

G.C.E..Ordinary Level

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**Department of English
NIE**

The Life and Death of Cholmondeley

-Gerald Durrel

Shortly before we left our hilltop hut at Bakebe and travelled down to our last camp at Kumba, * we had with us a most unusual guest in the shape of Cholmondeley, known to his friends as Chumely.

Chumley was a full-grown chimpanzee. His owner, a District Officer, was finding the ape's large size rather awkward and wanted to send him to London Zoo as a present, so that he could visit the animal when he was back in England on leave. He wrote asking us if we would mind taking Chumley back with us when we left and depositing him at his new home in London, and we replied that we would not mind at all. I don't think that either John or myself had the least idea how big Chumley was. I know that I visualized an ape about three years old, standing about three feet high. I got a rude shock when Chumeley moved in.

He arrived in the back of a small van, seated in a huge crate. When the doors of his crate were opened and Chumley stepped out with all the ease and self-confidence of a film star, I was considerably shaken. Standing on his bowlegs in a normal slouching chimp position, he came up to my waist.

*Kumba (KOOM ba): a City near the west coast of Africa in Cameroon

He stood on the ground and surveyed his surroundings with a shrewd glance, and then he turned to me and held out one of his soft, pink-palmed hands to be shaken, with exactly that bored expression that one sees on the faces of professional hand shakers.

He seated himself in a chair, dropped his chain on the floor, and then looked hopefully at me. It was quite obvious that he expected some sort of refreshment after his tiring journey. I roared out to the kitchen for someone to make a cup of tea, for I had been warned that Chumley had a great liking for the cup that cheers.

As I poured the tea and milk into Chumeley's mug and added three tablespoons of sugar, he watched me with a glittering eye and made soft "ooing" noises to himself. I handed him the mug and he took it carefully in both hands. He tested the tea carefully with one lip stuck out, to see if it was too hot. As it was, he sat there and blew on it until it was the right temperature and then he drank it down.

Chumley's crate was placed about fifty yards from the hut (next to a great gnarled tree stump to which I attached his chain) From there he could get a good view of everything that went on in and around the hut, and as we were working he would shout comments to me and I would reply.

That night, when I carried Chumley's food and drink of tea out to him, he greeted me with loud "hoo hoos" of delight, and jogged up and down, beating his knuckles on the ground. Before he touched his dinner, however, he seized one of my hands in his and carried it to his mouth.

With some trepidation I waited as he carefully put one of my fingers between his great teeth and very gently bit it. Then I understood: in the chimpanzee world, to place your finger between another ape's teeth is a greeting and a sign of trust. To place a finger in such a vulnerable position shows your confidence in the other's friendliness.

His manners were perfect. He would never grab his food and start guzzling, as the other monkeys did, without first giving you a greeting, and thanking you with a series of his most expressive "hoo hoos." Then he would eat delicately and slowly, pushing those pieces he did not want to the side of his plate with his fingers. His only breach of table manners came at the end of a meal, for then he would seize his empty mug and plate and hurl them as far as possible.

Not long after Chumley's arrival he suddenly went off his food, lost all his interest in life, and would spend all day crouched in his crate. He would refuse all drink except about half a mugful of water a day. I was away at the time, and frantic message from John brought me hurrying back. On my return I tried everything I knew to tempt Chumley to eat for he was growing visibly thinner.

One evening before I went to take Chumley for his walk I opened a tin of Ryvita biscuits and concealed a dozen or so in my pockets. When we had walked some distance, Chumley sat down and I sat beside him. As we both examined the view I took a biscuit from my pocket and started to eat it. He watched me. I think he was rather surprised that I did not offer him any, as I usually did, but finished it up and smacked my lips appreciatively. He moved nearer, and started to go through my pockets, which was in itself a good sign. He had not done that since the first day he had been taken ill. He found a biscuit, got it out, sniffed it, and then to my delight, ate it up. I knew he was going to be all right.

The day of our departure from Bakebe dawned, and when Chumley saw the lorry arrive to load the collection he realized he was in for one of his favourite sports, a lorry ride

It was not long after we settled in at Kumba that Sue arrived. She was the youngest chimp I had ever seen: she could not walk and was the proud possessor of four teeth only.

The only times she screamed, clenching her little fists and kicking her legs in fury were when I showed her the bottle and then discovered it was too hot for her to drink straight away. This was a crime, and Sue let you know it.

Her face, hands, and feet were pink, and she had a thick coat of wiry black hair.

Chumley was, I think, a little jealous of Sue, but he was too much of a gentleman to show it. Not long after her arrival, the London Zoo's official collector arrived, and with great regret I handed Chumley over to be transported to England. I did not see him again for over four months, and then I went to visit him in the sanatorium at Regent's park.

I did not think that he would recognize me. But recognize me he did, for he whirled around his room like a dervish when he saw me and then came rushing across to give me his old greeting gently biting my finger.

When the time came to go, he shook hands with me and watched my departure through the crack in the door.

I never saw Chumley again, but I know his history: he became a great television star, doing his act in front of the cameras like an old trouper. Then his teeth started to worry him, and so he was moved from the monkey house back to the sanatorium to have an operation. One day feeling bored with life, he broke out and sallied forth across Regent's park. When he reached the main road he found a bus conveniently at hand, so he swung himself aboard. His presence caused such horror among the occupants of the bus that he got excited and forgot himself so far as to bite someone. If only people would realize that to scream and panic is the best way of provoking an attack from any wild animal! Leaving the bus and its now bloodstained passenger, Chumley walked down the road. When a member of the sanatorium staff arrived on the scene, he took his keeper's hand and walked back home.

After this he was branded as not safe and sent back to the monkey house. But he had not yet finished with publicity, for some time later he had to go back to the sanatorium for yet more treatment on his teeth, and he decided to repeat his little escapade. He broke open his cage and set off once more across Regent's Park. At Gloucester Gate he looked about hopefully for a bus, but there was not one in sight. But there were some cars parked there and Chumley approached them and beat on the doors vigorously, in the hope that the occupants would open up and offer him a lift. Chumley loved a ride. But the foolish humans misunderstood his actions: there he was asking for a lift, and all they could do was to wind up their windows and yell for help. Before he had time to explain his mission to the car owners, a panting posse of keepers arrived, and he was bundled back to the Zoo. Chumley had escaped twice, and they were not going to risk it happening again. From being a fine, intelligent animal, good enough to be displayed on television, he had suddenly become a fierce and untrustworthy monster, who might escape again and bite some worthy citizen. To avoid this risk, Chumley was sentenced to death and shot.

Monkeys - Punyakante Wijenaik

The sun was right overhead and the rock was warm. Its heat bounced off and touched him even through the heavy folds of his yellow robe. The robe hindered free movement, but nevertheless he managed to clamber up, so strong was his desire to see this monkeys. At last he sat on the rock surface. The monkeys, running barefoot like him, did not appear to suffer from the sun. they jumped and frisked, their furry bodies accustomed to heat. Their mother and fathers watched them from a dignified distance.

He brought out the black begging bowl hidden in the folds of his yellow robe.

‘ Here, here, ‘ he called to the baby monkeys.

They came to eat out of his hand. A simple diet, bits of left over food for which he had gone a begging at noon with the older monks. It was his sole meal for the day, for at night even samaneras did not eat. From his meagre meal he had managed to save two slices of bread and a plantain. He now broke these into pieces and fed the monkeys. He peeled off the yellow skin from the plantain and let them nibble at the pulp. He loved the feel of their tiny lips tugging at his food. They were his playmates, his sole toys. The mother monkeys sat by, watchful, on the sunwarmed rock, while the fathers went back to swinging on the branches. The small beady eyes of the young monkeys shone into his and their little tufts o hair blew in the wind, reminding him that his own head was shaven.

No one in the hermitage knew about this daily meeting with the monkeys. Each day, at this time, he stole away from his disciplined life during his sole leisure hour- twelve noon to one o’clock, - just to be with his monkeys instead of resting from the heat of the sun, as he should be.

Now he stretched out on the rock, ignoring the scorching sun. The little monkeys clambered all over him. They pulled his robes, tickled his bald scalp, brushed his cheeks with their long tails. One or tow of the mother monkeys came near. Suddenly he wished he was a baby monkey with a monkey mother who allowed him to tug at her pink breasts, drink her warm milk. Gingerly he put out a hand and touched a nipple. But the mother monkey giggled chattered and sprang back into the herd.

He shaded his eyes with his hand and wondered about his own mother. She had died at his birth. The Head priest of the hermitage had told him so. His grief stricken father had gifted him, as a babe, to the hermitage to be trained as a monk. ‘ His horoscope must be very bad to have him kill his mother at birth.’

And so he had lived in the hermitage in the forest, knowing only the yellow robed hermit monks and now he was six years old. He had been content until the monkeys came into his life. Now when he was with the monkeys, he was not a young priest but a child with his playmates. When he touched the monkeys and they touched him, he touched love. And he had never known love until now. No one in the hermitage touched him with love. Compassion, understanding, yes, but not love.

When the sun grew stronger he knew it was time to return to the hermitage, to return home. He got up reluctantly and the monkeys scrambled back to their mothers. How he wished he could follow them up into the cool of the treetops, swinging from branch to branch as on a giant trapeze, naked yet warm with love, carefree and happy. He wished he could make the treetops his home because the sun only filtered in there through green leaves, not like the scorching of the earth,

He sighed as he slid down to earth. He straightened and adjusted his robes. He went sadly, leaving the monkeys laughing and screaming in the treetops. He went back to silence and obedience.

He was tired. He had been up from four in the morning and now he was sleepy. Every morning the hermitage woke before the sun came into the sky. Everyone washed their faces in the cold darkness and mist that rose around the hills. The ice-cold water of the stream at that hour was invigorating. It shook the sleep out of his eyes. But now he was sleepy.

He tried to sit down to his meditations but found it difficult to concentrate on the breath coming in and out at the tip of his nostrils. He kept falling asleep.

The next day he rose again to the summons of the temple bell. He memorised the stanzas for the day rapidly enough but, once again, meditation was difficult. He found it difficult to keep his mind on his breathing knowing, that in a little while, he would witness the glory of the sunrise over the hills.

It was the birds who warned him of it. Quickly he opened his eyes a little bit and saw the first pale pink streaks of light growing longer and then turning gold in colour. The birds grew stronger in their announcement of daylight. They chirped and sang.

And then, suddenly, the sun exploded in a burst of scarlet splendour. Quickly he closed his eyes. Now he could concentrate on his breathing. But the temple bell summoned him to his daily tasks.

First he went and worshipped the Buddha sitting still with half closed eyes on his slab of cold cement. He removed the dead flowers that had lain fresh and fragrant smelling only the night before and threw them into the dustbin. He laid down freshly plucked flowers and cleaned out the black oil and poured fresh clear oil into the clay lamps and lit fresh incense sticks. It was his duty, as the youngest samanera, to keep the altar clean and fresh. Then he swallowed his breakfast of gruel made out of boiled rice and coconut milk, mixed with green leaves of the Hathavariya creeper that grew on the hermitage wall.

His stomach full again after a night of fasting, he went and sat next to his guru, the Chief Priest, to learn his letters. Then he helped to clean out the spittoons of the older monks and boil water for drinking in a clay urn. After which he sat again with the chief Priest, learning, memorizing religious verses, until it was time to go a-begging for his noon meal. He followed the older monks, his head bent low over his black bowl, waiting patiently until food was put into it. They went down the forest footpath, down into the valley and from house to house. Climbing back to the hermitage he could feel his friends the monkeys calling to him from the treetops. But he dare not lift his eyes to them for fear the other priest would see.

After the noon meal, when the heat of the sun was unbearable and the monks rested, he ran off into the forest to climb his rock again, this time his bowl filled with some sweetmeats given him by a householder. He was trembling with tiredness because he had got up before the sun. But the sight of his monkeys banished the weariness. He even dozed off on the rock surface. He had to be careful where he laid down for the surface was cratered with depressions in which wild flowers and cactuses grew. He fell asleep despite the discomfort of the unyielding rock surface and the monkeys clambered all over his little body, chattering and giggling.

The Chief Priest was tolerant of his youngest samanera as he nodded off to sleep during the afternoon meditation. But in the evening, when the boy went to bathe in the pool, he took a peek at his face reflected in the water and he saw the face of a monkey grinning at him above his head. Quickly he put his hand and stirred the water into ripples and the monkey vanished.

Later, while he was sweeping the compound with an ekelbroom he stopped to watch the sun set. Sunset was the opposite of sunrise. Brilliant hues fading into soft pastel shades which gave way to darkness. And then he became aware of dark shapes in the treetops – small mischievous eyes blinking and looking down at him. But he dared not raise his eyes from his sweeping.

If he looked up the monkeys might come down the trees and run about the temple compound looking for tit-bits. How had they followed him here? Did they follow his smell?

As the sun rose and the pure light of early morning sharpened the outlines of the branches the following day, he saw his monkeys, hordes of them, waiting and watching him. Now they came boldly down, some jumping, some climbing and they walked all over the hermitage compound, startling the priests out of their morning meditations. He was bewildered. Why had they followed him here, why? Now his secret was a secret no more. His hidden love was out in the open. The monkeys plucked the fruit and berries grown by the Chief Priest and flung them down at his feet. One even hung on the bell rope and rang the temple bell. The other priests were laughing at the invasion of the monkeys but not the Chief Priest. He looked grave.

After the monkeys had run all over the compound chasing him, they climbed back screaming and laughing into the treetops. And it was then he saw the Chief Priest look at him sadly. The Chief Priest took him by the hand and led him into an inner room where the monkeys could not follow him nor could he watch them and closed the door. There was no window in this room open to the sky and the trees.

He tried to understand the advice of the Chief Priest. He must not allow monkeys to dominate him, follow him here to the temple. He must not play with them or feed them, for then they would always follow him. Nor must he spend so much time looking at the sunrise and set.

You are yet a child and are drawn to nature. But the natural life is not what we are seeking, my child. We are seeking to withdraw from life itself, not to be born again. Time will pass and you will grow into a young monk and a true son of the Buddha. Your family will be the Sangha the brethren, not chattering monkeys. Therefore it is not too early start training yourself not to be distracted by those who leap from tree to tree, chattering, laughing, but clinging mindlessly. They are only monkeys but you have been gifted with the mind of a man. You must seek to liberate yourself from bondage. My son, always remember how fortunate you are to be born a man.'

He refrained from going to his rock that day and the next. He could hear his monkeys call him, screaming, crying but he did not go to them. If he went on playing with them, feeding them and loving them, they would always haunt him. They would not let him go. And so, with a sad last look, he turned away from the trees and the birds and the muted brilliance of the failing light of day. He must remember, he was, after all, born a man.

THE GIFT OF THE MAGI

- **O. Henry**

One dollar and eighty-seven cents. That was all. And sixty cents of it was in pennies. Pennies saved one and two at a time by bulldozing the grocer and the vegetable man and the butcher until one's cheeks burned with the silent imputation of parsimony that such close dealing implied. Three times Della counted it. One dollar and eighty- seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.

There was clearly nothing to do but flop down on the shabby little couch and howl. So Della did it. Which instigates the moral reflection that life is made up of sobs, sniffles, and smiles, with sniffles predominating.

While the mistress of the home is gradually subsiding from the first stage to the second, take a look at the home. A furnished flat at \$8 per week. It did not exactly beggar description, but it certainly had that word on the lookout for the mendicancy squad.

In the vestibule below was a letter-box into which no letter would go, and an electric button from which no mortal finger could coax a ring. Also appertaining thereunto was a card bearing the name "Mr. James Dillingham Young." The "Dillingham" had been flung to the breeze during a former period of prosperity when its possessor was being paid \$30 per week. Now, when the income was shrunk to \$20, though, they were thinking seriously of contracting to a modest and unassuming D. But whenever Mr. James Dillingham Young came home and reached his flat above he was called "Jim" and greatly hugged by Mrs. James Dillingham Young already introduced to you as Della. Which is all very good.

Della finished her cry and attended to her cheeks with the powder rag. She stood by the window and looked out dully at a gray cat walking a gray fence in a gray backyard. Tomorrow would be Christmas Day, and she had only \$1.87 with which to buy Jim a present. She had been saving every penny she could for months, with this result. Twenty dollars a week doesn't go far. Expenses had been greater than she had calculated. They always are. Only \$1.87 to buy a present for Jim. Her Jim. Many a happy hour she had spent planning for something nice for him. Something fine and rare and sterling--something just a little bit near to being worthy of the honor of being owned by Jim.

There was a pier-glass between the windows of the room. Perhaps you have seen a pier-glass in an \$8 flat. A very thin and very agile person may, by observing his reflection in a rapid sequence of longitudinal strips, obtain a fairly accurate conception of his looks. Della, being slender, had mastered the art.

Suddenly she whirled from the window and stood before the glass. Her eyes were shining brilliantly, but her face had lost its color within twenty seconds. Rapidly she pulled down her hair and let it fall to its full length.

Now, there were two possessions of the James Dillingham Youngs in which they both took a mighty pride. One was Jim's gold watch that had been his father's and his grandfather's. The other was Della's hair. Had the queen of Sheba lived in the flat across the airshaft, Della would have let her hair hang out the window some day to dry just to depreciate Her Majesty's jewels and gifts. Had King Solomon been the janitor, with all his treasures piled up in the basement, Jim would have pulled out his watch every time he passed, just to see him pluck at his beard from envy.

So now Della's beautiful hair fell about her rippling and shining like a cascade of brown waters. It reached below her knee and made itself almost a garment for her. And then she did it up again nervously and quickly. Once she faltered for a minute and stood still while a tear or two splashed on the worn red carpet.

On went her old brown jacket; on went her old brown hat. With a whirl of skirts and with the brilliant sparkle still in her eyes, she fluttered out the door and down the stairs to the street.

Where she stopped the sign read: "Mne. Sofronie. Hair Goods of All Kinds." One flight up Della ran, and collected herself, panting. Madame, large, too white, chilly, hardly looked the "Sofronie."

"Will you buy my hair?" asked Della.

"I buy hair," said Madame. "Take your hat off and let's have a sight at the looks of it."

Down rippled the brown cascade.

"Twenty dollars," said Madame, lifting the mass with a practised hand.

"Give it to me quick," said Della.

Oh, and the next two hours tripped by on rosy wings. Forget the hashed metaphor. She was ransacking the stores for Jim's present.

She found it at last. It surely had been made for Jim and no one else. There was no other like it in any of the stores, and she had turned all of them inside out. It was a platinum fob chain simple and chaste in design, properly proclaiming its value by substance alone and not by meretricious ornamentation--as all good things should do. It was even worthy of The Watch. As soon as she saw it she knew that it must be Jim's. It was like him. Quietness and value--the description applied to both. Twenty-one dollars they took from her for it, and she hurried home with the 87 cents. With that chain on his watch Jim might be properly anxious about the time in any company. Grand as the watch was, he sometimes looked at it on the sly on account of the old leather strap that he used in place of a chain.

When Della reached home her intoxication gave way a little to prudence and reason. She got out her curling irons and lighted the gas and went to work repairing the ravages made by generosity added to love. Which is always a tremendous task, dear friends--a mammoth task.

Within forty minutes her head was covered with tiny, close-lying curls that made her look wonderfully like a truant schoolboy. She looked at her reflection in the mirror long, carefully, and critically.

"If Jim doesn't kill me," she said to herself, "before he takes a second look at me, he'll say I look like a Coney Island chorus girl. But what could I do--oh! what could I do with a dollar and eighty- seven cents?"

At 7 o'clock the coffee was made and the frying-pan was on the back of the stove hot and ready to cook the chops.

Jim was never late. Della doubled the fob chain in her hand and sat on the corner of the table near the door that he always entered. Then she heard his step on the stair away down on the first flight, and she turned white for just a moment. She had a habit for saying little silent prayer about the simplest everyday things, and now she whispered: "Please God, make him think I am still pretty."

The door opened and Jim stepped in and closed it. He looked thin and very serious. Poor fellow, he was only twenty-two--and to be burdened with a family! He needed a new overcoat and he was without gloves.

Jim stopped inside the door, as immovable as a setter at the scent of quail. His eyes were fixed upon Della, and there was an expression in them that she could not read, and it terrified her. It was not anger, nor surprise, nor disapproval, nor horror, nor any of the sentiments that she had been prepared for. He simply stared at her fixedly with that peculiar expression on his face.

Della wriggled off the table and went for him.

"Jim, darling," she cried, "don't look at me that way. I had my hair cut off and sold because I couldn't have lived through Christmas without giving you a present. It'll grow out again--you won't mind, will you? I just had to do it. My hair grows awfully fast. Say 'Merry Christmas!' Jim, and let's be happy. You don't know what a nice-- what a beautiful, nice gift I've got for you."

"You've cut off your hair?" asked Jim, laboriously, as if he had not arrived at that patent fact yet even after the hardest mental labor.

"Cut it off and sold it," said Della. "Don't you like me just as well, anyhow? I'm me without my hair, ain't I?"

Jim looked about the room curiously.

"You say your hair is gone?" he said, with an air almost of idiocy.

"You needn't look for it," said Della. "It's sold, I tell you--sold and gone, too. It's Christmas Eve, boy. Be good to me, for it went for you. Maybe the hairs of my head were numbered," she went on with sudden serious sweetness, "but nobody could ever count my love for you. Shall I put the chops on, Jim?"

Out of this trace Jim seemed quickly to wake. He enfolded his Della. For ten seconds let us regard with discreet scrutiny some inconsequential object in the other direction. Eight dollars a week or a million a year--what is the difference? A mathematician or a wit would give you the wrong answer. The magi brought valuable gifts, but that was not among them. This dark assertion will be illuminated later on.

Jim drew a package from his overcoat pocket and threw it upon the table.

"Don't make any mistake, Dell," he said, "about me. I don't think there's anything in the way of a haircut or a shave or a shampoo that could make me like my girl any less. But if you'll unwrap that package you may see why you had me going a while at first."

White fingers and nimble tore at the string and paper. And then an ecstatic scream of joy; and then, alas! a quick feminine change to hysterical tears and wails, necessitating the immediate employment of all the comforting powers of the lord of the flat.

But she hugged them to her bosom, and at length she was able to look up with dim eyes and a smile and say: "My hair grows so fast, Jim!"

And then Della leaped up like a little singed cat and cried, "Oh, oh!"

Jim had not yet seen his beautiful present. She held it out to him eagerly upon her open palm. The dull precious metal seemed to flash with a reflection of her bright and ardent spirit.

"Isn't it a dandy, Jim? I hunted all over town to find it. You'll have to look at the time a hundred times a day now. Give me your watch. I want to see how it looks on it."

Instead of obeying, Jim tumbled down on the couch and put his hands under the back of his head and smiled.

"Dell," said he, "let's put our Christmas presents away and keep 'em a while. They're too nice to use just at present. I sold the watch to get the money to buy your combs. And now suppose you put the chops on."

The magi, as you know, were wise men--wonderfully wise men--who brought gifts to the Babe in the manger. They invented the art of giving Christmas presents. Being wise, their gifts were no doubt wise ones, possibly bearing the privilege of exchange in case of duplication. And here I have lamely related to you the uneventful chronicle of two foolish children in a flat who most unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house. But in a last word to the wise of these days let it be said that of all who give gifts these two were the wisest. O all who give and receive gifts, such as they are wisest. Everywhere they are wisest. They are the magi.

The Dark Years –Nelson Mandela

This is an extract taken from Nelson Mandela's autobiography entitled "Long Walk to Freedom". This particular extract was selected because it seems to reveal Mandela's humanity at its most intent. It shows the human being within him. Here we see a son denied access to his mother at her deathbed and a father deprived of attending his son's funeral. Mandela's revolutionary spirit was part of his humanity because he felt strongly for his people who suffered at the hands of the white leadership. He is a man who was forced to be revolutionary.

Time may seem to stand still for those of us in prison, but it did not halt for those outside. I was reminded of this when I was visited by my mother in spring 1968. I had not seen her since the end of the Rivonia Trial. Change is gradual and incremental, and when one lives in the midst of one's family, one rarely notices differences in them. But when one doesn't see one's family for many years at a time, the transformation can be striking. My mother suddenly seemed very old.

She had journeyed all the way from the Transkei, accompanied by my son Makgotho, my daughter Makaziwe and my sister Mabel. Because I had four visitors and they had come a great distance, the authorities extended the visiting time from half an hour to forty-five minutes.

I had not seen my son and daughter since before the trial and they had become adults in the interim, growing up without me. I looked at them with amazement and pride. But though they had grown up, I am afraid I still treated them more or less as the children they had been when I went to prison. They may have changed, but I hadn't.

My mother had lost a great deal of weight, which concerned me. Her face appeared haggard. Only my sister Mabel seemed unchanged. While it was a great pleasure to see all of them and to discuss family issues, I was uneasy about my mother's health.

I spoke to Makgotho and Maki about my desire for them both to pursue further schooling and asked Mabel about relatives in the Transkei. The time passed far too quickly. As with most visits, the greatest pleasure often lies in the recollection of it, but this time, I could not stop worrying about my mother. I feared that it would be the last time I would ever see her.

Several weeks later, after retuning from the quarry, I was told to go to head office to collect a telegram. It was from Makgatho, informing me that my mother had died of a heart attack. I immediately made a request to the commanding officer to be permitted to attend her funeral in the Transkei, which he turned down. 'Mandela', he said, 'while I know you are a man of your word and would not try to escape, I cannot trust your own people, and we fear that they would try to kidnap you'. It added to my grief that I was not able to bury my mother, which was my responsibility as her eldest child and only son.

Over the next few months I thought about her a great deal. Her life had been far from easy. I had been able to support her when I was practicing as an attorney but, once I went to prison, I was unable to help her. I had never been as attentive as I should have been.

A mother's death causes a man to look back on and evaluate his own life, her difficulties, her poverty, made me question once again whether I had taken the right path. That was always the conundrum: Had I made the right choice in putting the people's welfare even before that of my own family? For a long time, my mother had understood my commitment to the struggle. My family had not asked for or even wanted to be involved in the struggle, but my involvement penalized them.

But I came back to the same answer. In South Africa it is hard for a man to ignore the needs of the people, even at the expense of his own family. I had made my choice and, in the end, she had supported it. But that did not lessen the sadness I felt at not being able to make her life more comfortable, or the pain of not being able to lay her to rest.

In the early hours of the morning of 12 May 1969 the security police woke Winnie at our home in Orlando and detained her without charge under the 1967 Terrorism Act, which gave the government unprecedented powers of arrest and detention without trial. The raid, I later learned, was part of a nationwide crackdown

in which dozens of others were detained, including Winnie's sister. The police dragged Winnie away while Zeni and Zindzi clung to her skirts. She was placed in solitary confinement in Pretoria, where she was denied bail and visitors; over the next weeks and months she was relentlessly and brutally interrogated.

When Winnie was finally charged - six months later - I managed to send instructions for her to be represented by Joel Carlson, a long-time anti apartheid lawyer. Winnie and twenty two others were charged under the suppression of Communism Act for attempting to revive the ANC. Later, George Bizos and Arthur Chaskalson, both members of the Rivonia team, joined the defence. In October, seventeen months after her arrest, the state withdrew its case without explanation, and Winnie was released. Within two weeks, she was again banned, and placed under house arrest. She immediately applied for permission to visit me but was rebuffed.

There was nothing I found so agonizing in prison as the thought that Winnie was in prison too. I put a brave face on the situation, but inwardly I was deeply disturbed and worried. Nothing tested my inner equilibrium as much as the time that Winnie was in solitary confinement. Although I often urged others not to worry about what they could not control, I was unable to take my own advice. I had many sleepless nights. What were the authorities doing to my wife? How would she bear up? Who was looking after our daughters? Who would pay the bills? It is a form of mental torture to be constantly plagued by such questions and not have the means to answer them.

Brigadier Aucamp allowed me to send letters to Winnie, and relayed one or two from her. Normally, prisoners awaiting trial are not permitted mail, but Aucamp permitted it as a favor to me. I was grateful, but knew the authorities had not granted permission out of altruism: they were reading our letters, hoping to glean some information that would assist their case against Winnie.

During this time I experienced another grievous loss. One cold morning in July 1969, three months after I learned of Winnie's incarceration, I was called to the main office on Robben Island and handed a telegram. It was from my youngest son, Makgatho,

and only a sentence long. He informed me that his elder brother, my first and oldest son, Madiba Thembekile, whom we called Thembi, had been killed in a motor accident in the Transkei. Thembi was then twenty-five, and the father of two small children.

What can one say about such a tragedy? I was already overwrought about my wife; I was still grieving for my mother, and then to hear such news...I do not have words to express the sorrow, or the loss I felt. It left a hole in my heart that can never be filled.

I returned to my cell and lay on my bed. I do not know how long I stayed there, but I did not emerge for dinner. Some of the men looked in, but I said nothing. Finally, Walter came to me and knelt beside my bed, and I handed him the telegram. He said nothing, but only held my hand. I do not know how long he remained with me. There is nothing that one man can say to another at such a time.

I asked the authorities for permission to attend my son's funeral. As a father, it was my responsibility to make sure that my son's spirit would rest peacefully. I told them they could send a security cordon with me, and that I would give my word that I would return. Permission was denied. All I was permitted to do was write a letter to Thembi's mother, Evelyn, in which I did my best to comfort her and tell her that I shared her suffering.

I thought back to one afternoon when Thembi was a boy and he came to visit me at a safe house in Cyrildene that I used for secret ANC work. Between my underground political work and legal cases, I had not been able to see him for some time. I surprised him at home and found him wearing an old jacket of mine that came to his knees. He must have taken some comfort and pride in wearing his father's clothing, just as I once did with my own father's. When I had to say good-bye again, he stood up tall, as if he were already grown, and said 'I shall look after the family while you are gone.'

*Extract from "long walk to freedom" by Nelson Mandela
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