

Manners

By

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INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

SPHESIHLE, 18, skinny with glasses, stands around, paces and argues silently with herself.

A beat.

There's a knock on the door, she answers it. In walks JABU, 20. He utters no word to Sphesihle but goes straight for the sink, pours himself a glass of water. Sphesihle locks the door and turns to Jabu, who gulps the the last bit of water left in his glass.

SPHESIHLE

(in IsiZulu)

Sorry, Bhuti. You ever heard of this thing called "Manners"? You act like saying "HI" will cost you a rand.

Jabu puts the glass down on the sink, gives Sphesihle the "Not right now" face.

JABU

(in IsiZulu)

Well, have YOU ever heard of this thing called "Mind your own business"? Stop acting like life will stop if I don't greet you. I don't want to.

Jabu walks towards the fridge.

SPHESIHLE

Don't even think about it.

Jabu continues.

SPHESIHLE(CONT'D)

(in IsiZulu)

Hey! I'm talking to you. Don't even think about opening the fridge. You won't like what you will find in there.

JABU

What are you talking about?

SPHESIHLE

Dude...You ate my food. Don't act like you don't know.

Jabu puts his hand on the fridge's door handle, ready to open it.

(CONTINUED)

SPHESIHLE

(in Isizulu)

Don't do that. I ate everything.
There's nothing in there. What? You
want me to yell it out for you? You
only understand IsiXhosa or
something?

She proceeds to say it in IsiXhosa.

SPHESIHLE(CONT'D)

There's nothing in there.

JABU

(in Isizulu)

What's your problem? Don't tell me
you ate my--

He opens the fridge. It's clean. Empty.

JABU(CONT'D)

My...My...There was...No man. Come
on, Sphe. You ate everything? It's
only the 20th. What will we eat
until month end?

SPHESIHLE

That's funny because you didn't buy
anything. You've been eating my
food. What did you think was going
to happen?

Jabu, with no sensible reply, retires from this silly
argument to a room next to where they stand. Sphehlehle
follows him.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

There's two beds on opposite sides of the room. Jabu sits
on his. Sphehlehle stands over him.

JABU

(in Isizulu)

You forget that your Mother still
owes me 300 Rands, Neh? Then you
take 300 Rands, you go buy
groceries and you come back telling
me that if I don't cough out my
fair share, I don't have the right
to touch your food? "Your food!"?
Who do you think you are?

(CONTINUED)

SPHESIHLE

Excuse me?

JABU

Come on, Sphe. Your Mother owes me. Let's be fair. As far as I'm concerned...I'm the one who bought food this month. That's my 300 rand. That's why I couldn't give you anything.

SPHESIHLE

...But she did tell you that she will give you your money, just not this month. I thought you guys understood each other!

A tired Jabu lies back-first on his bed now, looking at the ceiling. He has no intentions of answering Sphesihle's questions.

A beat.

Sphesihle gets closer to him.

SPHESIHLE(CONT'D)

Jabu?...Jabu?...Did he really just fall asleep on me? Is this guy serious? I didn't even get to tell him that I was playing. I didn't actually--

She's interrupted by her ringing phone. She puts it to her ear.

SPHESIHLE(CONT'D)

(in IsiZulu)

MAMA.

MOTHER(V.O)

(in IsiZulu)

I'm sorry I took so long, darling. I've sent Jabu's money. Tell him I said Thank You. Okay, Sweetheart?

SPHESIHLE

(in IsiZulu)

Thank You, Mama. I will. Love you, bye.

She hangs up, leaves a now "snoring" Jabu alone, goes to her bed and slides in as well.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Jabu's alarm goes off. It rings for a few seconds, a few seconds shy to a minute. He finally wakes up, and turns it off. He stretches his upper limbs and yawns as he slowly tries to get off bed.

He tosses the covers aside, sits and as he's about to stand, notices that Sphehlehle is already up. She reads a book, her bottom half still under the covers. He says nothing at all to her and exits the room. Sphehlehle shakes her head and continues reading.

We hear Jabu run the shower.

SPHEHLEHLE
(to herself)
This guy has no manners.

A FEW MINUTES LATER:

Jabu walks in. Dressed in different clothing now. He makes his bed, takes his school bag and exits the room.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Jabu's alarm goes off. It rings for a few seconds, a few seconds shy to a minute. He finally wakes up, and turns it off. He stretches his upper limbs and yawns as he slowly tries to get off bed.

He tosses the covers aside, sits and as he's about to stand, notices that Sphehlehle is already up. She reads a book, her bottom half still under the covers. He says nothing, but pauses, stares at the ceiling, then back at Sphehlehle. Confused.

He smiles a bit, shakes his head, says nothing to her still and exits the room. Sphehlehle shakes her head and continues reading.

We hear Jabu run the shower.

SPHEHLEHLE
(to herself)
This guys has no manners.

A FEW MINUTE LATER:

Jabu walks in. Dressed in different clothing now. He makes his bed, takes his school bag and exits the room.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Jabu's alarm goes off. It rings for a few seconds, a few seconds shy to a minute. He finally wakes up, and turns it off. He stretches his upper limbs and yawns as he slowly tires to get off bed.

He tosses the covers aside, sits and as he's about to stand, notices that Sphesihle is already up. She reads a book, her bottom half still under the covers. He says nothing to her, but pauses, stares at the ceiling, then at Sphesihle, again. Confused. He smiles a bit but now with concern.

He shakes his head, says nothing to her still and exits the room. Sphesihle shakes her head, continues reading.

We hear Jabu run the shower.

SPHESIHLLE
(to herself)
This guy has no manners.

A FEW MINUTES LATER:

Jabu walks in. Dressed in different clothing now. He makes his bed, takes his school bag and exits the room.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Jabu's alarm rings. It rings for a few seconds, a few seconds shy to a minute. He finally wakes up, and turns it off. He stretches his upper limbs and yawns...He remains in bed, looking at the ceiling as if begging it for answers.

JABU(V.O)
Sphesihle is already up. She's
reading a book.

He turns and looks at Sphesihle's bed. She's up, reading a book.

JABU
(In IsiZulu)
Jesus; What's going on now? What
did I do?

He's going crazy right now.

JABU(V.O)
(In IsiZulu)
Relax, Jabu. It's a dream. Your
mind is playing tricks on you.

(CONTINUED)

He can't smile right now, his face is full of fear and confusion. He gets off bed and exits the room. Sphehlehle shakes her head. Continues reading.

We hear Jabu run the shower.

SPHEHLEHLE
(to herself)
This guy has no manners.

A FEW MINUTES LATER:

Jabu walks in. Dressed in different clothing now. He makes his bed, takes his school bag and exits the room.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Jabu's alarm goes off. It rings for a few seconds, a few seconds shy to a minute. He finally wakes up and starts punching and kicking beneath the covers. Sphehlehle looks on in disbelief. He switches the alarm off.

He stares at the ceiling with teary eyes.

JABU(V.O)
(slowly)
Sphe is up already. She is reading
a book.

He turns and looks at Sphehlehle's bed. She is up, reading a book.

JABU
(begins to cry)
No...What is going on? What did I
do to deserve this?!

A beat.

JABU(CONT'D)
(in IsiZulu)
Sphe. What's going on? I have been
waking up like this for four days
now. Please help me.

Sphehlehle breaks out in laughter. She doesn't believe what she's hearing right now.

SPHEHLEHLE
(in IsiZulu)
The wires in your head get tangled
up sometimes, hey? I also need you
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SPHESIHLE (cont'd)
to help me. I need to study. I have
a test later on today. Dial down
the crazy, would you?

JABU

Sphe. Listen. I've been repeating
the same day for days now. Every
time I try to leave for class. I
open that door, and I find myself
here. All over again.

SPHESIHLE

(sarcastic)

Shame man. Why you? I mean. You are
a model human being. A very good
person...You know...I really don't
know why such would happen to you,
but anyway, go about your business.
Maybe you'll have luck this time
around.

JABU

(in IsiZulu)

Nxa. You. Everything is a joke with
you, isn't it? I'm not playing man.
I'm stuck in this day.

(Then)

You know what? Let me prove it to
you.

Jabu exits the room. Sphe shakes her head.

SPHESIHLE

(to herself)

This guy has no manners.

We hear Jabu run the shower.

A FEW MINUTES LATER:

Jabu walks in. Dressed in different clothing now. He makes
his bed.

JABU

Please try and remember this. I
will be basically doing the same
thing tomorrow. I'm really scared
right now. I don't know what to do.

SPHESIHLE

Yeah, yeah. Why not?

Jabu takes his school bag and exits the room.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Jabu's alarm goes off. It rings for a few seconds, a few seconds shy to a minute. He wakes up and starts punching and kicking beneath the covers.

JABU
(screams)
God fucking damn it! Man!

Sphesihle looks on with utter disbelief. She shakes her head.

Jabu quickly jumps off bed and rushes across to Sphesihle's.

SPHESIHLE
(in IsiZulu)
Stop it. Some of us are trying to study. I have a test later on today man.

Jabu kneels next to Sphesihle's bed.

JABU
Come on, Sphe. Don't you remember? I was telling you this yesterday. It's happening again. I'm repeating the same day. Help me, Please!

SPHESIHLE
(in IsiZulu)
Whoa Whoa whoa! Just last night, you didn't want to greet me. Now, you want me to help you? and...and with something I don't even know?

JABU
SPHE.

SPHESIHLE
Jabu.
(then)
You didn't even greet me right now. You just woke up, started screaming and ran over here to disturb me...be considerate dude. Manners!

Jabu gets an epiphany.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT. FLASHBACK

JABU

(in IsiZulu)

Well, have YOU ever heard of this thing called "Mind your own business"? Stop acting like life will stop if I don't greet you. I don't want to.

BACK TO PRESENT:

Jabu kisses Sphe's hand. Sphe is startled. He exits the room. Sphe shakes her head.

We hear Jabu run the shower.

SPHESIHLE

(to herself)

This guy has no manners.

INT. ROOM - MORNING

Jabu's alarm goes off. It rings for a few seconds, a few seconds shy to a minute. He finally wakes up, turns it off. He stretches his upper limbs and yawns as he slowly tries to get off bed.

He tosses the covers aside, sits and as he's about to stand, notices that Sphe is already up. She reads a book, her bottom half still under the covers. Jabu smiles.

JABU

Morning. Sphe.

SPHESIHLE

(in IsiZulu)

Excuse me?

JABU

(in IsiZulu)

I said good morning.

SPHESIHLE

No. I heard you. I just wanted to make sure that you didn't say it by mistake.

Sphe's face lights up.

(CONTINUED)

SPHESIHLE(CONT'D)

But anyway...Thank You. Good morning to you too.

JABU

I'm really sorry about last night. You had every right to finish your food. I will buy more today, I owe you that much.

SPHESIHLE

It's okay, man. I was about to tell you that I didn't really finish everything in the fridge. I moved it, because I was cleaning it. My Mother called. You were already fast asleep anyway. She sent your money. I will go get it later on today.

JABU

Wow. Life is crazy, you know?

SPHESIHLE

What makes you say that?

JABU

Let me go take a bath. I will tell you when I come back.

He exits the room.

SPHESIHLE

(to herself)

There's something different about him today...

A FEW MINUTES LATER:

Jabu walks back in. Makes his bed. Takes his school bag. Exits the room.

SPHESIHLE(CONT'D)

(to herself)

Didn't he say...

(then)

Screw it.

SCREEN FADES TO BLACK...

A beat.

THEN back to picture.

(CONTINUED)

Jabu walks in...

JABU

(smiles)

Oh, like I was saying...this is
crazy but you have no idea what
having manners can do for you. A
simple "HI"

SPHESIHLE

I do not believe this.

THE END