

# **THE AWESOMES**

## **WHO AM I?**

*By Max Coates • Published 2010*

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**Another great Yoza cellphone story**

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## STORY TEASER

There's never a dull moment in the lives of the three best friends who make up The Awesomes. When life throws a few curve balls in the love department Hope L'Amour has to confront a question she's never asked herself before: 'Who am I?'

As things hot up in Durbs by the sea Deevya and Nomusa find that they're also asking the same question of themselves.

## 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 III: Who Am I?* 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 its 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** Rich, beautiful and talented, Deevya looks like she has it all. After ending a rocky relationship she's determined to take a break from l.u.r.v.e in 2011. But wherever she goes, boys seem to follow. Will she be able to live up to her 2011 resolution, or will a special someone give her the reason she needs for a fresh start to romance?

**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 that you'd never guess at all this if you didn't already know. Nomusa is always there for her friends, no matter what the circumstances. But does she have it in her to be there for herself when love challenges her expectations of her future?

## CHAPTER 1

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I feel like I've been run over by a train. The only reason I'm at school today is because my mom refused to let me stay at home.

"You were so brave to express your feelings through your art and you must hold on to your courage. You're amazing Hope L'Amour!" my mom gushed, "You're an inspiration to us all. The world would be a better place if everyone wore their hearts on their sleeves. You've got absolutely nothing to be ashamed of – this is the time to hold your head high!"

It's all well and good that my mom has convinced herself that this is a positive situation for me, but now I'm at school with my eyelids looking like those big round loaves of polony you can buy in the cold meats section at the supermarket. If you could actually see my heart on my sleeve it would look like road kill. Sorry mom, but I don't know if this look can possibly inspire anyone. I cried myself to sleep last night after Zack DUMPED me on Valentine's Day. And I really don't feel amazing or like being out in the world for everyone to see that I look like a walking accident.

"Hooooope!" Deevya shouts to me as she arrives and spots me lurking next to my locker trying not to be noticed by anyone.

She struts over, full of the joys of spring.

"I had the most amaaaaazing night! I went out with..." and then her sentence drifts off as she looks me in the face. "You look *terrible!*"

I'm trying to think of what to say when Nomusa bounces over to us, clearly also on a bit of a post-Valentine's high. When she gets to us she's all smiles and then as she takes in my polony eyes she looks a bit shocked.

"Sheez Hope. You look *BAD*," she exclaims.

"Thanks guys, actually I'm feeling so gorgeous I'm thinking of entering the Miss South Africa beauty pageant," I retort, and then promptly lose my edge and burst into tears.

They get the whole story out of me. How I was waiting for Zack, ready to surprise him with the personalised Valentine's message I'd painted over the *whole* side of a *huge* building in one of the *busiest* streets in the whole of Durban, when I opened what I thought was a Valentine's card from him to me and got the shock of my life.

"He *dumped* you?!!" Nomusa cries out in surprise.

"...with a *letter*!!!" shrieks Deevya. "Not even face to face?"

"But that doesn't sound like Zack," says Nomusa, aghast.

And then a group of girls spot us from behind.

## THE AWESOMES: KISS WHILE YOU CAN

“Hey Awesomes. Love your work on that building in Umbilo Road. It’s on our bus route to school,” I hear a voice say as they approach, “and we drive past it every day. It’s really cool!”

And then another voice chimes in.

“Hope I didn’t know you and Zack were such a big item!! He’s *so* hot!”

They’ve all got huge grins on their face as they reach us, and then they spot my polonies.

“Oh dear,” says the girl in the front, summing up the situation. “I’m guessing your public Valentine’s wish didn’t go down so well with Zack.”

This is what happens *all* day. There are nearly 1000 girls in my school. The news travel fast. They news about the dumping letter spreads and all day I can feel everyone’s pitiful eyes on me. You know what happens to road kill when it’s stuck in the fast lane of a busy highway? Well, think of my heart...same kind of thing.

Deevya and Nomusa stay close all day and I’m grateful. If I’d had to survive this all on my own it would be even more unbearable.

“This is the worst of it,” says Nomusa. “Just hang in there today Hope. Things will get better.”

By the time I get home I feel flatter than a stamped on pancake. I’ve crept into my block of flats cautiously to make sure I don’t see Zack. As I’m about to close the front door I hear my next-door neighbour calling my name.

“Hope! Hope! This is all so exciting! What good news about you and Zack! This is sooo romantic! And now you’re *famous!*” she enthuses as she holds up the front page of Durban’s most popular newspaper like it’s a trophy.

There, in prime front-page position, is a photograph of our giant, building-sized street art in Umbilo Road. The photographer has zoomed in on the words I wrote to surprise Zack. “*Happy Valentines Day Zack! Kiss Me Now! Love Hope.*”

And the photograph is captioned: “Local girl Hope L’Amour went all out to declare her feelings on Valentine’s Day as ‘The Awesomes’ unveiled this exciting piece of street art on Umbilo Road. Thousands of commuters stopped to snap photographs with their cellphones, to share the romance with their loved ones.”

## Reader comments

Here are some comments left by readers at [www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/)

Yes..i've been in this type of situation before, all the exposure just makes things a whole lot worse!! **Nkavie**

mmh! mmh! mmh! i can nt relate. that jst made the situation more worse, atleast it taught me something. **Junior**

I can relate to that... nd lts quite a painful ordeal... I mean hw does 1 get over nd move on 4rm such an experience...?: **Supafly**

## What do you think?

*Can you relate to what Hope must be feeling? Do you think that all this public exposure makes the situation worse?*

To answer this question, or to leave your own comment, go to [www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/)

## CHAPTER 2

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Today my mom DID let me take the day off school. Yesterday was hard enough. And yesterday evening's newspaper article took the situation into a whole new league. But it was last night's phone call and today's early morning newspaper that really was the cherry on the top.

The follow-up article wasn't very big, but it still made the front page this morning. Apparently my heartbreaking blunder is newsworthy, for there it is, described in black and white, for the entire world to see.

“HEARTBREAK FOR HOPE

‘The Awesomes’ new street artwork on Umbilo Road has attracted incredible local attention. Yesterday The Daily News published a photograph of 16-year-old Hope L’Amour’s Valentine’s message to her boyfriend, Zack Black (17).

Hope wrote the words “Happy Valentines Day Zack! Kiss Me Now! Love Hope” on a paper aeroplane she’d drawn as part of the enormous artwork painted on the side of an abandoned building. According to one of her classmates, Hope allegedly received a letter from Zack telling her the relationship was over while she was waiting to surprise him with her public Valentine’s message. Hope was unavailable for comment when the newspaper telephoned her home last night.”

And let me tell you that I’m still unavailable for comment.

I’m speechless.

“I brought you these sunglasses,” says Deevya, when she arrives later that day, once school is over.

She hands me the hugest pair of shades I’ve ever seen in my life. But as I put them on and see my face disappear behind them I see where this is going. And I like it. I’ve got something to hide behind.

“There’s big trouble going down at school. Nobody’s owning up to calling the newspaper, but the teachers are furious,” says Nomusa. “And everyone sends their love to you.”

Hmmm. Whatever.

Next up Nomusa tames my ‘fro with her impressive braiding skills and then jams a hat on top of my head.

## THE AWESOMES: KISS WHILE YOU CAN

“Do you want to go out for a chocolate milkshake sweetie?” says Deevya kindly. “My treat. Nobody will recognize you with your new look.”

“Not a chance,” I reply immediately. “I’m not going anywhere for a while. Lets just have some tea here in my flat.”

Deevya doesn’t argue, bless her, she just turns on the kettle and once she’s made tea we all sit on the bed in my room, sipping away quietly. I think I must be in shock, because it feels totally normal for us all to sit here and not say a word, which isn’t really our usual style.

I look across at my reflection in the mirror on my dressing table opposite my bed. I hardly recognize myself. I take the hat off and stare at this sleek-haired girl with huge sunglasses steamed up a little from the hot tea.

“Who am I?” I say out loud.

Deevya and Nomusa look at each other. Deevya raises an eyebrow as if to say “get a grip baby”. And Nomusa looks like she’s gathering her thoughts on how to tell me who I am when there’s a loud knock at the front door.

And then we hear Zack’s husky voice.

“Hope? Are you there?”

We all sit in dead silence. The tick of my bedside clock suddenly seems so loud.

None of us move to let him in.

“Hope?” he calls again. “I know you’re there. Please let me in. I *really* need to talk to you.”

## Reader comments

Here are some comments left by readers at [www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/)

Im so into this story, wow the writer really knows how to captivate the reader. Im so impressed. I feel soory for Hope but its life. We will just have to wait for the next chapter.  
:D **LULU**

Hope sweety pie,if Zack asks u 4 the second chance,please give it 2 him.people deserve second chances. **MR UNIVERSE**

I love these stories,nd da fact dat u people show hw da youth cn empower themselves whilst in skul.i advice mre people 2do da same thngs da awsome do,instead of wastng tym wit useles habits dat wil neva take them anywhr...thank u 2da author nd pls keep the chapters cumin...**Gebz26(x)**

## What do you think?

If you were Hope right now what would you do? *Our readers recommend this: Let Zack in and hear him out: 64%, Pretend you weren’t home: 16%, Send the girls to sort the loser out, 19%.*

To answer this question, or to leave your own comment, go to [www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/)

## CHAPTER 3

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“Hope, I’m not listening to another excuse from you! I agree you’ve needed some time to lay low, but you’ve had the whole day. We’re going out in ten minutes. Get yourself gorgeous baby. There are people to meet!”

I look at Deevya in dismay. I’m loving my bedroom. I feel like no one or nothing can hurt me when I’m here. This is where I want to stay.

She puts one hand on her hip and looks pointedly at the watch on her other hand.

“Nine minutes,” she says.

And then she turns her back on me, joining Nomusa at my dressing table mirror to put on some make-up and glam-up her hair. Nomusa hits the volume button on my radio and the two of them start grooving away as if my room’s a nightclub.

I feel a bit cross with them for not giving me a choice in this, but given that the two of them went and spoke to Zack this afternoon so that I didn’t have to, I don’t really feel like I’m in a position to give them a hard time.

Don’t worry. I didn’t wimp out completely on the Zack thing. I don’t really know who I am right now, but I do know that I feel like I’ve got nothing to lose. So if Zack wants to tell me why he broke my heart I can deal with that. But only tomorrow. I got the girls to tell him that we can make a plan to get together tomorrow afternoon. But I can’t even bear to think about Zack right now.

“So where are you planning on going out tonight?” I ask Deevya and Nomusa, trying to latch on to another subject.

“You mean where are WE planning on going out, of course,” says Deevya. “To Wimpy, for burgers.”

I snort out loud.

“You’re getting that dressed up for burgers around the corner?” I say.

Nomusa and Deevya both grin broadly.

“We ain’t dressing up for the burgers baby,” says Deevya cheekily. “Panther’s taking us out for his farewell dinner. There’ll be hot guys. And Lindi for Nomusa.”

Nomusa nods happily at me, turns to the mirror, tops up her lip gloss and then turns back and gives me the status.

“Lindi sent me a Valentine’s card. We’ve seen each other and we’re on again, but we’re going to take it really slow and keep things super cool and chilled,” she smiles.



## THE AWESOMES: KISS WHILE YOU CAN

I look at Deevya. “I thought you weren’t into hot guys at all in 2011?” I enquire smugly.

“They’re not for me darling,” she grins. “They’re for you. And you’ve got three minutes left now, so hustle.”

And so this is how I end up sitting in Wimpy with a slick new hair do, beautiful make-up and cool kit. That is all thanks to my friends. My bad attitude is 100% my own. I know I’m not ready to be out and about.

“You look like The Shizzle,” says Nomusa as a crowd of hip looking guys cruise in.

I glower at her. I’m not in the mood.

Everyone gets introduced, but I apparently need no introduction.

“Hey Hope – we’ve heard all about you. Great newspaper coverage!” says a good-looking guy in jeans and a black vest.

How am I meant to reply to that?

“No seriously,” he says, reading into my silence, “I’m really sorry your feelings got hurt, but I’ve been a street artist for three years and my work has *never* made the newspaper. This is gonna do wonders for your career!”

Really? I look up at everyone’s faces and they’re all nodding and smiling. Some of them even look a little jealous. Hmm. Ok. I sit up a little straighter. I find myself smiling back. And wow – they really are a good-looking bunch of guys!

And they’re nice too. Two hours later we’re all still chatting and laughing away. Deevya’s chattering non-stop to Panther. Nomusa and Lindi are totally absorbed in conversation with some of the other guys down the other end of the table. And I’m sitting next to a guy called Zoom and he’s been telling me the most amazing stories about his life as a street artist. And he’s so funny!

I’m cackling loudly at one of his jokes, holding my stomach it hurts so much from laughing, when something outside catches my eye. It’s Zack. He’s standing outside the window looking in and he looks really upset. As soon as I notice him he walks away.

## Reader comments

Here are some comments left by readers at [www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/)

Wow this story tells us that u need to knw that wh u r? Because if you dnt knw that you can do wrong things and u can not knw hw 2 separet good things n bad things thanks for yoza about this intresting story. **olwethu**

Zack has no regrets, the thing is he had not got a chance to talk to Hope. He is so not understood and treated like a villan. I'd get more upset than him, it was not his fault. The relationship was not working out well, or was it?

Defenately zack is in deep regrets n nw that he saw hope laughing wth sum ada guy, it must be killing hm. **Matz**

## What do you think?

*Do you think that Zack is regretting breaking up with Hope?*

To answer this question, or to leave your own comment, go to [www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/)

## CHAPTER 4

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I wake up from a dream that seemed totally real. But it's obviously not because when I look around my room I don't see thousands of paper aeroplanes with 'I'm sorry. Love Zack' written on the side of each. No siree. There's just my usual, boring old carpet looking back up at me. I feel strangely disappointed.

My cellphone beeps. It's a message from Deevya.

*Gld 2 c u looking so hppy last night xx*

And then she sends an mms with a pic she took of all of us sitting and smiling at the table in Wimpy. I have a grin from ear to ear! Quite a different look to my Sad Sack expression that had stared back at me from my mirror earlier yesterday.

Her mms reminds me that I'm already feeling so much better. I think I'm ready to handle the masses at school today. And I'm sure I can also deal with Zack this afternoon. Well – almost sure.

We start the day with assembly. I keep a low profile. All the teachers leave the hall after main assembly, before the head girl does her announcements for the day.

I lean over towards Nomusa, who is sitting next to me.

“You and Lindi seem to be going well?” I half state, half ask.

Nomusa beams. “I like her so much. And she says she likes me so much too. She just doesn't know how to tell her parents about us right now. So we're not going to tell them. Its not like we're going steady or getting married or anything. We're just getting to know each other a little better, you know?”

Nomusa looks across at me a little anxiously as if she needs reassurance.

“That sounds totally reasonable,” I smile. “Take it from me – making any big, bold moves in the early stages of a relationship is over rated. I'm all for sloooow relationship development these days.”

She's about to say something when the head girl starts speaking into the microphone up on the stage.

## THE AWESOMES: KISS WHILE YOU CAN

“Ok guys, so we’ve got an unexpected surprise today. Normally we only give out Valentine’s cards on Valentine’s Day, but this year it seems that there have been some late deliveries!”

There’s a buzz of excitement around the room. I sink lower into my chair – I think my Valentine’s experience has scarred me for life. I want to run for the hills when I even *hear* the word Valentine’s!

“And there have been a LOT of deliveries,” the head girl continues. “In fact there are bags and bags of them. And they’re all for ONE person! Hope L’Amour, will you please come up to get your Valentine’s cards!!!”

I look around me. They must be talking about another Hope L’Amour. I wait to see her get up.

“Hope!” squeals Nomusa, “They’re for *you*! Go on up! She’s waiting for you.

I get up slowly, still not quite believing this is happening. In fact I’m waiting for this to be some kind of hoax that turns out to be another embarrassing Valentine’s nightmare.

But the head girl holds up a huge sack of post, looks me in the eye and nods encouragingly for me to come up.

There’s cheering and clapping and plenty of wolf whistling as I walk down the middle of the hall and then up onto the stage. By the time I get there the head girl has pulled the whole stash of cards out into the middle of the stage. THREE HUGE sacks filled with Valentine’s cards with my name on!

“Is there anything you want to say about this Hope?” asks the head girl, pushing the microphone into my face.

There are 1000 delighted faces looking back at me. And I’m totally lost for words.

“Maybe we can open a few and see who they’re from?” prompts the head girl.

So we do.

There is different handwriting inside every card. So they’re not all from Zack – which was a crazy little thought that sprang into my mind as I walked up here.

The cards say things like this:

‘I saw the story about you in the newspaper. Love your style! You’re a true romantic and I would love to meet you.’

‘Dear Hope. How could Zack resist you? I can’t! Call me!’

Dear Hope. So I read in the newspaper that you’re suddenly single. I’m sure that’s not going to last long. You’re fabulous.’

I grin. This is crazy fantastic! This must have happened because of the publicity around what I wrote on that wall. I can’t quite believe this response though! I could never have imagined this.

“Ummm...maybe romance isn’t so under rated after all,” I say into the microphone, smiling at all the excited faces. “Suddenly I’m feeling a whole lot of love again...”

A murmur of giggling sweeps the hall.

I try and pick up the three bags but I almost fall over from the weight, to happy laughter from the crowd. Deevya and Nomusa scoot up onto the stage to help carry. And as we walk back to our seats the whole assembly is in an uproar, clapping and stamping. Which just goes to show – everybody would always prefer to see somebody feeling loved rather than heartbroken. I’m glad I’ve lived to learn that lesson.

## Reader comments

Here are some comments left by readers at [www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/)

I undastnd hw u fil,i gt dumped on valentine's day by my gf 4 anada gal.hope i ws heartbroken! Um stl nt ova ha bt i hpe she'll cum bck. **Ghetto princess**

Better late than never, Hope. You deserve it gal coz good things cum to dose who wait!**Ms.ebrahim**

Wow dat ws amazin yoh im over excitd 4 u hope, shine gal i just hope amost those cards zacks must also b thr. **Kelebs**

## What do you think?

Did this chapter make you feel? *Our readers recommend this: So very happy for Hope: 60%, A bit jealous that that didn’t happen to you: 6%, Hopeful that maybe one day you’ll be madly spoilt on V-day: 32%.*

To answer this question, or to leave your own comment, go to [www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/)

## CHAPTER 5

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Look, I would never have planned my afternoon’s meeting with Zack this way. But he just happened to be on the stairs, helping carry stuff for the new family that’s moving into our block, when I arrived home. And I just happened to be pushing a trolley jam packed with three bags of Valentine’s cards from my bevy of admirers!

I accepted his offer to help me carry them up. It would have been a bit churlish to spurn him right then, right? And I wouldn’t have told him what they were if he hadn’t asked.

And I really couldn’t help that I couldn’t wipe the smile off my face when I said, “Oh these? Just a few Valentine’s cards for me that I’m bringing home from school.”

I certainly never *planned* to become “the most popular girl in the whole school”, which is what everyone has been calling me today. But I’d rather be that than “the saddest girl in the whole

## THE AWESOMES: KISS WHILE YOU CAN

world”, which I think I might have been on V-day. The former is a better answer to the “Who am I?” question, don’t you think?

To tell you the truth I *am* actually feeling like The Shizzle. I am loved by many! What more could anyone honestly ask for??!

And after I’ve shown Zack my Valentine’s cards he evidently isn’t feeling very shizzlish himself. In fact he looks bleak. And possibly a bit nervous. I’m not sure – I’ve never actually seen this expression on Zack’s face before so I don’t really know what it means.

I take the bull by the horns and suggest that we have that chat I suggested over a cup of coffee downstairs.

“I just need to do some things upstairs and I’ll come down and find you in a few minutes,” he says in strained, flat voice.

“Cool,” I smile cheerfully and head back into my flat.

My mom’s home early today and she’s a bit dumb struck by my Valentine’s haul.

I hear Zack close his front door on his way back out.

“Oh mom, I’m going out for a coffee with Zack. I’ll just wait for him at the elevator,” I say.

“Hang on, let me catch the lift down with you. I need to nip into the supermarket to get some things for supper.”

So both of us are standing at the lift doors when they open with a ching. And inside is Zack and his mother.

“Oh, hi Erica!” I say to her.

She mumbles a hello, but barely looks at me. I’m quite stunned. This is not like her at all. I glance at my mother and to my surprise she is looking might p\*\*d off herself. She has her haughty, disapproving look etched all over her face.

And then I get it! Light bulb moment! My mom’s upset with Zack for breaking up with me, and Zack’s mom is upset that all the publicity has ended up making Zack look bad. And now they’re having a whole big silent emotional drama with EACH OTHER about it!

Hang on momma’s – given the circumstances isn’t it Zack and I who are meant to be all tense and upset with each other?! Unbelievable! Who are the grown-ups in this lift anyway?

I sneak a peek at Zack to see what he’s thinking. He’s looking at me, and he’s trying not to smile but he’s not doing a very good job of it. I can tell he’s also totally sussed the vibe. I giggle first and Zack’s mom shoots me a killer look. Then Zack giggles and my mom shoots him the death stare. And then the lift doors open and the two of us dart out, leaving our moms to deal with their own dramas by themselves

## Reader comments

Here are some comments left by readers at [www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/)

Its preferable that parents do not get involved in our teen problems, but they love us above measure and it is wrong of us to expect them not to care. They will be concerned because they do not want to see us hurt in anyway. The parent-child love is the truest true love i know. Zack's mom is absolutely innocent, same goes to Hope's mom.

The mother's should nt b involved in their kids relationships becox they knw hw they feel,though theyshud try taking advice be4 takin decisions n' stuff

lol...eish mothers,mothers.thy shud leav their childrn aln 2 deal wit their probz.id laugh ryt thr gud story thou...whtz gna hapn nxt,huh?cnt w8...**GOTCHA BABE**

## What do you think?

*Should the mom's be getting involved in Zack and Hope's problems?*

To answer this question, or to leave your own comment, go to [www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/)

## CHAPTER 6

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We don't get a coffee after all. Instead Zack buys us each a tin of cooldrink and we go and find a wall to sit on beneath a huge, shady tree just outside of Davenport Centre. We both have our cellphones in our back pockets and we take them out and put them on the wall between us before we hop up onto it.

My legs dangle down below me and I let my feet bang against the wall.

The silence stretches between us. Well, maybe that's a bit of an exaggeration because the Indian Mynah birds are screeching in the branches above us, and the traffic is heavy and it's only a pavement's breadth away from us. I guess what I mean is that I can feel the weight of all that is unsaid and about to be spoken. My heart is thudding away like a base mix in a nightclub.

Eventually Zack turns and looks me straight in the eye.

"I...I don't know where to begin..." he says slowly and then takes a deep breath and speaks faster as if he needs to get it all out. "So I'm just going to speak and I hope it all comes out right, because I know I've been getting things really wrong lately."

"No kidding Zack," I reply dryly. The thump of my heart fills the gap between each word.

"Look Hope," he says sheepishly, "the truth is that I forgot about Valentine's Day."

You have *got* to be kidding.

## THE AWESOMES: KISS WHILE YOU CAN

“That’s it?” I say in disbelief. “You just *forgot*? Dude, do you live in a heart-free zone? It’s not like it’s easy to miss Valentine’s Day when we live above a shopping centre where every shop window was dripping with Valentine’s propaganda for *weeks* before the 14<sup>th</sup>!”

Zack looks down and shakes his head forlornly like he totally agrees with me and he too *cannot* believe his ignorance.

“I know,” he mumbles as if he’s thinking out loud, “it’s terrible because I’ve always considered myself a romantic kind of guy, but somehow all that Valentine’s stuff went right by me. I’m hoping I’m better at spontaneous romance...”

A part of my heart begins to melt as I see him looking so remorseful, and then I get a grip.

“Hang on a second Zack. That’s *such* a pathetic excuse I can only imagine it’s true, because you’d be a fool to make up a story that makes you look so – sorry, but I have to say it like it is – that makes you look so ‘brain dead’. It might get you off the hook for your *insanely thoughtless* timing, but the point is that *you broke up with me*, with no warning, and you *didn’t even do it to my face!*”

I wish I’d thought to bring my shades. I’m suddenly all teary. I take a huge breath in, and jump off the wall so that my feet are firmly on the ground. My hand shoots instinctively to my ‘fro to smooth it down, but as I touch my slick, braided hair I remember that I don’t look the same as I did a few days ago, before this rollercoaster began. And I don’t *feel* the same.

Bursts of memory flash vividly before my eyes: the feeling of satisfaction as I stood back and looked at my finished street art for the first time; the excitement of waiting for Zack...and then the feeling of my heart ripping in two when I read his letter; Deevya and Nomusa cheekily grooving in my bedroom while they cheered me up; the really cool guys we met at Wimpy; my *hundreds* of Valentine’s cards; and all the girls cheering for me in assembly.

I blink as I turn to face Zack and he is looking at me with such longing in his eyes that my breath catches in my throat. It’s an epic moment. I’m standing there, just a regular girl on a random day, but I’ve got all these new feelings inside me! They’re a powerful swirling mix of the *unforgettable* events of the last few days, a sense that my life is *my own* and I must live it with *truth*, and this *massive* heartfelt attraction to Zack all at the same time. Crack! Bam! Boom!

And right now I need to know what went down.

“I just need to know why you did it Zack?” My voice shakes with emotion, and it feels like there’s a lot riding on what Zack says next.

“I did it for you Hope,” he says quietly, and I swear I’m not imagining that he just blinked away a tear. “You seemed so doubtful about us sometimes, and recently you were always so busy when I tried to make plans to see you. I thought you were avoiding me and that you weren’t really into me. So I thought I’d make it easier for you and end it so that you didn’t have to do the dirty work of breaking up with me yourself.”

Crashing silence.

## THE AWESOMES: KISS WHILE YOU CAN

Flashbacks to telling Zack about my doubts about us that day on the pier; and to turning down his invites when I was putting in overtime on the street art...

Frikking heart-roast-on-mouldy-raisin-toast – what a *disaster*!!!!

“Why didn’t you *spea*k to me Zack? Why did you just write that letter?” I ask him, watching him intently for his response.

He doesn’t blink and answers with honest simplicity.

“It broke my heart to end it with you, Hope. I didn’t want to and I didn’t have it in me to do it face to face. The letter seemed like the only way at the time. And then I saw your street art for the first time in the newspaper and I realized how completely wrong I’d been. I thought I was going to have a heart attack or something. I’m *so* sorry Hope, I *really really* am. If I could take it all back I would. Can we carry on like it never happened?”

### Reader comments

Here are some comments left by readers at [www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/)

It's now clear to me that their break up was due to a sequence of misunderstandings. And Zack has made it clear that it wasn't in his heart to break up with her. As for Hope, as heart broken as she was (understandably so), I think she should look at reality of this situation i.e the fact that they still lurve (hehe) each other. So for me a KISS-AND-MAKE-UP wouldn't be such a bad thing. **NUZZZ!!!**

Beebabe-o.m.g diz is a truli fantastic story...i lov it..i lov zack da mst da poor guy totali cares abt hope....i wish i culd find a guy lyk hm:D

I luv dis story! lve bn thru almst da sme thng dat hope is gng thru nd it sux! Bt dis story rox!

### What do you think?

Do you think that there’s any chance of Zack and Hope’s relationship recovering from this? *Our readers recommend this: No ways, Hope was hurt too badly. She’ll never be the same: 13%, Maybe, love moves in mysterious ways: 54%, For sure. These two are made for each other: 31%.*

To answer this question, or to leave your own comment, go to [www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/)

## CHAPTER 7

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“Zack Black – you misread the situation. And you acted like a fool.”

My words may sound harsh, but my voice is actually very tender. The dude has dug himself into a hole deeper than the Kimberly Diamond Mine – and the look in his eyes tells me that he knows it.



## THE AWESOMES: KISS WHILE YOU CAN

“But at least you’re a gorgeous fool,” I say in a soft voice.

Zack reaches out and takes my hand, and when he smiles at me his eyes look like the sun has come out from behind the clouds.

He tugs me towards him and my body reacts like a magnet. My arms slide around his neck as Zack pulls me in even closer. After days of being apart there’s suddenly no space between us, and it feels like our bodies are made for each other.

Zack’s lips softly graze my neck and the chemistry between us takes my breath away.

When he speaks it’s in a low, husky voice and he’s so close to me that his breath on my neck gives me goosebumps.

“They do say that the best part of breaking up is the making up, Hope L’Amour.”

I stay close for a few seconds, leaning into him, mesmerized by the feeling of his hands moving seductively across my back. And then, with momentous effort, I pull away.

“I’m glad you’ve explained,” I say slowly, thinking hard about what I’m saying, “but the fact still remains that I made the most romantic gesture of my life and you *did* dump me on Valentine’s Day.”

Zack sighs. “I’ve said I’m sorry, and I really am, I’ll say it a thousand times.”

“I know you’re sorry Zack, but I didn’t see that letter coming and when it happened I felt...lost. Like I didn’t know you or myself anymore. I just kept asking myself ‘Who am I?’”

Zack nods like he understands.

“And I’ve always thought you understood me really well Zack, but you’re telling me that you broke up with me because you thought I was about to break up with you. And at the time you couldn’t have been more *wrong*. Which means that even *you* don’t really know who I am.”

“We misunderstood each other Hope,” Zack frowns, “that doesn’t mean that I don’t know who you are.”

I take a long sip of my Coke.

“I’m only sixteen, and you’re only seventeen Zack. These last few days have been *massive*, and in the midst of all this heartbreak, I’ve realised that I’m still busy *becoming* someone. It’s been so surprising but *amazing* to realise that and, actually, if you hadn’t broken up with me I don’t know if that would have happened.”

Zack puts his hand on my shoulder. “Where are you going with this conversation Hope?” he asks earnestly, his eyes worried.

My words tumble out on a wave of passion.

“I have real feelings for you Zack, I know that for sure now, but I can’t carry on like nothing happened, because something has changed in me over these last few days. I’ve realised we can’t

## THE AWESOMES: KISS WHILE YOU CAN

really know *each other* yet because we're both still getting to know *ourselves*. And I don't think we should carry on like nothing's happened because look where that got us last time!"

Zack frowns again and stares down at the pavement.

In the silence that follows I get the feeling that I may as well have been pouring my heart out in Japanese. It makes me feel quiet empty not to be understood, but I was speaking my truth, so there's nothing to do now but stand by that.

Buses and taxis roar by, belching out smoke. Strangers walk past, totally unaware of the tension in the air, and a huge blob of bird poo splatters on the pavement, thankfully not in reaching distance of us. Time ticks by.

After long minutes of hard thinking Zack slowly starts to nod his head, and then he looks up at me and gives me a beautiful smile.

"I hear you Hope – what you say makes so much sense. We *are* still so young, and there is still so much to learn about ourselves and about each other."

My heart expands like a helium balloon. I hop back up on the wall next to Zack.

"So what's your next move?" I ask him, hoping he really has got me.

"Well...how about I say sorry to you a hundred more times," he says with smiling eyes, "and we take a step back and go back to being good friends to each other. And then I ask you out on another first date, and we see where that takes us?"

My secret stash of butterflies spring to life in my stomach.

Zack, baby, we are both speaking the same language again! Hallelujah!

## Reader comments

Here are some comments left by readers at [www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/)

Wow... I am actually hapi 4 thm. I wish ths fairy tale culd also happen 2 me:\$.!:( tearz of joy).

**Ms pastor**

Wow! This is the greatest story ever,keep up the great work:D **Ntando**

Unlike many ada men i know,dis one has acted maturely!BIG UPS ZACK 4 BEING SUCH A MAN AT A VERY TENDER AGE N2U2GAL-HOW MODEST! **EMPRESS**

## What do you think?

*So guys, are you happy the lovebirds are kinda back together?*

To answer this question, or to leave your own comment, go to [www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/)

## CHAPTER 8

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I'm on cloud nine as I walk down the hill to Nomusa's family's flat. Zack and I are on the same groove again, and my life is stretching out in front of me like a blank page ready to be filled with beautiful colour.

"Hope! Wait up!"

I turn to see Deevya skipping towards me in a beautiful sundress. Us Awesomes are getting together for an afternoon inspiration session and a bit of a catch up.

Deevya's phone rings and when she answers it I can tell by her voice that it's Nomusa on the other end of the line.

Deevya hangs up, hugs me hello and gives me the status.

"Nomusa says she needs to get out of the flat, her kid brother and sister are driving her nuts. She's going to meet us outside her place and then we can go to the park or something."

When we get there Nomu's already waiting, holding a brown paper bag in her hands.

"Are those what I think they are?" I ask, eyeing it hungrily.

"Yebo, yeah," says Nomusa proudly, "three times freshly baked doughnuts oozing apricot jam and still warm from the oven."

We take turns to high five her. The café downstairs from Nomu's flat is a legend in its own 'hood for these sugar-dusted delishishnesses.

"So, we could go to the park up the road," says Nomu, "or, if you're not going to get totally traumatised Hope, we could also go and sit on the bench opposite our street art. But it's your call Ms. L'Amour."

I must admit that my heart does still feel like someone's just given it a little squeeze when I think about THAT wall, but I realise that the three of us never had a chance to stand back and look at the finished piece together once we were done. Valentine's dramas blew that out the water.

"Let's go," I say, and then I start to get really excited, "now, now, now!"

Deevya looks at me sideways as we head along towards our wall.

"Have you seen Zack by any chance," she asks, on the money as usual.

"You better believe it dudes," I smile, and then fill them in on the scoop as we walk.

When we get to our bench we sit down in a row and take in the view of our wall.

"It feels *so* good to be here," I announce.

## THE AWESOMES: KISS WHILE YOU CAN

And then we happily eat our doughnuts as we mutually agree that The Awesomes are actually the shizzle, and that our street art rocks the nation. Our sugar-coated lips are all smiles.

“So I know it’s been *all about me* for this last week or so,” I say with a grin, “and *thanks* guys! But now that my personal and love barometers show clear skies ahead I’m a little more tuned in to the bigger picture again – and I’d *love* to know what’s been happening with you both?”

“You start,” Nomusa nods at Deevya. But right then one of the buses clad with a picture of Nomusa modelling a bikini pulls up at the bus stop in front of the bench. We laugh and wave to let the bus driver know we’re not getting on.

“I think that’s a sign that you go first,” chuckles Deevya. “And don’t beat about the bush – we want an update on your love life first.”

“Ok,” says Nomusa, taking a deep breath, “It’s still going, it’s still good – great actually...but it’s also not all easy.”

“What are you not finding easy?” asks Deevya, and we both lean in to listen as Nomusa answers in her soft voice.

“Well...you know that Lindi wants us to be a secret, right? And I thought I’d be ok with that, but I’m not really used to pretending – that’s just not who I am.”

Deevya and I both nod as we think about this, and Nomusa keeps explaining.

“I know I’m not that outspoken about my feelings, but if I’m with you two anyone watching would instantly know that we’re great friends. And if I’m surfing I don’t try and hide that I’m totally passionate about it. But when I’m with Lindi and there are other people around, I have to constantly check that I’m not accidentally showing what I’m really feeling to the world. I have to hide that I’m so happy we’re together. And that’s just so hard for me. It feels so...so unnatural.”

I think about Zack and I talking outside on the pavement this afternoon, and how great it was to hold nothing back as I tried to show him and tell him what I was feeling. I really didn’t care who was watching us. Why should I have?

“I totally understand how hard that must be Nomu,” I empathise. “You’re very strong – I don’t think I could do it.”

Deevya looks thoughtful. “People only feel a need to hide stuff about themselves when they’re afraid of being judged badly by others. Maybe you should tell Lindi that Hope, Zack and I have all unintentionally been in on your little romance since we accidentally spotted you kissing – and that we think you make an awesome couple”

I like where Deevya is going with this, and I chip in my two cents worth.

“Yes...and then let Lindi get used to that. It’s not like you told us – we just spotted you guys kissing that first night and made you tell us what was going on with you two. Lindi might freak out at first, but then at least *you* can relax and be yourself when you and Lindi are around us. And maybe in time Lindi will be a little less afraid to let her feelings show when she’s around us too.”

Nomusa pops her last piece of doughnut into her mouth, and the look on her face says she she thinks we might be on to something.

My phone rings in my pocket. I pull it out.

“Hmm, I don’t know this number,” I say out loud as I look at the screen.

As I take the call a flirty, girlish voice on the other end of the line says “Hey Zack, it’s Gugu. Are we still on for tonight?”

I hold the phone away from my ear and stare at in confusion. And then I remember that Zack and I have the same phone. We’d put them next to each other on the wall this afternoon when we were busy making up, and when we picked them up we must have accidentally swapped.

## Reader comments

Here are some comments left by readers at [www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/)

Yes theres a future 4 nomusa nd lindi as soon as dey warm up 2 da situation nd i thnk dis whole thng is blown out of propotion cauz zack has done ntng bt worn hs heart on hs sleve nd declared hs luv 4 hope u no evrythng iz nt wat it seemz. **Officialy Irrisistable**

Nomusa shud jst 4gt it, it wil neva wrk btwin her n lindi, myb its al in lindi's mind tht she love's nomusa. And as 4 zack he shud stop playin games coz its obvious tht he wants 2 make hope jolous. **Matz**

Nomusa shouldnt be afraid 2 show her affection 2wards lindi in public,so applies 2 lindi. The sooner people know,de better and nomusa wont always look behind her back in case they-re caught...it might take time 4 people 2 accept dat bt they will eventually do. **Anne marie**

## What do you think?

*Will Nomusa and Lindi make it as a couple? And do you think Zack’s up to no good?*

To answer this question, or to leave your own comment, go to [www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/)

## CHAPTER 9

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“Hope, chill darling, I know Zack and I can tell you that this is going to be an innocent misunderstanding,” says Nomusa.

Deevya flicks her long hair and looks dubious. “You’re probably right Nomusa, and I’d love to be as trusting as you, but personally I always like a bit of proof rather than relying on blind faith,” she says.

With that Deevya snatches the cellphone out of my hand and starts navigating through Zack’s personal info!

## THE AWESOMES: KISS WHILE YOU CAN

“Deevs! You can’t do that, that’s Zack’s phone,” I protest.

She shoots me a look as if to say, ‘so stop me’, and then starts reporting back on her findings.

“I’ve checked his dialled calls and he’s never dialled this number, and this is the first call he’s received from it. The number’s obviously not saved in his phone otherwise Gugu’s name would have come up on the phone. I’d say there’s no need for you to worry about this one...”

Even though I feel uneasy about Deevya going through Zack’s phone, I feel relieved at what she is telling me.

“And,” Deevya continues with a satisfied grin spreading across her face, “in his drafts folder are more than 20 sms’s that he wrote to you between Valentine’s Day and today, and never sent. She scrolls and reads: ‘Hope, you are everything to me, I’m so sorry’; ‘Hope, this is all a big mistake’....

I snatch it back from her. Poor Zack. This is his private info. It’s totally wrong for us to delve into it.

Nomusa looks smug. “I *told* you, the guy is solid gold. Zack’s the man.”

“And he’s a gonner,” Deevya says happily, “he’s totally Hope-ful. If you two love birds keep carrying on like this you might actually convince even jaded old me to believe in l.u.r.v.e again.” It’s hard to tell by her tone if she’s being serious or if she’s just taking the mickey out of me.

An hour later, after I’ve said goodbye to the girls and walked home, I knock on ‘Zack the man’s’ door to give him back his phone.

“Zack! How hilarious! We accidentally swapped phones!” I say as he opens the door.

But Zack doesn’t seem to be seeing the funny side in this.

“So who is this Zoom who wants to know if you want to go out with him tonight?” he asks, brandishing my phone like its evidence of a crime committed.

“That’s funny,” I retort lightly “because I was going to ask you who this Gugu is who wants to know if you’re ‘still on for tonight?’”

Zack looks totally blank, as if he has no idea who or what I’m talking about, and then he makes the connection.

“Who?? Oh, Gugu...she’s that new girl that’s moved into the block. Damn, I totally forgot about that. I helped her family move in this morning. Remember I was carrying all those boxes? She asked me if I wanted to come and have a just-moved-in Kentucky picnic at their flat tonight as thanks for my help.”

So that’s all. Ok. That’s cool-ish. I’ll be keeping an eye on that Gugu though.

## THE AWESOMES: KISS WHILE YOU CAN

“Well Zack, I’m afraid I haven’t been a very good neighbour because I was a bit surprised, and maybe just a *teensy* bit jealous when Gugu phoned, and once I’d figured out that I had your phone I must admit that I just hung up on her!”

Zack looks amused. “Well, that’s not very welcoming,” he grins at me.

“So what did you say to Zoom?” I ask, fixing him with an inquisitive look and lifting one eyebrow.

Zack suddenly looks really embarrassed. “Well, he didn’t call, he sent an sms. And I only read it because I thought it was my phone,” he says defensively, and then continues with more confidence, “So when I realised what must have happened and that I had your phone, I just replied by sms on your behalf and said: ‘I’m so nt intrsted in u Zoom. Pls dn’t evr bther me agn. I’ve gt bttr thngs 2 do so take a hike. Hope.’”

I gasp. “Zack! How could you! He’s just a friend, and he was really nice to me when...”

Zack pokes me in the ribs. “It’s ok. I’m only joking Hope. I never replied. I just spent a couple of hours reading and rereading that sms, working myself up into a state about it.”

Both phones simultaneously beep as an sms arrives.

We swap phones so that we each have our own back. It’s a group message from Nomusa.

*hi gys. I’m modling in a fshion shw tmrw nght on the bch. Pls cum. Dress up. And brng frnds. Wl b fun!! Luv Nomusa*

“Damn,” says Zack.

“What?”

“Well my mom’s going to Cape Town on a business trip tomorrow, and she’s staying overnight, so I have the flat to myself for a change. And I was going to ask you if I could cook you dinner.”

I don’t really know if that’s an invitation or not, given the ‘was going to’.

“But she’s out for another couple of hours now, so we’ve got the place to ourselves,” says Zack. “Do you want to come and chill in my room and listen to some music Hope?”

Somehow he manages to move into my space during that sentence so that by the time he’s finished it we’re standing not more than an inch apart.

I’m trying to remember all those good reasons for taking things slow.

“Hope, I loved everything you said today about getting to know yourself, and us needing to get to know each other better too. It means we’ve got to step into the unknown, and that’s such an adventure.”

I’m feeling so torn. Should I stay or should I go?

“Don’t go,” says Zack, caressing my face with his hands. “I’ve got great music.”

And because of everything that happened today and because it ain’t over yet, I let myself be persuaded.

## Reader comments

Here are some comments left by readers at [www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/)

Of course this counts as that 'first date' i mean come on, wt u talkn abt...(sumthn's wrng sumwer...i have a hunch). **T jay**

Yoza is so cool,luv the romance stories i cud spend al day js reading them. They r vibey n hot n great 4 reading n very interesting,i say keep it up,u guys rock. **Sunshine**

Hope! Be strategic girl! If you leave Zack tonight, he'll spend it with Velaphi... As much as I trust Zack, I wouldn't leave him with some chick with a flirty girlish voice. Things are too tender atm to risk it (G). **MiLo KiT-kAt**

## What do you think?

*Mmhmm, things are hotting up here. Do you think this counts as that 'first date'?*

To answer this question, or to leave your own comment, go to [www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/)

## CHAPTER 10

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Talk about a vibe! It’s late evening and there are *masses* of people packed around the catwalk that’s been assembled on the beach. The music is pumping, the sun’s going down and the sea is beginning to reflect the twinkling lights of the hotels that line the curve of the bay.

Nomusa is working the catwalk like a supermodel! And the crowd is going mad as she and the other models strut their stuff, wearing the coolest of Durban design, accessorized with BIG attitudes. As Nomu strikes a pose at the end of the ramp she spots us all in the crowd and flashes us a dazzling smile. Deevya and I grin at each other as Nomusa turns away with a flourish – the girl has presence and style, and we *love* her for it.

“Nomusa is the *coolest*,” I try and say to Lindi who is standing next to me. But the music is so loud she can’t make out what I’m saying. By the look on her face I’d say she’s thinking the same thing though. I hope so. Nomusa’s a one-of-a-kind. If Lindi messes this up because she’s afraid that what other people think is more important than what the two of them have, then she might live to regret it for the rest of her life.

I lose that thought as Zack gets back from buying drinks for us girls, hands them round, and then kisses my cheek as he pulls me in next to him.

“Hello beautiful,” he whispers in my ear.



## THE AWESOMES: KISS WHILE YOU CAN

“It’s nice to see Romeo and Juliet getting along so well again,” says Deevya, smiling at us.

I see her eyes flicker in recognition at somebody behind us, and as I turn to look, I spot Zoom and the rest of the boys easing through the crowd as they come over to say hi.

“Hey Hope,” Zoom jokes with a cheeky smile, “made any newspaper headlines recently?”

Eek! I know from chatting to Zack last night that he’s still feeling a bit sensitive about all that publicity around our break up, but he handles it well, stepping forward, introducing himself and shaking hands with Zoom and the crew.

I notice Zoom looking a little taken aback, and I suddenly remember that I never replied to his sms asking me if I wanted to do something with him. Oh *dash* it! How could I be so forgetful? The poor guy probably thinks I’m still single too! And here I am obviously totally back together with Zack. What do I *say*?!

Deevya, taking in my expression and sizing up the situation, steps into the gap, grabs Zack’s arm and pulls him over to her side.

“It’s *so* fantastic to see you guys!” I hear her exclaim as she strikes up the conversation, “What have you been up to? Have you spotted Nomusa on the catwalk yet? She’s looking amazing...”

At which point Nomusa steals the limelight as she glides out in the most exquisite evening gown and killer heels.

For the next ten minutes we’re totally caught up in the action of the fashion show. And then suddenly it’s over, with just the audience and the music left behind.

It’s kind of cool actually, all of us outside on the beach, chatting underneath the stars in the balmy evening air, waiting for Nomusa to join us. There’s a full moon coming up and a good vibe going down, and everyone’s getting on really well – even Zack and Zoom.

As most of the crowd starts leaving the beach Zack spots someone he knows walking by and runs after her to catch her.

“Hope, meet Gugu, the new girl from downstairs,” he says as he gets back, introducing me to a short, freckly girl with a sweet face.

She looks really nice. Honestly. But when I say hello I can’t help remembering her flirty voice on the phone as she tried to make a telephonic move on my guy, and I know my smile doesn’t quite reach my eyes. I feel a rush of guilt at my lack of neighbourly warmth.

After a stint of half-hearted conversation on my part, Zack looks around at the rest of our circle of friends hanging out and chatting as the beach gets emptier and emptier, and turns to run his brilliant idea past both Gugu and I.

“Hey! Why break up a good party? My mom’s away so we could all go back to my place and chill for a few hours. What do you girls think?”

## Reader comments

Here are some comments left by readers at [www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/)

I liked the mood and the atmosphere, please try give more information and cant wait for the next chapter! **Mkfunkx**

I really love this story, remind me of myself, yeah I was also in that position, and at the end I was the 1 who got hurt, -but for hope sake, I truly hope she won't get hurt, bring on the next chapter please!  
**Sha sha d**

Why did Zack invite Velaphi to his place????! He should be alone with hope!!! And maybe they could make a bit of romance...**Exotic**

## What do you think?

*A moonlit beach, good vibes, beautiful people getting to know each other better and a house party to go to...this is a night made for magic. Could there be some new developments on the cards?*

To answer this question, or to leave your own comment, go to [www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/)

## CHAPTER 11

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We all chip in for a Mozzie Cab to take us to Zack's place, and squash in for the short journey. The driver's pretty cool to let us *all* get in – we're quite a crowd! With Lindi, Nomusa, Deevya, Gugu, Zoom and his three friends, as well as Zack and I, we're a good party waiting to happen. I'm wedged in between Zack and Zoom.

Zack's holding my hand and talking to Gugu who's sitting on his other side. I had a moment on the beach earlier when Gugu glanced nervously over at me, and I could see her suss the vibe and clock that Zack and I have a connection – and she backed right off. So I'm so over my little stab of jealousy. Who needs it anyway? And I'm having so much fun!

“Have you been doing any more street art?” Zoom asks, his eyes giving him away as they flicker down to Zack's hand stroking mine.

“No, I haven't actually. I've been kind of busy, but I'm starting to feel like I might be ready for something new,” I reply.

“You've really got a huge talent,” says Zoom sincerely, “I really love your work. You should keep at it. You're a star on the rise!”

I can tell Zoom really means it. How sweet is he? And I know he is so passionate about his street art, so that really is a compliment. Hmm...he's really good looking too – I wonder if there's any chance of setting him up with Deevya?

The taxi stops outside Davenport Centre.

## THE AWESOMES: KISS WHILE YOU CAN

“Isn’t this where YOU live?” asks Zoom. “I thought we were going to Zack’s place?”

“Oh, didn’t you know? We actually live in the same block. That’s how we know each other. Zack lives downstairs from me,” I tell him as I clamber out of the taxi.

Zoom looks like I’ve just told him some really bad news.

“Are you ok?” I ask him as he gets out behind me.

He looks at me helplessly, like he’s way out of his depth, and then he laughs ruefully.

“How do I get myself into these situations?” he mumbles to himself.

“What situations?” I ask him, but he waves me off as he heads over to his friends, who giggle and slap his back consolingly as he reaches them.

Deevya slips in next to me as we all stroll across the parking lot to the rickety old lifts inside the entrance to Davenport Centre.

“Shame, I think Zoom has it pretty bad for you,” Deevya says quietly, making sure nobody can overhear

“Did he say something to you?” I ask, as I turn to look at her.

“Nope, he didn’t need to. It’s written all over his face,” Deevya says matter of factly.

Somebody should invent a device so that no human being can ever accidentally fall for someone whose heart belongs to another.

The lift doors are open when we get there, but Deevya and I wave the others on, and take the stairs so that we can carry on chatting.

I sigh out loud.

“That was a big sigh...what’s on your mind?” asks Deevya.

“Oh...I wasn’t going to say anything...” I begin.

“Well please do, I’m all ears,” urges Deevya, always hungry for the inside scoop.

“Well, it’s just that I’d kind of hoped that you and Zoom might have a thing for each other. I just thought the l.u.r.v.e coast might be clear now that Panther’s left Durban,” I say, as we start climbing.

Deevya laughs out loud. “Hope, are you *still* barking up the wrong tree? Panther and I were always *only* good friends. I’ve told you that. *And besides* – he was 13 years older than me. *And* you might have noticed that he had the love of his life’s name proudly tattooed on his arm for the whole world to see and I loved that about him. What were you thinking? Seriously! And Zoom is just not my type, sorry.”

## THE AWESOMES: KISS WHILE YOU CAN

Nomusa catches up with us, taking a few steps at a time, “And what about Panther’s little brother? Is HE your type?” she chips in cheekily. She must have heard that last bit.

Deevya almost trips on the step.

“How do you know about Cameron?” she asks, clearly taken by surprise.

Nomusa grins. “Well if the you and ‘Cam’ are going to chat away constantly in public on Facebook, it’s not like it’s a big secret, is it? A pity he lives in New York, but nothing can hold back true love, can it?”

Cameron? This is all news to me!

“Oh, shut it you Facebook snoop,” says Deevya playfully, “you girls have overactive imaginations,” but despite her joking tone I noticed a vulnerability in Deevya’s face that I’ve never seen before.

We’re a bit breathless as we get to Zack’s flat. He’s already got the music on, the lights dimmed and is busy lighting candles as we get in.

As he makes his way across the room to open the door to the balcony he touches my back and smiles at me.

“Hey guys,” he says to the whole bunch of us, all milling about in the lounge, “there’s a great view from out here. And it’s much cooler than inside. Come on out.”

I notice that Zoom is looking really uncomfortable, almost hopping from one foot to the other. Weirdness. Everyone heads for the balcony, but Zoom turns away, seemingly fascinated by the wall on the other end of the lounge. Zoom’s friends also hang back, looking a little bit apprehensive.

It’s all a bit strange and I puzzle over it for a few seconds before I join all the others outside.

As I step outdoors I notice everyone is gaping out at the building diagonally opposite, and Zack is looking quite taken aback.

I turn my head to follow his gaze and gasp out loud.

Have you ever seen glow-in-the-dark paint? Well somebody has decorated the building we’re staring at with an enormous painted heart, and written inside it ‘*You’re totally hot Hope L’Amour*’. It’s all been painted in glow-in-the-dark paint, and right now this mysterious message is glowing as brightly and vividly as if it were high-voltage neon lighting.

I just cannot believe my eyes!

## Reader comments

Here are some comments left by readers at [www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/)

Thts the swtest thng 2 do,,i thnk zoom iz the prson hu done I

This story rockz my world keep it up yoza nd bigup to the awsms!:) :) **Ms angel**

I love dis story and i thnk hope n zack make a gud couple bt i thnk zoom n hope wld b perfect 4 each other

## What do you think?

*Who did it? Our readers recommend this: Zac: 18%, Zoom: 77%, The Awesomes: 4%.*

To answer this question, or to leave your own comment, go to [www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/)

## CHAPTER 12

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As Zoom steps out onto the balcony he is blushing so badly he's almost glowing more than the building. He puts his hands up in surrender, does a little apologetic bow and confesses.

"It was me," he says in a voice that's slightly strangled.

And then he rubs a hand over his face and laughs ruefully to himself as he stares at the floor, while we all take that in.

"Nice work Zoom, you incurable romantic," one of his friend's calls out, and Zoom shoots him a grateful look.

"I've been known to get myself in these embarrassing situations before," Zoom goes on, addressing us all, then glances at the massive building glowing with his enormous message, "but maybe this is the most embarrassing."

There's a little bit of nervous giggling amongst the girls, but we're all still taking this all in.

Zoom turns to look at me with a smile that is half apologetic and half desperate for me to save him from this nightmare. It's quite endearing actually.

"Hope, if I'd known you and Zack were back on, I wouldn't have, umm...worn my heart on your neighbour's building," he says with a rueful smile. "It's just that after that story about your Valentine's in the paper, and then meeting you and discovering you are so...well...lovely, this idea just popped into my head. When I first met you I could tell you were still quite heart sore from your break up, and feeling so exposed about your street art 'love letter' – so I thought that looking out your window and seeing THAT surprise one night might...help."

Deevya has a huge smile on her face. "I think it's awesome," she says, "You had no way of knowing Zack and Hope were back on, or that we'd all end up together back at Zack's place tonight of all nights for this collective viewing! But it's classic!"

The rest of us keep staring agog at the wall with its glowing pink heart and words. I feel like everyone's waiting for *me* to say something. I turn to look at Zoom again and he looks so shy and vulnerable. Kind of like how I felt just a few days ago when I had my own paint-on-wall hoo haa.

## THE AWESOMES: KISS WHILE YOU CAN

“Zoom – I love it! I mean, I love Zack, but I of all people can only admire you for doing that,” I say, and then I start to giggle. Me – hot? I’ve never really thought of myself like that.

Zoom also starts to laugh, and then so does everyone. I feel Zack’s hand on my back and then I hear him say jokingly, “Thanks for completely showing me up dude! I’m going to have to think of something *unbelievable* to impress Hope after the scale of that work of art, Zoom.”

I love Zack even more for having a heart that’s much bigger than his ego.

The party takes off. Isn’t it amazing how these crazy, truthful expressions that you can’t run away from really get under everyone’s skin?

I can see Zoom is going to be fine. He’s one chilled guy. Zoom’s friends tussle his hair affectionately and Nomusa turns up the music.

I notice Lindi follow Nomusa into the lounge, and say something to her. Nomusa smiles radiantly, and then the two of them kiss, right there, for the entire world to see.

I say a mental thank you to Zoom, for providing the inspiration to say what you feel and roll with the consequences. We’re all only human, after all.

Zack pulls me into his arms, and I love the feeling of his body as he hugs me tight. Over his shoulder I notice that Gugu is talking animatedly to Zoom. Her eyes are sparkling, and every time she emphasises a point, she touches his arm.

### Reader comments

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This is actually cute. Could not help feeling all fluffy inside. Wish the world really had that magic feel every now and then. **Mao**

I think its ADORABLE and incrdibly BRAVE ! zoom is 1 in a 1000000. **IollipOp**

Yoh zoom is a gd guy except or his ego . Great move there dude . Bt some guys find it easy to do the same nd continue plyin a fool with girls... They jst want other thngd besyds being with u nd enjoying what the girl is. **Beautiful**

### What do you think?

*What do you think of Zoom’s experience? Is it better to risk embarrassing yourself by showing your feelings, than to never show them at all?*

To answer this question, or to leave your own comment, go to [www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/)

## CHAPTER 13

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I loooove Saturday. Seriously.

## THE AWESOMES: KISS WHILE YOU CAN

I had a good sleep-in this morning until my mom woke me up with cup of tea. Sweet. I propped myself up on my pillows and looked out the window at the building across the way. I couldn't see any of Zoom's handiwork in the light of day, but I realised I had a ridiculous grin on my face when I even thought about it.

The rest of the night had been cool. More than cool actually. AMAZING. Zack played DJ and got some tunes going on the sound system, pumped up the volume, and before you knew it we'd renamed the living room Club Lounge. Rocking. And we all were. Every now and then someone would flick the light switch on and off really fast to get a bit of a strobe effect going. All that we needed to complete the picture was a mirror ball. But then again we did have a glow-in-the-dark artwork beaming through the open balcony door, so maybe that was enough.

Zoom and his friends are really cool. Snappy dressers and dancers – and they were loving Deevya. Birds of a feather, I guess. Nomusa and Lindi were totally on form, ruling the dance floor. And Zack was the best. He's my guy. Sometimes you just need a dance floor and some beats to know you're totally made for each other. Magic. *What* a feeling. My tummy flips even thinking about him.

And so tonight is the big 'first' date. Officially.

Zack and I have had such an amazing time over the last few days that I thought that one of those moments probably counted as 'the date'. When I said that right after Zack asked if tonight could be the 'big date' night, he looked horrified.

"Hope – this date is a big deal! I remember *everything* you said that day when we started patching things up – that we're still so young and just discovering ourselves and each other. And these last days have been so much better than ever before that I don't think we should *ever* forget to be open to that sense of discovery. I'm not taking anything for granted. I would never have forgotten my promise to take you on another 'first date'. It was my idea after all. And I could *never* resist the chance of spending time alone with you."

After a speech like that from the hottest guy on earth, it's not really that surprising that I'm feeling like 999 million dollars.

So, after a quiet day at home, I'm dressing up for the occasion. I've got my radio on and I'm happily humming away to the tunes as I get dressed. A blue denim mini over black leggings, a cool strappy top that Deevya made for me, and big, thin silver hoop earrings. I remember that Zack says he has a surprise for me, and that it involves a bit of walking, so I opt for flat sandals with pretty straps that twist up around my ankles.

I've just finished putting on a light slick of lipgloss when the doorbell rings. I take one last look at myself in the mirror and notice that my eyes are sparkling, and my skin is glowing. Could it be that I'm in love?

I open the front door and I can't see the dude for the huge bunch of flowers he's holding in front of him.

"Happy Valentine's Day," I hear Zack's voice say behind the masses of roses.

## THE AWESOMES: KISS WHILE YOU CAN

Hooray! After I've fussed with finding a vase and putting the flowers in water, stolen a few delectable kisses in the kitchen, and forgotten and then remembered my bag, we're on our way.

"You look beautiful," says Zack quietly, holding my hand as we stroll down the road.

The sun is close to slipping behind the hills behind us, and in the trees above us the Indian Mynah birds are shouting their goodbyes to the day.

I feel quite shy. A proper date is just so different to...well, just being together normally. Zack squeezes my hand and shoots me a look as if to tell me that he knows, and it's fine.

I don't know where we're going but I'm happy to just go with it. Zack's pretty quiet too as we wonder through a maze of back streets, past old blocks of flats and little houses with red-tiled rooftops and overgrown patches of tropical garden out front. I glance at Zack from time to time and for a moment I think he looks terribly sad, but then he notices my gaze and his face melts into the most heart-warming smile I've ever seen in my life.

Umbilo Road is quiet and sun dappled when we get there. The usual thrum of roaring pantechnicon trucks, blaring taxis and normal cars acting like racing cars, has dulled to a very gentle trickle of unhurried weekend traffic.

I think Zack must have chosen this route because it goes right past my street art. The way things worked out on Valentine's Day, we've never actually looked at it together. Even though he's here this time, and holding my hand, I still can't help my heart from beating faster when we get there. Bad memories have a way of hanging about in the body, even when life has moved on. I can even feel my hand get sweaty as I remember the terrible feeling of that day, and I think Zack notices too because as we cross Umbilo Road towards *that* bench, he raises it to his lips and gives it a tender kiss.

Zack sits first, and then I tuck in next to him. He puts his arm around my shoulders and pulls me in really close. I put my cheek against his heart and I can feel his heart is beating really fast too.

"So I know I didn't give you a Valentine's card," he smiles down at me, tucking a loose strand of hair behind my ear. "but I just want you to know that your Valentine's surprise was one of the best things that's ever, ever happened to me. And I'm sorry I fluffed it up so badly on the day."

"Zack... it's all over and done with," I say softly, "it's totally fine." But in my heart I feel so touched that he still worries about the sore spots that day left behind.

We both look up at that huge painted wall and I get such a surprise that I burst out laughing, and then I burst into tears, and then I throw my arms around Zack's neck and hold him tight.

There's a new addition to The Awesomes street art. Somehow, sometime – I don't know when – Zack has been doing some painting. The original picture is still the same – me leaning out of my bedroom window looking down at Zack. Zack leaning out of his bedroom window, looking at me. My paper aeroplane with '*Happy Valentine's Day Zack! Kiss Me Now! Love Hope.*' is still there, eternally floating down to him.

But now there's another paper aeroplane that he's throwing up to me. And on it's side, in Zack's handwriting it says, "*Hope L'Amour, you're the girl of my dreams. Love always. Zack*".



## THE AWESOMES: KISS WHILE YOU CAN

I'm lost in the moment, happier than I've ever been, cradled in Zack's arms. I pull back to look at him with a huge smile on my face, and I see that same deeply sad look in his eye. My heart flips again – in a bad way.

“What's wrong Zack?” I ask anxiously, “What's going on?”

He shakes his head. “I'll tell you another time Hope. Lets just enjoy right now. Really, it's nothing.”

But I know it's not nothing. I have this terrible feeling in my stomach all of a sudden and I know that whatever's going on I need to know *right now*.

“Zack – you have to tell me,” I say, and my voice is both stern and scared all at the same time.

“Hope...” he says, and trails off. I can tell he's trying to think of a way to get out of this situation.

“NOW Zack,” I insist.

“Ok...I really didn't want to do this here. I was going to tell you tomorrow, once we'd had our date. I only found out myself this afternoon, so I'm still trying to take it all in...”

I'm staring at him with wide eyes, afraid of what he's going to say next.

He sighs, runs his hands through his hair, smiles at me and strokes my cheek.

“You know my mom went to Cape Town on a business trip yesterday?” he begins.

I nod. Of course I know. That's how we all ended up partying at Zack's place last night.

“Well apparently it was more than just a business trip. When she got back home today she told me that part of the reason she went to Cape Town was to have dinner with someone – a man called Justice that she's apparently been Internet dating for the last year. I haven't known anything about this until today.”

I keep nodding, urging Zack to go on.

His forehead furrows with worry as he speaks, “Anyway, she say's she's always had a good feeling about him, but when they met each other in person it felt like they were meant to be...and apparently he feels the same way about her.”

Zack looks away down the street and then takes a deep breath before he finishes.

“Hope, I know this sounds totally crazy. It *is* crazy...but they've decided they want to be together. And so my mom has decided that we're going to move to Cape Town. Soon. Like next week. She says he is going to support us until she finds another job. And there's a really good school nearby that will take me.”

I can't think of a single thing to say.

## THE AWESOMES: KISS WHILE YOU CAN

Zack carries on. “I’ve never known her like this. My mom hasn’t had a man in her life since my dad left her before I was born. But she’s glowing. And *totally* certain. And I can’t tell her she’s wrong, because I know that feeling. Because that’s exactly the same way I feel about you Hope

### Reader comments

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wow i feel touched.man wht a story.to me it feels like its real and those things realy happend.bt at the end i feel sorry 4 hope.nice do another one i would love to read it.

**DANIEL**

I loved all thee awesomes stories i cnt wait for da nxt story n zack does he really hv to go lts gv hope a lil joy n zack loves ha too y cnt they b togeda. **SASHA**

We need more!!! You cant leave us hanging like that. What will happen to Zack and Hope? Me myself i need to know. **Angel lips**

### What do you think?

*What’s the best party you’ve ever been to?*

To answer this question, or to leave your own comment, go to [www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/](http://www.yoza.mobi/stories/33/)