister told me that I am there to get married. When I got there my father's sister told me that I am there to get married
06:59	Narration	**Bomkazi did not want to get married but she also did not want to sound like a rebellious child. So, she left with the groom and his peers to the groom's home.**
07:09	Bomkazi	My father's sister then called the groom and his friends to come and take me. I agree because, 'a girl's home is in the groom's home' but deep down I knew I was not going to stay long there. When I get a chance, I will escape.
07:21	Narration	**Indeed, she did escape when she had a chance, not once but two times.**
07:27		I ran away and went to my mother's home. Where my mother's sister advised me to go to people, I know in Mthatha so that they won't find me. When I was staying with my sister in Payne in Mthatha I used to go to church, so when my aunt suggested that

		I should go to Mthatha, I taught of that pastor, and I went there. I told them my story and they allowed me to stay there for as long as I want.
07:59		**Bomkazi knew that she could not stay at the pastor's home forever, but she also understood that she would not be able to return to her family's home so she decided to call people she knows to ask them to find her work so that she could become independent**
08:13		I called my brother's baby mama who lives in Cape Town to get me a job. She took the number I called her with a gave it to my mother, and then my mother started calling on the phone
08:27	Narration	**However not before long, Bomkazi's family got hold of her number and started calling her telling her to return to the groom's home and that is when the pastor's wife suggested that they should go to the authorities to seek protection.**
08:50	Bomkazi	Because of the calls I was receiving the pastor's wife suggested that we go to the police and social workers so that they do not be abduct me again. They said forcible abduction is a criminal offence people who do such could get a maximum of ten years, but I did not want to get them arrested I wanted a protection order so that they could not be able to abduct me again.
09:18	Narration	**After Bomkazi and the pastor's family went to the police, they were referred to the social workers.**
09:23		We went to the social workers, the social workers from Mthatha said they will meet with the social workers from eXhora so that they can go to my home and speak to my mother. I stayed there for three weeks and then returned to eXhora but after we soke to the social workers.
09:38		**In eXhora Bomkazi then felt safe. She felt as if she could begin a new life for herself and that is when her mother started calling her sister asking how her daughter was and when she is coming back home.**
09:44		I stayed two weeks with my mother's sister and went home. In those two weeks my mother kept calling her sister asking how I was and when I am coming home. The first two weeks of returning home things were tense but after some time when she heard stories of the home, she wanted me to marry in she said she was glad I ran away and that she was sorry.

09:56	Narration	**These are two different stories about ukuthwalwa, a condoned cultural practice in the Nguni tribe. In these two stories we find two woman who were both abducted. Amanda experienced a gentle abduction one to which she consented to but Bomkazi did not experience a gentle abduction, in fact she experienced a forcible abduction because she did not consent. Bomkazi did not want to marry a man much older than her. Bride abductions are sometimes practiced with the consent of those involved, but other times it involves forceful kidnapping and rapes because the women and girls involved did not consent. This often means that the girls future is ruined because she has to focus on wifely duties. Fortunately for Bomkazi this is not how her story, she was brave enough to run from a marriage she did not want**
10:30	Credits	And now I would like to thank Simthandile Qeqe the voice over artist, I am Zisanda Solwandle. Thank you so much for listening.