

The
265 BLEND

M A G A Z I N E

VOLUME : ISSUE 1 DECEMBER 2024

**LINGUISTIC
SINS**

“IF YOU WANT
TO CRITICIZE,
CRITICIZE THE
PERFECT
LANGUAGE”

**TECH TREND-
265 DATES**

MALAWI'S
FAVOURITE
DATING SITE

BASE CUBE
THE EXHIBITION



“Blending stories, cultures and perspectives”

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BLEND

A black and white portrait of Mercy Cee Chimwaza, a woman with short dark hair, wearing a light-colored turtleneck sweater and a light-colored jacket. She is looking slightly to the left of the camera. The background behind her is a solid yellow color.

An Editor's Eye

Mercy Cee Chimwaza

The
265 Blend is
a unique magazine born
from the dedication of Malawian
volunteers who are passionate about
addressing the real-life challenges young
people face. Each issue is carefully crafted
to inspire, educate, entertain and offer insights
and solutions for issues like mental health, career
development, relationships, and personal growth.
Our volunteer team works tirelessly to bring this
vision to life, but we need your support to keep
going. Whether through sponsorship, partnership,
donations, volunteering, or simply spreading
the word, your help can make a real differ-
ence. With you by our side, The 265 Blend
can grow stronger, reaching even more
young Malawians with the sup-
port, inspiration, and solu-
tions they need.

Mercy

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BLEND



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265 BLEND

What it takes to hatch to another year

Adulthood 101
-Mercy Cee Chimwaza-



life

Unscripted

By Mercy Cee Chimwaza

It's December, and for some of us, the excitement of the year almost being over is the only thing keeping us going because, let's face it, this year has really shown us flames. If you ask me about adulthood, I can honestly say that this year, I've truly tasted it at its finest. And if I'm being honest, "shocked" would be an understatement... *Zero out of ten*, would not recommend

If the universe was hypothetically asking me how much suffering I could handle, I think I exceeded the limit. In fact, this year could be summed up as: *"If I don't laugh, I'll cry."* I thought I was ready for the freedom, the living-alone life, but apparently, nobody can truly prepare you for the madness that is adulting. Fending for yourself? It's all on you. Your goals? Yours to set. Your future?

In your hands no matter how small they are, and it doesn't help when you are clumsy like me (good luck with that). My mind is always screaming "Help!" Every 2 minutes.

There's no way to sugarcoat it: It's been a year full of rejections for me. Rejected job applications, failed business ideas and don't even get me started on love and relationships. And despite all of that, I had to keep on going. Because life doesn't pause for you to catch your breath. It moves on, and so do we, whether we're ready or not. *Lira koma uziyenda.*

So I survived. Yes, I had moments of doubt. Yes, there were days when I wanted to pull the covers over my head and pretend the world didn't exist.

But I kept going. Because even on the toughest days, there's a tiny bit of progress. And that's enough to keep moving forward. Adulthood doesn't always offer the smoothest path, but every step counts, even if it feels like you're crawling some days.



Through the frustration and setbacks, I have learned not to compare myself to others. Everyone's journey is different, and it's okay to be where you are.

It's easy to fall into the trap of comparing your life to others, especially with the pressure of social media, but let me tell you this: We're all just trying to figure it out.

Setting realistic goals, accepting where I am, and celebrating the small wins have been my survival tactics.

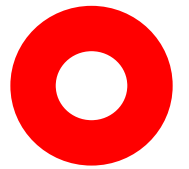
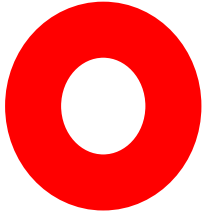
Yes this year has been tough, I can honestly say I have learned more than I ever thought I would. I found a job, which is a major win, and I started working on this magazine, something I'm truly passionate about.

So, no, it wasn't all bad. So here's to 2025. Let's carry the lessons, the growth, and the resilience into 2025. Let's keep going, no matter how tough it gets, slow down, rest but don't give up.

I can't promise I won't forget my own advice along the way, but I will make sure it won't be as chaotic as this year.

*From an upcoming adult,
a teenager in her 20s.*





Relationship GPS

A summary to Tinartha

RUMBLINGS OF RONNIE PRIDE #09

// **Q** By Ronnie Pride

Quick question... lol Sorry for ambushing you... I am trying to make sense out of some things in my life.” That’s how the text from my cute friend began, followed by questions about relationships, compatibility, and sustainability.

As I reflected, I realized my answers were simple yet complex because relationships are influenced by countless factors. This writing attempts to address her questions while weaving in my own thoughts.

Many relationships start by accident, almost haphazardly, without much thought—like hiring someone off the street without doing background checks. During the early stages, people highlight their positives and minimize their negatives, making it hard to truly know their character. For long-term success, emotions alone aren’t enough. Choosing a partner without good judgment can lead to dire consequences.

Here are my thoughts on her questions:

1. How did you know you were ready for a relationship?

I didn’t know. After a year of being single, I got used to my independence, and relationships felt like too much effort. Instead of searching for my “type,” I focused on becoming the kind of person my type would be attracted to—“my type’s type.”

I began doing things, going to places, and adopting habits that aligned with this imagined version of myself. Over time, the fictional “type” became a goal to strive toward, and the choices I made aligned with the future I envisioned.

2. What qualities were you looking for in your to-be girlfriend?

I have never had any specifics on the type of qualities I want in a partner but I have always been specific about what I don’t want. Wants are always changing and it’s easier for something that you want to not ever want it again....whereas for things you don’t want, you cannot be easily convinced or convince yourself that you want them. I guess it’s a process of elimination. A lack of things you want can be compensated but an abundance of things you don’t want is unbearable.

3. What’s fundamental for relationships to work?

Relationships thrive on connection, where both people affect each other positively or negatively. The key is communication—sharing your thoughts, emotions, and experiences openly. Unspoken expectations often lead to resentment, so even small things matter. If something bothers you, say it. If something makes you happy, share it. Mutual understanding is the foundation of a healthy relationship.



4. What keeps people in relationships long-term?

Consideration is an often-overlooked love language. It's about being mindful of how your actions, words, and choices affect your partner. Small, thoughtful gestures—like anticipating their needs or easing their burdens, build trust and show care. Consideration isn't about grand acts but consistent, meaningful efforts that demonstrate respect and understanding.

5. When do you think is the right time for a person to start pursuing a relationship (long term). Does age and mental readiness play a vital role in this?

Love is only big to those who discover it for the first time. However we often discover it at a young age. Biologically, the prefrontal cortex the part responsible for reasoning in your brain develops fully around the age of 25.

This part is responsible for decision making, planning, Personality expression, social appropriateness, attention, emotion regulation, etc so yeah you might discover love at a young age however you should be aware that this love is discovered while your reasoning or logic hasn't developed in other words, anyways we learn as we grow.

6 Do you think religion and faith has a vital role it plays when it comes to relationships?

Religion and faith pretty much determine the terms and conditions in which you try to make Sense of existence and reality at large. Even atheism is in its own way a religion trying to make Sense of existence and reality at large. This comes back to how you create the compatibility Of your core beliefs.

If your core beliefs and values are in alignment, religion and faith has Less effect. Core beliefs and values in relationships are guiding principles that shape your identity, Decisions and behaviors in context of moral beliefs, spiritual beliefs, political/cultural beliefs, Cleanliness, finances, family expectations in terms of how many kids, division of parental Chores and responsibilities, how to raise children etc to whatever makes up your core beliefs.



Health and FITNESS



SUICIDE

The hidden journey

By Henry K

Suicide is often misunderstood as a sudden, impulsive act, but in reality, it's the result of a long and painful journey. This journey begins quietly, with small, often unnoticed signs that gradually build up over time. It can start with losing interest in everyday activities—things that once brought joy no longer seem appealing.

Appetite diminishes, sleep patterns change, and the person begins to withdraw from others, choosing isolation over interaction.

As time goes on, these feelings intensify, and life starts to lose its meaning. The thought of ending it all starts to creep in, but even then, it's not an immediate decision.

What many people fail to understand is that suicide is rarely about a single event. It's not just about a breakup, job loss, or any one thing. It's the result of countless small stresses and struggles that accumulate over time. Each minor setback adds to the weight, and eventually, it becomes too heavy to carry. This buildup of stress can lead to a breaking point, where suicidal thoughts begin to take hold.



The process can be explained by the Stress-Diathesis model, which suggests that everyone has a threshold for how much stress they can handle. When life's pressures exceed that threshold, it can lead to serious mental health issues, including suicidal thoughts.

For men, this journey can be even more hidden. Societal expectations often demand that men be strong, self-reliant providers. This pressure can make it difficult for them to express their feelings or seek help. Instead, they may bottle up their emotions, leading to a silent struggle that goes unnoticed until it's too late.

Understanding how suicide develops is crucial to preventing it. It's important to pay attention to the small signs and stresses that can build up over time. By recognizing these early warning signs, we can offer support before the situation reaches a critical point. Suicide doesn't just happen—it's a slow and painful process that can be stopped if we're willing to look beyond the surface and offer help when it's needed most.



Taking the first

BY Jones Allan Kampezeni

It's easy to imagine being fit and healthy. The vision of a toned body, boundless energy, and a active lifestyle dances in our minds.

Yet, for these dreams to come to fruition, you have to put your left foot forward and let the right one follow. The journey to fitness is much like embarking on a grand adventure: exciting, challenging, and incredibly rewarding.

In project management, there's a saying: tackle a project like you would eat an elephant one bite at a time.

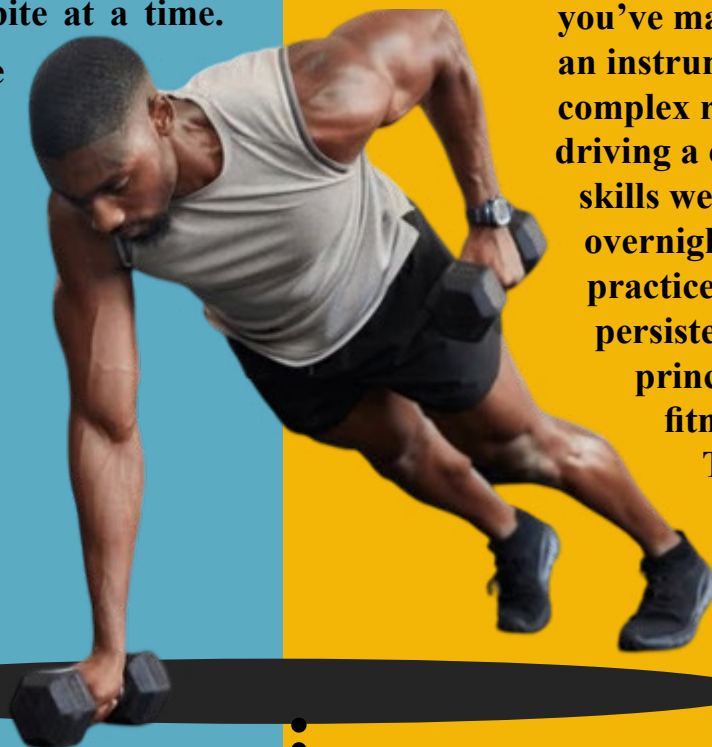
You can't consume the whole elephant in one sitting, but you can manage it in chunks and pieces. This metaphor perfectly captures the core of beginning a fitness journey. You have to break it down into manageable steps.

You don't start by running a marathon; you start by walking around the block. It's a process of gradual progression, and each step is vital.

At first, it might suck...you will want to quit. The first week might feel like you're not making any progress. You might struggle to catch your breath, and your muscles might ache in rebellion. But remember, good things take time. Repetition is the secret sauce of success. It's what turns fitness from a chore into a lifestyle.

Think of any skill you've mastered: playing an instrument, cooking a complex recipe, or even driving a car. None of these skills were perfected overnight. They required practice, patience, and persistence. The same principle applies to fitness.

The initial stages are always the hardest.





step matters

Your body will resist the change, and your mind will create excuses. But each small step counts.

Celebrate the small victories..each extra push-up, each additional minute on the treadmill, each healthy meal choice. These small wins build up over time, leading to significant changes.

It's also crucial to remember that everyone's journey is unique. What works for one person might not work for another. Find what you enjoy—be it running, swimming, dancing, or lifting weights. The key is to keep moving and to enjoy the process.

When you find joy in the journey, it ceases to be a chore and becomes a cherished part of your life. Building a support system can make a world of difference.

Share your goals with friends and family. Find a workout buddy who shares your aspirations. Join fitness groups or classes where you can connect with like-minded individuals. The encouragement and accountability from a supportive community can be incredibly motivating.

Embrace the setbacks as part of the journey. There will be days when you miss a workout, indulge in a treat, or feel too tired to move. That's okay. What matters is not the occasional slip-up, but the overall trend. If you're consistently making healthier choices than unhealthy ones, you're on the right path.

So taking the first step matters because it sets the tone for your entire journey. By starting small and gradually increasing your efforts, you build the discipline needed to make fitness and health a lasting part of your life. So, lace up those running shoes, take that first step, and embrace the journey ahead. Your future, fitter self will thank you for it.

In conclusion, the journey to fitness is not about perfection but persistence. It's about making one good decision at a time and building upon it. It's about showing up, even when it's hard, and finding joy in the process. Remember, taking the first step matters. It's the beginning of a transformative journey towards a healthier, happier you.

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& ENTREPRENEURSHIP



Youth in entrepreneurship

By Dekhani Julius

In Malawi entrepreneurship is emerging as a leading career among the youth. To explore the relationship between youth and entrepreneurship we interviewed Victor Daffrece, founder of Spark Delight Soap Making and Detergent company who started his entrepreneurial journey in 2019.

Victor is the firstborn in a family of 2 from Zomba district, Thondwe village. He holds a bachelor's degree in computer applications, a certificate in business incubation offered by the African Development Bank, a certificate in detergents from Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences (MUBAS), a certificate in personal initiative from Reserve Bank of Malawi under Fines Project and also a student at the same MUBAS studying industrial laboratory technology.

Victor's products include Vroom Car Shampoo, Ukhondo Plus detergent, Fresh n Cool hair shampoo, Geza bathing soap, pine gel, and Wali Wali dish wash, which have been on the market for 4 years. Victor named his company Spark Delight because he wanted to reflect the sparkle of cleanness and delight of a job well done.

“My business is built on the foundation of helping people and industries shine through our high-quality soaps and detergent as well as our expert cleaning services and in industrial chemistry” explains Victor in the context of our conversation.

Considering the unemployment issues among our country's youth, Victor has been employing several male and female youths under his company, creating a room of support that directs their development and adaptation to entrepreneurship as a means of earning. Spark Delight also offers cleaning services and a short course program in basic industrial chemistry.

Through the economic sustainability that his company shows towards the country, Victor was nominated twice on the Forbes Africa 30 under 30 in the year 2022 list and also selected by the Ministry of Trade to exhibit at the international trade fair on two consecutive occasions. He has also been hired by the Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences as a trainer in the short course of detergent making and has graduated 3 cohorts so far.

The spark in his company's name represents the spark of cleanness and purity that the company's products and services aim to deliver. It also symbolizes the spark of knowledge and innovation the company ignites in students through short course programs. The Delight complete the satisfaction and joy that customers experience when they use the company's products and services.



It also reflects the delight of discovering new knowledge and skills students gain from the courses.

Looking at the challenges that most entrepreneurs face are high competition in the market for there are many products and a lack of capital financing their business progress. Victor says he is trying to make his company's products so unique and applying for grants from other big companies and people.

Quoting the late Bingu Wa Mutharika's "Dream in colours" Victor encourages the youth to press on hand with all their effort and colours and strive to pursue their goals. Youth must improve whatever they're into be it products or service delivery to their clientele. And when they fail they should remember that there is always an incentive for trying.



THE 265 BLEND ENTREPRENEURS OF THE YEAR

Let's get to know the CEO of Clem Jay collection well-Known for his exceptional customer service.



CLEMJAY'S COLLECTION

Q & A

CLEMJAY'S COLLECTION

1 Tell us a bit about yourself?

- um I'm Clement ClemJay Ching'oma born in Zomba but currently staying in Mzuzu. Graduated in 2023 from MZUNI with a Bsc of science in land management (physical planning) but currently unemployed. I run a small taking orders business

2 When and how did you start your business?

- Started this business back in 2023 after I finished my studies from Mzuni after I tried several businesses that failed, tried yootcha nyama, selling chips, mowa and mpunga but they just didn't sit well with me though.
 - I wanted to be able to afford nice clothes and nice sneakers so this business was one way of that... "iwill get employed mindset"

3 What keeps you motivated?

- Uuhmm I strive for a better life where I'm financially secure and happy. I have also seen so much progress ever since I started such that I stay alone and pay my own bills bhobho, so that alone is what keeps me going



4 Any perks that come with your career?

- The freedom of time I do what I want and when I want to

5 What are the challenges you face. And how do you handle them?

- Uhm shortage and difficulty in accessing forex since I source most of my stuff from China
 - Rude customers
 - Sometimes deliveries take a bit longer than expected and that's a compromise

6 How do you balance your business and personal life?

- The business is my personal life



7 What's the biggest lesson you have learnt in your career?

- Be nice to everyone and always have that smile. And also good behavior is a very important asset.

8 what are your future goals?

- Z a s a m b i r e -
ko sopo wamubotolo lol
- Open a shop and provide employment opportunities to my fellow youth

9 Any interesting facts about you or your business that people don't know?

- It's not as easy as it looks lol

10 Apart from this career what else would you want to do?
Uuhmm all I think of is growing this business

11 Mess or Ronaldo?

- R o n a l d o

12 Orange or Pineapple Squash?

- Don't have a problem with either I just like it heavily diluted

13 Any last words?

- Many thanks to people who support me in various ways. buying and recommending me to people , Iam truly grateful



**THE 265
BLEND
ENTREPRENEURS
OF THE
YEAR**

Get to know the CEO of Ix threads, one of the youngest creative fashion designers in Malawi.



**I
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Q & A IX THREADS

1 Tell us a bit about yourself

• I'm a fashion design student at Finish line Vocational College. Born and raised in Blantyre, I discovered my passion for fashion in my senior primary school phase. With a background in art and creativity

2 When did you start your business?

• It was in 2022, precisely December 10th when I had just started my fashion lessons and decided to open an Instagram account to just post my school life as a fashion student... before I knew it, people started reaching out to buy my pieces allowing me to grow even further... and just like that I was in business through the business



4 What's your Motivation?

• The fear of dying unsuccessful.

3 Who inspires you?

• Xandria, a pioneer in sustainable and inclusive fashion, inspires me to challenge conventional norms and create innovative, responsible designs.

5 Perks that come with your career?

Here are some perks that come with fashion and design:

- Creative Expression: Fashion and design allow you to express your creativity and bring your ideas to life.
- Joy and Fun: Creating and experiencing beauty brings happiness and fulfillment!



6 What are the challenges you face and how do you address them?

- Self-Doubt and creative block:
 - Focusing on strengths, seeking feedback from trusted peers, Taking breaks, exploring new sources of inspiration and celebrating small victories.
- Difficult Clients:
 - Listening actively, ask clarifying questions, and offering solutions that meet their needs.
- Tight Deadlines:
 - Prioritizing tasks, managing time effectively, and communicating with through the process clients.
- Standing out in a crowded industry
 - Staying updated on industry trends and skills, focusing on exceptional customer service. Taking calculated risks. Prioritizing quality and attention to detail.

7 How do you balance business and your personal life?

- Let me tell you, it's not easy. But I try to Set boundaries, prioritize self-care, and delegate tasks when possible.

8 What's the biggest lesson you have learnt in your career?

- You have all the time in the world, all you need is focus.

9 What's the advice concerning your career you wish someone gave you earlier?

I wish someone had warned me that pursuing my passion wouldn't be all sunshine and rainbows. Instead, I've faced work stress, time sacrifices, and risky decisions. But despite the challenges, I've grown and learned so much

10 What are your future goals?

- Create costumes for performing artists, Travel and collaborate with international designers,

11 Talents you have that people don't know about?

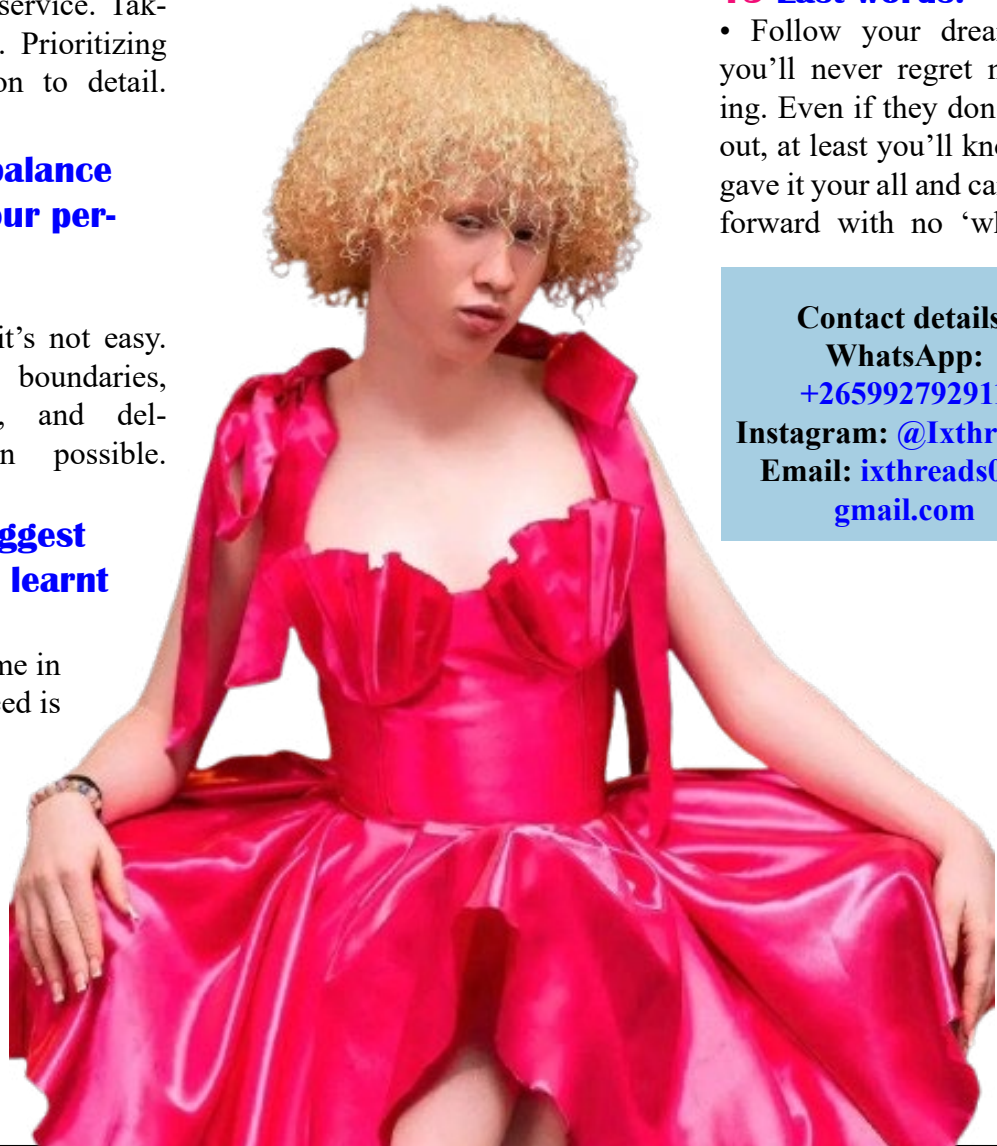
- Drawing and singing are my creative outlets, now enjoyed as hobbies that bring me joy and relaxation.
- last but not least, not so interesting. But I do freelance since I'm still a student.

13 Messi or Ronaldo?

- I'm not a sports person so neither. 14 Orange or pineapple squash, Pineapple all they wayyyy!

15 Last words?

- Follow your dreams, so you'll never regret not trying. Even if they don't work out, at least you'll know you gave it your all and can move forward with no 'what ifs'



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E Squared Multimedia



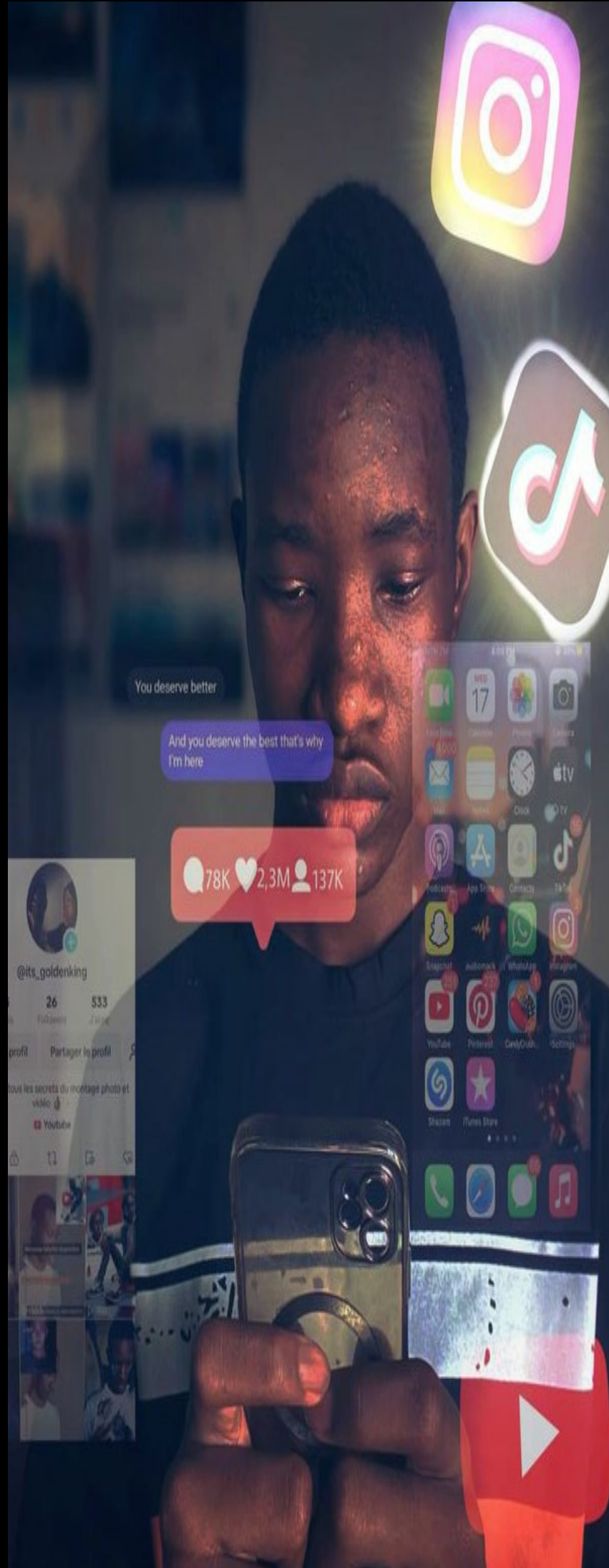
THIS IS YOUR SIGN TO GET A CREATIVE DESIGNER FOR YOUR PROJECT



**TO LEVEL UP YOUR
BRAND WE OFFER**

- ✔ Graphic Designing
- ✔ Book & Magazine Designing
- ✔ Digital Art
- ✔ Animate Logos
- ✔ Video shooting & Editing
- ✔ Documentary Production
- ✔ Music & Poetry Recording

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TECH TREND

265

DATES

MALAWI'S FIRST DATING APP





265 Dates

By Harrison Brown Masanjala

Described as “Malawi’s favourite dating site”, 265Dates is the first dating smartphone application launched in the country. Owned by the youthful socialite Pemphero Mphande, the dating app was launched in late June 2024.

Since its launch, the app has reportedly registered over 50,000 users and boasts an average rating of 3.3 stars on the Google Play store. Available for both Android and iPhone, the app serves the same purpose as the renowned Tinder or OKCupid, ideally presenting a platform where Malawians can easily meet others within the country and beyond.

265Dates lets users subscribe hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly, and a gold subscription to use the app. To help users find matches, it filters them based on distance or range of other users, preference of the nature of relationship one is looking for, whether a long-term relationship or short-term fun.

Though not widely discussed, the launch of such an app has brought a shift in Malawi’s dating landscape, with people, especially the youth able to sift the dating pool without going beyond their smartphones. One would say social media already does that. But there is a distinction: social media brings people, in general, closer to each other, while a dating app brings those looking for love closer to each other, statistically increasing the chances of meeting someone new.

Apart from that, the app will break traditional dating customs. One needs not go out, and meet up with new people in a face-to-face setting. That ought to kill the thrill of the initial stage of dating, of course, while for others, it has come to save them from the feared humiliation of the same stage where one has to meet a stranger, nervously introduce oneself, and be served the rejection card.

The plus side of the app on dating is salient, with confessions hailing it for newfound love. The app’s owner, has on several occasions, posted such confessions on his social media pages, and such confessions need not be overlooked when thinking about the pluses of the app.

The minuses may be there too, like promoting infidelity, deception, and lack of commitment in relationships due to a perceived sense of abundance. There are, however, cases that also need not be overlooked when analyzing the app. 265Dates being the first dating app

launched in Malawi opens the door for other apps. There is a chance Mphande has inspired other youths to follow his footsteps, with applications to make life easier, and other dating apps in the future may be a part of those. That means the app, while the only one currently on the scene, needs to evolve to meet the needs of people so that it does not get replaced by any new app. 265dates has come to give Malawians the feel of modern dating that the rest of the world experiences. The internet’s popular swipe left and swipe right are no longer strange concepts but a real experience in Malawi.

DO YOU WANT TO SUCCEED

ON ULIZINGATI? Here is how

By KwaManje

Many of the people have come to the conclusion that as long as you have digital content, then this can be sold on Ulizinga and make one earn thousands or millions. We all wish this was true, but it is not the case.

Before, we continue, for those that are not familiar with the Ulizinga platform: it is a Malawian digital platform where content creators can sell their work by charging an amount that they deem fit for their content.

Now, how can one make sure that they succeed on this platform and make the best of it? We will use two examples. Mushroom Shade series and Jetu. The reasons for such examples is to shine a light to most people as to why Mushroom Shade decided to release their season 1 final episode on Ulizinga and why Jetu managers deemed it fit for Jetu to have her song on YouTube and not Ulizinga.

I am sure most digital marketers are familiar with the marketing funnel.

One needs to know how the digital market works in order to succeed on it. For starters, Mushroom Shade had to first create awareness with its first episode on YouTube.

After that, it had to continue with the release of the second episode so as to see if people have indeed grasped the time and date of the show's release. The act of the viewers streaming of the second episode showed the creators that the viewers have considered watching the show.

However, considering the show does not prove anything as there needs to be more work done. Thus, they paused the show for more and better production so that the audience can appreciate the series better and give people enough time to alert others of the show. In so doing, turn these people considering watching the show to actually be looking forward to more of the show's episodes.

Therefore, if one is looking forward to more episodes, we can clearly say that they have been converted to be Mushroom Shade viewers.



This conversion ought to come with a sizable reward somehow, which is what the creators did, by releasing two other episodes back to back. Now, they knew they have the audience in a chokehold. This is a stage that the audience are now loyal and would do anything to see how season 1 finale ends.

Ulizinga came at the right time as the show now has a loyal audience, leading to the content creators of the show utilizing the audience's loyalty to their maximum gain, thus, putting the final episode on Ulizinga for people to watch. They knew people would be able to pay a value of 1k kwacha to watch the episode as the satisfaction would be greater than the cost attached and their target audience is capable of spending 1k without any complaints.

To add on, with this kind of loyal fanbase it has created, there is no doubt that season 2 episodes will be put on Ulizinga first before YouTube, as this is a faster way of them making money in Malawi.

Jetu on the other hand has a huge fan base, however, her fan base is inclusive of even the lower-class income people that she started reaching to before she was known to high income people in Malawi. With this in mind, she has not achieved that conversion rate to the point that she can capitalize on her music through Ulizinga, but rather YouTube, as it is a single payment method and not double payment method that the majority of her fanbase are familiar with and can afford.

Nevertheless, Ulizinga is here to stay in Malawi just as OnlyFans has in the world. One just needs to know how to work the digital market in order to prosper on this platform. This is the kind of innovation that Malawi has been looking forward to. It is my hope that many people catch up to it faster than expected as such innovations do take time to penetrate a developing country like Malawi.



THE BLIND SPOT:

The Use, Misuse, and
Abuse of AI

BY ELTON MANDA



The Malawi Defence Force, in collaboration with the National Defense College and the Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA), recently organized a panel discussion that resonated to navigate the ethical use of artificial intelligence (AI) in Malawi.

With the current global discourse on AI, discussions surrounding its role in the security or development sectors has become increasingly pertinent. The conference provided a critical platform to explore the opportunities that AI presents, as well as the risks and ethical implications tied to its adoption within the Malawian context.

Panelists engaged deeply on how AI is not just a technological advancement but a transformative force with the potential to reshape sectors such as security, healthcare, education, and beyond.

One of the focal points of the discussion was the balance between leveraging AI for national security and addressing the potential for misuse. Several panelists shared compelling insights into how AI could enhance security measures, improve resource allocation, and optimize strategic responses to emerging threats.



However, the conversation also acknowledged that the same tools could be misapplied, leading to surveillance issues, ethical dilemmas, and societal mistrust.



Moreover, the panelists tackled the ethical considerations surrounding AI development. Questions arose regarding accountability, the need for transparent AI systems, and the importance of involving a diverse range of voices in these conversations. The dialogue underscored the necessity for Malawi to implement frameworks that ensure responsible AI usage, safeguarding citizens' rights while promoting innovation.

The panel highlighted the importance of collaboration among government, academia, and the private sector. By pooling resources and knowledge, Malawi can cultivate an adaptive ecosystem capable of effectively managing the challenges and opportunities presented by AI.

Special thanks were extended to the organizers—the Malawi Defence Force, National Defense College, and MACRA—for facilitating this essential dialogue. Their commitment to exploring how emerging technologies can shape Malawi's future in security, development, and beyond is commendable. Such initiatives not only shine a light on pressing issues but also catalyze informed discussions that are pivotal for national progress.

AI adoption in Malawi is a very complex issue, with challenges that require thoughtful navigation. However, discussions like the recent panel on “The Blind Spot: The Use, Misuse, and Abuse of AI” are vital steps towards creating a well-informed society that can adapt to technological advancements. As Malawi moves forward, the insights gained from this conference will be instrumental in guiding the nation towards a future where AI is utilized ethically and responsibly, ensuring security and development for all.



LITERARY
LOUNGE

ALONE

By Selin Gondwe

Alone, like the title on this page,
Empty, like the blank space before it took form.
Powerful, like the meaning that hides behind the words.
I am a survivor,
A fighter who grew weary of the fight.
Now I lie still,
Brief, like the lines of this poem.

-Selin

HOPE

By H. Kanjauke Jr.

Can you call me back?
I promise I will pick up
I will welcome you
Embrace you
Trust you this time please
I want to feel you in this empty void I call a hear

By Lodocoat Gobeley

They sang songs of love
Somewhere in the warm heart
The Tumbukas
Their faces bathed in tears of love
If happiness was a color, I saw it etching
lines on their faces
“Nkhukutemwa chomene” I could make
out the phrase from her lips
The father cried yet with joy
For the toddler who once clung to his
side is now a woman
How he thought he’d be the only man
she’d ever love.

They sang songs of love
Somewhere in the warm heart
The Chewas
“Mwana wanga nchipikicha” they sang in
delight
If happiness was a person, I saw him in
the mother
Her heart swelled with joy
Her little boy bloomed into a man
How she thought she’d be the only wom-
an he’d ever love.

What is, if not beauty in unity?
Two cultures blending
Somewhere in the warm heart of Africa
In a symphony of devotion
Singing songs of love.

THEY SANG SONGS OF LOVE



“**D**

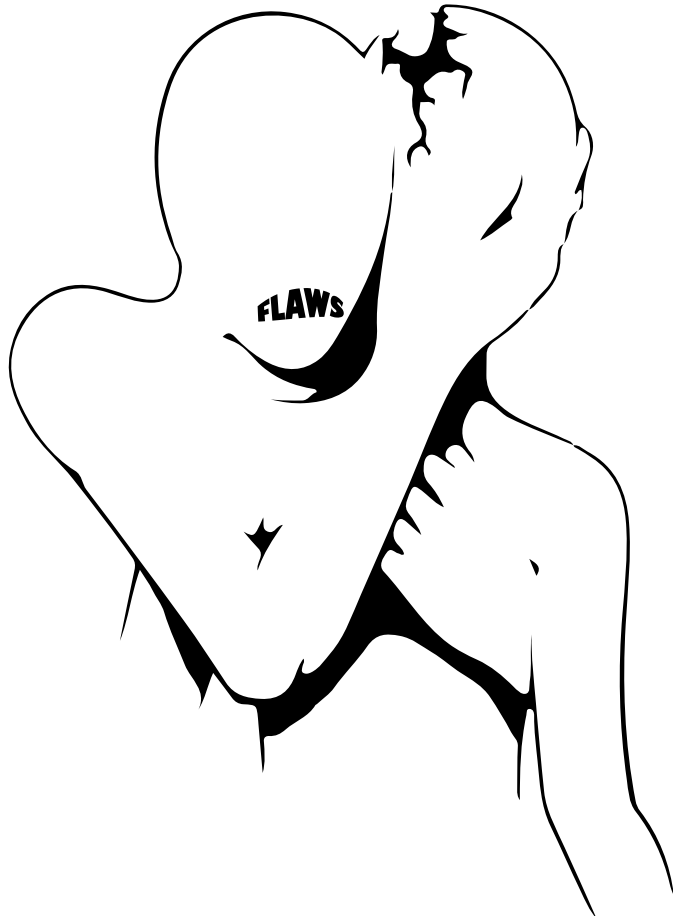
id you truly love her or you just tolerated her until you could no more?” Inquired Dr. Waalipo, her words came out dressed in teeming eloquence.

“What’s that supposed to mean?” I defensively demanded whilst shifting in my seat uncomfortably.

She smiled captivatingly before she explained.

”You see, there’s a love-tolerance ratio in relationships. Some relationships have more love than tolerance-these relationships are gifted with longevity and seven out of ten times they last a life time. Some have more tolerance than love and only last for so long.” She paused, boring into my sheepish eyes then asked.

”Which category do you think describes your previous relationship best?”



FLAWS OF A PERFECT MAN

I looked away for a split second but that was still perceptible to her eye. She was exceptional at what she did even though in the midst of me throwing a tantrum I once told her that she was a terrible therapist in one of our early sessions; I was brought into the face of unfamiliar truths about my life which I was in denial about for years.

Of course I apologised the next day, to my surprise we casually joked about it. Nangumanya, a friend of mine was the one who referred me to her when I was mildly depressed after ending a relationship that had its run after five years. Dr Waalipo, melanin galore, 5’4, slightly slim, radiant natural hair, long faced, always smiling-I know the irony-spoke softly, her vocabulary was cherry picked, a good sense of humour, a hybrid dialect composed of Scottish and Irish accents, God fearing and above all she was a person who was genuinely altruistic. At five years old, that was when she first knew that she wanted to be a psychotherapist, of course it was not that vivid and specific then. All she knew was that she wanted to see through people and pinpoint the genesis of their behaviour. She had a plethora of questions growing up as a child-questions that not even adults were able to draft answers that met her satisfaction-concerning almost everyone’s behaviour and actions.



Short story

BY

Kondwani

Cole

Chiwowa

And that is why I ended things with her? I've already told you Doctor, we were different people and we had to go separate ways!" I realised that my voice was on a crescendo and self consciously I said "I raised my voice didn't I?"

"You surely did but that's good thing. There's a misdirected anger in your tone and that's normal because the majority of humans are almost always at crossroads when it comes to anger," She faintly smiled and passed me a glass of water.

"You are not about to ask me if it's half empty or half full are you?" I teased as I received the glass.

"Mommy why is uncle always James laughing?"

"Mummy why do people always want to be around you and not aunt Tizenge?"

"Daddy why do you stare at mum that way?"

"Why does granny talk a lot and gramps barely says a word?"

She was predestined to be a therapist, when she got in college she did not hesitate to pursue a bachelor's in psychology and now here we are. At twenty nine she has her masters in human behaviour and earned the title "Doctor". She was singled out by an organisation and was awarded with a doctorate.

"Honestly, I do not know," I managed to say with a futile attempt to subtle the shakiness that was tenaciously glued to my voice.

She effortlessly smiled, "Either you are actually oblivious or you are just too frightened to look into this matter, perhaps because you are scared of what you might find or rather not find." "I am sure five years does sound like tolerance had the upper had doctor

I remarked with faint sarcasm. "Five years sounds like love didn't have the upper hand either now does it?" "I don't know what do you want me to say? That I didn't love her? I only tolerated her?"

"I mean I could but I went to an actual school, you know where they taught us legit stuff," She humoured me with a smirk on her face. She always knew what I needed, after leaving the glass half empty I started feeling more relaxed and at ease. That made me wonder if it was regular water or she might have mixed it with a tranquilizer. I leaned all the way back on the Italian leather couch and took a deep breath.

She proceeded, "Anger is a secondary emotion, it relies on other emotions to exist. You are probably angry because of the fact that you have to question your entire relationship and I get that it must be frustrating because if you thought you loved her only to find out that you merely tolerated her it will mean it was never love all those years. Knowing you, being the perfectionist that you were raised, doing something wrongly doesn't help you sleep at night now does it?" "Damn! You're good I'll give you that so, what's next, Doctor?" My compliment ended in a condescending tone and she let it slide or saved it for later.

"Let's see, you tell me how you grew up. You had a favorite parent?"



“T

atatatat, sorry I know I’m paid to listen to you but I’m a bit unorthodox like how I previously made that clear to you already.

You had a favourite parent? Don’t worry I won’t tell, I mean I couldn’t even if I wanted to cause that’d put me on the line and me licence as a psychotherapist would be revoked in a blink,” She managed to ask me about my unstable childhood without me feeling any gratuitous discomfort and it was amazing.

“Good one!”

“I bloody know!” She said self complacently whilst snapping the fingers of her left hand, “so talk to me.”

I chuckled “I don’t know my...my...my upbringing was quite complex and interesting as I told you in the early days. And I’m not sorry to disappoint you but I didn’t have a favourite parent...” Before I could finish she stopped me

Moving on, do you think she loved you more or tolerated you more?”

“That’s a good question doctor, really. Let me guess this will have to do with me ending the relationship huh?” I said with a smirk on my face.

“Humor and deflection, that is how you cope and it’s quite clever really,” she concluded while she took down the notes.

“Nothing ever goes past you now does it?” I looked at her, almost irked but deep down entirely blown away that she could see right through me.

“I mean it would’ve been bloody ironic, learning about how the mind works and people’s behaviour only to have people’s actions go over me head don’t you think?” she remarked rhetorically.



“Having said that, we should end this session here. I’ll be having me next client in a bit, do me a favour while you’re at home. Care to reflect on some of the questions that you spent an entire hour deflecting and will pick up from there.

Bye now!”

Five minutes, that’s the time it took me in my sedan BMW 7 series to drive home from my therapist’s luxurious office. “Peep peep!” then the gate keeper opened for me. I greeted her warmly and she asked me in our native language where Cleo was.

“Madamu alikuti?” She asked.

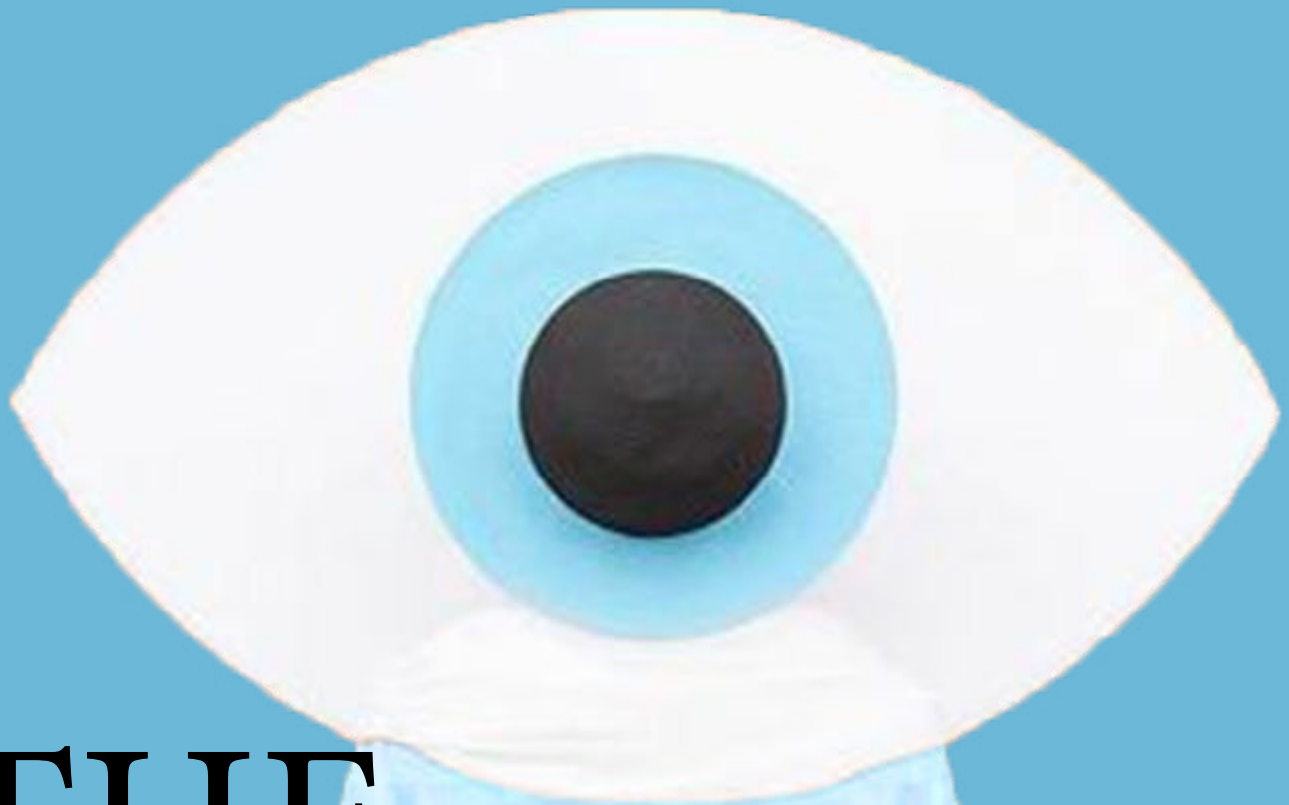
It was on a Friday and Cleo always spent the weekends at my place and I made a joke about it to just to brush it off. That made me realise what Dr. Waalipo said, that I use humour and deflection to cope.

Walked past the porch and I thought of Cleo. That used to be her favourite place. She said the view when the sun was setting was surreal. I opened the door and Kitty jumped on to me. Funny story, we named our dog “Kitty” just for the hell of it. We got her a year ago-because I had lost a bet. Around the same time, we also got one herbaceous plant which I named “flowers” all because the plant could not have flowers. At her place, there was a cat named “Puppy” and a plant named “Outdoors” because it was a house plant. The most interesting thing was that I was not a fan of dogs and she was not either a fan of cats, the opposite was true for the both of us. We switched because it was a preparation for when we would live together, learning to love the things we did not like about each other. Dr Waalipo was wrong, humour was not just my coping mechanism but the foundation on which my whole life was built upon and for the first time in my life that made me sad. In that moment I had an epiphany, my approach to life was that it was a joke, it made me realise that I needed to grow up, take life seriously and maybe get the love of my life back if she had not already moved on. We broke up five months ago because we were different? No, we actually were so alike and that was why we lasted five years. I walked in my room whilst carrying Kitty and looking around I saw that the room was half filled with her stuff. My stuff was also at her apartment which was forty-five minutes away from my place. Five years together all wasted, deep down I knew I would never find anyone like her and I had to make things right; therapy was one of the steps towards fixing things.

“You are so unbelievably selfish; I wonder how you even sleep at night!” Cleo spoke on top of her voice of which she seldomly did. “Well maybe if you were a little bit more appreciative then things would be so much different!” I snapped back at her. “I am tired, honestly,” She sighed.

“I think this is it, maybe we should just call it off.” I explicitly suggested at a whim. “C’mon babe that’s not what I meant, I mean I’m tired of having to take all responsibility when we fight as if you are never wrong, like you are the perfect man.”





THE PERSPECTIVE

&

OPINION
LAB

Why are artists miserable?

As an artist, have you ever found yourself staring at your finished artwork and all you see is flaws. Or perhaps you have poured your heart and soul into a project, only to have it met with criticism, rejection, or worse – no one buying it.

This article snips a little recipe of what it takes to be an artist or what it means to be an artist.

By Eglah Chikafa



**“You have
the true
artist’s
most
important
asset, a
miserable
life ”**

**Lisa Simpson from the
-Simpsons TV show-**

Why are artists miserable?

By Eglah Chikafa

Artists are drawn to a cycle of self-doubt and disappointment. They are drawn to the sting of inadequacy.

And why inadequacy? According to DSLRguide. “Because the people who find the sting of their inadequacies, they are the people who find the magic.”

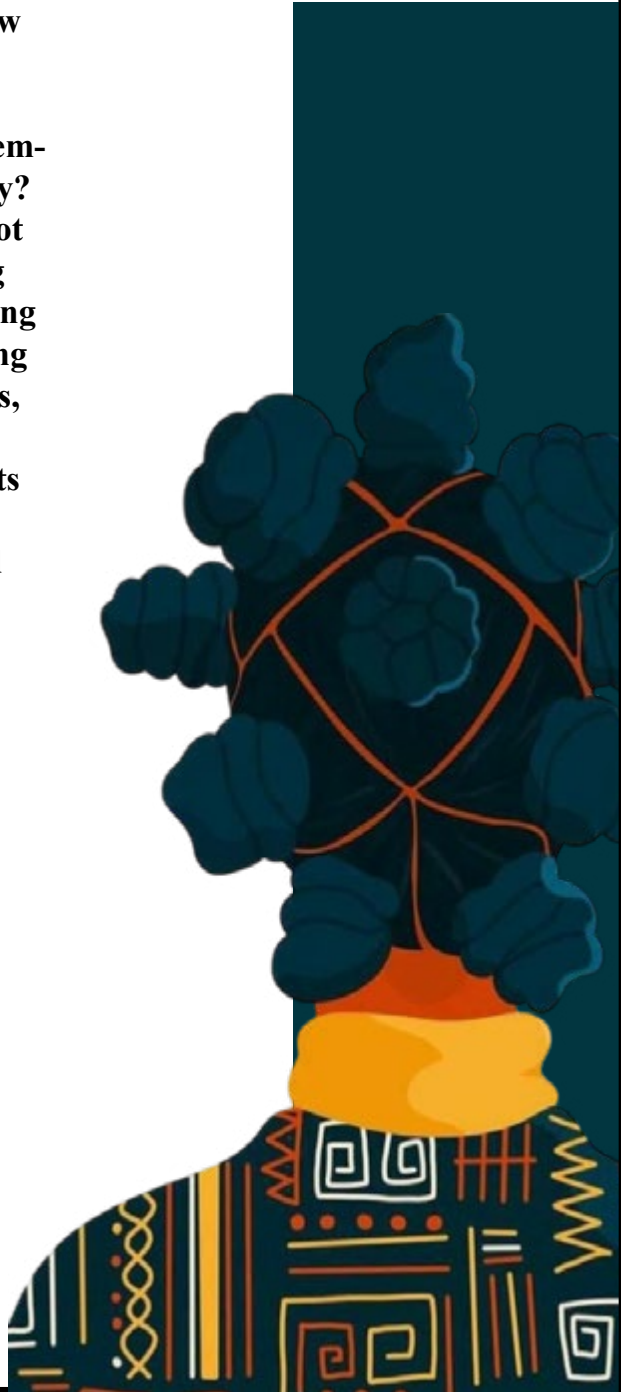
It’s the constant awareness that the ideas of an artist are never quite good enough, that they must continually erase and revise the work to uncover the hidden magic, it is making mistakes to capture the real picture in your mind.

This curse of creativity drives artists to push beyond their boundaries of what is acceptable, to innovate and experiment until they paint the spitting image of their imagination. “It’s a curse of creativity...but never having the ability to give up on the idea.” DSLRguide.

Being an artist comes at a cost. The relentless pursuit of perfection can be exhausting, a never-ending cycle of self-criticism and doubt.

And yet, the struggle that fuels creativity, forces artists to dig deeper and find new sources of inspiration.

So, why do artists put themselves through this misery? Because in the end, it’s not about creating something perfect – it’s about creating something true. Something that resonates with others, something that leaves a mark. And for that, artists are willing to endure the pain, the frustration, and the uncertainty.



**Beyond
and ayond
you admarvesion
Article series**

By Andrew Maliro

MISSPELLING,

REDUNDANCY:

LINGUISTIC SINS



On 1 August, 2017, I posted on my Facebook timeline, “If you want to criticize, criticize in perfect lan-

guage. Poor grammar and criticism are like poverty and riches. You can’t have riches without first defeating poverty.”

I focused on language perfection when criticizing (or reproaching) someone because not many accept criticism – even when it’s a positive one.

Instead, they get angry and, in the course of letting out their anger, start looking for loopholes in the criticism so ungrammatically offered. If really it is ungrammatical, woe to it for the backfire is always equal to the task.

True, many people will still not take heed of criticism even when it's perfectly structured anyway.

However, I, for one, would better stick to grammar rules and let the person ignore my advice at owner's risk than suffer both the negligence and the grammar backlash.

50-50 or nothing!
Bad grammar also potentially weakens the message we want to put across. Imagine giving a friend the map to your house on a phone call like, "...just after jumping the bridge, you will see my house across the Nkhotakota road." Just imagine! Your house is not only the end of the road but the friend, who is in fact travelling by car, will also need to do some acrobatics in order to cross a bridge.

If I were the person receiving the directions, I would first wonder if this friend smoked something from Nkhotakota before calling me.

As if this is not enough, if you ask them to write what they said you most probably will have a good reading of something like, "...jast aftar japing the bldige, you weel see my howse a cross the Nkhotakota load." Just imagine! Do you know what many say in defense of their own linguistic mistakes? "Bola mwamva!" (Good thing is you understood!)

In so doing, they commit a fallacy of missing the point because the issue is not whether or not we understood them but how their message should have been presented for effective communication.

F u n n y
enough, they now choose to code-switch to vernacular – a language they know better—and I keep asking myself why they didn't go for it and avoid the hullabaloo in the first place.

Redundancy, simply defined as a needless repetition in language, is also one of the commonest linguistic sins people commit. The phrase "the reason why", for example, is a common expression in English but it's actually redundant. . "Reason" already implies "why" so using both together is unnecessary. Instead of saying, "The reason why I called..." you can simply say, "The reason I called..." Other common redundant phrases include "each and every one", "the time when", "people...they..." and many more.

In Chichewa, we have expressions like "ndamupeza kulibe" (literally "I found him not there"), "wadzuka atafa" (literally "s/he woke up dead"), "wapenga misala" (literally "s/he is mad with madness") and many more superfluities. These must be avoided if we want to make our c o m m u n i c a t i o n s , reproaches, commendations and advice holy. In conclusion, in the language world, all grammar mistakes are sins. Like other sins, linguistic sins, once committed, must either be confessed or admitted not celebrated or brushed for they can dent our language holiness. As well, if we have limited knowledge about the language we want to use, let's go vernacular. Do not force matters. Without trying to commit any redundance here, let me repeat: do not force matters. Let this sink in.

PS

While the article targets Malawians, it can equally be applied to people with similar issues anywhere in the world

The empty echo chamber:

*the ineffectiveness of online
debates in fuelling real change*

By Madame M



By Madame M

Despite Malawi's relatively low internet penetration rate that is below the SADC regional standard, there has been an increase in online debates and discussions on issues like corruption, governance, and economic development across several social media platforms.

The circulation such issues receive on the internet reflect the concerns of citizens and the depth of their dissatisfaction with the governance of the country as they leverage digital spaces to demand accountability and drive reform by addressing their unmet needs and desires.

However, these digital discussions rarely translate into real change because users are more often exposed to negative (although true) viewpoints that reinforce their existing feelings of helplessness and create a sense of complacency that discourages action and sows seeds of anti-patriotism.

Many youths, who are believed to be the leaders of tomorrow, are now looking for greener pastures outside the country than nurturing what they perceive to be a dry, infertile land due to the massive gap created by individuals who deem it impossible to improve the country and see going International as the only true viable option to success.

This spirit of passiveness does not stem from the lack of ambition, but rather sprouts from the narrow horizon viewpoint people have after gaining a few information that offers a reality check that may seem too overwhelming to handle and forces individuals to escape through emigration and other means.

However, it's essential to recognize that by disengaging from the issues, we inadvertently surrender our agency and our future to the very problems we seek to escape and perpetuate the status quo. It's time for us to reclaim our power and our collective responsibility to shape the future of our nation

It's time for us to shift our mindset from "what can I gain from my country?" to "what can I give to my country?" It's time for us to rekindle our sense of patriotism, not as a blind loyalty to a flawed system, but as a fierce commitment to building a better future for ourselves, our children, and our communities.

We owe it to ourselves, to our freedom, and the brave women and men who fought for it to become the change we seek for. Let us rise up Malawi, and ignite the flames within us.

BUILD OR FLEE?

The Entrepreneurial Dilemma in Malawi

By Prince Bush Moffat

Being one of the poorest countries on earth, Malawi faces a significant brain drain as educated and uneducated citizens leave in search of greener pastures abroad. Even those with an entrepreneurial mindset often choose to leave the country due to its hostile environment towards start-ups, especially those without funding. The obstacles to building a thriving business in Malawi are endless, including the slow adoption of new products and technology, a high illiteracy rate, unfavorable taxes, and widespread poverty that limits the potential customer base for many products.

With an increasing number of graduates entering a shrinking job market, most find themselves without employment opportunities. The reality of the job market is that even those fortunate enough to secure jobs often struggle with wages that barely cover daily needs, let alone personal growth. This leads to a pressing question, is moving abroad the answer to our problems? While many would answer yes, I believe the answer is No.

Think about this analogy: parents have a great influence on their child's future by providing education and basic necessities, which paves the way for success. But not every child ends up on the path their parents intended. Some children go on to succeed even though they are neglected or go through difficult times.

Similarly, Malawi may not have the policies or infrastructure necessary to support the growth of start-ups, but this should not be interpreted as an insurmountable barrier.

Rather, we need to change our perspective and see the difficult terrain as a chance to sow the seeds of innovation and cultivate brands that will ultimately help Malawi thrive.

If Malawi were a financially stable country with large businesses and advanced technology, would you still be able to create your start-up and compete with well-established companies? The answer is likely "No." Currently, many start-up entrepreneurs in Malawi are hesitant to enter the market, fearing competition from well-established businesses. But this fear overlooks an important point that the current state of Malawi should be a motivator to start businesses now before the easy opportunities are claimed by others.

Malawi's main source of foreign currency lies in the agricultural sector yet the number of large-scale farms and the overall participation in irrigation farming is disproportionately small compared to the available land and population. This indicates that we are underperforming in the very sector that sustains our economy.

Unfortunately, many influential and educated figures in Malawi encourage people to leave the country at the first opportunity, citing a lack of visible progress.

But my opinion differs and I call this ‘The Misguided Exodus.’ The countries that our talented and educated men and women flock to were not always rich—they were once poor, but they were built into the prosperous nations they are today. This transformation will not happen in Malawi if we are unwilling to stay and build, instead of fleeing while cursing the state of the nation as if it were someone else’s responsibility to improve it.



Blaming the system is not productive because we, the citizens, are the ones who operate the system. Regardless of how visionary the leaders might be, no amount of good policy will succeed if the people in the offices below them do not share the same vision and energy to build. This responsibility extends to all civil servants at every level.

Considering that the private sector is the main driver of economic growth, investing our energy and knowledge into building businesses in Malawi despite the challenges is the only way forward. There is always a market for great products and we must seize the opportunity to develop brands before the competition becomes too fierce.

The path to a prosperous Malawi doesn’t lie in abandoning the country but in staying and working to improve it. The challenges we face should be seen as opportunities to innovate and build rather than as reasons to leave. If we are committed to transforming Malawi, we must channel our efforts into creating businesses and opportunities within our borders. The future of Malawi depends on our willingness to invest in our land and build a better tomorrow – build or flee?



ALL THINGS SPORTS



**“None of us
are Walking
Football
Encyclopedias”**

THE FEMALE FAN STRUGGLE

By Mercy Chimwaza

I saw a Twitter thread of people posting themselves in their favorite team jerseys, and the first picture that caught my eye was a girl in a Manchester United jersey. My immediate thought was how stunning she looked, her beauty somehow made the jersey even more striking. As I held onto that compliment in my mind, I scrolled up to see a quote tweet on her picture. It was a guy asking, “Mention Manchester United’s first 11” yes it was a joke, but the more I thought about it, the more it didn’t sit right with me. I hadn’t seen a single guy in that thread asked the same question, and it made me wonder: why do women have to constantly validate their knowledge and love for football?

Yes, I will admit most women probably only know Jude Bellingham or one or two famous or handsome players. But here’s the thing: some of us know a lot more than that. We may not have memorized every player, every position, or every goalkeeper in history, but guess what? Neither have most men. None of us are walking football encyclopedias, so why is the standard different for us? It’s exhausting to see women being interrogated and over a sport we love. So here’s my message: leave the girls alone. Celebrate their passion instead of interrogating it, and let’s enjoy the beautiful sport together!



THE EDITOR'S
PLAYLIST

Mercy Chimwaza

STEPPING INTO BASE CUBE'S EXHIBITION

"This is 2024—you're either a one-day fan or a day-one fan." A clever assertion of his authenticity and the strides he's made, all while showcasing his signature understated confidence.

But the heart of the album lies in its emotional storytelling. Tracks like *15 Minutes of Shame* transform vulnerability into brilliance, turning an embarrassing moment into a song so relatable, it feels personal. My favorite, though, is feeling. It's a love song that hits all the right notes, with a beat so intoxicating it makes even the most single among us feel like we're in the throes of romance.

Base cube shines on this track, both singing and rapping with sincerity, pouring his emotions into lines like, *"Thinking about your love got me staring at the ceiling / 24/7 tryna analyze the feeling."*

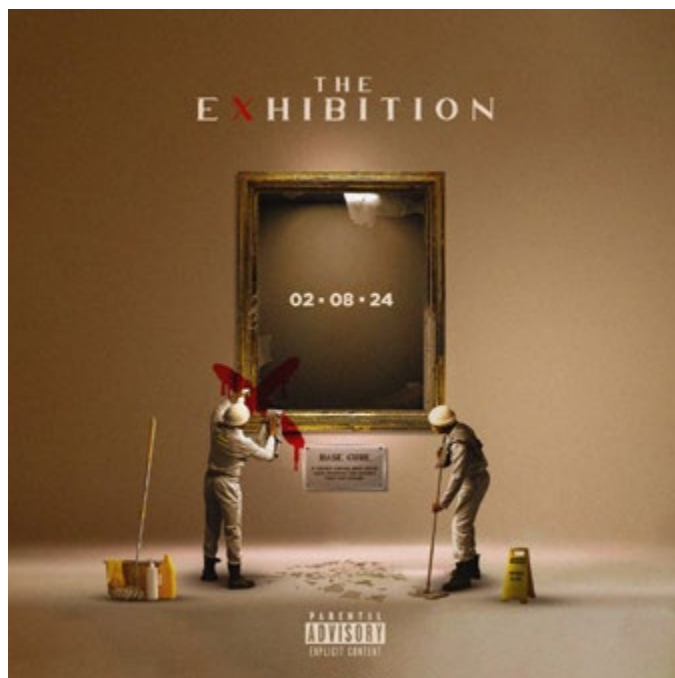
His choice of collaborators is equally impressive; *My People*, featuring Krazie G, stands out as a masterclass in chemistry, tone, and production. Every track on in the Exhibition has something to offer, and Base cube's ability to combine raw emotion with and creativity is unmatched, his smart lyricism, smooth flow, and voice that blends effortlessly with the beats makes this album to stand out from the rest. If you haven't listened to it yet, trust me it's worth every second. And if you have, let this be your reminder to hit play again!

By Mercy Chimwaza

This year has seen an outpouring of incredible albums, but my pick is Base cube's *The Exhibition*. True to its name, this album is a curated experience, each track feels like a piece of art on display.

The opening song, *welcome to the exhibition*, sets the tone perfectly, inviting listeners into what feels like an auditory gallery.

It's a warm, captivating start that relaxes you while building excitement for what's to come. Then there's *I Brag Different* a standout track that lives up to its bold title. Here, Base Cube reflects on his journey and growth, delivering one of the most memorable lines of the year:



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265 BLEND

QUIZ

1 A name of a Malawian artist that has 8 letters, the name starts and end with an R?

2 Name a Malawian album released in 2024 that featured Krazie G in only one song.

4 What's the song that has both Theo Thompson and Chavula in?

5 In what Lucious Banda song do we find this line: "wina wa arsenal, wina wa Man utd?"

The first 3 people to get all the questions right will receive a weekly data bundle. Send answers and your number to: **0992990732**

3 "Satana pama playing cards amatipasa aja tamupasa pick two ndi chi jump" whose sang this line and in what song?



MOVIE RECS

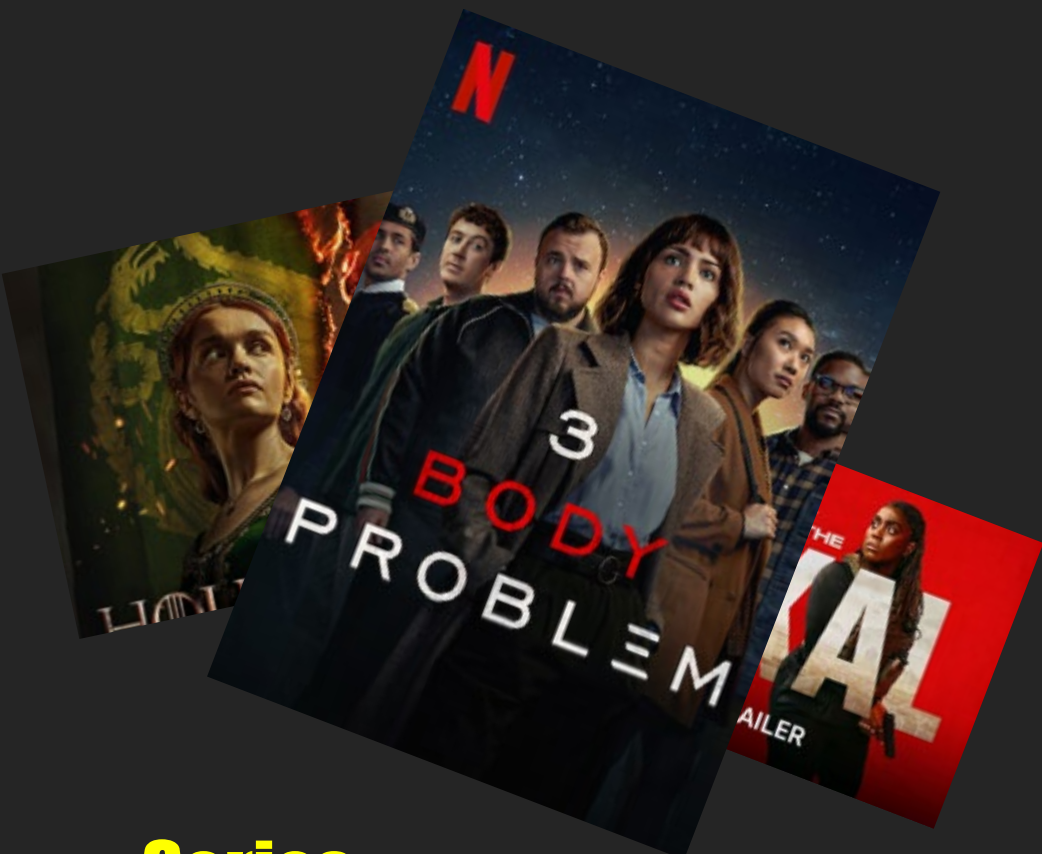
From Myth's (iamblackmyth) twitter timeline

In case you are looking something to spice up your movie night, Netflix and chill or even Nkiri and chill lol Here are the best-must-watch movies and series of 2024.



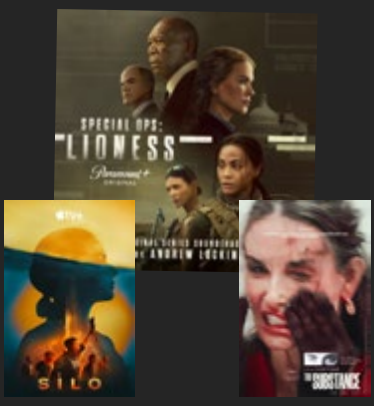
Movies

- Elavation
- Smile
- The substance
- Midas Man
- Absolution



Series

- Special ops: Lioness
- The day of the Jackal
- House of the dragon season 2
- Silo season 2
- 3 body problem



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