

ECHOES OF WAR



CLEOPHAS MALALA

BUTERE GIRLS

SYNOPSIS

There exists a natural balance between RESPECT for the old and CARE for the young. Those who are old bring experience while those who are young bring enthusiasm and creative innovation. This is the relationship that weaves together our ever evolving society.

This play is a hyperbole attempt to illustrate the widening gap between two generations; the old and the young. The artistic context is set in the Royal Velvet Emirates, a fictitious kingdom in the Middle East. In this Kingdom, the old have quickly lost trust of the younger generation. The young are agitated by the inflexible strictness of the old.

The balance is an inevitable compromise.

CHARACTER BIOGRAPHY

SULTAN

A tall energetic man in his prime time. He oozes all qualities of power and affluence. His gesticulation and elaborate movements paint him as an authoritative man in full control.

MAMA ANIFA

A woman steeped into religion. She demonstrates qualities of an over - protective mother saddened by the pain of her daughter's mistake.

POLICE

The father to Anifa Imana. An overzealous security officer. He finds himself subconsciously conflicted between traditional attributes of a child and the realities of a new generational daughter.

MUSTAFA

The embodiment of a new generational innovator. He finds himself on the wrong side of the law and has to fight the stain of a revolutionary.

ANIFA IMANA

The personification of Artificial Intelligence. She has all the attributes of quantum computing and synthesized storage. She represents the future; a collaboration between nature and software.

IMAM

A representative of the cultural background in which strict Islamic rules are followed and executed.

- TEMPO** - Moderately fast
- ILLUMINATION** - Bright then dim
- MOOD** - Predominantly that of uncertainty
- SETTING** - Royal Palace of Arabic architecture with Walls of Gold and Stone; The palace rises from the desert sands, its walls a symphony of honey-colored stone and shimmering gold leaf. Intricate geometric patterns and flowing calligraphy adorn the facades, whispering tales of ancient dynasties. Precious stones, lead into sprawling courtyards. Inside the palace, richly woven carpets, silk tapestries, and glittering chandeliers. Walls are covered in intricate mosaics and hand-painted frescoes, depicting scenes of royal processions, epic battles, and mythical creatures.
- MISE EN SCENE** - rostrums to, mark focal points. Acting space is determined by the scenic design available.
- EXEGESIS** - The police station stands as a symbol of both order and fragility in the midst of chaos. Its once-imposing facade is now scarred with bullet holes and graffiti, a testament to the violence that has engulfed the city. The windows, shattered and boarded up, offer glimpses of a ransacked interior, where desks lie overturned and files are scattered across the floor. A faint smell of dust and decay hangs in the air, mingling with the acrid scent of smoke.

Inside the police station, the atmosphere is tense and oppressive. Armed officers, their faces etched with weariness and suspicion, patrol the corridors, their eyes scanning the crowd of people seeking help or justice. The station's cells, once meant to hold criminals, now house refugees and displaced families, their desperation palpable.

The station's function has shifted in this war-torn landscape. It's no longer just a place to report crimes, but a refuge for the vulnerable and a symbol of what little authority remains. The officers, stretched thin and under-resourced, struggle to maintain order amidst the chaos, their efforts a beacon of hope in a sea of despair.

Inside a police station cell. There is evidence of tight security. The Police Officer in charge of the station is taking the suspect's testimony. There are vocal chants outside the police cells.

Officer: *(Emphatically)* Mustafa!

Mustafa: Officer, You requested a statement and a statement you shall have.

Police: Proceed but remember this statement will be used by our prosecution team.

Mustafa: My father and I were not part of the demonstrators.

Police: *(Making wild movements)* State the truth, young man.

Mustafa: My father is a paramedic. That is the pure truth.

Police: *(Dismissingly)*. Those are your words.

Mustafa: And I... I am a fourth year student of information technology.

Police: Proceed.

Mustafa: I developed an application called telemedicine.

Police: *(Inquisitively moving closer to the detainee)* What is telemedicine?

Mustafa: Officer *(He resorts an elaborate explanation)* This is an application that enables doctors to diagnose and treat patients from miles away.

Police: Young man, did you say your father is a paramedic?

Mustafa: Most certainly sir.

Police: And you are a university student. Right?

Mustafa: Right.

Police: Then tell me... what was a paramedic and a student doing on the streets during a demonstration?

Mustafa: *(Emphatically)* Officer, I was testing my project. We helped many stranded patients.

Police: *(Interrupting)* Patients or demonstrators?

Mustafa: Alright... *(With resignation)* demonstrators!

Police: Good! Proceed!

Mustafa: It was during this melee; a stray bullet hit my father.

Police: Correction. Your stray father was hit by a bullet. The bullet was on its legitimate path. *(With finality)* Right?

Mustafa: Right.

Police: Write!

Mustafa: That is when I was arrested.

Police: Liar.

Mustafa: I committed no crime! I am innocent and that is all I have to say. Full stop.

Police: *(Tears the statement into shreds. Scattering them on the floor in utter anger)* this is trash, hogwash, balderdash.

Mustafa: That is the truth; nothing but the truth!

Mother: What mistake has my son made?

Police: Madam Community Administrator, your son is among the people destabilizing the tranquility of our nation!

Mustafa: I am innocent!

Mother: The Imam can attest; Mustafa is a disciplined child.

Imam: This young man helps me in teaching the children at the Madrasa using the latest technology.

Police: No. This is a hardcore criminal.

Mother: Officer it pains me when I see my son in this state.

Police: *(Changing the mood to melancholy)* I am also a parent of a daughter about his age.

(Figurative appearance of the mother and daughter to enhance character introduction)

Ma Anifa: Anifa Imana is her name, and I am her mother.

Police: *(Breaking into a sorrowful rendition)* a daughter I took to university so that she may help me in my old age. Unfortunately someone has ruined the bright future of my daughter! After four years of my sweat, she has come back home with a PHD in pregnancy. I am still looking for that baboon who caused all this havoc.

Mother: Officer, as the community administrator, I interact with them in my day to day duties and I can assure you that this current generation is very delicate. It must be handled with a lot of care.

Police: *(Finality)* Young man. Flap those gates. Go home. But this should serve as a stern warning to you and your friends. *(Opening the gates)* Go Out!

Anifa: There you are!

Mama Anifa: Anifa, tell your father what you told me.

Anifa: Father, this is the boy who abducted my heart and set my soul on fire.

Mustafa: *(Alarmed)* Anifa!

Anifa: While others were busy bombing buildings, he was busy bombing me.

Mustafa: *(In a bid to protest)* Anifa stop!

Ma Anifa: My temper has reached dangerous levels! *(Lamenting in painful rendition)* You have no idea how

difficult it is to raise a daughter in this time and age.

Mother: Calm down.

Police: I need a clear explanation on how this biological atomic bomb landed in my daughter's womb. Wait and see!

(He paces to get out of stage. (Primary and secondary back up sounds are necessary to heighten the tension and impression of an approaching helicopter. The characters are thrown into a frenzy and panic combined. They will rearrange themselves in a bid to receive the unknown visitors).

Fatma: Chopper

Layla: 'Helicofta'

Fatma: No, it is called helicopter!

Dweller 1: Aeroplane! And who might that be?

Jamal: This is military surveillance chopper.

All: *Subhana Allah!*

Fatma: They must be looking for us.

Lennah: This is too much.

Dweller 1: We are tired of this intimidation!

Dweller 2: We are tired of this war!

Fatma: They are now provoking us.

Jamal: Let us run and hide in the control room.

Dweller 1: No, in the mosque!

Fatma: No, in the control room.

Jamal: Run.

Servant 2: *(Making an absolute stage appearance)* we are from the royal palace

Servant 1: Servants of the royal highness, ruler of the velvet Emirates.

Servant 2: His royal highness, the Sultan!

Servant 1: Madam Community administrator, who is Mustafa Ali?

Mustafa: I thought the war is over and the rebuilding of the Country has just begun.

Servant 2: Our instructions are simple; we are here to pick and deliver Mustafa Ali to his Majesty the sultan.

(The characters are in a pensive mood and panic mood engulfs the scene)

Mother: As the community administrator. I have not received any official notice regarding this.

Servant 1: We ask again, who is Mustafa Ali?

Anifa: Of course a terrorist

Mama Anifa: What has he done this time? Has he bombed somebody's daughter again?

Anifa: Or planted a landmine in someone's fertile land again?

Mustafa: Anifa, this is not a child's play!

Anifa: But this is your child..

Mustafa: Aaaaaaagh! Enough of this nonsense!

Mama Mustafa: My son Mustafa! Control your anger.

Both: Good!

Servant 2: So, you the Mustafa!

Mustafa: Mother, I am now scared.

Both: Scared? Why?

Mother: Sir, do you have any documentation proving why my son is being taken?

Servants: No!

Mama Mustafa: Then, is he under arrest?

Servants: No!

Mustafa: So what is this?

Anifa: *(And aside as she seeks to address and imaginary audience)* Abduction!

Servant 1: What did you just say?

Anifa: Abortion!

Mustafa: Anifa!

Servant 2: Mustafa, you are required to choose two people to accompany you to the royal palace!

Mustafa: Alright, I choose my mother...

Both: Yes!

Anifa: And your bomb!

Mustafa: Anifa!

Servant 2: *(Resolutely)* Your mother and Anifa.

Servant 1: Quick, the engine is already on. Roaring like the lion of the dessert! Let us proceed. This way.

Mama Anifa: You are not going anywhere. Come this way. You cannot jump from the frying pan to a blazing fire.

(The following shall have a complete transformation of a new Scene. Transition to the palace is smooth and swift. Primary and Secondary backup sounds may be necessary to heighten the mood. Backdrops may flap to shift the scenery to that of a royal Palace.)

Servant 1: Behold, the Royal Palace of the Velvet Emirates.

Sultan: *(Exuding a lot of royal power and an impression of well cultured sophistication, he walks towards the invited guests)* I am the ruler of the Velvet Emirates and you are my honored guest!

Mustapha: Thank you, your Royal Highness.

Mama Mustapha: Your Highness, I am Mustafa's mother.

Sultan: I am aware of who you are.

Mama Mustafa: *(Inquisitively)* for what purpose does my son owe this royal invitation?

Sultan: Your son was amongst seven hundred university students who presented their proposals on critical innovations.

Mustafa: Yes, your highness. My project was about Telemedicine. A virtual application connecting patients to a global pool of medical practitioners.

Sultan: That proposal excited all of us. A mindboggling idea worth royal recognition.

Mustafa: I am honored.

Mama Mustafa: *(Oozing with excitement)* I am excited!

Sultan: It is for that reason, that I, Sultan of the Velvet Emirates, declare you the winner of the project competition!

All: Yes!

(The mood turns to jubilation)

Mustafa: You're royal highness, I am humbled by this honor.

Mama Mustafa: This is the greatest news of our lives.

Mustafa: *(In total submission)* Your-Highness, may I return home to celebrate this auspicious moment with my friends!

Sultan: You are live on all government media platforms. Let your friends revel with you in your moment of glory!

Mama Mustafa: Thank you, your majesty.

Sultan: As the Emperor, I have decided to incorporate these young people into the decision making process of our country. Mustafa as the winner, you will receive this.

Mustafa: *(Full of ecstasy)* Wow! A palace.

Sultan: This palace is vast enough to host you and your entire lineage.

Servant 1: Here a cash award for you to use. For the next ten years, you shall wear this crown as the Peace Ambassador of the Royal Velvet Emirates.

Mama Mustafa: My son, Mustafa, *Allah* has remembered us! From the ashes of war, we shall rise!

Mustafa: From the debris of war, we shall rebuild our country.

Mama Mustafa: And from the echoes of war, the twisting tunes of peace love and unity shall be composed.

Sultan: To demonstrate the seriousness of this award, your proposal will be fully implemented by my government.

Mustafa: Mother, this feels like a dream.

Sultan: ***(This a towering gait of a powerful leader, he paces around the palace as he occasionally shows compassion to Mustafa and his mother)***

All: Wow!

Fatma: And just like that, Mustafa has joined the club of power.

Anifa: *(With a pinch of jest)* and just like that, I am the first lady and the mother of the unborn billionaire.

All: *(In jubilation)* Weweeeeee!!!!!!!

Sultan: And to the general public; this kind gesture should not be misinterpreted as a show of weakness. May I remind you, all those who fueled hatred, spite and divisions amongst the people of this nation, shall

be hunted down, arrested and dealt with! No stone shall be left unturned. Every nook and cranny shall be searched. All your hiding places shall be turned upside down. We shall find you!

Servant 2: Your Royal Highness, It time for *Salah al-Zuhr*.

Servant 1: Our midday prayers.

(At the rubble village, Mustafa's generational friends are gathered around live streaming on a social media platform, watching the grandiose reception of Mustafa into royal affluence).

Mama Anifa: Imam, it is good you are here. I am not convinced that my daughter should be married in this unholy family.

Police: Over my dead body!

Mama Anifa: This will not happen under my watch.

Imam: Mama Anifa, I agree. *Nikah* is a very integral stage in someone's religious life. However, this generation must be guided.

Mama Anifa: *(In a show of absolute resolve)* I refuse to be a part of this.

Imam: Calm down

Anifa: Mama!

Mama Anifa: Anifa, let us go home! We must detonate that bomb ticking inside you!

Anifa: *(Speaking in a teenage slung and coded speech work that is enjoyed only amongst the generational friends)* what the eef!

Police: And why are you clasping those peculiar spectacles?

Ma Anifa: Anifa, since when did you become visually impaired?

Anifa: These are not mere lenses but a prism—a bridge between your fossilized perceptions and the seven-dimensional tapestry of tomorrow.

Police: What witchcraft is this?

Ma Anifa: Will this sorcery reveal why a girl cradled in faith now dares to swell with shame before taking marriage vows?

Anifa: Mother, Father, put them on. Gaze deeper. *(Activates the device; a holographic womb shimmers into existence)* What do you truly see inside that womb?

Police: *(squinting)* I see empty air.

Ma Anifa: *(voice trembling)* I see no child... only shadows.

Imam: *(leaning closer)* Anifa—are you truly expectant?

Anifa: Yes, I am expectant—but not with a child.

All: what!

Anifa: This pregnancy is a symbol. One that carries the expectations of my generational friends.

All: Yes!

Anifa: I carry life— but not of flesh. This womb pulses with the unborn expectations of a generation. Behold!

(The hologram fractures into radiant threads)

Jamal: *(pointing)* Expectations of good governance – roots unyielding, branches heavy with fruits of justice and not the rot of corruption! Expectations of universal healthcare; a shield guarding every life, from cradle to grave!

Lennah: *(teary-eyed)* Expectations for job opportunities – the light that will illuminate our future!

Fatma: Expectations of affordable education

Lennah: Wings of knowledge lifting even the forgotten to soar.

Anifa: *(softly)* this is the child I carry—a chorus of desires from my generational friends. (Lost in a vacuum of hallucination) Yes mother, I am expectant. I am expectant!

Ma Anifa: Child, you speak in riddles; you are hallucinating!

Imam: Mama Anifa, do not interfere. Allow the child to dream.

Police: This is juvenile myopia; you must be living in a utopia!

All: *(They respond in similar slung)* Chorea! Chorea!

Mama Anifa: And who are these?

Anifa: These are my generational friends.

Mama Anifa: I don't like this company.

Police: Neither do I!

Fatma: Guys, *nikama hatutakikani hapa. (It seems our presence is not needed here)*

Anifa: *(More generational slung that cuts off the elderly and focuses information in generational circles)*
Chude! Chude!

All: *Chudegenge!*

Ma Anifa: You cannot defy your parents like this. That boy is a terrorist.

Anifa: Mama I love terrorists.

Police: Idiot

Anifa: I love idiots, papa!

Police: *(Affirmatively)* this is not the place for such discussions.

Anifa: This is not a discussion, this is to inform you that after thorough consultation...

Both: Consultation? With who?

Anifa: With myself. I have resolved; to love and cherish him... till death, do us part.

Police: This is madness.

Anifa: I am madly in love. So help me God.

Ma Anifa: This is outrageous. You must have lost your mind. Let us go home now.

Anifa: I am an adult of sound mind. I am off.

Police: Anifa! Stop this nonsense

Ma Anifa: Anifa. Where are you going?

Anifa: To hell.

Ma Anifa: To hell?

Police: Anifa!

Ma Anifa: Anifa!

Mama Anifa: Imam!

Police: Imam!

All: Anifa!

In the Palace. The air is thick with the scent of rare incense and exotic spices. Inner courtyards, secluded and serene, offer respite from the grandeur of the public spaces. The sounds of trickling water from indoor fountains, and the soft echoes of footsteps on marble floors, create an atmosphere of quiet power. The whole picture is an embodiment of opulence and power associated with royal Arabic heritage.

Servant 2: Mustafa, before receiving this award, we must conduct a comprehensive background check on you.

Servant 1: We hope that you have never participated in any activity that has breached the peace and tranquility of our kingdom.

Mustafa: I swear; just ask my mother, I hold a certificate of good conduct.

Mother: Mustafa is a disciplined boy. He even prays five times a day, when reminded.

Servant 1: Mustafa, now log into all your social media accounts.

Sultan: Any progress?

Servant: Ya Sayyidi...

Servant 2: Ya sultan...

Servant 1: Ya Mawlana...

Sultan: Kallim! Speak.

Servant: We have ...

Sultan: Found out what?

Servant: We are afraid.

Sultan: Of what? Disclose your findings!

The mood shifts drastically to a tense one filled with the air of uncertainty. Short paces characterize the floor movements of actors. Wild gesticulation becomes widespread. Secondary backup sounds are used to heighten the tension.

Servant: This young man is the reason our country is sinking in the gulf of war.

Servant 2: There is clear evidence of the pivotal role he plays in inciting and fueling violence using his social media accounts.

Servant 1: Mustafa is a spark that ignites a wild fire. Have a look at this.

Sultan: *(Mind-boggled)* Bring my spectacles... what!

Mother: *Subhanallah!*

Mustafa: Mother!

Sultan: *Sakit!*

Servant 2: *Kaput!*

Servant 1: The nation awaits the royal decree.

Sultan: *(Majestically standing as a pillar of power)* Let it be inscribed; this young man shall serve as a lesson

to anyone who dares to threaten the tranquility of our great nation. Activate the cameras. Go live. So that his generational friends may witness the consequences of their treachery. Take him to the hangman's noose.

Mother: *(Devastated) Nooooo.*

In the Control Room - An ultramodern computer hub designed for penetrating secured links. It is painted sleek, cold efficiency, a blend of cutting-edge technology and clandestine purpose. It is located in a nondescript, heavily fortified location. The interior is characterized by a minimalist aesthetic, with clean lines, dark, sound-dampening surfaces, and subtle, adjustable lighting. Rows of high-performance workstations, each equipped with multiple holographic displays and tactile interfaces, dominate the space.

Anifa: Welcome to the control room.

All: Anifa!

Anifa: Our command Centre. Our coordinating hub.

Layla: Fatma, I have never been here before.

Anifa: There is always a first time.

Layla: I am eager; ready for the induction.

Jamal: Anifa Imana is a genius. Her intelligence is unmatched

Layla: I am now curious!

Jamal: She is a combination of an encyclopedia, a library, an archive, a museum, google... name it

Fatma: Anifa Imana, is a repository of all imaginable solutions.

Layla: I am confused.

Fatma: Ask her any question, and you will receive an instant, correct answer.

Layla: Any question?

Jamal: Yes, any question.

Anifa: Ask.

Layla: Okay. Anifa Imana, who is the president of Afghanistan?

Anifa: Hibatullah Akhundzada

Layla: Name three types of alkaline chemicals found on the periodic table.

Anifa: Sodium, potassium, and lithium.

Layla: Determine the average velocity of a car travelling 100 meters east in five seconds.

Anifa: *(Speaking in technological jargon that is in tandem with her work station)* Average velocity is equals displacement over time. Given a displacement of 100 meters and a time is 5 seconds, the Average Velocity is 20 meters per second.

Layla: Lastly, in a country called Kenya. Produce the photos and names of the adjudicators presiding over the Western Region drama festivals?

Anifa: *(she instantly produces the photos and the names)*

Jamal: We told you. Anifa Imana is a spectacle. She can not only produce photos but also live videos from that drama event at Chavakali High school.

Anifa: Come take a look at this.

Layla: Jamal, you said her full name is Anifa Imana?

Anifa: Don't struggle with the full name, just call me by my Initials.

All: A.I

Anifa: Yes, A.I for Anifa Imana.

Jamal: Guys back to serious business. The proceedings at the palace are now live.

Fatma: Look, Mustafa is being executed!

Anifa: Executed? For what reason!

(Back to the control room)

Anifa: This is unacceptable.

Fatma: We can't let this happen.

All: Impossible!

Jamal: These people are determined to wipe us all out.

Fatma: I told you. This is a generational war.

Jamal: A war against authorities who have turned a deaf ear to our cries.

Anifa: A war against our own parents, who cling to their rigid ways, still trapped in the outdated norms and primitive practices of the past.

Layla: A war against a society that brands us as a rotten generation, condemning us without understanding.

Fatma: A war against the religious leaders who chain our modern minds refusing to let us explore the possibilities of a new world.

Lennah: This is our war. A war against everyone who stands against us

Jamal: Comrades, we must liberate our generation. No matter the cost.

Fatma: Guys, we must rise against this tyranny. Anifa, what do we do?

Anifa: Relax, we shall stretch them beyond the elasticity limit. By the click of a single button, I will stir the pot just enough to make flames rise. Have a look. Enough content to trigger public anger. Everything has gone viral.

Lennah: The nation will bulge with fury.

Fatma: The streets will swell with unrest.

Malik: Walls of patience will collapse!

Anifa: This will definitely rattle the sultan.

Layla: Anifa, you are a genius! This will salvage Mustafa.

Anifa: Comrades, to the control room!

(At the palace)

Sultan: Mustafa, say your last words.

Mustafa: I have nothing to say.

Servant1: At the count of three...

Sultan: We shall end the era of errors. This will be a significant turning point in the history of our

motherland. *Thalatha, Ithnan, wahid!* Off with his head!

Servant2: Your Majesty, there is a new twist in this plot.

Sultan: Stop your tongue twisting trickery and speak to me plainly.

Servant 2: Your attention and presence is required immediately at the emergency room; where critical decisions are made. This way. Welcome.

Sultan: And what is this? What is your colleague doing?

Servant 2: Your highness, he is listening to the ground.

Sultan: Listening to the ground? What do you mean?

Servant 1: Your Highness, the temperature is rising rapidly, as you can see, this royal thermometer doesn't lie.

Servant1: This royal thermometer gathers every minute heat in the hearts of the people. It never falters. It is always accurate. The people are angry!

Sultan: Angry? What are you talking about!

Servant 2: The streets are overflowing with anger.

Servant1: All walks of life are up in arms. Medical practitioners

Servant 2: Are on strike.

Servant1: Members of the teaching fraternity

Servant 2: Are protesting

Servant 1: Farmers

Anifa: Are counting catastrophic losses.

Servants: And the informal sector

Anifa: Is chanting songs of war.

All: Freedom is coming tomorrow!

Sultan: My scull is cracking. This boy must be executed.

Mother: No, please!

Sultan: He has ruined our nation.

Servant2: But sir, Mustafa's social media accounts are still active. Broadcasting images and content that continues to catalyze public fury.

Sultan: How is that even possible?

Mustafa: I told you, I am not the one responsible.

Sultan: Then tell me, who is this sapient of deceit? Who is this person that dares provoke an angry lion in his den?

Mustafa: I am worried, if I disclose her identity, my generational friends will make my life and that of my family a living hell.

Mother: Mustafa my son, we shall cross the bridge at the appropriate time. Just cooperate!

Sultan: Loosen the noose! You are hereby converted from a convict to a state witness. You will enjoy state protection.

Mother: Alhamdulillah!

Mustafa: Thank you. Your highness.

Sultan: Now, tell me, who is this criminal spreading propaganda and fake news?

Mustafa: She is not a criminal.

Sultan: Then what is she?

Mustafa: An intelligent person.

Sultan: Intelligent!

Savant: Intelligent!

Mother: Intelligent!

Mustafa: My rose flower; the sun that rises in my heart even at night.

Sultan: What is her name?

Mustafa: Her name is Anifa

Sultan: Anifa who?

Mustafa: Anifa Imana!

Both: Good!

Sultan: Now, come!

(In the control room)

All: Anifa Imana!

Anifa: Just call me A.I. Now, I have generated a fake pay slip..

All: A fake pay-slip?

Anifa: Yes, for the police force; burdened with unreasonable statutory deductions. I am sure that will annoy and demoralize them.

Fatma: Let me have a look at it.

Anifa: It's already trending. Propaganda, fake news, spreading like wild fire. Guys, share this to all our generational friends in all your social media accounts

All: Right away Anifa!

(At home)

Mama Anifa: Baba Anifa!

Police: What is it my wife?

Ma Anifa: Look, it is all over the media, your colleagues have downed their tools. Their voices rising in unison like a tidal wave.

Police: Outrageous! Why?

Ma Anifa: This is your latest pay slip.

Police: This is disheartening. I cannot continue defending a country that is against me. Mama Anifa, escort me to the police station.

Ma Anifa: To do what?

Police: To return these weapons and officially render my resignation.

Ma Anifa: Your brain is finally working!

Police: Let us go. *(They exit)*

Anifa: Good! Our propaganda has worked. The police are on a go-slow. We are safe for now.

All: In short, tumeanguka nayo.

Jamal: Indeed this is literally the control room.

Fatma: Guys. I have good news.

Anifa: Break that bottle of suspense and reveal its contents.

Fatma: During my usual browsing on the internet. I met my soulmate. And guess what!

All: What!

Fatma: I sent him a live pin location. He is just one minute away. I am so anxious. I am excited to meet my new catch thanks to Anifa Imana. Let us go and meet him.

(A royal chariot carrying a young man enters. The rest of the crowd are wowed)

All: Wow!

Xavier: My name is Xavier. I guess you are Fatma, my online compatible soul-mate.

Fatma: Welcome my *habibi!*

Xavier: Let us dine and dance in merriment as we legitimize this unbreakable bond of love.

(Back in the palace)

Sultan: Major General!

Major General: Sir yes sir

Sultan: We must apprehend those criminals spreading propaganda and fake news. As the commander-in-chief, I will personally lead this operation.

Major General: We pledge to serve our nation with unwavering loyalty. By our sweat, flesh and blood, we shall prevail.

Army: So help us, God.

Sultan: Let us proceed with the mission.

Servant 2: A respectful reminder, your highness.

Sultan: I cannot afford any distraction. My focus is on the enemy.

Servant 2: This is to remind you of the provisions of the supreme law, which require, under such circumstances, that you sign a succession deed transferring authority to the heir apparent. This is in the unfortunate event of your loss during the war.

Sultan: I am fully aware of that protocol. Quickly. Summon my son; Call **XAVIER** immediately. Time is of the essence.

(Outside the control room)

Fatma: Guys, I am sorry!

Anifa: Sorry!

Jamal: Sorry for what? What is the matter?

Fatma: I have made a mistake. A terrible mistake. I gambled, and now I have messed everything up.

Layla: What do you mean?

Jamal: What did you do?

Xavier: (Entering) my sweetheart.

Fatma: Xavier, please give me some space to talk with my friends.

Xavier: Am I not your friend too?

Fatma: It's complicated, Xavier. Too complicated.

Xavier: Don't Judge me by the secret I have shared with you.

Anifa: Secret! What secret?

Fatma: Xavier... is the son of the Sultan.

All: What!

Jamal: Are we safe? Do you realize what this means?

Fatma: Xavier just go. You are putting all of us in danger.

Xavier: How? I have done nothing wrong.

Jamal: This is too much exposure. Too much risk.

Fatma: Xavier just go.

Xavier: No. I won't leave you. I am staying here. Fatma, aren't you proud of me?

Jamal: (Aside) Guys, I don't trust this. This looks like a set up. I think he is a spy on a mission.

(In the palace)

Sultan: I am a man on a mission.

Servant: your highness, I have searched everywhere but I cannot find Xavier.

Sultan: Where is he? Where is my son? Where is Xavier?

Servant 1: Your highness, once you sign the succession deed, his presence won't be immediately necessary. The supreme law allows for it.

Sultan: *(while signing the deed)* Eyes on the goal. Mustafa!

Mustafa: Your-Highness!

Sultan: Let us move

Major General: Hip hip.

All: Hurray.

(At the control center)

Anifa: This place is compromised. We need to disperse- immediately. Move in different directions. Stay off the grid.

Fatma: Xavier it's been a privilege knowing you. I am out of here.

(At the police)

Police: Mama Anifa, the station is deserted. I can't even deliver my resignation.

Ma Anifa: Just leave it on the OB table. We need to find our daughter. She has been incommunicado for three days now.

(Mustafa enters)

Mustafa: Major General, this is our local police station.

Major General: And I assume this is the officer in charge?

(Enters the Sultan)

Sultan: First things first.

All: Sir yes sir.

Sultan: By the authority vested in me under the supreme law, I hereby declare a state of emergency. Effective immediately. No civilian...

All: No civilian...

Sultan: Shall be found outside their homes. If the war has destroyed your residence, what should be done, major General?

Major General: Let them take cover under the rubble and debris.

Sultan: Yes, let them hide beneath the remnants of war—a war they brought upon themselves.

Ma Anifa: Look at this. These are the consequences of war.

Sultan: And who is this?

Mother: This is the wife of the Officer in charge of this station?

Sultan: What is she you doing here?

Ma Anifa: I escorted my husband to deliver his resignation letter. He is officially stepping down from the service.

Sultan: Unpatriotic. Detain these two civilians in the holding cell. The community administrator and one of my servants will take command. To the crime scene.

All: The control room.

Sultan: Move out.

(Outside the control room)

Xavier: Fatma!

Fatma: we are in grave danger

Xavier: Danger? Do I look dangerous to you?

Anifa: We are under attack.

Xavier: Attack! By whom?

Jamal: Guys, listen. I am intercepting their "comms". They are closing in fast.

Anifa: They are advancing on our position. We need to move. Now!

Layla: What is the plan?

Anifa: Scatter and regroup at the rally point.

Fatma: Where is the rally point?

Anifa: Anywhere but not here.

Jamal: They are approaching.

Xavier: Fatma, what is going on?

Anifa: Run.

Fatma: Hide!

Xavier: Where?

Layla: Anywhere!

Anifa: Every man for himself.

Xavier: I am lost.

Fatma: Hide.

Xavier: Where?

Fatma: In the control room.

Xavier: This is suicide.

All: We are in danger!

Xavier: Where is Anifa!

Fatma: Xavier, what is the matter!

Xavier: Anifa, where are you taking my horse?

Anifa: *Imekataa kusimama. Haina Brakes! (It has refused to stop. It has no braking system)*

All: Anifa!

Xavier: This is madness!

All: Xavier!

Jamal: Anifa, wait for me!

Fatma: Hide!

Xavier: Where?

Lennah: The control room.

Fatma: Close the door.

Jamal: They are coming!

All: Run!

(The control room doors are closed, with Xavier inside.)

Sultan: Take cover!

Major General: Diamond formation! Move!

Sultan: Decoy drill. Execute.

Major General: wasp approach. Quick. Flank them!

(Outside the police station)

Layla: I am Exhausted.

Lennah: Me too.

Fatma: Let them come and kill us if they want.

Jamal: Is anybody inside this police station.

Fatma: It looks abandoned.

(The scene drifts to a military drill)

Sultan: Major General!

Major General: Yes sir.

Sultan: We have no choice. Fire warning shots to flush them out if they are hiding inside.

Major General: Understood sir.

(In the cycle of the generational scene. The crowd of the generational friends quickly degenerates to a rowdy mob that's is externally uncontrollable.)

All: Anifa!

Anifa: This war is not for the faint hearted. With the help of our generational friends, we have drained the ambulance fuel tank.

Fatma: What is the plan?

Anifa: We burn down this station to the ground.

All: Yes, burn! Burn, Burn!

(The following scenes take place concurrently and consecutively; all at once. Half of the act happens in the control room while the other half happens in

the police station. The overall impression is that of a continuous juxtaposition)

Anifa: Action

Sultan: Action. Cock your weapons!

Anifa: Bring the lighter.

Sultan: Shooting positions!

Anifa: Take your positions!

Sultan: Pull the trigger!

Anifa: Strike the match.

Sultan: Fire!

Major General: Xavier!

Sultan: Xavier!

All: Xavier!

Anifa: Light the fire!

Mother: What is going on here? Officer! Officer! Officer!

Police: What!

Mother: The keys! Bring the keys, quickly.

All: What?

Police: Anifa!!!

Anifa: Mother!

Mama Anifa: My daughter!

Mustafa: Jamal, Laylah

Mother: Mustafa, come back here!

Mustafa: Those are my generational friends. *Wallahi*, we are inseparable.

Mother: Mustafa! Mustafa!

Mama Anifa: This is a cursed generation.

Mother: No let us not lose hope they need parental guidance
Let us go after them.

Sultan: My vision is failing me.

Xavier: Father, I am a victim of cross fire.
Astaghfirullah, I have no idea what is going on.

Sultan: My son, you have embarrassed me. You have made me shed tears of disappointment. You have stained the walls of the Royal Velvet Emirates.

Major General: He is bleeding like an open tap. *Allah* We must stop this now

Sultan: Call the Ambulance.

Servant 2: Sir, our satellite surveillance team has just sent disturbing images.

Sultan: What Images?

An image of burning ambulance, the beacon of hope, now turned a funeral pyre. Flames lick the white paint, turning to sticky yellow, then black. Thick acrid smoke billowed into the night sky, carrying the stench of burning rubber and melting plastic.

Officer: Image number two!

The windows of the police station are shattered by an explosion. The inferno from inside the burning building can be seen engulfing the entire building.

Sultan: *Yarabbi!*

(Anifa and team followed by the parents. They are apprehended, subdued and presented before Sultan's Parade.)

Police: These are the ring leaders.

Mother: You can't imagine, we caught them red handed torching the ambulance and the police station.

Xavier: Father, help me.

Servant 1: Sir, what should we do?

Sultan: My hands are tied. Let his death shall be used as a lesson for generations to come.

Mustafa: Xavier is one of us. *Wallahi* We will not let him die. We will salvage him.

Sultan: How? Yet you have turned our hospitals into ruins.

Mama Anifa: How, yet you have jammed all our telecommunication network.

Mother: How yet you have burnt the ambulance that was meant to take him to hospital.

Mustafa: Give us a chance. I will use the Telemedicine application. Let me log in.

Mustafa: Anifa, the encrypted manual cannot be accessed.

Anifa: That is easy for me. I can sort it in a minute. Fatma and Jamal, follow the first Aid Manual of Dr. Sandeep Patel from India.

Jamal: Right away Anifa!

Anifa: No. Use, Doctor Xing Sheng from China. She is more specialized in such situations than him.

(With grim focus, Jamal kneels, his fingers tracing the wound on Xavier's arm. The sterilized tools and anesthesia are provided by the on looking friends. With meticulous precision they make the physical extraction of the bullet from Xavier's arm. The production is done in a pantomime form)

Jamal: *(A shout of victory and praise to Almighty) Takhbir!*

All: *Allahu Akbar*

Mustafa: Your highness, you see my project; Telemedicine, was meant to heal not to harm.

Anifa: I am Anifa Imana.

All: A.I

Anifa: I use my expertise to solve societal problems. We are not your enemies.

Sultan: *(Conclusively)* Your actions were reckless. You cannot justify this chaos. Your intentions were noble but your methods were flawed.

Mother: Mustafa and your friends, you can still express your concerns without violence. There are better ways.

(With visible tears streaking down their faces, each drop a cold, heavy weight of remorsefulness).

Mustafa: Mother, on behalf of my generational friends, we draw wisdom from your guiding statements.

All: Yes!

Fatma: We are ready to walk in the footprints of the past generations...

Jamal: And build our Nation on the strong foundation they laid.

Laylah: Your-Highness, and the entire citizenry of Royal Velvet Emirates

All: We are sorry!

Sultan: My sons and daughters, rise all of you. You have shown courage and ingenuity. But remember, true power lies in unity, not division. Mustafa, your telemedicine project will be implemented nationwide.

All: Yes

Sultan: Anifa, you will work with our cybersecurity team

All: Wow!

Sultan: To ensure such incidents never take root again. I have been well briefed about the expectations you carry in your womb. I undertake; my government will help you deliver those expectations safely.

Parents: Most obliged your highness.

Sultan: As for the rest of you... you are the future of this Nation.

All: We will not let you down.

Sultan: To the people of the Velvet Emirates.

All: Your-Highness!

Sultan: The war is over.

All: *Allamdulillah,*

Sultan: Let the rebuilding begin. Never again shall we
dance to the...

All: **ECHOES OF WAR...**

-THE END-

RUTO MUST GO ! ! !