

# **THE AWESOMES I NEVER BEEN KISSED**

*By Max Coates • Published 2010*  
*Owner Shuttleworth Foundation • License Creative Commons*  
*Attribution Share Alike 2.5 South Africa*

**Another great Yoza cellphone story**

## ABOUT YOZA CELLPHONE STORIES

Yoza cellphone stories are stories for you to read, review and comment on, all on your cellphone.

Read this story at [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/) or on MXit at MXit Cares > mobiBooks > Yoza.

Follow Yoza on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/yozacellphonestories](http://www.facebook.com/yozacellphonestories).

For more information go to [www.yoza.mobi](http://www.yoza.mobi) or email [info@yoza.mobi](mailto:info@yoza.mobi).

## STORY TEASER

Turning sweet 16 seems to have brought endless adventure to the three best friends that make up The Awesomes. Naughty, nice and sometimes even plain nasty, it's not surprising that The Awesomes have got themselves into a tight spot before the New Year has even begun. Getting into trouble is the easy part, but the fun really starts when The Awesomes try to get out of trouble.

## MEET THE AUTHOR

Hi, I'm Max Coates and I'm new to this story writing game. In fact 'The Awesomes' is my first teen series and the thousands of readers who have commented have helped me shape the story as I go – thanks guys. You're amazing! Really!

A note to all publishers rushing to pin me down for a megamillion publishing contract, simply mail me at [MaxCoatesBooks@gmail.com](mailto:MaxCoatesBooks@gmail.com) to get my people to speak to your people ☺

[**Note from Max Coates:** I'm delighted to share my story in accordance with the Creative Commons agreement detailed – many thanks to all future publishers for making it available to more readers. I would love to follow the journey of this story. If you do re-publish *The Awesomes: Kiss Me Now* may I kindly request that you write me a quick email to let me know. My email address is [MaxCoatesBooks@gmail.com](mailto:MaxCoatesBooks@gmail.com). Many thanks! Max.]

## CHARACTERS

These are the main characters in The Awesomes:

**Hope L'Amour, 16** Life can sometimes seem like a tightrope walk for young artist Hope L'Amour, but she never gives up on trying to find a balance between being true to herself and being the best she can be for her friends and family. If it's not her two best friends then it's romance that pulls Hope off the straight and narrow and into a life of heart-stopping adventure. When the chips are down will Hope find the courage to trust her instincts in order to follow her true destiny?

**Deevya Padayachee, 16** On the surface Deevya looks like she has it all – she's rich, beautiful, talented and she has amazing friends. But scratch beneath the surface and you'll find that life isn't as glamorous as it may appear on the outside. Can Deevya face up to her emotions? And will she drop her façade and let Hope and Nomusa give her the support that she needs?

**Nomusa Bhengu, 16** There's no doubt that Nomusa is one of Durban's golden girls. She's a top surfer, the face of a swimwear label, and one of the talented trio that makes up The Awesomes – but she's so chilled out and unassuming you'd never guess she's such a hotshot. Nomusa is so good at anticipating her friends' needs. But are they as wised up as she is?

## CHAPTER 1

---

I'm so nervous my palms are sweating and my heart is pounding like a drum. I know I shouldn't be doing this, but it's too late to back out now. I fix my eyes on a point in the distance and stride purposefully through the door of the nightclub without a sideways glance. I'm waiting for the looming bouncers to grab me by the arm, demand to see my ID and then shout out for the entire queue to hear, "What are you thinking trying to sneak in here Hope L'Amour? You're only 16 and you don't look a day older than that! Out!"

My cheeks are already burning at my anticipated walk of shame past the watching crowd waiting to get in. But - miraculously - I walk uninterrupted through the entrance hall and out onto the edge of the heaving dancefloor. It would appear that confidence is a door opener. And I obviously don't mean MY confidence because I'm quaking in my heels right now, but rather the bold nonchalance of my best friends Deevya and Nomusa who walked in next to me. They're the ones who've talked me into crashing the New Year's Eve party at Nigiro despite the fact that it's an over 18 club and we're all just 16. And all credit for our successful illegal entry goes to Deevya's heart-melting smile and Nomusa's brain-frying catwalk strut. I should have known that those beefcakes guarding the door couldn't say no to them.

To be quite accurate it was actually Deevya who managed to persuade me to leave the house party my mom thinks I'm at right now.

"Trust me, you're going to love it when you get there Hope! You keep telling us you haven't kissed anyone yet because you're waiting for 'The One', but we've known all the guys at this party for years and none of them seem to be your Romeo. If you really want to live your life you have to learn to take a risk every now and again. C'mon Hope! Follow your destiny. You know you want to!"

So here I am putting my life in fate's hands and high-fiving my friends the moment we're all inside the club and out of sight of the muscle men.

"Nice work Hope!" laughs Deevya triumphantly 'I knew you had it in you'.

I breath a sigh of relief and fluff out my 'fro in a show of false confidence.

"Everybody knows it's a bad idea to get in the way of a woman with big hair," I joke.

"You said it!" grins Nomusa, already swaying to the beat. "Which means you're the one who's going to lead the way right into the middle."

She runs her hand over her barely there Alek Wek shave cut to emphasise the point and nods towards the mass of party animals getting down to the beat.

As I set off into the crowd I find myself thinking that my two best friends have pushed me into surprising myself many times since the day we first met in art class in Grade Eight at Glenwood Girls' High, our school in Durban. We have totally different personalities, and if we weren't all mad about sketching and cartooning I don't know if we would ever have even gotten to know each other. But drawing comes as naturally as breathing to each of us - and it's pretty cool to

have friends who breathe the same air, if you know what I mean. We all want to study illustration we finish school, and in the meantime we're constantly dreaming up creative projects together.

We call our collaborative trio 'The Awesomes'. Deevya came up with the name, of course. Nomusa was totally cool with it, as she usually is. And I needed a little persuading, but they managed to win me over.

I'm smiling as the DJ slides the volume button heavenwards just as I reach the heart of the dancefloor. I swing around to face my friends and instead collide spectacularly with the most agonizingly gorgeous guy I've ever laid eyes on in my whole entire life.

## Reader comments

Here are some comments left by readers at [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

It totally a rediculous poing 2 a club and fynd a guy u dnt even knw dat guy wil have sex with u and leave u lyk nuthing has happened. **Destiny girl**

Wow nyc stry.wndr wat'll hppn nxt...wll she kiss d guy or nt cn't wait 2 find out.m 1 of d typ whoz nvr been kssd m still wytn 4 ma prince charming. **BAD GIRL**

Yes I do I really do.I believe that my prince charming is out there waiting for me."My perfect fit"I haven't found it yet but I will we all will one day. **Orchid Rose**

## What do you think?

*Do you believe in meant-to-be love? Have you found it?* To answer this question, or to leave your own comment, go to [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

## CHAPTER 2

---

"Woah!" he laughs as I put my hand on his shoulder to steady myself.

"Uh ... sorry!"

It would appear that my brain has gone into freeze-frame mode - its fresh out of conversation and I'm standing here drowning in deep blue eyes with long dark lashes. Everything slows down and goes quiet except for the sound of music playing far off in the distance. And then eventually he blinks and the noisy disco suddenly returns to its normal speed and volume. He takes my hand off his shoulder and shakes it as he leans forward and shouts into my ear.

"I'm Simon."

I smile.

"I'm Hope."

## THE AWESOMES: NEVER BEEN KISSED

And that's as far as a conversation can really go when the music is so loud that the floor is vibrating. But Simon doesn't let go of my hand and I'm totally fine with that, which is unusual for me. And we dance. And boy can the boy dance. I'm normally selfconscious but his rhythm is so contagious that I'm pulling out the dance moves like it's the most natural thing in the world.

I'm not really one to forget about my friends but I'm almost surprised to see Nomusa and Deevya when they tap me on the back about half an hour later. Deevya raises an amused eyebrow.

"We're going to the chill out lounge. Come with us," she shouts.

I look at Simon.

"You come too," hollers Deevya and then turns and leads the way.

Simon nods and as he turns to follow her he lets go of my hand and it feels so ... empty.

"Get a grip, Hope," I mutter to myself as we fight our way across the dance floor, but not for a second do I take my eyes off the back of Simon's head. There's no way I'm going to lose him in the crowd.

I'm the last to make it to the quiet, moody glow of the chill out lounge. Deevya, Nomusa and Simon are already chatting easily by the time I get there.

"You look really familiar," he says to Nomusa.

"Are you a surfer?" she asks.

"Of course. I'm a Durban boy," Simon smiles.

"I also surf," says Nomusa, "you've probably seen me at the beach."

She's quite modest, our Nomusa, and doesn't add that she is always in the top three in the surfing contests around the country and is the face of a big swimwear label as part of her sponsorship deal with them. Her face is probably familiar to Simon because it graces a few billboards around the city.

"Cool. See you in the water sometime then. I'm going to get a beer," he continues. "May I buy you girls a drink? Hope? A beer?"

"Yes, please," I say without thinking.

Nomusa and Deevya both give me a look.

"I'd love a coke," says Deevya, flicking her long hair over her shoulders and fixing him with a sultry look.

Simon blinks and smiles.

"Yeah, me too please," says Nomusa.

## THE AWESOMES: NEVER BEEN KISSED

"Are you sure? It's New Year's after all?" says Simon.

"A coke would be great thanks," smiles Deevya, and Simon heads off to the bar.

"He's cute!" exclaims Nomusa.

"He's trouble!" says Deevya.

I stare at her in disbelief.

"How can you say that! You don't even know him!"

"I've got good instincts. And you don't know him either."

"Oh please, you're just jealous!" I snap.

Where did that come from? I don't know who is more shocked by my words, Deevya or me. What a pathetic thing to say! Deevya gives me a look that lets me know I'm going to pay for that stupid comment. And then Nomusa intervenes and starts making random conversation to change the subject. She keeps chatting for a few minutes. It gives me time to think about how to apologise and explain myself to Deevya. I'm about to say sorry to Deevya when Simon returns with the drinks.

And maybe I was wrong about Deevya wanting to get me back for that 'jealous' comment, because she chats away happily to us and keeps the conversation going for which I'm very grateful. She even synchronises our cellphones to make sure we all have the same time, and sets our alarms for the New Years countdown. And then she turns her attention to Nomusa, which gives me a chance to chat to Simon properly.

"So, have you finished school?" I ask, and realise I've probably just given my age away with my naïve question.

"I've just finished. And I got my exemption, which is a relief!"

"So what are you going to do next?"

"I'm taking a gap year this year to work as a photographer's assistant. That's what I want to be - a photographer you know. But I'm going to find out what it's all about in the real world before I decide if I want to actually study photography."

I'm about to reply when my cellphone alarm goes off and spurred on by the beer I've been drinking I leap to my feet and shout "Happy New Year!"

Nobody else does. I look around in confusion as everyone looks at me and laughs. And as I realize that Deevya has set me up I fix her with a death stare. She almost falling off her chair she's laughing so hard.

"Serves you right!" she manages to gasp out between giggles.

## Reader comments

Here are some comments left by readers at [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

Lmao revenge is sweet. I lykd dis chapter, it gets u in da mood 2 read da next one.

**Secret+Rose**

Just leave h0pe to find out if sim0n is a g0od guy or n0t! And every0ne likes to laugh, so there is n0thing wr0ng with the j0ke that deevya played on h0pe, it was funny!

**Lil+ronaldo**

Well i think every fwend just trying 2make all laugh....and cum on guys it was at a new year party we all would like 2have fun and laugh i think that was kwl what she did i will try it 4a next time.....lol. **sweetlips**

## What do you think?

Deevya's tricked Hope by setting the alarm on her cellphone an hour before midnight. How do you think Hope should react? Our readers recommend this: *New Year's is a long night - Hope's got plenty of time to plot a suitable revenge*: 18%, *Laugh along with everyone else*: 55%, *Give Deevya a piece of mind for embarrassing her*: 26%. To answer this question, or to leave your own comment, go to [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

## CHAPTER 3

---

I'm still giving Deevya the slitty-eyed look, furious with her for setting the time on my cellphone an hour early, and trying to figure out what to do next when all the lights in the club are turned on. It's suddenly so bright that we have to shade our eyes with our hands. Then the music turns off.

"Hey, what's going on?" says Nomusa.

And then, through the door of the chill out lounge we see the police walking into the main section of the club.

"It's a raid!" exclaims Deevya. And then very quickly: "Just get up really casually and follow me girls."

"Where to?" I ask, panic rising in my throat.

"Ladies room," Deevya replies briskly.

And for the second time that night I feign innocence as I make my way through another doorway with my friends, leaving Simon behind without a second glance.

There's a girl in there, putting on her lipstick in front of the bathroom window.

"There's a raid happening in the club!" Nomusa tells her.



## THE AWESOMES: NEVER BEEN KISSED

The girl's hand flies to her mouth in panic. Clearly she's also not quite 18.

"Ok, come with us. All of us into this empty stall, we're climbing out the window!" orders Deevya.

I start to giggle. I can't help it. Maybe it's the beer. Maybe it's nerves. But it's obviously contagious because Nomusa starts laughing too.

"This is ridiculous," giggles Nomusa.

"Guys, it's not funny!" scolds Deevya, "You'll get arrested and your parents will kill you!"

She's right. Deevya's parents are totally fine with her going to clubs - but they are admittedly pretty weird parents. But my mother and Nomusa's parents would freak if we had to call them from the police station to bail us out.

"And personally I can totally do without being packed into the back of a police van and made to spend a few hours in a police station cell with all the other New Year's criminals," Deevya rants on. "We're out of here."

With that Deevya climbs on the toilet seat and opens the unbarred window.

"You first Nomusa! Move it!"

Nomusa climbs onto the loo and slithers athletically out the window without any fuss.

"Oh, hello Simon," we hear her say in surprise when just her legs can be seen from the bathroom cubicle.

"I've used this exit myself before," we hear him say. "I thought I'd come outside the club and round to the back to give you a hand down from the window to the ground. It's quite a drop."

So I haven't lost him! He's come around the back to help us out.

"See! He IS a nice guy!" I hiss at Deevya.

"I didn't say he wasn't," Deevya hisses back, "I meant that he is trouble for you. Now focus on what's more important right now and get your behind out of that window!"

I climb on the toilet lid, then up onto the cistern and poke my head and shoulders gingerly through the window. I can see Nomusa holding the window open and Simon looking up at me from outside.

"Go!" shouts Deevya from behind me, and gives me an unexpectedly hearty push on the bum.

I fall forwards, kicking instinctively to try and balance myself. I find a foothold and as I push off with my foot to propel myself out the window and into Simon's arms I hear the toilet flush behind me. Nice one Hope. Stepping straight from the toilet flusher into the strong arms of my knight in shining armour. It's not exactly Cinderella, is it?

## THE AWESOMES: NEVER BEEN KISSED

The same thought has obviously crossed Nomusa's mind because she has a ridiculous grin spread right across her face as my feet finally reach the ground outside.

"Cool fanfare Hope," she giggles.

Next out is lipstick girl.

"My name is Lindi by the way," she says as her feet touch the ground. "Thanks for helping me out. You've saved my bacon!"

"Ok guys, I'm coming out," announces Deevya and launches herself out the window at speed.

We're not quite ready, and as we all rush to catch her we hear a loud ripping sound, and then I feel a sickening pain in my ankle as she lands on me and my foot twists as I fall.

### Reader comments

Here are some comments left by readers at [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

N0w they in tr0uble! This also happens to me but i find an excuse to tell my parents! N0w they just have to think of s0mething to say! G0od luck guys! **Lil ronaldo**

Yea sure i jus thnk du anytng without ur parentz permissn ..bt i rily rily enjoy readn ur storiz...uhm i learn alot 4rm em prbably...KEEP IT U GUYZ. **MR NICE GUY**

Running away from trouble cn make more trouble...**Little waters**

### What do you think?

*When The Awesomes try and get themselves out of trouble, they seem to get themselves in deeper trouble. Does this ever happen to you?* To answer this question, or to leave your own comment, go to [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

## CHAPTER 4

---

I actually want to vomit I'm in so much pain. And there's Simon staring slack jawed at Deevya in her Wonderbra and sequined leopard skin leggings, while the remains of her torn top dangle from the catch in the window.

Nomusa stands on her tiptoes, grabs the pieces of ripped fabric and hands them to Deevya, who slips them on, twisting the frayed pieces around her bra straps until it looks pretty decent. In fact it looks fantastic. While she's quietly closing the window I'm wondering if Deevya has a future in fashion rather than illustration.

"Lets get out of here fast!" she says.

"No can do," I gasp in pain. "My ankle ..."

## THE AWESOMES: NEVER BEEN KISSED

And we all peer down at what now looks remarkably similar to an elephant's foot jammed into my highheel.

"Oh my goodness," says Nomusa. "We need to get that shoe off!"

She bends down to undo the strap. And then my phone rings, and it's my mother of course.

"Answer as if everything's totally normal," Deevya instructs.

Ok, in fact if Deevya doesn't go into illustration or fashion after school she may well have a future as a con artist.

"Hi mom." I bite my lip to stop myself from whimpering from pain.

"Hi darling. Are you having fun?"

"Yes mom! I'm having an amazing time!" I exclaim, digging my nails into my palm as Nomusa shoots me an apologetic look then resorts to cutting through the strap of my high heel with the penknife on Simon's key ring. What I used to think of as my ankle continues to mutate into a large balloon.

"Darling, I'm afraid I'm going to have to come and fetch you early. I know it's New Year's and I said you could stay out until after midnight, but I feel like I might be getting a migraine. I'm sorry but I'm going to have to come and pick you up in the next ten minutes so that I can drive us safely home, take my medicine and get into bed. Will you wait by the front door?"

"Sure mom," I hear my voice saying before my brain can catch up with it. "I'll see you in ten minutes."

## Reader comments

Here are some comments left by readers at [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

That was a stupid thing to tell yOur mum h0pe! U sh0uld made an exuse like, "mum, d0nt w0rry, my friends mum will dr0p me off"! N0w she will find out and might n0t ever let u go out again! **Lil ronaldo**

You shouldnt lie 2 ur parents and do things behind their backs.. Deevya is a bad influence

I so wish evry teenager out thr cud read ths st0ry... A less0n wll b learnt in th end. Nice st0ry maaan. Kudliwa ngokuthiwa accept n appreciate evry lil thng u get,nam ke i appreciate th 1 short chaptr i read evryday...kip em c0mmming....**Mbalentle**

## What do you think?

Hope's in big trouble. What do you think she should do? Our readers recommend this: *Phone her mom back and tell her the truth: 16%, Do everything she can to get back in time: 28%, Sms her mom to say she's organised another lift home: 54%*. To answer this question, or to leave your own comment, go to [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

## CHAPTER 5

---

"Are you completely out of your mind!" Deevya explodes in disbelief. "We've got to get back to the party which is four blocks away and there's no way you can run on that ankle. Why didn't you say you could get a lift home with someone else?!"

Actually this really is too much. I burst into tears.

"Hey, everybody chill, it's going to be fine," says Nomusa, as cool, calm and collected as ever, and gives me a hug. "Shame, Hope."

"Sorry," says Deevya, "I'm just worried about you."

"It's not going to be fine," I wail, pools of mascara dripping down my cheeks, "my mom will completely freak out if I'm not at the party when she gets there."

"Ok, well there's no time to waste then," says Deevya, in a softer voice this time.

"Simon, you look like you're pretty fit. Do you think you're up to carrying Hope four blocks at a run in under ten minutes?"

He looks a little taken aback, but to his credit he rises to the challenge after only the briefest of hesitations.

"No problem at all."

And with that he picks me up with his strong arms and holds me against his broad chest.

"Put your arms around my neck," he says to me. "And you girls lead the way," he says to Deevya and Nomusa.

"Mind if I come along?" says Lindi. "I can't really go back into the club to find my friends, and I think I'd feel a bit afraid to hide out here by myself in the dark."

"Sure. If Hope's mother doesn't kill us all when we get there it might actually be a cool party," smiles Nomusa.

I tuck my face in up against Simon's neck as he runs, biting my lip against the jarring pain in my ankle. His aftershave smells incredible though. I decide to just concentrate on slowly breathing it in and out of my nostrils. I think I may be losing the plot completely, but hey, cut me some slack, I'm injured you know.

Deevya chooses a back route that avoids the entrance to the club, but we look down Clarke Road as we cross it and see dozens of police vans parked outside Nigiro, their blue lights flashing.

It's a reality check. And as it sinks home I feel shocked at the situation we've let ourselves get into. Going to Nigiro had seemed like an exciting idea, but we'd broken the law. And whichever way you look at it, that has serious consequences.

## THE AWESOMES: NEVER BEEN KISSED

Glenwood is really dark at night and as Simon gallantly carries me across the suburb along Lena Ahrens Road I feel so guilty, and really scared too. What if someone has spotted us? What if the police come after us?

"Hey!" a male voice shouts behind us. "What's going on!? Where are you going?"

### Reader comments

Here are some comments left by readers at [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

Da story z awsome nd 4 da undr-age staf wel ts rong bt,da awsmes wl always b da awsmes,gr8 staf!!!!!! **MicB**

Goin 2 clubs whyl ur underage z v risky n dangerous.its great dat dey went as a group bt dey shudn't put demslvs in dat type of situation. **SENA**

it reali is an offence!guys lts w8t 4 our tym..thy say,gud thngs cum 2 those whu wait.instead of hvn 2 run n hde n break ur ankles at a plyc wher u wernt sup0z 2 b,rathr be wher ur al0wd 2 b!!aftrall..we gut a future ahead of us!we are da future!lts nt ruin dt 4 owrslves!!  
**Angelic**

### What do you think?

*Do you think it's a serious offence to go into an over 18 club when you're not old enough? To answer this question, or to leave your own comment, go to [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)*

## CHAPTER 6

---

I get such a fright that I scream, and Simon nearly drops me in shock.

"Pull yourself together, Hope. It's only Zack for heaven's sake! Nothings going to get the police here faster than if you start screaming your head off!" scolds Deevya.

I have to say, for the record, that this is possibly the bossiest night of Deevya's entire life.

Zack, who is the same age as me and has been my downstairs neighbour in the block of flats I live in for as long as I can remember, comes jogging up to us.

"Hey Hope, are you ok?" he asks in concern, then looks at Simon suspiciously.

"It's a long story. I've sprained my ankle, but at least I didn't get caught in the raid."

"Is that where you went? To Nigiro? You guys suddenly disappeared from the party. I looked for you for ages. I've been worried. Then I figured maybe you'd snuck off to Nigiro. I came to see if I could find you, but there were all those police cars outside. And then suddenly you went running past in the dark."

## THE AWESOMES: NEVER BEEN KISSED

"Zack," I reply with urgency, "my mom's picking me up from the party in a few minutes. She doesn't know I'm not there, and we're NEVER going to make it in time! I'm so sorry to pull you into this situation but do you think you could maybe run ahead and stall her? It would buy us a little time."

"Ummm...well...Ok. I'll try," says Zack hesitantly.

He's such a straight up and down guy, and he knows my mom well. Deception is so not his thing.

"If you can just keep her by the front gate we'll sneak in the back and come out through the front door. Don't tell her I've sprained my ankle or she'll come running in to look for me."

I feel really bad getting Zack caught up in this, but we're so far down this road we may as well try and get away with it.

I look at the time on my cellphone. It's about eight minutes since my mother called me. Even with Zack's help I don't know if we're going to manage to pull this one off. My heart sinks. My mother is going to kill me.

### Reader comments

Here are some comments left by readers at [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

Poor zack also gettn hmself involved.shame lil hope lets hpe ur mom wont find out.

**Kaoscole**

This story iz interestng .I enjoy reading it although im a guy .Get wait to read the rest of the story. **GUSSI LOVE**

Dis story is almst as nice as sisterz. **Jerseylicious**

### What do you think?

Would you lie to a friend's mother if she asked you to? Our readers recommend this: *For sure. Friends help each other out through thick and thin:* 14%, *No. I'm not into lying* 5%, *It depends on the situation. Sometimes a little lie is better than the truth:* 79%. To answer this question, or to leave your own comment, go to [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

## CHAPTER 7

---

As we get close to the house we can hear that the party is in full swing.

"Sounds like a cool vibe," puffs Nomusa. "We should have stayed here. Instead we're probably about to get gated for the rest of our lives."

## THE AWESOMES: NEVER BEEN KISSED

Nomusa always has a positive attitude. In fact, this is probably the most pessimistic thing I've ever heard her say. It feels like a prophecy of doom. My mom's always trusted me and now she's about to discover that I've really let her down.

The back gate is closed but Deevya gives it a push and it swings open.

"Keep it cool guys. If you have to face the music then deal with it when that happens. But don't give up yet, and don't give yourselves away. I think we might just pull this off," she says.

The kitchen door is wide open and there's nobody in there - everybody's on the dancefloor in the lounge.

"Ok! Simon, if you could please put Hope down on a chair at the kitchen table. You're a star for carrying her home, thank you! Nomusa, get some ice from the freezer and wrap it in a tea towel to make an ice pack. Hope, put your foot up on the other chair and wrap that ice pack around your ankle."

While Deevya dishes out orders at the speed of light, she also whips an apron off the hook on the back of the door and puts it on to hide her ripped top.

"I'm going to find your mother," she says as she dashes off through the house.

Within a minute she's back with my mom and Zack right behind her.

"Oh my poor baby," wails my mom as she rushes across the room and puts her arms around me.

"Don't worry mom, I'll be fine."

But the instant I see her the tears start to pour again and I feel about five years old.

"So as I was saying, I'd just finished putting together the last of the party snacks just a minute ago," improvises Deevya, "when Hope came to help me. And she's simply not used to those high heels you know, and as she was walking across the room she just fell out of her shoe and twisted her ankle. It swelled up quite quickly so I had to cut the strap of her shoe to get it off. But the ice will help. And I don't think her ankle's broken or anything serious so don't freak out, just a little sprain."

"You're so hot and sweaty!" exclaims my mom in alarm as she puts her hand on my arm.

"That's not from the pain," says Deevya, "we've been dancing in the lounge all night you know, and this humidity is hectic."

Nomusa and I both stare at Deevya in astonishment. I'm astounded by how smoothly the lies have poured from Deevya's lips. If I didn't know the truth I would have believed every word that she'd just said. From behind my mother's back Deevya smiles at me triumphantly and gives a thumbs up. I don't smile back. Somehow now that my mom's here my good sense seems to have returned. And lying to my own mother seems like the most terrible thing to do.

I know Deevya's trying to help keep me out of trouble, but as she keeps lying I know that she's digging me into an even deeper hole.

All night I've been going along with Deevya's plans and games, but sitting here in this situation I realise that doing so was a big mistake. I don't like being a part of this web of deceit.

## Reader comments

Here are some comments left by readers at [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

trust me u never get away with a lie it always come bite u in ur bck side whn u least expt it.

Uhm this st0ry is very intriguein'!i hpe dat dis is nt da end...wt hppnz 2 sim0n..?cnt w8t 4 da nxt part

Lol. Defnitly! Sum how my mum always catches me out. But my sister gets away like a con-artist. **Ms ebrahim**

## What do you think?

*Do you think there's a trick to getting away with a lie? What is it?* To answer this question, or to leave your own comment, go to [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

## CHAPTER 8

---

So I didn't sleep so brilliantly. That's not that surprising since my swollen ankle was wrapped up in a frozen gel ice pack then tightly bandaged.

My mom had taken me to the emergency room at King Edward Hospital after the party. They did X-rays and nothing was broken so they'd just strapped up my ankle, given me some painkillers and sent me home.

I spent the night with my foot propped up on two pillows, which felt really strange. And the icepack thawed in the middle of the night so the bandages got wet and soggy. All of that was manageable, however. It was the recurring dream about my mother in a policewoman's uniform inside Nigiro that was more than I could cope with. I'm so glad that it's finally morning!

I hear the front door of our flat open and shut, and then my mom peeks her head around my bedroom door.

"You're awake," she smiles. "I popped out to the emergency chemist at Overport to get some things for your ankle."

Ok, that means I must have slept better than I thought because I certainly hadn't heard my mom get up and go out, and our flat is tiny so it's pretty unusual to miss any action.

"How is your ankle feeling?"

"Not as sore as last night," I say. I wiggle my toes and gently twist my foot both ways. "Just a little bit tender."



## THE AWESOMES: NEVER BEEN KISSED

"Ok," she smiles, "that's sounding good. The chemist recommended you rub Reparil Gel on your ankle a couple of times a day over the next few days and that you should keep it bandaged when you're not lying with your foot up. But I know you're never going to be able to stay still for long, so I've rented you a crutch to help you keep your weight off your foot for a couple of days."

"Cool, thanks mom. You're an angel."

"It's a pleasure. I'm just glad you're not too badly hurt. Accidents happen so easily you know."

Her voice sounds strained and I think she must be thinking about my dad. Well, my adoptive dad to be accurate because I'm an adopted child. Dad was a Frenchman, hence my exotic surname, and he died in a yachting accident when I was two. Or at least that's what we've imagined must have happened, because he was sailing alone and he just disappeared off the North Coast of KwaZulu-Natal. They never found his boat or his body.

"I was chatting to another mom at the chemist and she said her daughter was arrested at a night club last night because she was under age."

OMG. This is so not where I thought this conversation was going!

"Oh really?" I say casually and look out the window.

"Uhuh," nods my mom. "And her daughter stayed at the police station all night because she didn't want to phone her parents and give them a fright in the middle of the night."

"But weren't they expecting her home?" I ask, all innocence.

"Apparently she has her own keys and said she'd organised a lift home from the party she said she'd be at. The woman told me that she and her husband never wake up when their daughter comes home late at night because they sleep with their aircon on and keep their door closed to keep the room cool and then can't hear anything outside the bedroom."

Did I mention that my mother is a counsellor? And that she was evidently born for the vocation because random strangers tell her intimate details about their lives wherever she goes.

"So why was the mother at the chemist?" I ask.

"She was buying some MedLemon for her daughter. She picked up a cold in the police station."

"Oh shame."

A lame response, I know, but what else am I meant to say?

"You know, Hope, I'm not the kind of mother that would ever expect you to try and hide things from me for any reason. I hope that you know that you really can always talk to me when stuff happens. And if you ever need help, I'd be the first person to give it to you, whatever the circumstances."

And then my mom kisses my forehead, gets up and walks out of my bedroom.

## Reader comments

Here are some comments left by readers at [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

\*I dnt think hr mother knowz bt she wl find out any tym bcz newz trvlz \*fast\* **Babylicious**

I think Hope shld tel her mom whts popin.Cos shes rily concern..N secrts cum out lyk it or not galfrnds..**Mrs TRACE**

Wow wish i had such a consdrate mom, not that im complaining, but yoh...But seriously dont tell ur mom Hope

## What do you think?

Do you think that Hope's mother has figured out what happened last night? Our readers recommend this: *There's no way. It's just a random coincidence:* 30%, *Yes. News travels fast in Durban:* 6%, *She has her suspicions and she's digging for clues:* 62%. To answer this question, or to leave your own comment, go to [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

## CHAPTER 9

---

Holy friggin' macaroni. Am I just paranoid or is my mom onto me? My mind is whirling like a merry-go-round trying to work out how she could possibly have figured this all out. And my chest feels heavy with guilt.

I pull out my sketchbook to see if drawing will calm me down a bit. It usually does. But a few minutes into sketching I realise I'm drawing my mom in a policewoman's outfit and I slam the book closed and chuck it under my bed.

My phone beeps as an sms comes through. I don't recognise the number.

'Happy 2011 Hope! Gr8 to meet u. How is da ankle doing? If u'r up to it I've got a cool spot on da beach next to da pier in front of dbn surf lifesaving club and will be here with frnds for most of da day. Simon.'

I get off my bed, grab my crutch and make my way into the lounge.

"Hey mom. I met this boy at the party last night and he's just sent me an sms to say he's at the beach today and do I want to come down and join him."

"Ok," she says. "And how do you feel about that. Do you want to go and meet him?"

You see what I mean? She's a born counsellor.

"Ja, I'd like to."

"And do you think it's a good idea for you to go down to the beach on New Year's day when you've got a sprained ankle. It's probably going to be really busy."

## THE AWESOMES: NEVER BEEN KISSED

"No, I really don't think it's a good idea, but I think I'd like to go anyway," I grin.

She smiles at me as if to say 'so it's like that is it?'

"Ok Hope. But do you think maybe it might be a good idea to take a friend along in case you need a hand?"

She has a point. I think about asking Deevya, but I feel like I need a little bit of time to get my head around her lying so easily last night. So I sms Nomusa instead.

'Wanna go 2 da beach?'

She replies straight away.

'Always. Plnning on ctchng da mynah bus down thr in hlf an hr.'

Nomusa and her family live close by in a flat on Umbilo Road.

"Mom, how would you feel about giving Nomusa and I a lift down to the beach?"

"No, prob darling."

"Thanks!"

'dn't ctch da bus. Wll pik u up in 15 mns' I sms back.

I'm going to spend the day with Simon. My tummy fills with butterflies.

### Reader comments

Here are some comments left by readers at [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

YES IT IS VRY UNFAIR,BECOZ AS FENDZ U R SUPPOSE 2 DO THNG 2GETHER  
ALWYS. **Coco**

Totaly nt so kwl,we knw dat she dd wt sh dd 2 protect ha, n they 4rnds anyway.  
**Caribbean+chic**

N0pe.. Even in a group u gotta have One-on-One tym wid each other. **Ms ebrahim**

### What do you think?

*There are three best friends in The Awesomes. Do you think its fair that Hope is not inviting Deevya to the beach?* To answer this question, or to leave your own comment, go to [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

## CHAPTER 10

---

It's hard to look sexy with a bandage on my foot and a crutch under my arm, but I'm trying anyway.

Nomusa looks amazing of course. She's wearing a tiny pair of hipster boardshorts, a rash vest that she's customised with a handpainted isiShweShwe pattern and she's got her surfboard tucked under one arm. She's tall, lean and totally in her element on the beach.

My butterflies, still flying high due to my imagined day of romance on the beach with Simon, kamakazi dive to an all-time low as we spot him. He's lying face down on his towel while Deevya leans over him, squeezing suntan lotion onto his back. I stop dead in surprise. To say that this is not exactly how my romantic imagination had pictured the day rolling out is something of an understatement.

Deevya's wearing black bikini bottoms, a cropped white tank top, about ten brightly coloured necklaces and a pair of big silver hoop earrings. Her silky black hair falls down to her waist. Basically she looks like a walking, talking, Durban babe version of Pocahontas.

Confidentially, right now I'm feeling like a jealous, fat-footed fool. If my ankle weren't throbbing I might well kick myself for being such a romanticising idiot about Simon.

"Hope!" Deevya squeals when she spots us, and runs over. "I'm so glad you're up and about. Here, let me help you across the sand."

And she grabs my crutch out of my hand and offers me her arm.

"I didn't know you were going to be here," I try not to growl at her.

"Oh really? Simon invited me. And he also invited Lindi - you know, that girl who climbed out the window with us last night. I didn't know you were going to be here either but I'm happy you are. You can lean on me as hard as you need to," she says.

I force the corners of my mouth to lift into a smile to hide the fact that I'm quite upset.

"Hey Hope!" says Simon. "Great to see you. Sorry I can't get up, Deevya's busy painting on my back. Check it out."

I try not to get too distracted by Simon's bare, muscular back as I feign interest in Deevya's art work. She's squeezed out a suntan lotion cartoon of Simon lying on a towel on the beach, smiling at the group of bikini-clad girls sitting around him.

"Would you mind taking a photo of my back on your phone so that I can take a look?"

I reluctantly do so and show it to him.

"Rad Deevya!"

Deevya shoots me a meaningful look. I don't really get the meaning and I'm not in the mood so I let it go right past me. I'm still getting my head around how manipulative I've realised she can be and I'm not up for any mind games right now.

Simon jumps to his feet.

"Make yourself comfortable on my towel if you want, Hope. I'm heading out for a surf."

Oh fabulous. I arrive and he leaves. The day just gets better.

"Us too," says Nomusa.

I look over and notice that Lindi also has a surfboard with her. The three of them chat away as they strap their leashes to their legs and then run off leaving Deevya and I sitting alone together in awkward silence.

## Reader comments

Here are some comments left by readers at [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

Nope.h jst likes ha as a fwend. **Gomolemo**

I would say he is only because of what had happened at the club the night before, yet that morning he seems to be implying the wrong messages. **Miss Sasha Fierce**

Wel,sim0n is smart,hes playn gud mind gamez,bt hope shud start sh0wing ha true flngz or els she l0ses hm

## What do you think?

Do you think Simon's into Hope? Our readers recommend this: *Yes. He's really gone out of his way to spend time with her in the last 24 hours:* 7%, *No. If he was he would be hanging on the beach with her, not surfing:* 25%, *Who knows. Boys can be really confusing:* 66%. To answer this question, or to leave your own comment, go to [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

## CHAPTER 11

---

"So what's your problem?" asks Deevya.

Can a girl not have a moment to have a quiet sulk to herself without being called on it?

"Nothing."

"Ja right," says Deevya. "This is exactly what I was trying to warn you about last night. I told you that Simon was trouble for you."

"I really don't know what you're talking about Deevya."

"No Hope," Deevya says "I think it's more like you don't want to hear what I'm talking about. You've got all these ideas about meant-to-be love and you're totally star struck by Simon – it's so obvious. But I'm telling you this - if you're imagining for one second that he's The One, then you're setting yourself up for a big fall. And that's the simple truth."

I feel a rush of blood to my head. It's so typical that Deevya thinks she can be so certain about my love life and it's so annoying! Did I tell you that Deevya had a boyfriend called Prakesh for a year? They broke up six months ago and with that it seems that Deevya decided she had the education required to graduate with a doctorate in L.O.V.E. She thinks she knows it all and that she is the relationship expert, while we know nothing.

The timing is not good for her to administer her 'expert' advice on love and life. Right now I'm bruised, tired and confused. It feels like for the last 24 hours Deevya has done nothing but tell me what I should be thinking, feeling and doing. And she doesn't seem to understand that I just want her to keep her nose out of my business and leave me to make my own choices in my own time. I'm so over her right now! In fact, I crack.

"Sorry Deevya, but who are you to be preaching the "simple truth" to me?" I explode. "If it wasn't for you I wouldn't have been in that stupid club last night, I wouldn't have broken the law, met Simon, hurt my ankle, nor ended up in a position where I'm lying to my own mother! Can you possibly understand that if you hadn't started trying to take over control of my life we wouldn't be sitting here having this conversation right now? So don't you start preaching to me about simplicity and truth when it's quite obvious that your handle on both is a little shaky right now."

Deevya's eyes go wide and then to my horror they brim with tears.

"I ... I think I'm going to go for a swim," she chokes out in a small, strangled voice.

And then she gets up and runs blindly into the sea with all her jewellery on. I stare after her in dismay, not least because it seems that Deevya has forgotten that she doesn't know how to swim. But still, she just keeps wading in deeper, clumsily banging into swimmers as she goes. I see the learner surfer fall off his surfboard before she does and as his board flies into the air I know what's going to happen next.

"Deevya!" I scream, and leap to my feet, running despite the pain in my ankle.

And then the surfboard comes crashing down, its sharp nose hits her on the back of the head and Deevya disappears beneath the waves.

## Reader comments

Here are some comments left by readers at [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

WELL I WOULD SAY SHE WENT A LIL BIT TOO FAR BECOZ NW HOPE THINKS DEEVYA WANTS 2 CONTRL HER LYF,,,BT I THNK SHE WAS JST TRYING 2 BE A FRND AN WAS A LIL JELOUS. **Coco**

Hope is ungr8fl n no1 put a gun 2 ha head 2 go..look manje the poor deevy is not only emotionally bruised bt abt 2 drown and yea i 2nd tht the story is pretty good. **Silv3r p3arl**

1stly da is nothing happening between hope n simon so da is no nid 4 hope 2 get al upset.  
Secondly simon is nt intrested in hope if he was he shuld have invite hope alne bwt no  
instead he invite the whole crew. Hope dee is bing a tru frwnd. **Young Missie**

## What do you think?

*Has Deevya gone overboard by interfering in Hope's life? Or is she just trying to do what's best for her friend?* To answer this question, or to leave your own comment, go to [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

## CHAPTER 12

---

I'm sitting in the waiting room of the Emergency Unit at Entabeni Hospital wringing my hands in worry. I can't believe I'm in a hospital for the second time in 24 hours!"

"I'm sure she's going to be fine," says Zack for the twentieth time since he hauled Deevya out of the surf, unconscious and bleeding.

Turns out Zack had been strolling on the pier eating an ice cream when he'd spotted Deevya running into the water. Then he'd seen me running after her. And when she started to sink Zack jumped straight off the pier into the water and pulled her to the surface.

The lifesavers took over from there. Deevya was breathing normally even though she hadn't regained consciousness, so she didn't need mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. There was an ambulance already on standby at the beach for New Year's Day emergencies and the ambulance staff quickly loaded her onto the stretcher and into the back. Zack and I climbed in with her. By the time we got to the hospital her eyelids were flickering and she was moving her hands, but she hadn't yet been able to open her eyes or speak.

"Have you phoned her parents?" asked the nurse when we arrived at the hospital and I felt even worse because it hadn't even occurred to me. Deevya's parents travel on buying trips for their chain of shoe shops all the time, and I'm totally used to Deevya being all by herself at home. I've almost forgotten that she has parents.

Mrs. Padayachee arrives about half an hour later, at exactly the same time as the doctor comes out to speak to us.

"How could you have let her go swimming?" she shouts at me. "You know she doesn't know how to! You're her friend - you're meant to look after her!"

"I'm so sorry, Mrs. Padayachee, I tried to stop her ..." And then I run out of words to explain that we were having a fight and that Deevya was actually running away from me.

"It's alright everyone," says the doctor in a reassuring voice. "Accidents happen and Deevya is going to be absolutely fine, so there's no point in getting over emotional. I've put in a few stitches on the back of her head, but the cut's not deep. Head wounds do bleed profusely, though, so I imagine it gave you quite a scare."

## THE AWESOMES: NEVER BEEN KISSED

He looks at me kindly and tears well up in my eyes.

"Deevya's got a slight concussion, and when the painkillers wear off I'm sure she's going to have a bit of a headache, but other than that she's fine. She's just feeling a little stupid for trying to swim in the sea when she knew she couldn't swim. But we all make mistakes sometimes. We wouldn't be human if we didn't, would we?"

He gives Mrs. Padayachee a meaningful look as he says that last sentence. Then he opens the door to the ward.

"If you'd like to see her you're welcome to come through," the doctor says.

"Deevya! My little princess! You could have died!" wails Mrs. Padayachee as she sees Deevya.

"Oh...hi mom," says Deevya in a surprised voice as we walk into her hospital room. "I didn't think you'd be back until tonight."

"We finished our business in Hong Kong faster than we expected and we managed to get on an earlier flight. Thank goodness we did! Look at you!"

"I'm fine, mum. Please don't make a huge fuss. It's not a big drama."

Then Deevya turns to me.

"Hope, I'm so sorry. I totally overreacted."

"That makes two of us," I say with feeling. "We've had quite an emotional 24 hours and I think maybe we both weren't really ourselves. I'm so sorry I hurt your feelings."

"Chill sister," says Deevya. "When I'm over my concussion, and if I haven't lost my memory, then maybe we can talk about it properly sometime."

Deevya laughs at her own joke and then winces as she puts her hand up to the bandage on her head. "Ouch. That hurt."

"Listen, I think we should leave Deevya to get some sleep," says Zack.

"There's no way I would ever leave my daughter when she needs me," says Mrs. Padayachee a little too defensively.

Yeah, whatever, I think to myself, but I'm not about to argue with her.

"Sleep well, Deevya. I'm so glad you're ok," I say before I close the door behind me.

I phone my mom as soon as we're out of the room.

"Hi mom. I need your help. I'm not at the beach anymore and I'll explain everything when I see you, but don't worry, everything's fine. I just wanted to ask you if you could please come and pick Zack and I up from Entabeni Hospital?"



## Reader comments

Here are some comments left by readers at [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

They we both wrng i thnk n its gud they manage 2 say da word SORRY

Yho trouble sims 2 folow u everywher Hope. Nd i do hope ur filn sori 4 urself cz its al ur 4lt tht deevya is in hosptl- **DEVINE**

AwWwsum sTori;-).... Oh PlzZ deEvaY's mUm hArdLy eVen c Ha cHild She WaNts 2 bE al cOncerNd... Bt aNyWay I larK(LYK) tHis stOri AloT

## What do you think?

Do you think its Hope's fault that Deevya is in hospital? Our readers recommend this: *Yes. If Hope hadn't got angry Deevya would never have needed to run into the sea;*, 3%, *Yes. If Hope hadn't got angry Deevya would never have needed to run into the sea,* 5%, *Accidents happen. I don't play the blame game:* 90% To answer this question, or to leave your own comment, go to [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

## CHAPTER 13

---

The guilty feelings finally got to me and I told my mom everything that had happened the night before. I hate having big secrets between us.

Yup - you guessed right. She freaked out. Quietly. My mom's not one of those mom's who gets overly emotional and starts throwing a fit. But that doesn't mean it's any less scary!

Mom's mouth went tight and the look in her eye was a mix between disappointment, anger and what I'm sure was fear. We sat in strained silence for about half an hour. It felt like 900 years!!!! And then she told me to go to my room and think about how it made her feel to have had me lie to her.

So I did. And I felt like a horrible, dishonest human being. My stomach into a tight knot of 100% rotten guilt.

After about an hour of sitting on my bed sweating it out, my mom came into my room. I didn't imagine things could get worse. But they did.

She started to cry and then she choked out, “ You need to give some serious thought to how I would be feeling right now if something really bad had happened to you last night! I’m so upset I need to go out for a walk and some fresh air to clear my head!”

This time she wasn't that quiet. She slammed the door so hard on her way out it felt like the whole block of flats wobbled from side to side.

Mom couldn't have thought of a better punishment if she'd tried. She is normally so unbelievably cool and I've never, ever known her to be this upset with me. And leaving me sitting by myself knowing that I'd caused her so much pain made me feel like I was in hell.

## THE AWESOMES: NEVER BEEN KISSED

When mom got back from her walk she was much calmer. And when she gated me for a week I swear I was actually GRATEFUL to be properly punished so that this emotional agony could end. I'd been bad. And facing the consequences felt like the right thing to do.

So this is how my punishment went...I wasn't allowed to see any of my friends for a whole week. I wasn't even allowed to go and watch a movie by myself. I didn't get any pocket money. Tough going. But on the bright side it did mean I had lots of time to sketch and paint, which was pretty cool. I really got into my own creative zone. And I got up early every morning to make tea for my mom to make amends. By the end of my week of punishment the vibe between us was good again.

Tonight is my last night of 'detention' and it feels like things are cool enough to ask my mom one of the questions I've been thinking about all week.

"Hey mom? You know you told me about that woman you'd met in the chemist and her daughter that got arrested in the raid? And then you gave me that long speech about you being the kind of mom I can talk to when things happen?"

My mom smiles. "Yes?"

"Did you tell me all of that because you knew I'd been at Nigiro the night before?"

"No."

"Then how come?" I ask.

"Instinct, I guess. I could tell you were hiding something from me because I know you so well. And when I fetched you from the party you and your friends were all so stressed out. I didn't get the feeling that you were all having a simple, happy party at a friend's house."

Sheez. My mother would make a great private investigator!

"I really didn't know you'd been at Nigiro," she continues, "but I did know that there were suddenly secrets between us, much like there were between the woman I met at the chemist and her daughter. You teenagers don't realize how vulnerable you make yourselves when you feel that you have to hide the truth about your lives from your parents. I told you that story so that I could tell you that I always want you to know that I'm always on your side."

I can tell that she really means what she's saying.

"Thanks mom," I say I give her a hug.

Then I sit back on the couch and gaze out the window down onto the docks a few kilometres away. I've been so confused this last week and a bit. Thank heavens the world is starting to get back to normal and make sense again. But then I think of Simon and I can't help myself frowning.

"What?" asks mom.

The woman doesn't miss a thing. But it's ok. Since she's on my side I don't mind spilling my guts.

"I had such a feeling about Simon, like there was instantly some connection between us. But Deevya said that I was 'star struck' and that my imagination was setting me up for a big fall."

"And do you think she's right?" ask my mom.

"I'm not sure mom. I feel like I need to spend more time with him before I really know."

"Well that sounds like you've got your head screwed on right Hope! You're a teenager. It's perfectly natural to not always be sure of what you think - you've got time the world at your feet so you don't need to rush into anything. Give yourself space to discover and think. And now that you're not gated anymore you can have some fun while you're at it!"

She gives me a big smile. I feel so much better.

Hmmm. 'Fun!' Oh yeah. I can do that. Just watch this space!

## Reader comments

Here are some comments left by readers at [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

ALWAYS tel da truth no matter what cos u never knw who might be watching u whether u friends or family or not! **Surf Girl**

I mostly tell the truth but when i lie i never confess to them,I rather confess to a friend. **Rose**

I hav lied 2 my ma many tymz, bt problm is she alwayz findz out, so i always end up forced to confess

## What do you think?

*Have you ever lied to your parents and then confessed and told them the truth? Tell us about it?*

To answer this question, or to leave your own comment, go to [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

## CHAPTER 14

---

[A week and a bit later...]

It's the last day of the holidays and the drama of New Year's and my punishment is long behind us when Nomusa, Deevya and I meet for one last coffee before school starts. We're at the Corner Café in Glenwood and we've got a prime table spot - in the sunshine right next to the huge, open window.

"I can't believe it's all over," groans Nomusa "I just don't know if I can handle all those teachers and bells between lessons after a whole month of freedom!"

"You're not even going to have time to think about it," I console her, "we've got so much work to do for our exhibition at Red Eye."

## THE AWESOMES: NEVER BEEN KISSED

We, as in 'The Awesomes', have been invited to take part in the coolest exhibition in Durban that happens from time to time down at Durban Art Gallery, which is in the middle of the city. We're working together on a series of cartoons that tell a love story set in Minitown. You know Minitown? That really cool mini-model version of Durban city that's a tourist hotspot down on the beachfront? Well that's where our love story is set. The story is kinda quirky. Sort of Afropolitan meets Bollywood with a Japanese anime influence. So we've called our exhibition 'AfroBollyMe'. Cute huh?

Deevya pulls out her sketchpad to show us some ideas she's been working on for it. And before long all three of us have our sketchpads out and are drawing away happily.

I check Deevya out from time to time when I think she isn't paying attention, trying to suss out if she's really ok. She seems a bit distracted. I'm wondering if it's a long-term side effect of her concussion.

"Hey, are you looking at the bruises under my eyes?" she asks me.

Well so much for Deevya not paying attention! She totally caught me out.

"I was just thinking that they're fading really quickly," I quickly explain.

The bruises under her eyes are a side effect of the knock on the head she got from that atom bomb surfboard. And what I said is true. They are looking much better.

Deevya swings the attention away from her and onto Nomusa.

"So Nomusa, I've been wondering if you've got your eye on a boy? You have a bit of a glow about you."

Nomusa looks bashful and shakes her head.

"No way, no one."

Hmmm! I know Nomusa well and right now she looks like she's hiding something from us! Confidentially, I've had a sneaky suspicion that there might be something going on between Nomusa and my downstairs neighbour Zack. I'm sure there's a bit of a vibe between them. And if there isn't then maybe there could be in the future. They'd be so well suited. I make a mental note to do a little matchmaking.

"What about you and Simon?" Nomusa unexpectedly asks me.

Sneaky diversion Nomusa! I feel my cheeks flush. But there's no way I want to get into this subject in front of Deevya. I'm still feeling a bit sensitive about how badly things turned out the last time we spoke about Simon.

As I'm trying to think up a clever change of subject a car pulls up and parks outside, right in front of the window we're sitting next to. We turn and see Deevya's ex-boyfriend, Prakesh, getting out. He's the one that Deevya went out with for a year. And actually he's the only boyfriend she's ever had.

## THE AWESOMES: NEVER BEEN KISSED

If you want my take on their relationship I actually thought it was like a rollercoaster ride with extreme highs and lows. Not that I'm any kind of an expert on relationships. But one day Deevya would seem extremely happy and in love. And then the next day she'd be absolutely devastated because Prakesh was having doubts about their relationship. And she got far too skinny and I'd even say she was often more than a little neurotic.

I breathed a secret sigh of relief when they broke up six months ago. All that emotional seesawing clearly wasn't good for the girl. Deevya hasn't seen Prakesh since the day they broke up. And in my opinion that's a good thing. Who needs heartbreak every second day? Seriously?! The only down side for us has been having to swallow all the relationship advice she's been feeding us ever since. But remembering how down she was when she was with Prakesh suddenly makes me realise that I'd much rather have her upbeat and bossy, even if it does get a little irritating now and again.

Right now Prakesh is standing just two metres away from us with a couple of DVD's in his hand. He must be returning them to the DVD shop across the road.

I glance at Nomusa and hold my breath. I'm expecting Prakesh and Deevya to have a huge argument, like they often did in the old days. But their encounter doesn't start quite as I anticipate it will.

"I've missed you," is all Prakesh says as he reaches Deevya.

Nomusa and I glance at each other and I almost giggle as she rolls her eyes. Deevya's come a long way since her and Prakesh broke up, and we're on the edge of our seats as we wait for her to show Prakesh her super-assertive, bossy colours. After the way he treated her he deserves to be put in his place!

And then? SHOCK and ASTONISHMENT! Deevya and Prakesh melt wordlessly into each others arms through the open window and kiss passionately like long lost lovers.

Nomusa's mouth is gaping so wide open in disbelief that a flock of birds could fly in there and build nests in her back teeth with no problem. It occurs to me that my mouth looks much the same but I'm so blown away I don't really care.

Finally, after the longest, schmelziest smooch you've ever seen in real life or the big screen, Prakesh pulls away from Deevya, and says "I'll call you".

That's it. That's all he says. And then he gets into the car and drives off without returning his DVDs!

At this point our jaws hit the floor.

When Deevya turns back towards us she is so radiant with happiness it looks like someone has turned a light on inside her.

After a full 30 seconds of stunned silence Nomusa manages to make a recovery.

"Deeeevyaaaaa!!!!!" she shrieks. "What's going on?! Are you and Prakesh back together or what?!"

"That's the first time I've seen him since we broke up," says Deevya in a husky voice, pouting her lips like Angelina Jolie. "But if that kiss is anything to go by I'd say Prakesh and I may well have a 'Forever After' to look forward to."

## Reader comments

Here are some comments left by readers at [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

It will live long after! I love the story

Thats the greatest story EVER BEEN WRITTEN, HOPE TO SEE MORE;) **Playmaker**

I think its got new wings and we waiting hear abit more about the 2 luurve birds **MELADY**

## What do you think?

*Do you think the love affair between Deevya and Prakesh is going to get new wings? Or do you think its destined to dive bomb?* To answer this question, or to leave your own comment, go to [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

## CHAPTER 15

---

Deevya's in a terrible mood at school for the whole of the next week. She's on edge, bitchy and I swear she's getting skinnier by the day - kind of like she used to be when her and Prakesh were going out before. Strange that, huh?

The three of us 'Awesomes' have been hitting the art room after school every single day to work on our AfroBollyMe project for the Red Eye exhibition - and it's going really well. So when Deevya cancels on us at the last minute on Friday afternoon Nomusa and I are quite relieved to catch the Mynah down to the beachfront for some chill time.

"So you never did answer my question about Simon," Nomusa says, as we're lying on our towels on North Beach enjoying the heat of the sun.

She's talking about that epic day at The Corner Café when she last asked me what was going on with Simon and I. Prakesh and Deevya had provided more than enough distraction to move the subject away from Simon.

"Yeah, I know," I reply.

I think about telling Nomusa that I'd found Deevya a little bit too involved in my possible 'romance' with Simon for my own comfort, but I bite my tongue. There's been more than enough drama around that. I'm all for keeping things low-key and simple.

"And so?" she prompts, pushing me to get to the point. "Spit it out Hope! Is there something happening between the two of you?"

"Well... yes ..."

## THE AWESOMES: NEVER BEEN KISSED

"Oh my gosh I knew it!" shrieks Nomusa as I'm halfway through my sentence, bouncing up into a sitting position with a huge grin on her face.

"... And no, was what I was going to say if you'd let me finish," I smile.

"Oh. Well tell me the 'yes' part first then," urges Nomusa.

"Well he's been calling me..."

"Yay!" shouts Nomusa shooting her arms up into the air in victory.

"But I haven't actually seen him since that day I nearly drove Deevya to an early death on the beach."

"Hey," says Nomusa, suddenly serious, "I've been meaning to chat to you about that. You can't blame yourself. Deevya hasn't been herself for a while. Her parents have been away so often these past few months she's pretty much been an abandoned child. And even though she always tells us what we should do, she never really opens up about what's really going on in her life. Her feelings for Prakesh are a prime example. I mean who knew? Deevya tries to pull off this totally on-top-of-it, adult vibe, but I reckon that inside she's one scared, confused kid."

Wow. Nomusa keeps a low profile but she sure knows how to read a situation. That all made so much sense to me.

"Thanks Nomu. I appreciate it. I've been really worried about Deevya, actually. And I still am. Even now I don't know the truth about what's going on with her and Prakesh. She just changes the subject whenever I ask, but she's so tense I can't imagine it's all good."

"Hmm. It's good we're having this chat, Hope. I think we need to keep a close eye on Deevya," says Nomusa thoughtfully. "But hang on! We were talking about you. Give me the scoop on Simon! Don't think I'm going to let you distract your way out of this!"

To be honest I'm dying to have a girly chat about Simon. So this is the skinny...

"Well, the thing is I honestly felt a connection with Simon when I first met him. But there was so much drama right after I met him: the police raid on Nigiro; my sprained ankle; Deevya telling me Simon wasn't The One; then Deevya's accident; then being gated. Yowza. My life's been like a soapie!"

"I hear you sister," chuckles Nomusa. "It's been non-stop 'lights, camera, action' for weeks now! Anyway, carry on!"

"Well after all that I didn't know what to think anymore. I was wondering if Deevya knew something about Simon that I didn't know, or if I was grasping at straws to even think there might be some flicker of interest."

"Cut the waffle and get to the cake!" urges Nomusa.

## THE AWESOMES: NEVER BEEN KISSED

I laugh. "I can't! What I've decided is that it's totally fine to be unsure. I'm just going to take it slow, and if Simon's interested in getting to know me better we'll take it from there."

As I finish speaking my cellphone rings - and it's Simon! I hold it up so Nomusa can see his name on the screen and we silently high five as I take the call.

"Oh hey Simon," I say, ever so casual.

Nomusa can't hear what Simon is saying but she's hanging on to my every word. And this is what she hears.

"No, I don't actually have plans tonight Simon.

"Yes, I'd love to see you too Simon."

"Sure thing Simon. I'll sms you my address and see you at my place at, what, 7?"

"Perfect. Bye Simon."

Nomusa is lying on her back kicking her legs in the air with excitement.

"You're a freak," I laugh at her.

"And I think it's safe to say that you and Simon have got a bit of a connection going there," Nomusa cheers.

## Reader comments

Here are some comments left by readers at [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

Life is a story. **Gibson**

Finally!nw we knw dat simon likes Hope n so does she.dis is awsum.kp d story cuminglits totaly rockng;) **PORTIA**

Like seriously. . . How many times did she say the word simon during that phone call?  
**Pheobus-Apollo**

## What do you think?

Like Hope, do you think it's totally fine to be unsure of yourself? Our readers recommend this: *Well I'm not sure how to answer this question and that feels totally fine: 14%, I'm more comfortable when I know what I think: 22%, Yes. Life is full of uncertainty so it's good to embrace that: 62%*. To answer this question, or to leave your own comment, go to [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)



## CHAPTER 16

---

A few minutes later Nomusa spots Lindi surfing and paddles out to join her. I watch them for a while as they sit on their boards at backline, casually chatting and laughing as they wait for a good wave. After a while I lie back on my towel, feeling the cool breeze on my skin, trying to imagine my date with Simon tonight. Mmmm...

"Daydreaming?" says a familiar voice, and I am so deep in one that I nearly jump out of my skin.

"Woah! Oh hi Zack. I guess you could say that. Holy ravioli, you nearly gave me a friggin' heart attack."

"Sorry Hope!" He glances towards the surf where Nomusa is gracefully riding a wave. "Are you waiting for Nomusa to finish her surf?"

"Yeah," I answer, now that I've regained my cool, "but you know Nomusa. She'll stay out in the water until the last possible minute."

Zack smiles as he nods in agreement and I look at him closely. I haven't forgotten about my secret plan to match make Zack and Nomusa. And, hello! Judging by the look in Zack's eye right now I think there's a good probability of a Nomusa/Zack love match.

"Have you ever been on those red cable cars at the amusement park?" he asks me.

Random question, I think to myself.

"Of course I have - but not since I was about five!" I reply.

"Me neither. Do you wanna give it a quick whirl?" Zack asks.

What an amazing opportunity to play matchmaker, I think to myself. "Sure thing," I answer without hesitation.

First, Zack and I walk out on the pier and shout down to Nomusa in the water below that we'll be back soon. Then we stroll along the beachfront till we get to Funworld.

"My treat," says Zack as he pays for my ticket.

"Thanks dude. This is a really cool idea."

There isn't a queue and we hop onto a cable car together without delay and are whisked up into the air. I'd forgotten how cool these cable cars are! We're so excited we're like two kids up here in the sky. The views are incredible and I keep grabbing Zack's arm to show him things I spot. We chat non-stop from the beginning to end of the ride and I'm actually a little sad when it ends.

As we walk back to meet Nomusa at North I make a mental note of all the good things about Zack that I must casually mention to her in my bid to match make the two of them. This is what I come up with:

## THE AWESOMES: NEVER BEEN KISSED

1. Zack loves the beach. 2. He surfs. 3. He's kind and he has a great sense of humour. 4. He's clever. 5. He's interesting. And interested. 6. Nice legs and great shoulders. 7. Has she noticed that he looks a lot like Michael Copon?

By the time we get back Nomusa and Lindi are sitting and chatting on the beach, waiting for us. We're all going to bus back to Glenwood.

First we catch the Durban People Mover, then at the Workshop we change to the Mynah bus. I make an extra effort to chat to Lindi (who's really nice) so that Zack and Nomusa have some time to talk.

And I think that there must be angels on my side, because when the bus is driving up Berea Road another bus passes us clad with an advert of Nomusa posing in a sexy bikini. It's too good an opportunity to miss!

"That's Nomusa!" I announce loudly and breezily to the passengers at large, pointing to the picture on the bus as it goes by.

And everybody looks suitably impressed. Zack included.

### Reader comments

Here are some comments left by readers at [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

Ooooo...(smile)j cnt w8 to see the rest afta this,jst as it gets interestrng the chapter ends.lol  
wwwhhhhyyy(crying) **Keylee**

Ey its a gr8 story cnt wait 2 read wht wll hppn betwn hope and simon. **Lativa**

Ths story kps gtn beta nd beta...!:D **mimi**

### What do you think?

A modelling contract is part of Nomusa's surfing sponsorship. Would you be comfortable being the face of a big brand? Our readers recommend this: *Yes, I was born for fame*: 42%, *If they paid me enough I'd make sure I was comfortable*: 31%, *No. I value my privacy*: 26%. To answer this question, or to leave your own comment, go to [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

## CHAPTER 17

---

Simon calls me again at five.

"Hey Hope. I just realised there's an I Heart Durban party on tonight. I'm sure it's going to be amazing. Do you want to go?"

Oh dear. That's an over 18 blast in case you didn't know. It's the hottest thing to do in Durban and I'd love to go, but on the other hand I know I'd have to run the under-age gauntlet again and

## THE AWESOMES: NEVER BEEN KISSED

frankly I'd rather not. I think I'm permanently scarred by my clubbing experience - well until I'm 18 that is, when it won't be an issue anymore.

I decide to keep it simple and just tell Simon straight.

"Simon, that sounds so cool, but to be honest I can't bear the thought of even risking going through all that under-age trauma again. You saw how bad things got last time!"

I hear Simon chuckle on the other end of the phone as he remembers all the drama at Nigiro.

I continue. "If you want to cancel our plan so that you can go to the party that's fine. I can understand that you wouldn't want to miss it."

"No way," says Simon straight away. "I'm looking forward to seeing you."

My heart skips a beat.

"Thanks for you sms with your address by the way," Simon says. "Since you live in Davenport Centre why don't we grab a burger at Deluxe then as it's practically on your doorstep?"

"Sounds great. Thanks Simon. See you later."

A little after seven Simon rings our buzzer and comes up to say hello to my mom before we stroll through Davenport Centre shopping centre on our way to Deluxe Burger Bar.

When we get there we order burgers and fries and chat easily while we eat.

Once we've finished and they've cleared our plates Simon pulls his old laptop out of his satchel.

"I thought you might want to see some of my photos?" he offers.

"Fab. I'd love to!" I exclaim.

He takes me on a virtual tour of Durban through his eyes: into the shops in Grey Street; looking up into the huge old trees in the Botanical Gardens; up close to all the Art Deco buildings on the Berea; and through the shack lands of KwaMashu. It's epic. And I'm fascinated. This is a guy with an artist's eye, and I can relate to that!

We each have a cup of coffee and then he walks me home.

At the doors to the lift Simon pulls me into his arms. He feels so strong and masculine. His cheek touches lightly against mine, and then he turns his face to kiss me.

## Reader comments

Here are some comments left by readers at [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

W0w!!! That was a very interesting story...It shows me how important it is to have friends true friends....And it teaches us as teens to love, respect and trust our parents, especially girls is much better to be close with your mom...**N0x**

Wow guys, nw i want my veri own sim0n :-}. **Lovejoy**

D suspense z jus unbearable!! I dnt thnk hope shud kiss hm thou,he sure duz sound lyk trouble bt hey luv z blind ryt?lol **GOSSIP GIRL**

## What do you think?

Do you think Hope's going to kiss Simon? Our readers recommend this: *The guy's a hottie - she'd be crazy not too*: 24%, *No way, not in public*: 6%, *It's hard to predict what Hope's going to do next. I'll just wait for the next chapter*: 68%. To answer this question, or to leave your own comment, go to [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

## CHAPTER 18

---

I pull away before Simon's lips touch mine.

"Whazzup?" he asks with a surprised look on his face.

To tell the truth I'm feeling a little surprised myself.

"I'm just not one to rush into things," I smile.

"Okaaaaay," he says, but I can tell he's not really getting it.

There's a long silence and I know he's waiting for me to explain. I take a slow breath in as I try to work out what I need to say. It's weird, but I can hear my mom's voice in my ears: "Give yourself space to discover and think".

It's hard to come up with the perfect sentence when Simon's holding both my hands and looking passionately into my eyes, so I just open my mouth, start talking, and hope for the best.

"Simon, you know I think you're so unbelievably ummm...(hot, gorgeous, sexy flash through my mind, but I settle for)...cool. And I have from the moment I met you. But we've only had one burger together. And I think I'd really like to have some time to at least find out...um.. what other kinds of food you like before we...you know...um...think about...kissing...properly."

Could I have phrased this any more romantically if I tried?! My cheeks are on fire with embarrassment.

Simon laughs, quietly at first but then much, much louder until eventually he has to wipe the tears from his eyes.

"I think I know where you're coming from Hope. Well, I hope so anyway," he chuckles.

He takes my face in his hands and strokes my cheeks with his thumbs.

"You're really beautiful, you know," he suddenly says, to my surprise.

"Thank you," I whisper.

I find that I'm really close to him again, and I'm staring at his Adam's apple.

Simon takes my hand and kisses it.

I blush again as he looks into my eyes. Dang, but he's super hot.

"I've got an exhibition at Red Eye next Friday evening," I venture. "Why don't you come along?"

"I'd love to," he says, "see you there."

"Thank you for dinner. And goodnight." I say as the lift doors open and then shut behind me.

By the time the lift doors open on my floor I'm wondering if I'm going to regret not kissing Simon tonight for the rest of my life. We'd had the most amazing time together.

But on the other hand, there must have been something holding me back, otherwise I'd still be downstairs kissing his face off in the foyer. Right?

## Reader comments

Here are some comments left by readers at [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

I just like Hope have turned down a number of kisses mainly because i dont like to act sub-consciously and i respect myself and people greatly. however i have no regrets about the kisses i've turned down because i'm nw happily :) and i have no regrets and doubts about it.

Gd 1 hpe u n simon dnt dserv each ada n u dnt knw hm.i thnk u n zack r a perfect match.he's ur match m teling ya!!!! **Sandile**

I hate kissing so i always pull away from it but it cost me my past relationship so im slowly building up 4 my current boyfriend. . .so myb pulling away is A BAD IDEA

## What do you think?

*Have you ever turned down a kiss? Was it a good move or do you still regret it?* To answer this question, or to leave your own comment, go to [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

## CHAPTER 19

---

'The Awesomes' have a hectic week as we finish off AfroBollyMe for the Red Eye exhibition. But we're loving our artworks, even if we say so ourselves!

## THE AWESOMES: NEVER BEEN KISSED

"Guys, I've loved working on this with you!" I exclaim, getting all emotional as the final colour is added to the cartoon love story set in Minitown that we've been working on for the last few weeks.

"It was Awwweesome!" Deevya and Nomusa unintentionally say together at the same time, and we all kill ourselves laughing.

We high five. Then we low five. Then we laugh again. Love it.

Since Deevya kissed Prakesh at The Corner Café, which was more than a little confusing for me, I'm feeling a little better about sharing my news about Simon, which comes with its own confusions. This boy-girl thing is all a bit of a mystery anyway, isn't it? So why wait till all the mystery is solved before spilling the beans?

"So... I had dinner with Simon on Friday night," I casually drop into the conversation, and wait for a reaction.

"Oooh!" squeals Nomusa.

"Yeah, I heard about that," says Deevya in a cool voice, and I swear she's got that disapproving look in her eyes again! Can you believe it?

"Who told you?" I ask her in astonishment. That was not the reaction I had anticipated.

"I bumped into Simon at the movies on Saturday night."

"Oh really," I say casually, but it's weird that I instantly start to get that jealous feeling again. I need to watch that. Jealousy is not cool. And it doesn't feel good.

But I still can't stop myself from asking the first anxious question that leaps into my mind.

"And who was Simon with?"

"Nobody," replies Deevya. "He was on his own."

Ok. I breathe out. And as I do so I realise with relief that I'm not actually jealous of Deevya seeing Simon. But I do find it strange that I instantly imagined that Simon was on a movie date with another girl. Anyway, I was wrong, so let me just let it go. In fact maybe this is a good time to get Deevya to tell us what's up with her and Prakesh.

"And who was with you Deevya?" I pursue.

"I was by myself," says Deevya defensively.

"Oh," I say in surprise. "But where was Prakesh?"

At this Deevya's eyes suddenly cloud with tears. I've obviously unintentionally hit a sore point.

"Why do you always have to ask so many questions?" she snaps at me. "Can't I have a little privacy!"

## THE AWESOMES: NEVER BEEN KISSED

I look at her closely in concern. Deevya's thin as a rake and we've been so busy working on AfroBollyMe that I hadn't noticed how troubled her eyes are today.

"Hey Deevya," says Nomusa softly, "I don't want you to feel like we're stalking you, but we do like to know what's going on in your life. We are your best friends you know."

"Yes I know," sighs Deevya in exasperation. "Why are you making such a big deal out of this? I'm totally fine."

But we can see she's not fine.

"Are your parents away again?" asks Nomusa.

"Yes. They were in London last week, and they're in Paris this week, but they'll be back in time for the exhibition on Friday," says Deevya as if it doesn't matter at all.

Nomusa and I exchange a look. I can see Nomusa's also remembering our conversation about Deevya that we had on the beach that day. That's when we decided to keep a close eye on her. And something is definitely not right with Deevya today.

"Hey Deevya, do you want to come and stay with me and my mom for a few days until your parents get back?" I ask. "It can't be fun staying in that big house all by yourself."

"No thanks. I'm used to being on my own," she replies, but this time a tear breaks loose and slides down her cheek.

I can see Deevya's feeling fragile and my intuition is that Prakesh is her main heartache right now, but I don't want to push her on that issue. Deevya clearly doesn't want to tell us what's happening and I know she'll just shut us out even more if we put pressure on her.

"Listen, Deevya," I say "I'm not going to push you for information right now, but please just know that if you ever need me to come over, or if you ever just want to talk, I'm here."

"Thanks, Hope. It's cool. I know what's best for me," says Deevya in her most adult voice. "You just need to know that I'm doing what I think is best for you too."

Oh dear. Now Deevya's really got me worried. I know it's like her to keep her motives secret, but that was a pretty cryptic comment, and I instinctively know that she's talking about Simon.

What ever happened to simple and uncomplicated relationships? And what is Deevya really up to?

### Reader comments

Here are some comments left by readers at [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

Wel i thnk dee knws sumthng abt simon dat hope nd nomusa i jst wonda wats dat nd hope its nt a bad thng! **K.K**

Firstly i love this story it really got me wanting more of it. I do think that deevya is maybe jeolous that hope have someone that likes her but then again maybe deevya knows

something that hope do not know about simon but i say leave hope and simon alone they not your business and yes prakesh deevya should just leave him alone his gana break her heart but mostly gana break her. **Cutie B**

It's quite strange:?. I think Deevya knows somethin abt Simon, there's a lil bit of a hidden secret behind ol diz. Or is there any relation between Simon n Hope dat only... no, i doubt. Anyway, it's hard 2 tell. **Dr fungi**

## What do you think?

*Deevya's acting a bit strange. Do you think that there's any chance that she might secretly be into Simon? Or is it something else?* To answer this question, or to leave your own comment, go to [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

## CHAPTER 20

---

The week leading up to the exhibition goes by without any major surprises. My mission to match make Nomusa and Zack continues. I keep looking for opportunities to get the two of them together.

So when we realise that the time has come to move our artworks from the art room at school to the Durban Art Gallery in Anton Lembede Street for the Red Eye exhibition, I hatch a cunning plan. I tell Zack we have loads of stuff to get down there and ask if he can give us a hand.

"Sure thing, Hope. Just say when," Zack replies.

He walks from his school one afternoon and meets us at ours, and once we're all on the Mynah holding our portfolio cases - which are full of our AfroBollyMe cartoons - I start to drop a few subtle hints.

"It's amazing how much you guys have in common," I add to their conversation as Zack and Nomusa chat about their experiences of teaching kids to surf at the surf school on Suncoast Beach.

Nomusa shoots a look at Zack and then giggles, which I take to be an encouraging sign.

Later, when they are busy hanging our cartoons in our exhibition space I overhear Nomusa say to Zack, "Be patient. Taking it slow is the name of the game when it comes to love."

Oh yeah! Things are definitely hotting up between those two. My plan is slotting into place faster than I'd hoped.

On Thursday Zack's mom invites my mom and I down for supper at their flat. January is humidity hell in Durbs, and the tiny flat is boiling hot. Zack and I take our plates of supper on to the little balcony and sit side by side on the bench out there. Our moms are happily nattering away inside the lounge beneath the ceiling fan that's spinning like a helicopter about to take off.

I've got a mouthful of Durban curry when out of the blue Zack asks me one BIG question.



## THE AWESOMES: NEVER BEEN KISSED

"Hope, I hope you don't mind me asking, but are you at peace with what happened to your dad?"

Whew! The surprises just keep coming. Nobody's asked me about my dad for a long time. You remember I told you that my dad disappeared with his yacht off the North Coast of KwaZulu-Natal when I was two? Neither the boat nor his body was ever found, so he was presumed dead.

Am I at peace with all of that? What to say? I don't really know so I just keep chewing on my chicken bone like it's the last piece of food on the whole entire planet. And then when it's done I make a big deal of fanning my mouth to indicate that that was one spicy piece of curry.

Zack sees right through my stalling tactics.

"Sorry Hope. You don't have to talk about your feelings if it makes you uncomfortable. I know you must have painful memories about what happened to your dad. I've just been wondering about how you feel about all that, that's all," says Zack "but I've never asked. So I thought I would, but..."

"It's cool Zack," I reassure him. "You just took me by surprise..."

My sentence trails off as I gaze off into the distance, lost in my thoughts. As I look down over the twinkling lights of the docks further down the hill, I realise that there's a part of me that's really glad Zack's asked me about how I feel about my dad. Especially because my dad is often on my mind, but he disappeared so long ago that nobody thinks to talk about it anymore.

"I still think about my dad every day," I say softly without turning to look at Zack. "And I like to think I'm ok about it, but there was this one time on the beach that I've never told anybody about."

"Tell me," says Zack very softly.

I turn to look at him and he looks directly into my eyes. Even though I've kept this secret from everybody, I find that the words just come so easily.

"It was a Sunday morning at the end of last year and I was having a coffee down at BAT Centre, on that beautiful deck that looks out across the yacht basin in the harbour. You know the one?"

"Ja, I do," smiles Zack. "It's one of my favourite places."

I nod and carry on.

"Well, this small yacht was sailing towards me and it looked just like my dad's."

My eyes suddenly start to get teary. Zack hands me his paper serviette and nods for me to keep talking. So I do.

"There was just one man on board and I'm sure he was looking at me. Then he waved and my heart started beating so hard. I stood up and I started waving back. Crazy, but right then I really thought it was my dad. And then - about two seconds later - I realised it wasn't him. And

## THE AWESOMES: NEVER BEEN KISSED

whoever it was wasn't even waving, but just trying to shake loose a rope that had hooked around the mast."

I stop at this point to take a few deep breaths. My throat is so tight and I find I have to swallow before I can keep talking.

"It felt like my heart ripped open and I burst into tears right there in front of everybody else on the deck. I didn't really care what they thought. I was just so confused. I couldn't understand why I was so upset. Zack - how can I miss somebody who I can't even remember?"

Zack is silent for a few seconds. Then he clears his throat - twice - and then he answers.

"Well... my dad left my mother before I was even born. He never even held me in his arms once when I was a newborn baby, and he's never ever laid eyes on me. He doesn't even know what I look like. And to tell you the truth I really miss him sometimes. So I guess what I'm trying to say is that I think I understand how you feel, even though it doesn't make logical sense."

Zack and I look at each other for at least a minute. I hadn't expected this conversation to happen, but now that it has I feel like a lighter space has opened up in my chest. And it's such a relief.

Zack's been my downstairs neighbour for so long, and I'm so used to him being around that he's kind of like wallpaper. I'm glad we've had this conversation. I hadn't really realised how alone I'd felt without a dad. Talking about it can't bring my dad back, but I feel a little less alone knowing that Zack lives with this too. And that he understands. And it makes me think that I need to stop taking him so for granted and start looking out for him too.

"Thanks Zack," I say quietly. "I needed that chat. You're a good friend."

He smiles a sad smile at me.

I shift up a little on the bench and lean against him. I'm not really sure why.

## Reader comments

Here are some comments left by readers at [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

T's gr8 but my instincts tell me more dan dat. **Fire**

I thnk those 2 derseve 1 anada since day oviably hv sumting in common n ofcoz day will able  
2 confort 1 self in future LUVE IS IN DA AIR N IF U DNT TAKE CONTROL OF IU FAST  
IT WILL B BLOWN 2 DA NEXT PERSON. **Green+T**

He he he,I think Zack has hots for Hope + they hv so many things in common.. e.g they both  
dont hv dads! **Yankee Oasis!**

## What do you think?

*Don't you think it's great that Zack and Hope are such good friends?* To answer this question, or to leave your own comment, go to [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

## CHAPTER 21

---

So it's finally Red Eye night! AfroBollyMe looks awesome, even if we say so ourselves.

Our parents all came early to have a look. Nomusa's mom and dad especially took the afternoon off work so that they could come, and they brought her little brother and sister too. Mrs. Benghu works as a domestic worker at a big house up on the Ridge, and Mr. Benghu is a foreman in a factory in Umbilo.

They are so obviously proud of Nomusa. The whole family beamed from ear to ear from the beginning to the end of their visit.

Deevya's folks arrived straight from the airport, looking a bit jet lagged and world weary. But they really loved AfroBollyMe.

"Deevya, this is stunning Princess, stunning!" enthused her dad. "Some of these AfroBollyMe designs would look incredible on the right pair of shoes."

"Genius girls!" exclaimed my mom. "You are so incredibly talented. And I consider myself lucky to be related to one of you so that I can enjoy some of these in my home for a while once the exhibition is closed!"

It's getting dark when they leave and the Indian Mynah birds are going nuts in the palm trees outside as they come home to roost.

My thoughts turn to Simon who should be arriving soon. I don't know how things will go tonight. I'm not totally sure how I even feel about him, but still, the tummy butterflies that arrived when visitors started to flock towards our AfroBollyMe exhibition get even more excited when I think about seeing Simon in just a few minutes.

I sneak a peek at my reflection in a mirrored column in the gallery. My 'fro is fluffed, my eyes are wide, my lips smiling and my funky blue mini dress looks good. I've got a feeling...woohoo...that tonight's gonna be a good night...

And then I frown as a voice inside of me asks, "But is Simon really The One?"

I sigh out loud. To be honest I know that every thought about Simon and I (if I'm allowed to even say our two names together like that after only one date) has a question mark dangling at the end of it.

This is what I'm thinking all at the same time: What am I going to say when he arrives? How come I didn't kiss him when I had the chance, but then was jealous when I imagined him at the movies with another girl? How come the butterflies in my tummy flap their wings when I think of being in the same room as him?

I get distracted from my thoughts by loud laughter at our AfroBollyMe exhibition area. There are lots of people exhibiting at Red Eye tonight but amazingly our exhibit seems to be the most popular. It's buzzing with people! The happy noise is coming from Nomusa, Lindi and Zack who are excitedly chatting away in the midst of the crowd over there. My heart fills with love

## THE AWESOMES: NEVER BEEN KISSED

and pride as I watch them. I'm so lucky to have such cool friends and to be a part of all of this tonight!

I notice that like me Deevya is also standing to one side. She keeps smoothing down her already smooth and glossy long black hair. And she too keeps looking towards the entrance door. She looks like she's also waiting for somebody. I saw Prakesh's name on the guest list and it was written in Deevya's handwriting, so I'm pretty sure that she must have invited him to come tonight.

I still don't really know what's going on with Deevya and Prakesh. And I haven't asked her anything more about the strange comment she made about "doing what she thinks is best for me" when we were talking about Simon the other day. But I can tell she's feeling the same nervous anticipation that I am. And the vibe is good, so while Deevya and I kind of seem to be in the same boat, I figure this is as good a time as any to get things out in the open.

I walk over to her and crack a bit of a joke as an opener.

"So I keep looking towards the door because I'm waiting for Simon to arrive. I'm hoping that's not the reason you keep looking towards the door too Deevya!"

Deevya laughs. "No, I'm waiting for Prakesh."

"Oh, ok cool," I smile "I thought as much."

Deevya looks at me really closely.

"Oh dear," she says "I can see you've still got that Simon bug in your system."

I laugh out loud. Why deny it? But this time I'm going to ask Deevya why she really thinks that's such a bad thing. And right after that I'm going to ask her about the Prakesh bug in her system.

"Hey Deevya," I say "I know you've told me that Simon is trouble for me, but you've never actually told me why. So what's the buzz dude? Shed some light for your clueless friend Hope?"

Deevya grins at my irony, and then she looks a little worried.

"If you're brave enough to take it on the chin then I'm happy to tell you," says Deevya.

"Hit me," I say, with a show of bravado.

"Ok. Here goes," says Deevya. "It's really simple. Simon is a guy who really loves women ... in general. He's the kind of guy who's led by his, um ... lust. And he doesn't even realise it. He thinks he's falling in love for the first time, everytime."

Hmm. That's quite a judgement Deevya's making. But that's exactly what it is - a judgement. She doesn't know anything about what I discovered about Simon on our date.

"Look, Deevya," I say patiently "I know you have strong opinions on all things concerning romantic love, but I've been getting to know Simon slowly and I'm not convinced that you're right this time. Maybe you're judging him on first impressions? When Simon and I went on our

date he showed me his photographs and there's a depth and sensitivity to them that really touched me. That has to come from the heart."

"Completely!" says Deevya, "I'm not disputing that. It's just that I think you're a one guy kind of girl and he's a lots of girls kind of guy. And that's never going to change."

I shake my head doubtfully. Where does Deevya get all these ideas that she's so certain about?

"Listen, Hope," Deevya says, putting her hand on my arm "you and Simon aren't really serious yet, are you? I mean you haven't kissed yet have you?"

She looks me in the eye as she leans in intently to hear my answer.

"No, we haven't kissed," I say quietly, looking around in case Simon arrives while we're talking. I'd hate him to overhear this conversation.

"Ok, thank goodness!" says Deevya.

She looks so genuinely relieved that I feel totally off balance. My head is spinning.

"Listen Hope. If you're not going to believe what I say then let me show you!" says Deevya.

"Err...and how exactly do you plan to do that Deevya? This is all sounding a little bit scary!" I say with wide eyes.

"Sometimes you just need to see a guy from a different perspective to get the measure of him. I've got a plan that might just give you another perspective on Simon," Deevya says persuasively.

I'm still not convinced. I raise my eyebrows at Deevya, as if to say "dude, what are you smoking?"

"Just go along with my plan Hope," Deevya urges. "Once you've seen for yourself then you can decide if Simon is really The One for you. If I'm wrong, then maybe he is actually your guy. But if I'm right, I'll save you from getting your heart broken."

## Reader comments

Here are some comments left by readers at [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

Dis is really getting 2 climax, im dying 2 knw if Simon is the right guy 4 Hope or nt...afta all itz devya talking here, who would b.live her anyway? **Dark angel**

Talk abwt suspense!!!!!! wow!! Gr8 job on this chapter. **Cynthia**

I thnk she knws sumthng abt simon and she doesnt want Hope 2 get hurt..deevya cares abt Hope. **lee**

## What do you think?

What do you think Deevya's really up to? Our readers recommend this: *She's out to steal Simon from Hope: 17%, She's got her friend's best interests at heart: 45%, Deevya's so confused it's hard to really know: 36%*. To answer this question, or to leave your own comment, go to [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

## CHAPTER 22

---

How Deevya managed to talk us into this, I don't know. But she's got Nomusa primed and ready downstairs next to our AfroBollyMe exhibit.

When Simon arrives Nomusa has promised to flirt her socks off with him to test how easily he can be won over. Yeah, I know, this is one crazy plan. My heart is pounding like a drum inside my chest and I feel a bit nauseous.

Deevya and I are in the empty upstairs gallery, hiding out like James Bond and his floozy on a stakeout. We're out of sight of the crowds below, but we've got a birds' eye view of what's happening down there in the crowded exhibition space.

What shocks me most is that it happens so fast. Simon arrives. And let me tell you, he's looking hotter than ever. I actually forget to breathe for a few seconds. But then Deevya elbows me hard and I gasp in surprise, sucking the air back into my lungs.

Nomusa walks straight over to Simon with her best catwalk swagger and kisses him slap bang on the lips as she says hello! Then she pulls out the stops faster than traffic on the Durban to Pietermartizburg freeway out of rush hour, batting her eyelids and oozing charm. I had no idea Nomusa could flirt like that, but the girl is working it.

Simon only glances around once, with a semi-guilty expression on his face, and presumably asks where I am. Nomusa says something and gestures in a way that I imagine means she's explaining that I've already left.

And then the guy that could have been The One for me, never-been-kissed Hope L'Amour, acts like an unsuspecting fly eagerly winging its way into the deathly territory of a Venus Fly Trap. I can tell from his body language that he thinks Nomusa is The Shiz.

Nomusa takes Simon's hand and flirtatiously leads him over to the bar. He follows her like a love-struck puppy. And then, once he's turned away from her as he tries to order them drinks from the busy barmen, she deserts him. Nomusa can't see us but she knows where we are. She gives us a thumbs down of disappointment, and then she disappears.

I'm feeling a bit numb.

"I'm sorry, Hope. It's not personal," says Deevya with concern "You know that don't you? I know this is hard but it really is better to know that Simon isn't The One now rather than later, don't you think?"

## THE AWESOMES: NEVER BEEN KISSED

I'm gobsmacked by what I've just seen, but as I put my hand on my heart I realise it's still in one piece. I close my eyes for a few seconds to give this feeling my absolute attention. Yup, nothings broken in my heart space.

"Has anyone ever died of a broken ego?" I moan dramatically.

I think that's an incredibly funny response from me given the circumstances, and I glance at Deevya in surprise when she doesn't laugh. She's looking down in horror at something in the downstairs gallery. My eyes follow her gaze and I suck my breath in.

Prakesh is there with another girl - and he's making no bones about the fact that they're very much together!

I know I've got no idea what is or isn't going on with Deevya and Prakesh, but I was witness to that kiss at The Corner Caf; just the other day and there was no mistaking the raw emotion on both sides of that impromptu liaison. Prakesh can't but know that he'll hurt Deevya by being here with another girl. So why didn't he just stay away?! This is Deevya's gig.

I glance across at my friend whose face is now fixed like a stone mask. The tables have turned so fast, and suddenly I'm the one consoling her.

"Deevya ... it's ok to be upset you know," I say, desperate to help. "Prakesh is so in the wrong. I'm here for you."

I try to put my hand on Deevya's shoulder but she pushes it away.

"Thanks, Hope, I know that," she snaps, "but there's a time and a place for displaying emotion, and right now I'm not going to risk giving Prakesh any chance of seeing what he does to me."

I can understand that. Dignity is so important. But I wish that Deevya would realise she's not the one that has anything to hide. She has a good heart. And that Prakesh is one strange guy. I mean kissing her and then leaving straight away at The Corner Cafe was not exactly model behaviour, if you know what I mean? And then bringing another girl to Deevya's exhibition when she clearly hasn't expected that? The guy is acting like a chop.

"Hey Deevya, do you want to get out of here or do you want to come downstairs to watch me give Prakesh a public kung-fu in the illegals?" I enquire.

This is a joke, in case you're wondering.

Deevya kind of laughs but then Prakesh turns and shares a long slobbery kiss with his new girlfriend, and Deevya looks like she's been stabbed in the heart.

## Reader comments

Here are some comments left by readers at [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

girls you should just enjoy yourselves.pretend as if nothing is happening.dont let these guys get onto you.your beautiful and you got what it takes to bring them down.do so dont ever try to make them jealous or something.live your life. **Rose**

Never fall for someone you dont know, taking things slow and get to know the person better is the only way you can really know who you are getting involved with. **Babyface**

To be honest people change. if hope realy loves hm she cn change hm. bt as 4 prakesh, tym 2 let go gal. he aint wrth the tears. hope al im sayn is tht dnt judge a buk by its cova. plus dnt gve hm ur heart nt yet. we al dnt knw wats gona hepan so best u nt comit urslf 2 a relationship wth hm

## What do you think?

*It seems that Hope and Deevya are both facing a crisis with the guys they like. Give the girls some advice -they really need it right now!* To answer this question, or to leave your own comment, go to [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

## CHAPTER 23

---

I'm desperately trying to think what to say or do to make this less painful for Deevya, when Zack comes to the rescue.

Deevya and I are still staring at Prakesh in dismay when Zack puts his hand on my shoulder and quietly says in my ear, "Need some help?"

"How did you know?" I reply.

"Nomusa quickly filled me in on the history between Deevya and Prakesh after she'd seen him arrive with that other girl," explains Zack. She asked me to come and check on you guys while she mans AfroBollyMe - it's so busy down there. Are you two ok?" Zack asks.

"I am," I whisper back, so happy to see him "but Deevya's far from fine. I was just trying to think what I can do to help. I don't think going down to face Prakesh is going to help right now - she's so shocked. I think it might be gentler to just get her right out here."

"Let me help," says Zack.

I nod gratefully.

And then Zack speaks in a louder voice to both Deevya and I. "Hey girls. I used to hang out in this gallery a lot a few years back. I know a cunning route out if you're feeling like you ready for a great escape?"

Deevya hesitates for a split second before she nods. Zack puts his arm through hers and leads the way. I follow behind, across the upstairs gallery, then down staircases I didn't even know existed. We walk past an admin room with windows that look through into the downstairs gallery. I catch a glimpse of Simon completely engaged in conversation with a girl I don't know. I think he will be just fine without me.



## THE AWESOMES: NEVER BEEN KISSED

As we walk past another window my eyes widen and I manage to stifle a gasp of surprise. There's a couple locked in a passionate embrace discreetly out of sight of the crowds in the gallery, but unwittingly directly in my line of vision from this back route.

It's Nomusa and Lindi - and they're kissing!

Instantly I decide not to say anything to the others. That was such an intensely private moment and I feel instinctively protective of my friend. But Zack turns around to catch my eye and I know straight away that he also saw, and that he's known for a while.

It's completely dark outside the gallery even though it's not that late yet. The Mynah buses are still running and one stops as we get to the bus stop. We're the only three passengers on board.

Deevya looks pale and drawn. I can tell that she has that awful scene on replay in her mind, and it's killing her.

Well all sit in silence for a while and then Zack starts to speak and gets straight to the point.

"Deevya, I just want to tell you that from the little bit I've been told about him by Nomusa, and from what I saw with my own eyes tonight, that Prakesh is one selfish, complicated piece of work."

Deevya looks surprised but she makes no move to argue with him, so Zack carries on. Bless him.

"You're really amazing Deevya," says Zack with sincerity. "You're nice, clever, talented, beautiful, a good friend, and so much more than that too. If Prakesh, or any guy, brings this kind of pain into your life then I find it hard to believe that it's worth hanging in there. I've seen you when you laugh and you really suit being happy. All this misery doesn't do anything for you."

Deevya actually seems to be listening for once and I nod at Zack to keep talking. Heaven knows its time Deevya sees the light on Prakesh. I know I don't know Prakesh that well but I know Deevya and I know that her being involved with Prakesh has done more harm than good.

"Deevya," says Zack "I personally know at least ten guys who'd give every chest hair they possess just to have a conversation with you."

Deevya giggles and I feel a wave of relief.

"There are so many possibilities for finding really good love," says Zack. "Don't waste your time on this guy who obviously doesn't appreciate you. What's his name anyway! Prick-eish?"

Deevya chortles and I could just kiss Zack. Where does he get all this stuff from? I reckon he must be a closet Seventeen reader.

"I think I started seeing Prakesh differently for the first time tonight Zack," says Deevya.

Deevya's looking at me as she continues. "Sometimes a girl needs to see a guy from a different perspective to get the measure of him. You know what I mean hey Hope? I think what tonight has really taught me is that it's high time I learn to follow my own good advice."

I lean across and give Deevya's hand a squeeze.

"My stop's coming up," says Deevya as the Mynah trundles along Musgrave Road. I'd invite you in but I think what I really need is a cup of tea and a hot bath."

Yeah, I think, and a long, hard sob into your pillow once the lights are out.

"Thanks guys, you're both so awesome. I think you'd make an amazing couple by the way."

And then Deevya blows a kiss and hops off the bus.

## Reader comments

Here are some comments left by readers at [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

Great chapter! Love the twists and the issues about trust and friendship brought up! Hmmm .  
. The girls are opening up to what really is. Keep up the surprises! Good work! **Dimplez**

Love works in misterious ways nd hope is jst about 2 realise it. **Lady.J**

Wow Nomusa is lesbian thats an interesting twist to the whole story now i am just curious as to what will unfold as the chapters keep coming!!and Hope and Zack are so going to end up together.. Prakesh is an idiot Deevyah should have realised that from the very beginning. **Toxic Candy**

## What do you think?

A lot happened in this chapter! Whose future are you most interested in right now? Our readers recommend this: *Hope's*: 50%, *Deevya's*: 14%, *Nomusa's*: 34%. To answer this question, or to leave your own comment, go to [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

## CHAPTER 24

---

Zack and I both look out of opposite windows for a few minutes after that unexpected little comment. Freakin' halitosis Deevya. Thanks a lot for putting me in the most awkward position known to mankind! Zack lives downstairs from me so it's not like I can just casually walk away from him like I did from Simon. Or did Simon walk away from me? I dunno. Geez. Boys!

I'm considering humming to fill the silence when my phone beeps. It's a message from Nomusa.

'I'm sriry bout Simon :-)& I sw wht wnt dwn wth Prksh :-):-) BTW its nt only us who tnk we're da Awesomes. Evrybdy LVD AfroBollyMe. Cll me if u nd me xx'

My cell beeps again, but this time the message is from Simon.

## THE AWESOMES: NEVER BEEN KISSED

'Hope! Lvd yr exhibitn. U'v gt hge tlnt! Whr wer u? Sriry I mssd u. Heding out 4 a cofee with a frnd snce u r M.I.A. C u sn'

"Do you feel like going back to your exhibition?" asks Zack.

"What do you think?" I bounce back at him.

"I'd say that's a big NO, but that you'd love me to take you to a surprise destination."

"Yes, now that you say it out loud I'm sure that's exactly what I was thinking," I grin.

"Cool. Well we're on the right bus to get where we want to go, so sit back and enjoy the journey," smiles Zack.

So I do. Because I realise I am enjoying this journey even if I don't know where it's all going.

I look out through the window and remember Nomusa and Lindi's kiss. In these last few days I've started to realise that there's a lot I haven't been noticing.

"Hey Zack?" I venture.

"Yeah," he says.

"How did you know that Nomusa was, well ... into Lindi? Did she tell you?" I ask.

"Yes she did.,but only after I brought it up," he says seriously.

I go quiet. I've been so caught up in Deevya's dramas and the rollercoaster of my own life that I've been totally out of touch with Nomusa's life. OMG. Cringe moment. I've even been trying to set her up with Zack. How totally insensitive must that have seemed?

"Don't give yourself a hard time," says Zack.

I'm a little surprised at how good he is at reading my mind.

"Nomusa knows she can talk to you whenever she wants," Zack says. "I think she's probably needed a little time to work things out in her own heart first."

"But I don't get it," I say out loud. "How come she spoke to you about it then Zack?"

"Well..." Zack says slowly, "the thing is that Nomusa noticed something that I hadn't really spoken to anyone about," he shoots me a look, smiles mysteriously and carries on. "Nomusa kind of picked up on the fact that there was someone I had feelings for, but that I was a bit unsure what to do about them right then."

Zack - as in my nice downstairs neighbour Zack who I've known forever has feelings for someone?! As in romantic feelings?! Zack has a love interest?! Judging by the way things have turned out with my match making exercise the object of his affection is not Nomusa. So who is it?! And how come I don't know about it?

## THE AWESOMES: NEVER BEEN KISSED

It feels like a lightening bolt has just come out of nowhere and is electrifying my heart. Unfortunately it seems to have shorted my brain at the same time. What is going on with me?! I've never had a feeling like this before.

I'm staring at Zack like I've just laid eyes on him for the first time in my whole entire life, but he doesn't notice a thing and keeps rambling on about his conversation with Nomusa.

"Nomusa and I had a real heart to heart. She's pretty sussed that girl. And when I thanked her for bringing it up she said, 'You know Zack sometimes all it takes is a little encouragement from a friend to get your heart moving in the direction it wants to go.'

And so I said to her, 'Well you know Nomusa, maybe this is a good time to tell you that I think you should follow your heart too.' And that's when we talked about her and Lindi. I thought I'd noticed something between them and turns out I was right."

"So you mean they've been together for a while?" I ask him.

And let me tell you that I'm impressed that I managed to get that sentence out so clearly because my mind is not actually on Nomusa and Lindi's relationship right now.

"No. I'm pretty sure tonight was their first kiss," Zack says.

There's something about the way Zack says "kiss" that just makes me melt.

I sigh out loud. I just can't stop myself. And then I realise what I've just done and quickly turn my face away to look out the bus window.

Zack. Kiss. Zack. Kiss. Phew. I open the bus window to get a bit of fresh air into my system.

I still feel like I'm in the middle of a sudden electrical storm, but at least there seems to be a clear line of communication between my heart and my brain right now. And my body seems to be in on the conversation too, which is more than a little disconcerting. And they all seem to be in agreement with what's suddenly at the top of my mind.

I'm so aware of Zack sitting next to me on the bus. There is something so unbelievably good about sitting next to him. Like I can feel that his heart is pure and in the right place. Where has this all come from? Am I going completely crazy?

I try to steady myself, but it's impossible.

I'm shaking when I turn round to face him. He holds my gaze and my heart does a happy, electrified cartwheel in his direction. And instantly it's clear as day that that is where it's meant to go.

## Reader comments

Here are some comments left by readers at [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

WOW! GAL U DEEPLY INLOVE. **Brandilicious**

Wat a perfect match those 2 a gud 4 each other awaaaay...**Sister+Ann**

Hey im adicted 2 mixt n yoza is one of the top reasons i keep coming on mxit. **Victoria**

## What do you think?

*Shoowee! Do you know this feeling? Could it be L.O.V.E.?* To answer this question, or to leave your own comment, go to [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

## CHAPTER 25

---

Zack holds my hand as we walk side by side along the Golden Mile. It feels like we're walking on air.

"Where on earth are you taking me?" I ask him.

"To the top of the world," he grins. "But you're going to have to look like you own the place when you walk in."

"Oh no! Dude! You've got to be kidding me Zack! The last time somebody said that to me I just missed ending up in jail and I did end up in hospital. Seriously, that's a dangerous thing to ask me to do!

"Just follow me, Hope," says Zack as he strolls casually into the Southern Sun North Beach Hotel.

We saunter across the lobby towards the lifts. Zack pushes the lift button and then he starts to whistle while we wait for the doors to be open.

"Dude," I hiss. "If you start making noises like the Pied Piper I'm telling you we're going to be back on that pavement before you have time to say Southern Sun North Beach Hotel!"

Zack chuckles, the lift doors bing open and he shuffles me in. Zack pushes the button for the top floor and I cuddle into him as we soar up into the sky.

"This is it," he says. "The secret destination you never knew you always wanted to go to."

A rooftop pool spills out in front of us. The room is contained by floor-to-ceiling - and the view, from the sparkling lights of the funfair below to the twinkling lights of the harbour and city, takes my breath away. But it's the ships lit up far out at sea that steal my heart. They feel so close I feel like I could reach out and scoop them up into my hands.

A small yacht motors by on its way back to port. Zack lifts his hand and gives it a solemn wave and I get a lump in my throat. I know it's his way of showing me that he remembers our conversation about my dad on his balcony. And I realise that that was when it all began for Zack and I, and I didn't even realise at the time. Zack smiles warmly down at me and I know that he totally gets me.

## THE AWESOMES: NEVER BEEN KISSED

"I've been trying to get you to notice me for a long time, Hope L'Amour," he says in a husky voice.

"You have my full attention," I whisper as I touch his cheek.

And then we KISS and it feels so good it's like we're floating in the sky, far out at sea above the ships, amongst the shining stars.

### Reader comments

Here are some comments left by readers at [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)

Indeed this z awesome, yeer u've taken me 2 another world, lol i also should start noticing these thngz. Tz well crafted guys, big up. **Unique**

Oooooo! What an awesome story :).. It was so exciting the whole time & it ended perfectly! I wish I could keep on reading The Awesomes forever.. I loved this story sooooo much!

Wow wow! wow!!! Gosh i so loved every chapter of ths story 4rm da beggining 2 the end.Zack and Hope makes such great couples!Feels so realy wish the story could continue...I LOVE IT:P **VUVULICIOUS**

### What do you think?

*What did you think of The Awesomes 1: Never Been Kissed? 1.) It rocked! 2.) It was great. 3.) It was ok. 4.) It wasn't really my thing. 5.) It sucked?* To answer this question, or to leave your own comment, go to [www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/28/)