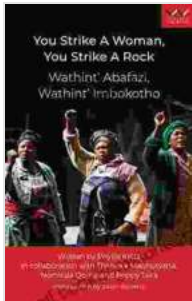


# You Strike Woman You Strike Rock: Wathint' Abafazi Wathint' Imbokotho



## You Strike a Woman, You Strike a Rock / Wathint' Abafazi, Wathint' Imbokotho: A play by Phyllis Klotz

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 4939 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Print length : 95 pages



In the annals of South Africa's tumultuous history, the anti-apartheid movement stands as a testament to the indomitable spirit of a people united against oppression. Amidst the struggle for freedom and equality, women played a pivotal role, their voices rising in defiance and solidarity. One such song that encapsulates the spirit of resistance and female empowerment is "Wathint' Abafazi Wathint' Imbokotho" ("You Strike a Woman, You Strike a Rock").

### Origins and Meaning

The song emerged in the 1950s as a rallying cry against the forced removal of black women from their homes in Sophiatown, a vibrant township on the outskirts of Johannesburg. The lyrics, written by African National Congress (ANC) activist Phyllis Ntantala, resonated deeply with women who had long endured the brutality and humiliation of apartheid.

The central metaphor of the song is the rock, a symbol of strength, resilience, and defiance. By equating women to rocks, the song conveys the message that they are not to be trifled with. The lyrics proclaim: "Strike a woman, strike a rock, strike a man, strike a rock, touch a child, touch a rock." This powerful imagery underscores the interconnectedness of all members of society and the collective resistance against oppression.

### **Miriam Makeba and the Internationalization of the Song**

The song gained international recognition thanks to the iconic South African singer Miriam Makeba. In 1960, Makeba performed "Wathint' Abafazi Wathint' Imbokotho" at the All-Africa Women's Conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Her rendition electrified the audience and brought the song to the attention of a wider global audience.

Makeba's powerful voice and passionate delivery resonated with listeners around the world, becoming a symbol of the anti-apartheid movement. Through her performances and recordings, Makeba used her platform to highlight the plight of women in South Africa and to advocate for their liberation.

### **Impact and Legacy**

The song had a profound impact on the South African anti-apartheid movement, becoming an anthem of female solidarity and resistance. It inspired women to organize and mobilize, calling for an end to oppression and inequality. The song also helped to raise international awareness of the plight of women under apartheid, contributing to the global movement for human rights.

Beyond its immediate impact, "Wathint' Abafazi Wathint' Imbokotho" continues to resonate today as a powerful symbol of female empowerment and resistance. It is sung at protests, rallies, and gatherings around the world, reminding us of the ongoing struggle for gender equality and the importance of standing up against oppression.

## **Themes of Unity and Intersectionalism**

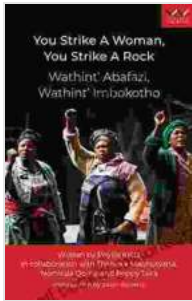
One of the enduring strengths of "Wathint' Abafazi Wathint' Imbokotho" is its message of unity. The song transcends racial, ethnic, and class divisions, bringing together women from all backgrounds to fight for a common cause. The lyrics emphasize the interconnectedness of oppression, drawing parallels between the experiences of women, men, and children.

The song also embodies the principles of intersectionality, recognizing that women face multiple forms of oppression based on their race, class, gender, and other factors. By highlighting the experiences of black women in particular, the song gives voice to those who are often marginalized and forgotten.

"You Strike Woman You Strike Rock: Wathint' Abafazi Wathint' Imbokotho" is more than just a song; it is a testament to the indomitable spirit of women in the face of adversity. It is a reminder of the power of unity, solidarity, and resistance. The song continues to inspire and uplift, serving as a beacon of hope in the ongoing struggle for gender equality and social justice.

As we commemorate the women who fought tirelessly against apartheid, let us draw inspiration from their courage and determination. Let us

recommit ourselves to the cause of women's empowerment and to creating a world where all women are free, equal, and respected.



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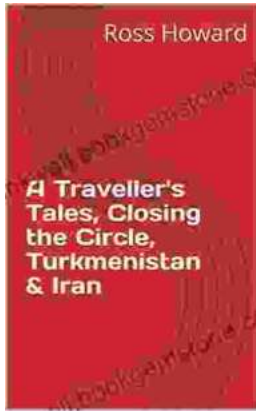
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