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MY SON WANTS ANITA AMONG

was there minding my own business when my son burst in, speechlessly. "Finally dad," he declared, "I want to marry. I have found my rib! And this year! Please do not say no!"

Me? Say no? Never! Unless if I am the one footing the bill. This is the type of news that excite me and my ageing folks today – not the Arsenal victory or Tyrese Gibson, the \$1m promoter of Uganda coffee. When your son finally decided to marry (and these days, it can stray to beyond 40 years of age), you get that feeling of success. It looks like a much anticipated handover of a problem to some unsuspecting daughter of equally excited parents. It also brings nostalgic memories of your own wedding, especially the ludicrous promises you made to God at his altar.

Because my son has been rumoured to be "married" to a dozen different girls, I had to ask who the lucky rib was. The rib concept is a Biblical version of a wife, who is a perfect match, spiritually, emotionally and physically. The Bible says God designs for every man a wife at her conception, without his idea, participation or consent. According to the Bible, God harvests a rib from an unconscious man and uses it to customise a specific partner that matches perfectly and effortlessly in a jigsaw compatibility. Does anyone have such a wife? Of course, the rib theory does not apply to our new Speaker OO and his predecessors, AAA and RAK, for reasons that do not require my elucidation.

BUT WHY AMONG?

My son replied, without hesitation, that his rib was Anita Annet Among! I looked up at him hoping it was a prank... It was not! She obviously cannot be his rib because when Anita was manufactured in 1973, my son was not yet born! Where did God get my son's rib bone to model AAA? I also know her as married already, unless she insists that she is a double rib edition. Or that her marriage was also a social media concoction. What worries an elderly man like me is, usually, the prospect of grandchildren. Will she be able to manufacture me some grandchildren or are we headed for a twin circus of surrogate mothering?

But why would my son want Among for a wife? It had to be for her double-double achievements: twins, profession (accountant and lawyer), prominence (vice-president NRM and outgoing speaker NRM), party official (FDC and NRM), schools (Bukedea Comprehensive Academy, North and Bukedea Comprehensive Academy, South), MP (twice for Bukedea) and of course, the obvious: she owns more money than the entire budgets of all the eastern districts,

including the entire Karamoja region. Who would not want to marry such an illustrious woman? Boys, these days, also look at a woman's wealth, networks, popularity and calculate how to shortcut hard work using the marriage ladder.

But my son rejected these allegations! He said he was not after her treasure; after all, she had fallen from grace and is likely to lose most of it. What attracted him is her enigmatic subterranean scalawag nature. He believes she is the Lernaean Hydra, a Greek mythological monster, famous for its ability to regrow two heads whenever one was severed. Using words such as resilient, adaptable, indomitable, tenacious, relentless and master planner, he argued that her character was the kind that gets to 100 in a game of Snakes and Ladders, no matter the number of snakes that get to swallow her.

I countered it with such rebuffs as bundle of contradictions, ruthless tactician, manipulative tactician, materialistic fop and a magnetic ability to attract both admiration and hatred. But, instead of tarnishing her, my description seemed to fuel my son's infatuation for the lady. He said she has strong survival genetics and the ability to conquer the world. A woman who rose from the office of a housemaid to that of Speaker of Parliament, the third in the national Order of Precedence, cannot fail to ride him to wherever heaven is. Do not joke with a woman who easily deals with religious leaders of every faith: churches, mosques and shrines. Wasn't she in the Vatican on eight separate occasions? She actually held five private audiences with the pontiff; three with Pope Francis and two with Pope Leo XIV already... Even the Uganda Martyrs Shrine in Namugongo has not seen the same pope twice!

THE WILD HORSE

My son's attraction to Among has an explanation in psychology, only that it is always attributable to women. Many women get attracted to wild, problematic, rebellious, 'unkempt' or rugged men who inspire in them the urge to tame the wild horse. There is a perceived reward in "refining" the man and being the only person capable of "gentling" him from a dangerous general. Taming an intimidating man serves as a profound psychological validation of a woman's worth and unique influence. My son is male, of course, but these days, the theories we applied to women have lost a sense of gender direction; they infect males as well!

Most young boys have inscrutable role models in fire spitting dragons, cruel murderers, ruthless films stars and violent video games. Psychologists attribute it to the evolutionary yearning for violent simulations that mimic ancient,



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A successful partnership relies on collaboration and teamwork, rather than one person (the tamer) imposing their will on the other.

ancestral instincts for hunting, fighting and territorial defence. These games allow boys to satisfy their deep developmental need for dominance and independence, while confronting their real-world fears, death and the concepts of evil, from a safe distance. Defeating powerful online enemies rewards their brain with a strong sense of achievement.

On maturing, my son must have got fixated with an adrenaline surge to subdue a tougher, fearless, conqueror in a wife. He must be imagining that the chase and taming process of the marriage will be thrilling and dangerous, but with a rewarding prize as fulfilling as passing a very difficult exam. I had to stop him!

A BITTER-SWEET UNION

Many parents face sons whose choice of wife is nauseating but the flood of determination supersedes Kampala's version. On the surface, Among has an extensive and expensive portfolio but, beneath her makeup, there are

problems galore. Marrying her may attract the wrath of the US and UK sanctions, a man called Magogo and the Karimojong who are still looking for their iron sheets. Without politics, her wealth and standards may become hard to maintain. A woman who can lie with a steady iris is a risky destination to painful DNA tests.

Of course, she is a woman of great worth. Her mobilising skills persuaded over 120 opposition bigwigs to cross over to the ruling party. She has no problem with polygamy; instead she is known to stabilise co-wives into a harmonious co-existence. Her possible imprisonment would only afford my son an opportunity to run her money and property unsupervised. My son can even sue her persecutors and social media rumormongers to milk reparations. With this union, my son can dive into the money pool!

I HEREBY WITHHOLD MY BLESSING!

Therefore, my verdict was No! No marriage, even if Among got saved by the firebrand Prophet Kakande himself! When we base our marriages on strategy, whether of wealth acquisition, taming monsters, political motives and other matters unrelated to love, we assume so many factors captive constantly.

Do you think her relatives, money-hungry politicians, former men, children and supporters will allow you to enjoy her wealth alone? Some people started in Luwero district and you join them at Nateete (in Kampala district) and hope to be the chief eater? The in-laws will accuse you of gold-digging and call you a visitor who wants to access the bedroom! In-laws become extremely complicated when their sister has the most money.

On the point of taming the monster, I was unequivocal. In real life, a strong or difficult person cannot, and should not, be tamed like a wild animal. Treating a relationship as a project of control often leads to deep resentment. Instead of forcing someone to change, a healthy dynamic adjustment requires mutual respect, patience and listening as well as effective communication. So I reached out for black ink and started pouring into the fire to achieve a black smoke. This election needed to be nulled before she could get her infrastructure on me. And when the infrastructure includes Police, EC, court and UNEB, you cannot win. But when I turned to check out the look on my disappointed son, I woke up! What a terrible dream!

