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**A FISTFUL OF FEATHERS**



**BY**

**SHIRLEY ANNE POOL**

The title of the screenplay comes from a “moppie”. “Moppies” are very much like rhyming ditties, meant to be sung in a humourous yet often insulting manner. The “moppies” in this case, only rhyme in Afrikaans, and I envisioned them being used as background “music” to the some parts of the screenplay. Although the “moppies” may seem rather childish, one gets the impression that most of these “moppies” reflect the “coloured” community’s sense of social and political inequality and powerlessness. For example,

‘n handvol vere  
‘n handvol vere  
kyk hoe lyk die boeremeid se klere

**English translation:**

a handful of feathers  
a handful of feathers  
look at the White Afrikaans farmgirl’s clothing

.....  
Hitler ry ‘n aeroplane  
Hitler se hol is vol asyn

**English translation**

Hitler rides an aeroplane  
Hitler’s ass is full of vinegar

.....  
Kartokkie ry die wa  
En boer sit agterna

**English translation**

The acorn rides ( or steers ) the wagon  
And the White, Afrikaans speaking farmer sits at the back (of the wagon)

.....  
So lank as ‘ie kind in die tjaarlie le  
Lyk hy nes soos jy

**English translation**

As long as the baby lays in the shawl  
He will look like you  
(This is sung when a man tries to deny he is the father of a particular baby.)

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This work is dedicated to Professor Lesley Glenn Marx



Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the Masters in Creative Writing Degree

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature

Shirley Anne Pool

Signed at the University of Cape Town

University of Cape Town



## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

### MAIN CHARACTERS

**Charlene:** thirteen years old

**Sara:** Charlene's mother

**Keith:** Charlene's father, fisherman

**Stella:** Charlene's twenty year old sister

**Grandmother:** Keith's mother

**Aunty Minnie:** Grandmother's sister

**Jantjies:** "Father of Many"

**Geraldine:** Jantjies' common-law wife

**Klein Jantjies:** Geraldine and Jantjie's favourite child

**Avvie:** Geraldine's sister

**Shane:** Young man, about twenty one years old

Curved parentheses indicate screen directions, whereas square parentheses indicate that a cultural oddity or otherwise is being explained to the reader.

FADE IN :

EXT. PIER KALK BAY HARBOUR EARLY AFTERNOON

*A father and son are on a pier. They have a radio with them and there is a broadcast on about nation-wide strikes, and a report on the T.R.C. It is very misty and we hear the waves breaking against the rocks. The horizon is not clearly visible since the sea, mountains and sky are all grey and blend into each other.*

FATHER

First look behind you before you throw in the hook. We had a accident here, not long ago, hook in a girl's cheek, almos' took her eye out also. *(looks behind him)*  
People don't always see the sinker get the light when you swing it, 'specially when it's so misty.

BOY

*(pauses)* Why mus' we look behind us? We fishing...they must looking out for the hook. We getting the food, not them.

FATHER

I know, but sometimes you get people, they want to stand and watch us do this, catch our food. Makes them feel full when we fill our buckets.

BOY

Ja, there's always people watching... but what when there's no fish? And then?

FATHER

We have to wait. Store our rods for a while.

*They continue for a while. At another spot on the pier, there is a great hurrying excitement. A young boy is about to go out on the boats for the first time. The father and son put their rods down to join in the excitement of watching the boy go out to sea. The boy seems very nervous and looks down at his feet. He climbs into the boat unassisted.*

KLEIN JANTJIES

I'm okay, mom. Ja, I'm warm enough. Yes, mammie I won't lean far over.

FISHERMAN

Ja...aunty, he's alright. He's not stupid.

GERALDINE

Don't forget, this is Jantjie's laaitjie you talking about. And it's the sea, you know. And another thing, you don't need to be stupid to drown.

FISHERMAN

He'll be alright. We'll look after him, just throw him overboard if he don't listen.  
Daai sal hom bang maak. (*Laughs to himself, no-one else finds it funny*)

GERALDINE

When you come home, boy... we can have your favourite roast chicken. We'll see how much fish we can sell today. (*to another woman*) Last time we could only get a small piece of mutton with all that snoek we sold.

WOMAN

I know, things is bad.

GERALDINE

If we sell enough snoek we can get a t.v this year for Christmas. Everytime I look at the sea I think about all the things I want. I look at the sea, and I see a new lounge suite coming in on the waves, or a t.v. If this sea could just wash up a washing machine for me, then I'll be happy.

FISHERMAN

Come we get this thing going.

GERALDINE

You bring him home if he get sea-sick, you hear?

FISHERMAN

Can't promise, we'll see how far out we go.

GERALDINE

You bring him home.

FISHERMAN

Maybe

INT. LOUNGE

*Not far away, Charlene, a young girl of thirteen and a half is dusting off a "ship in a bottle", with the intention of going to join in the festive atmosphere at the pier. As she reaches to replace the bottle on the mantelpiece, she almost drops it as she cringes in pain with her menarche.*

SARA

Wipe the blood off your legs and rinse that cloth with cold water in the basin.  
Kom, maak gou.

*The girl does so, then goes outside to empty the dirty water into the open drainage system. The mother comes outside and is horrified to see her daughter doing this.*

EXT. AT DRAINAGE SYSTEM

SARA

That's for fish blood, you know. How can you throw your bloody water in that drain? You want a whole lot of flies?

CHARLENE

The flies are here anyway, so what difference does it make?

SARA

Ja, but if they in the house, we know they only sitting on the fish blood. En nog 'n ding, stop backchatting, jy mekeer a taai klap!

CUT

INT. KITCHEN                      LATER SAME AFTERNOON

*Sara opens the fridge and takes out a pack of pork sausages, which she begins frying. From time to time she glances out of the window, waiting for her husband.*

SARA

*(pointing to sausage in pan)* Come look here.

CHARLENE

What?

SARA

Sien jy nie? *(She cuts a slit in each of the sausages, they begin to swell. Then, in a serious fashion, she turns to speak to her daughter.)*

This is how you will feel... You had \*men on the station for a year already, nou kyk jy my met groot oë aan. [\*a reference to women's pubic hair]

*Keith comes in and hangs up his raincoat.*

KEITH

That boy of Gerry's is going to have a tough time today. Siestog, I told the other men to stick a kabeljou or something in, under the plankies, in case the boy don't get nothing. The weather's not so lekker today. But next time he'll have to get his own, come hell or high water.

SARA

Sit down. I'm almos' done with the supper. *(Places food on table)* Your daughter became a young lady today, you know what I mean?

KEITH

Ja...so what's that got to do with the price of eggs? *(To his daughter)* Are you still going to help me with the knots tomorrow?

SARA

I don't want her hanging around by the boats anymore, if she don't need to be there. I don't like the look of some of the new boys that's helping out. If things happen, they quick to blame the mother. There's better things for her to do around the house.

CHARLENE

Like what?

SARA

Like keeping your mouth shut when I discuss things that don't concern you. Your mouth is like a fish, open and close whole day. And if it isn't that then you blow your mouth up like a blaasoppie.

KEITH

Did you shine the ornaments?

SARA

Ja...I think we must sell that ship-in-a-bottle, we can get something decent for it. Towards a new washing machine.

CHARLENE

Please don't, mom.

*Charlene picks up the ship-in-a-bottle and observes her parents and home through it, moving it slowly from left to right. The camera follows her gaze from inside the bottle.*

CHARLENE

It's almost like the ship is sailing in the house and we all underwater. Mom...did you ever cry underwater? It's like nothing you ever felt before. It's like the sea's inside you, coming out through you.

*The father is looking around for a match to light his cigarette with.*

KEITH

They having a competition at the fish festival. Your friend, Kim, is entering the Miss Mermaid competition. Six kilograms of crayfish and one hundred rand to be won. *(to daughter)* Why don't you also enter?

CHARLENE

Maybe...but will I fit into a mermaid costume, that's the thing.

SARA

We can make one to fit you, if you want. Some sewing might keep you out of trouble.

EXT. ROAD IN STEENBERG LATE AFTERNOON

*Some boys are playing soccer in the road, the girls are sitting in groups on the pavements, playing with geranium seeds. [These are known as "clocks" to the children. The "clocks" are geranium seeds which spring off a stalk. Children stick them on their clothing. The stalk twists round like the minute hand of a clock.] There is a close-up of the "clocks" while the snoek horn is blowing. The boys give way for the snoek van.*

FISHMONGER

Gaan se vir jou ma daar's bossies vis  
Een vir die slams en een vir die chris'

*They slow the van down and Geraldine comes out of her house to take a look at their wares.*

GERALDINE

Lyk maar lekker, but no money today, man.

FISHMONGER

Is alright, skenk my maar 'n doppie, (*gestures appropriately*) you can always pay later.

GERALDINE

My man's weer weg met sy \*Bonteheuwel briefcase. Wag, ek gaan gou kyk.

*She comes back with some beers which she gives to the fishmonger in exchange for some fish. As the snoek van passes around the corner, we see a group of men coming home. They are silhouetted against the sunset, and appear to be carrying briefcases. They are clearly intoxicated. As they come nearer we see that the "briefcases" are \*carriers for packaged wine, complete with carrying handles.*

GERALDINE

I had to give your wine away. There was no more fish for the children.

JANTJIES

Better to give the children away and get me some wine.

GERALDINE

Your children is worth less than you, and what are you worth? Won't even get a empty beer glass for you.

JANTJIES

*(putting his arm around her and leaning on her for support)* Wil jy hê ek moet jy trou? Is that what you want sweetie, for me to marry you? A beautiful white wedding...and a Royal Rolls Royce. Well...I haven't got that car and that thing you must have when you get married, what you call that thing the white people got, a polis...a pol

GERALDINE

A what?

JANTJIES

You know! A policy for the children's education. Ek wonder hoe werk it. My friend Maanie, he said his boss got one, every month you can get money from it, it grows. I'm also going to grow money, then we can get married. *(laughs sarcastically)*

GERALDINE

Well, if we got married, then maybe your children wouldn't be so on the street all the time. All of them...bloody bastards.

JANTJIES

Jy...half the bastards is yours. *(Looks at the children playing in the street)*

GERALDINE

They on the streets whole day, just like you.

JANTJIES

Well, where mus' they be? You see tennis courts around here?

GERALDINE

Stop making excuses for the children. They don't even want to go to school anymore. We also didn't have tennis courts, but I didn't grow up the way they growing up.

JANTJIES

You didn't even grow up...if you can't see what's wrong here. *(sits on pavement)* This is the way it is. And stop talking about yours and mine and ours. *(Some of the younger children clamour around him)* They all our children. *(looks at one child)* But not this one.

*Geraldine and Jantjies go into the house. Jantjies is still very drunk and nearly falls in by the front door.*

INT. KITCHEN

GERALDINE  
Did you look for work today?

JANTJIES  
Of course!

GERALDINE  
In that state?

JANTJIES  
Yes, man...of America. By the smokkie, I was talking to the Americans-

GERALDINE  
I don't want to hear about this gangs.

JANTJIES  
I can cut a easy deal. Get some cash, pack Mandrax pille like a chemist.

GERALDINE  
Why can't you garden or paint?

JANTJIES  
They pay you peanuts. And anyway, I can't paint nice...I'm not Michelle.

GERALDINE  
Who?

JANTJIES  
Don't you know? You think you so clever. Michelle Angelo is a painter who painted in that big church in town. It is a very famous church painting. (*looks proudly at his 12 year old son, Klein Jantjies*) Klein Jantjies said they learned him that at school. He's been going lately.

KLEIN JANTJIES  
Yes, Mom...and they learned me that on Basil Day the French people killed each other. That's why they got a Eiffel Tower.

GERALDINE  
(*smiling very proudly*) You see boy, why it's good for you to go to school? You can get clever and get a good job. Now come read this instructions on this OMO box for me so I can get started with this washing. It's a new kind of OMO.

KLEIN JANTJIES

*(picking up box)* m...m...m...mi...mi...mix...*(smiles at his accomplishment)*  
mi . . mix... th...th...mix...thr...mix...three...mix three...

*Geraldine smiles glowingly at her son, mistakenly believing he is an average reader for his age.*

INT. KITCHEN IN SARA'S HOUSE LATE AFTERNOON

GRANDMOTHER

You mus' start washing you own underwear now...

CHARLENE

I know

*Charlene's father enters with her younger sister, Megan.*

KEITH

Charlene, help me with this knots, \*kanalla. [\*a Cape Malay word used when asking for free services, also used as a substitute for "please"]

CHARLENE

*(moving over to help him)* Did you ever go so far out on the boat, you thought you weren't coming back?

SARA

Did you finish peeling the potatoes?

CHARLENE

*(to father)* Well...did you?

SARA

I'm talking to you.

CHARLENE

It's in the water in the outside sink.

KEITH

It's not how far out I go that scares me...it's how dangerous the water is on that day.

SARA

*(from backyard)* This water's dirty, there's rust or something coming out the tap.

KEITH

A current can pull you away fast. Can pull you almost straight from the shore. Sometimes the tide will rise so fast in some places you forget there's rock under you, under the water...that's the danger of a small boat. When the tide falls, the rock and wood don't go together.

*Sara comes back in the kitchen and hands the potatoes to the grandmother to chop up. Sara wipes her hands on a dish cloth and takes out Charlene's mermaid costume, which she is working on for the Fish Festival.*

SARA

Come here, try this on.

CHARLENE

*(starting to undress)* Can't mommy ask Neil for some nice sequins for the top part? Please, mommy. It will look so nice.

SARA

I'll see if he's got any, you know he likes to use it for himself. *(everyone laughs)* Keith, there's something wrong with that tap. Check it out. We'll need clean water first thing in the morning.

*Montage sequence of local insects, animals. A lizard suns itself on a rock, seagulls come in droves to find food on Muizenberg beach, a "rain beetle" scuttles across the road.*

INT. KITCHEN THE NEXT AFTERNOON

*Sara, Charlene, the grandmother and Charlene's older sister, Stella, are in the kitchen. The grandmother's sister, Aunty Minnie, has come to visit. Stella pours a cup of tea.*

AUNTY MINNIE

I hear your daughter's a young girl now, one more to go, then you have to find them all husbands.

CHARLENE

I'm not interested in having a husband.

AUNTY MINNIE

That's because they not interested in you. *(turns to mother)* Who would be interested in her? She's too rough-looking, and too dark, but don't worry, I brought something that might help.

SARA

Thanks for thinking of her. Sit down here.

*Sara motions to Charlene that she should sit next to her grandmother, who is cutting potatoes. Stella leaves the room to hang up some washing.*

AUNTY MINNIE

I knew she would rather have the money, but seeing it was her birthday last week,  
I decided to get her something myself.

*She opens a parcel containing a comb with a silver edge, a jar of Vaseline and a tube of Germolene ointment. Charlene looks disinterested.*

SARA

Thank you...I forgot about all this old things we used to use.

AUNTY MINNIE

Well...maybe you shouldn't forget. Your children is not very fair you know.

*The grandmother and Sara look a bit uneasy.*

AUNTY MINNIE

Now...granny, you know what to do. Just a little bit of Vaseline will smooth that girl's hair, a little bit with some lemon juice for her black elbows. And I still believe Germolene is the best. Everynight a little bit, remember how much of this you used when you were young and courting, before you met Keith?

SARA

*(very uneasily)* I'll make sure she uses it.

AUNTY MINNIE

And there's no reason the others shouldn't be using it.

SARA

*(to Charlene)* Come and thank your aunty for the present.

*Charlene gets up, walks over to the present, stares at it, looks at her aunty in a very rude way, and walks away.*

AUNTY MINNIE

Kyk hoe swaai daai kind haar gat!

*Sara gets up quickly, knocking over a bowl of sugar. She grabs Charlene by the arm..*

SARA

Don't you look at your aunty that way! Now you think you big you can do what you want?

INT. BATHROOM TWO WEEKS LATER, EARLY AFTERNOON

*The mother is losing her eyesight due to diabetes. We see this as she struggles to inject herself with insulin. She has a bit of trouble getting the right dosage in the syringe and she squints her eyes. She then busies herself with putting on her make-up, battling to see the difference between the colours. She is preparing to go to Neil, a flamboyant homosexual, otherwise known as a "moffie", for the sequins.*

CHARLENE

Mom, you look like you've been crying. Are you tired or something?

SARA

No...I feel fine. Why?

CHARLENE

You don't look right. *(comes closer and sees what her mother has done)* You used your red lip-liner on your eyes...and your black eye-pencil on your mouth!

SARA

Where?

CHARLENE

Can't you see?

SARA

Of course I can see! It's just dark in this bathroom, that's all. Here, help me take it off with this cream.

CHARLENE

*(changes tone of voice)* It's okay, mom. It's not too bad. *(slowly wipes off make-up)* Now at least I know what you would like if you ever cried your eyes red.

EXT. MOUNTAIN SLOPE

*Charlene is leading her mother up a mountain slope, which is not too steep. They are following a path to Neil's house. Sara's eyesight is particularly bad this day. Camera shot of mountain view through Sara's eyes, as they walk along. Camerawork here is a bit shaky, and there are dark spots, smudges on the lens. This is contrasted with a view of the mountain from Charlene's point of view.*

SARA

I can't see the top of the mountain from here. It's very overcast today, isn't it?

CHARLENE

*(lying)* Yes. It's a bit misty. I also can't really see the top of the mountain.

INT. NEIL'S HOUSE

*Neil is busy dancing with three friends, who are clearly Cape "moffies". "We are family" is the name of the song which is playing on the radio. There is a lot of kissing and hugging and simultaneous talk as Sara and Charlene enter.*

SARA

Ja...so this child needs some sequins for the competition.

NEIL

*(to Charlene)* Girl...something like this... *(holds up a piece of greenish blue sequins)* I would keep for a very special occasion, but I can see this is quite an important thing. Why don't you have it? Your mommy can always send a piece of that crayfish this way when you win that competition.

CHARLENE

Thank you Neil

SARA

Don't push you luck. You still owe me for helping you sew your New Year's costume.

NEIL

You just too wicked woman. Ek naai my eie goed...nou sê jy voor my vriende, jy't vir my gehelp. *(much giggling, snickering from the other three "moffies")* Kyk I'll see you at the Fish Festival. We might be doing a dance routine. That's if these boys can get off their gatte and help me out a bit.

EXT. PIER AT KALK BAY LATE AFTERNOON

*Stella and Charlene are about to call their father when they notice a new young man working on the boats.*

CHARLENE

Who is that?

STELLA

Isn't that the new ou, the one dad was talking about. He said he's lazy, the one that wants to start so late everyday.

CHARLENE

I wonder if it's him.

STELLA  
I think his name is Shane.

EXT. OUTSIDE GERALDINE'S HOUSE MID MORNING

*The women are gathered around an outside table, busy with preparations for the Fish Festival.*

GERALDINE  
So...how is your other girls doing?

SARA  
Alright. I hear your boy is reading so well. You must send him over to us someday. He can read to gran from the Bible. She would like that. How is your sister doing?

GERALDINE  
She's okay...I think she's in the house too much. It's not good, to be so alone. You know what I mean.

STELLA  
What do you mean?

GERALDINE  
*(to the older women)* She never talks to the neighbours. I mean, I'm not saying you must just mix with anybody, but I think there's something wrong with her.

SARA  
It's okay. You can tell us what the problem is. Does she still not go to the family parties, when everyone's together.

GERALDINE  
No...it's even stranger than that. Kyk hiersa, hoor hierso...if I tell you all, you musn't say a word.

*All the women come closer.*

GERALDINE  
I know she's my sister and all, but I think she's slowly going mad...skoon mal.

STELLA  
But why you say so, aunty?

GERALDINE  
*(to the older women)* Almost every night now, and even in the day, when she sleeps in the afternoon, she tells me she had a dream...actually, it's a nightmare.

You decide. (*She takes a deep breath, keeping the others in anticipation*) I musn't be talking 'bout other people's business, but anyway, she dreams. She dreams...she has potatoes...growing in her stomach. Nice smooth, big potatoes, the kind we use all the time in the stews. She say they perfect, no marks...smooth light skin. Then she dreams there's leaves growing out of her ears, nose an' other onbeskofde places. Then...hoor die...(they come even closer) she gives birth to the potatoes. One after the other, on an' on. She just lay them like she's laying eggs.

*The women are not sure how to respond, and are silent for quite a while.*

SARA

And these children of hers, the potatoes. How does she feel about them?

*Fade out while women continue speculating in the background.*

EXT. SANDVLEI EARLY AFTERNOON

*There is an end-of-term party taking place. Hundreds of young schoolchildren, between the ages of twelve and eighteen are braaing under the low bush trees. Almost all of them are consuming large amounts of alcohol. Most of them are still in their school uniforms. There are some policemen walking about, some have joined the pupil's festivities. Male students are urinating openly, the girls are urinating between open car doors. Some of the matric students have been smeared with nugget. It is very hot and people are cooling themselves off at a tap. The girls are taking off their jerseys and rolling up their sleeves whilst the boys are taking their shirts off. Some girls are being especially careful not to get their hair wet, since it will crimp. Charlene and her friend, Kim, walk into view.*

KIM

Check at all this mense...

CHARLENE

I see...

KIM

And all this dop! How are they going to drink all this?

CHARLENE

I don't know.

KIM

I'll have to help them.

CHARLENE

You can't because you mus' still go home.

KIM

I'm just joking. *(looks around)* There's Shane!

*Charlene turns around to see Shane urinating against a tree trunk.*

CHARLENE

I need to find a toilet, so I can change out of this school clothes. Aren't you worried about being in your school uniform?

KIM

I need some eye pencil. Have you got any?

CHARLENE

Ja, in my bag. But come we get to the toilet first. I also got lipstick, a nice colour for you. I want to freshen up, wash my face and hands, the trains is really dirty nowadays, even first class. There...I think that's the toilets.

*On their way to the toilets, they pass a group of policemen, in full uniform, interfering with a group of schoolboys.*

POLICEMAN 1

Gee stukkie braai, of gaan jy tronk toe?

POLICEMAN 2

Ja...or we arrest you for public indecency and underage drinking. *(takes out a notebook and pen and begins writing something)*

STUDENT 1

Julle's groats, you just see a party and then you want. *(to student 2)* Give them a chop each.

POLICEMAN 1

And a brandy

STUDENT 1

Hand it over

POLICEMAN 2

And a bietjie platsak, and some rolls, with butter on.

STUDENT 2

You's 'mos robbing us, in broad daylight!

POLICEMAN 2

Ja...just musn't go swim after this, (*looks out, at the water*) too easy to drown here.

POLICEMAN 1

There's more chance we'll drown in all this wine.

*The mood changes and the policemen and students settle down to a relaxed afternoon. There is a cacophony of sound, coming from various portable music systems.*

CHARLENE

I can hardly wait anymore, we almost there.

KIM

It looks like it's locked.

CHARLENE

Now what? I really need to go.

KIM

(*to a passing male student*) Do you know how we can get in here?

STUDENT

Can't you see it's locked. Are you stupid or something? Piss on the ground, like everyone else.

KIM

Voetsak! Jou ma-

CHARLENE

Leave him alone. Come we check the back.

KIM

He's onbeskof

CHARLENE

Ja...it's a bietjie wild here. Look how those ouens are fighting there. There the one fall over. He's a bietjie too drunk for a fight.

KIM

And look, there's that tief, the one who said we ugly.

CHARLENE

I can't hold it in anymore, and I also need to change my pad. If I don't change my pad now, there's going to be a bloodbath. It's so bloody hot, I'm going to faint!

KIM

I wish I knew how to pick a lock, then we can get this thing open.

CHARLENE

Look around, maybe someone can help us, ask that ou there.

KIM

*(to male student)* Kanalla, can't you open here for us?

MALE STUDENT

Only if I can go in with you.

KIM

If you go in with me, you won't come out, 'cause I'll moer you.

MALE STUDENT

Okay, lady. Sorry. Pee ma on the grass.

KIM

Here's Shane and Vinny. They coming over here.

SHANE

*(to male student)* What's going on here?

MALE STUDENT

Nothing, I was jus' asking the time.

*The student slinks away, rather intimidated by Vinny's size and demeanour, and by Shane's aggressive look.*

CHARLENE

I need to use the bathroom, and the gate's locked.

SHANE

Stand back.

*Shane proceeds to kick the wrought iron trellidoor. Vinny joins in.*

VINNY

Wait here, I'm now back.

*Vinny returns with an iron implement, which he and Shane use with great dexterity to open the gate, damaging the lock slightly in the process. With a sigh*

*of relief, Charlene, Kim and two other girls rush into the bathroom. Charlene and Kim share one cubicle.*

CHARLENE

Look at all this blood! (showing Kim the copious amount of menstrual blood)

KIM

And there's no toilet paper.

CHARLENE

It's okay, I got some in my bag. Pass me the powder also and the face-cloth.  
What's that noise outside?

*Kim goes outside the cubicle and peeps out.*

KIM

It's Shane and Vinny. They fighting with the parkie!

*A few feet away, the park maintenance man is having an argument with Shane and Vinny. The maintenance man pushes his way past them and goes up to the toilets, tying a padlock around the gate. He has, in effect, locked the girls in the toilet. Charlene is on the verge of crying. Shane and Vinny scale the wall from the back, while the "parkie" tries to phone the authorities. Shane and Vinny get in and start kicking the gate from the inside. A crowd has gathered outside, but they stay far from the "parkie" for fear of getting into trouble.*

PARKIE

Okay, okay. Don't break another lock. I'll let you's all out, but I want your names and addresses. This is vandalism.

CHARLENE

But why is the toilet not open to the public during the day?

PARKIE

Because people like you mess the place up. Last time they left the taps running. Like a whole flood here. I want you name. (*he opens the gate*)

SHANE

Hey, what's your problem? If you want names, here's my name. (*grabs pen and writes Jantjies name and address in the book*). There! What's it got to do with the girls? Are you a moffie that you mus' go on like that?

PARKIE

Who you think you talking to, laaitie? I'm almost twenty years older than you, son,

VINNY

Don't you touch on my friend, mister.

PARKIE

Are you also interfering? Hou jy jou bek.

*More people are starting to gather around quietly, gesturing to each other to come and look.*

VINNY

We not scared of you, moffie.

PARKIE

Sê julle ek is 'n moffie?

SHANE

Ja...moet ek jou wys?

*Shane and Vinny move in on the "parkie". A scuffle breaks out. Vinny picks up the iron implement which they used to prise open the gate. The "parkie" thinks he is about to be hit over the head with it, and cowers.*

PARKIE

I'm going to tell the cops you used that thing to vandalise this building. That is evidence.

*Shane grabs it from Vinny and walks very deliberately to the edge of the grass. He hurls the implement into the water.*

SHANE

So...where is it now? The cops will think you talking kak. Your word against mine.

*They walk away from the crowd.*

CHARLENE

I want to go home now. Where did Shane and his friend go?

KIM

I don't know, I didn't still want to look. The others will tell us. They skollies.

CHARLENE

Ja, they scared of no-one.

KIM

Oh no! There they go.

CHARLENE  
Where?

KIM  
There...at the back of the waantjie.

*Charlene and Kim stare in disbelief as they see Shane and Vinny being taken away, in the back of a police-van. A few minutes later, Shane and Vinny are back. By this time, Charlene and Kim are leaving. They go down to the station and get into a third class carriage. A train preacher is going into wild paroxysms about the dangers of alcohol.*

INT. TRAIN CARRIAGE LATE AFTERNOON

PREACHER  
And the Lord says, yes he says, oh the Lord says to his people...

COMMUTER 1  
Wat sê die Lord?

PREACHER  
Oh lady, he says, I am the vine, drink from me. Not from the platsak, not from the bottle store, but from me. Oh Lord, you see our sins, on the faces of our people, on the faces of our children, our bastard children. I am The Way, The Truth and The Life. Come to me and I will show you the way. Oh Lord, I open my arms to you, my hands I open in prayer. You are the Wine and the Bread.

COMMUTER 2  
Then give me bread, oh Lord, for my children.

PREACHER  
That we may eat around your table. Ons is almal honger, Here. (*He rubs his stomach.*) We ask for your wine, for your bread. Oh Lord, too many have gone astray.

*Holding onto a pole, Charlene and Kim sway with the motion of the people in the packed carriage. Sweaty, inebriated men are eating fish and hot chips. We can see the steam coming out of the packets. A train on the other side of the track comes to a standstill. It is filled mostly with schoolchildren singing freedom songs. The preacher is immensely perturbed by this.*

PREACHER  
Oh Lord, look. Look Lord. That the young people will come before your altar and ask for forgiveness. "Forward the Struggle" they cry. "We shall overcome" and "Justice will prevail" they cry. Sinful they are! Sinful they are!

*He hisses and spits, his eyes flashing wildly, gripping the Bible even tighter. He tries to make eye contact with an old drunk man.*

PREACHER

Like the wine, they serve two masters. They will see the end, for the gates of heaven will not open to those like these. Unless, I say, unless you ask for forgiveness. Come kneel by the altar of love, children, and beg. For no man can serve two masters, no man.

EXT. STOEP LATE AFTERNOON

*Geraldine and Jantjies are relaxing on the stoep. She has just finished sweeping it, and the broom is propped up against the wall. They both sit on a bench.*

GERALDINE

So, it looks like you going to keep that painting job. Did you go round to Avvie to drop off the meat?

JANTJIES

Ja baas. But she musn't think because I'm working now, that she's going to get meat everytime. I'll ask Klein Jantjies to drop the rest of the stuff off. Lyk my he like to take his bicycle down that road. (*lighting a cigarette*) That sister of yours is a real pes'.

GERALDINE

Jus' remember, she gave you a place to stay, before I even met you, when you were a bergie.

JANTJIES

Your gat! I was never a bergie!

GERALDINE

I don't know how she put up with you.

JANTJIES

Ag, well. You know how it is. Give and take.

INT. CHARLENE AND MEGAN'S BEDROOM TIME 10.30am

*Charlene is in bed due to cramps. She is trying to catch up with her school setwork book, "Treasure Island". She is writing Shane's name over and over on the inside of a notebook. Her mother and grandmother come into the room to arrange some artificial flowers in a vase.*

SARA

Are you in love or something? Why you smiling like that?

GRANDMOTHER

Do you want a hot water bottle? I'm going to put the kettle on now.

CHARLENE

Please

SARA

Why did you come home so late from school yesterday?

KEITH

*(from the kitchen)* Oh Sara. Give the child a break!

SARA

Where were you?

CHARLENE

You know we have to clean up on the last day of the term. We always do that. Before the June holidays, before December holidays, even now, for September.

SARA

I know. But that's during school hours. You normally don't come home so late. I'm not stupid. I jus' hope you weren't with that children at Sandvlei, where all that drinking and fighting carries on. Jantjies said he heard a lot of the young people got into trouble. Jy beland jou gou innie kak. Klomp vlêremuise wat daar gaan.

KEITH

*(from the kitchen)* So what would *she* be doing there! Is all skollies hanging out there. How can you take your own daughter so low?

SARA

I'm just warning you. Let me hear that you were there. There'll be trouble. And why do you look so happy?

CHARLENE

I'm just excited about the mermaid competition.

SARA

You giving me grey hair, child.

KEITH

You were going grey when I met you already. Long before she came along.

SARA

I don't need comments from you. You too much in the house, worrying yourself with women's affairs. Take that string of yours outside. You making the place untidy.

*The grandmother comes into the bedroom with a hot water bottle and a cup of tea.*

GRANDMOTHER

I keep telling you two, about bringing up old arguments. Old things.

CHARLENE

What old things?

GRANDMOTHER

Donkeys het ore.

CHARLENE

What?

GRANDMOTHER

Doesn't concern you.

SARA

Why must he bring up comments like that, I already had grey hair. His bloody children is making me old.

GRANDMOTHER

Don't blame the children for what went wrong. You wanted all this children. You couldn't wait.

SARA

Nou praat jy voor die kind.

CHARLENE

I understand Afrikaans, mom.

SARA

*(to grandmother)* And what do you take me for?

GRANDMOTHER

For what you are. Maybe it's time someone told you.

CHARLENE

Told her what?

GRANDMOTHER  
Who you calling "her"? She's still your mother, you know.

KEITH  
(*coming in*) What's going on here?

GRANDMOTHER and SARA  
Get out!

GRANDMOTHER  
(*to Charlene*) It's nothing to do with you

CHARLENE  
But...

GRANDMOTHER  
You listen to your mother, maybe she can still teach you a thing or two. Although I sometimes wonder.

SARA  
Now what's that supposed to mean?

GRANDMOTHER  
Don't let me start scratching in your files.

SARA  
That was long ago.

CHARLENE  
What was long ago?

SARA  
(*to Charlene*) shut up! (*to grandmother*) And what brought this on?

GRANDMOTHER  
Just don't think because I'm getting old, I'm getting senile. Ek's noggie kens ie.

SARA  
You are going senile.

GRANDMOTHER  
All I'm saying is, don't let me scratch in your files.

SARA  
Then don't.

EXT. WILLIAM HERBERT STADIUM (WYNBERG) EARLY AFTERNOON

*Charlene and Kim are sitting in the stands, watching the soccer teams getting ready. We see Shane, in his soccer outfit, showing some younger children how to kick the ball about. He turns to wave at Charlene. There is a casspir on one end of the field and some soldiers are watching the game.*

KIM

Shane was nog'al brave, hey?

CHARLENE

Ja

KIM

I mean, to wys the parkie. He don't skuil for anyone.

CHARLENE

Ja...he's not like this other ouens who is bang for the cops. I heard that there by the rally by St. Mary's he turned to klap this one cop, after they were firing teargas at the students.

KIM

Is it?

CHARLENE

Ja. That's what I heard.

EXT. STREET IN KALK BAY. EARLY MORNING

*We see a silhouette of Keith carrying his daughter in her mermaid costume. She can't walk in it, so he holds her across his arms. From a distance, because of the sunlight coming in from the back, it looks like he is carrying a "real" mermaid. As they come closer, we see who they are.*

EXT. KALK BAY HARBOUR

*It is the day of the competition. The Kalk Bay Festival is in full swing. There is music and dancing. We see Neil and his friends finishing off their dance act. They are wearing flamboyant colours and full make-up. Panoramic view of the whole festival with close ups on the excited faces of children. Klein Jantjies comes speeding over on his bicycle to where the women are. He is quite out of breath and pants loudly.*

KLEIN JANTJIES

Ma...kom gou. Is aunty Avvie.

GERALDINE  
What's going on?

KLEIN JANTJIES  
She was vomiting this morning when I went there to take her her groceries.

GERALDINE  
(to Jantjies) Go take a look, quick. If it's bad, go call aunty Minnie. Don't still waste you time with the doctor. He just talks about things we don't understand. Big words, no use. I think what she eats affects her brain.

STELLA  
Can it do that?

GERALDINE  
Of course! The food gives off acid and the acid climbs up the spinal cord. Klein Jantjies told me all about the effects on the brain. They doing it at school now. But also, if you drink alcohol, it makes the acid climb faster, and it gets to your brain faster. It can make you sick.

SARA  
You think she's drinking too much?

GERALDINE  
That sister of mine, she's a strange one. I say, she just needs some rest. Then she'll come right. The doctor won't even know what it's all about.

KLEIN JANTJIES  
Is she going to be okay, ma? Ma, I didn't do nothing, ma. I just walked in and there she was, half lying on the floor.

*Some distance from the action, we see Shane mending the inside of a boat. A few curious children who have wandered away from the main crowd stand and watch over him. The children's mother, on seeing Shane, jerks them away, mumbling to herself. Sara stands up and looks around into the distance. She sees Shane's profile very briefly, and looks confused, as though she has seen him before. She can't be sure though, it happens too quickly. We hear the master of ceremonies calling for the entrants to be brought to the stage for the mermaid competition.*

MASTER OF CEREMONIES  
Line up, girls, line up! Parents may help to place them on the seats. That's right, line them up.

SARA

*(sympathetically to Charlene)* There's always next year, Charlene. We mus' see to Avvie first.

INT. AVVIE'S HOUSE     MIDDAY

*There is knocking on the door. A voice calls from outside.*

AUNTY MINNIE

Open up Avvie.

AVVIE

Just wait *(opens door)* Who called you?

AUNTY MINNIE

*(pushing her way in)* Don't worry about that. What's wrong with you?

AVVIE

I don't know. First it was the dreams, you seker know about that. Because I told Geraldine, so everyone will know. Now this vomiting.

AUNTY MINNIE

Okay, was it project-style?

AVVIE

What?

AUNTY MINNIE

*(looking heavenwards)* Did it come out of your mouth like a fountain, or did you just vomit the normal way?

AVVIE

Yes

AUNTY MINNIE

What time?

AVVIE

This morning. Ten o'clock.

AUNTY MINNIE

This morning?

AVVIE

Ja

AUNTY MINNIE

But you can't be pregnant. That's now very strange.

FADE OUT

EXT. TAKEAWAY SHOP EARLY EVENING

*Charlene and Shane have just bought peri-peri chips and are standing outside the takeaway shop.*

SHANE

Are you cold?

CHARLENE

A bit

SHANE

Here *(He takes off his jacket and helps her to put it on.)*

CHARLENE

Won't you get cold?

SHANE

No...is alright. *(They start walking.)* I got something for you. I was thinking about you the whole time. I had to get you something.

CHARLENE

You were thinking about me the whole time?

SHANE

Ja

CHARLENE

Oh

*They stop walking and he reaches into his shirt pocket. He takes out a silver Mercedes Benz emblem and hands it to her.*

SHANE

Here

CHARLENE

A tjappie! Where did you get it?

SHANE

I didn't take it off a car. I don't do that kak.

CHARLENE

Then where did you get it?

SHANE

I beat Vinny at pool the other day. He had it. Some other ou had to give it to him. There's other stuff I can get for you, but I'm not a skelm.

CHARLENE

I never said you were.

SHANE

Ja...I want you to have things.

INT. GRANDMOTHER'S BEDROOM THREE DAYS LATER, EVENING

*The grandmother, Stella and Charlene are gathered around a wooden kist, which serves mainly as a trousseau box. The grandmother starts unpacking the box. The girls watch in awe, since the box is very seldom opened. They try to peer as deeply into it as possible, but are not allowed to scratch in it themselves. The grandmother gently pushes Charlene's hands away as she tries to touch something in the box.*

GRANDMOTHER

Stella, this is for you and Charlene.

STELLA

I want the watch...and the margazette ring, please gran.

GRANDMOTHER

Okay, but then the other ring, this one, is for Charlene.

CHARLENE

Can we have the stuff now already?

GRANDMOTHER

When I die, you can have it, or, if any of you get married before I die. (*Reaches deep into kist.*) Charlene, I think this will look very good against your skin colour. (*Holds up a piece of gold-embroided red fabric.*)

CHARLENE

It's beautiful, is it very old?

GRANDMOTHER

Look closely, the gold thread is real gold, that's why it's so hard. That's why I only got this small piece, it's very expensive.

STELLA

Where did you get it from?

GRANDMOTHER

I think it's original bridal fabric. I think it's from Java. Hand embroidered. But now everyone wears white.

STELLA

What about this? (*Holds up some fine white cloth.*) Where does this come from?

GRANDMOTHER

From my own bridal headgear. It's been cut, though. (*looks at Charlene*) I used a piece of it for your father's christening robe.

CHARLENE

Can I have it?

GRANDMOTHER

Ja, I suppose so. Although I don't know why you want it. It's supposed to be sewn onto my shroud when I die.

CHARLENE

That's okay, I'll use it for when I get married and you can still have it back in time for your shroud. (*laughing*)

STELLA

(*to Charlene*) What makes you think you going to get married so soon?

GRANDMOTHER

And what makes you think I'll need it back so soon? Talk about hurrying the old to the grave!

STELLA

That's not what I mean, here gran. I just mean, she haven't got a boyfriend and is likely I'll get married before her. Donovan's dad is already building on at the back.

GRANDMOTHER

Don't worry. I'll get something new for you.

STELLA

Like what?

GRANDMOTHER

Well, if you think you going to get married soon you'll need a proper trousseau, starting with bed linen.

STELLA

Mom already bought that.

GRANDMOTHER

And crockery?

STELLA

Yes. I can do with crockery, but new crockery. I don't like the old stuff.

GRANDMOTHER

Then you can give the old stuff to Charlene. She's almost finished school.

CHARLENE

I would like to have the old locket.

GRANDMOTHER

This one was given to my sister, Minnie, by a white man, long time ago. You can see there's only her name engraved on it. He was scared to put his name on it .

STELLA

Why did everything have to be a secret that time? At least now things is not like that.

GRANDMOTHER

Don't be so sure! Child of my child, tell my about this new boy you met, but that the family must still meet.

CHARLENE

Just someone I met. Ja, you'll meet him soon.

GRANDMOTHER

I hope so.

CHARLENE

I just want to share a home with him one day, that's all.

GRANDMOTHER

If that's your only wish, you not asking for much.

CHARLENE

That's all I ask for.

GRANDMOTHER

Ja...(yawns) It's getting late. Go to bed before the naglopers start walking the streets. And Stella, when Donovan comes to visit you, give him bread and jam, nothing fancy. If he comes back, you know he loves you.

INT. GERALDINE'S HOUSE LATE AFTERNOON

*Geraldine, Jantjies, Stella, Donovan, Sara and Klein Jantjies are sitting on the stoep. Donovan and Klein Jantjies begin kicking a soccer ball about. They stay within earshot of the others.*

GERALDINE

So...het julle gehoor?

SARA

Wat gehoor?

GERALDINE

Avvie say she's pregnant.

JANTJIES

Daai's sommer 'n klomp twak. That woman's mad. How can she be pregnant?

SARA

How do you think?

GERALDINE

Yes, again in women's conversation. What has it got to do with you, anyway?

*Jantjies, obeying his wife, remains silent.*

GERALDINE

Now you say nothing? You bloody bastard! What have you got to do with it? Is that why you took so long with the meat the other day? Nou sit jy met 'n bek vol tanne!

JANTJIES

No. I wasn't long there by her!

GERALDINE

Then where the hell were you the whole afternoon, come to think of it?

JANTJIES

I...I...I'm sorry.

GERALDINE

Sorry! You're sorry? Sorry for what? I'll make you sorry!

JANTJIES

No, honestly. I was at the bottle store, then I went to Eddie. We were drinking the whole afternoon, I promise.

GERALDINE

So...you were drinking?

JANTJIES

Now ask Stella's boyfriend. Donovan was also there.

STELLA

What! Donovan was there? *(to Donovan)* What the hell were you doing by Eddie? You know I don't like the drinking that goes on there...and the women.

DONOVAN

We only had a couple of beers.

SARA

And you want to marry my daughter? And you already lying to her, on a Sunday, nog'al! What kind of husband are you then going to be?

DONOVAN

I'm not lying, we only had a couple of beers.

SARA

I'm not talking about that, you stupid idiot!

STELLA

You told me you were helping Jantjies paint that day.

JANTJIES

But I was painting. We only had some beers.

GERALDINE

You just lucky I don't moer you. Ja... *(aggressively pointing her finger at him)*  
You just lucky you didn't stay long by Avvie.

JANTJIES

No, what mus' I do there?

GERALDINE

You know you like women. It's a wonder your bloody son, Jantjies don't take after you. Where you and women are concerned, I don't trust you.

JANTJIES

But Avvie? Oh please! She's so ugly, she's a vlei monster!

GERALDINE

Just watch your bloody mouth, that's my sister you talking about.

JANTJIES

Well, she's not so ugly, actually. She's got a nice figure.

GERALDINE

Oh...so you've been checking out her figure, you bloody shit.

JANTJIES

No she's ugly. And she's got a ugly body. I swear, the ugliest body I ever saw in my life.

GERALDINE

So, you saw her body?

JANTJIES

No, I mean she's ugly and her body's ugly through her clothes. And her hair's crucified. I don't want her. Help me out, Donny!

DONOVAN

Ja, if he wanted to see pretty kinders, he'd go to Eddie's. It's true. That's what he'd do.

SARA

*(to her daughter)* Do you still want this man?

DONOVAN

I wasn't checking out the girls, it was Jantjies.

GERALDINE

*(to Jantjies)* You treading on thin ice, I tell you.

JANTJIES

It wasn't me. Donny asked the girl for the number. Jesus, Donny, you making a slice on me!

STELLA

What girl?

DONOVAN

Yes, I asked a girl for her phone number.

STELLA  
What?

DONOVAN  
But it was for Jantjies!

GERALDINE  
You men just make trouble. Here am I, worrying about my sister being pregnant and you people just making it worse. *(to herself)* A single women living on her own, it had to go bad.

JANTJIES  
All I say is, I only go there to drop things off.

GERALDINE  
Well, you not going there alone anymore.

DONOVAN  
That's right Aunty Gerry. I'll go with him next time.

STELLA  
You go nowhere.

SARA  
That's right. You go nowhere, or don't you put your foot in my house again. You just lucky I still let you see Stella.

JANTJIES  
Can we go to the shop? I need a cigarette.

DONOVAN  
Please?

GERALDINE  
Get the hell out of here, you two. And you better be back before dark.

JANTJIES  
We just going to buy cigarettes!

GERALDINE  
And you go to the shop in 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, not the one in Symphony Street. The one in 7<sup>th</sup> is nearer.

JANTJIES

Ja, okay. Come we get out of this joint. *(to Donny)* I thought we could lekker shoot some pool at the other shop. Come we go. I'll rather be attacked in the street than by these women. In the street you still have a chance.

INT. DAY HOSPITAL/CLINIC MID MORNING

*Geraldine, Avvie and two of Geraldine's younger children are in a consulting room with a nurse. One of the children is messing his Simba chips on the floor. The other is fighting for the right to leave his mother's arms and join in the fun of stomping the chips into the carpet. Geraldine is becoming highly agitated at the children's behaviour.*

NURSE

*(to Avvie)* No, well. You see. You not actually pregnant. *(puts file away)*

AVVIE

What?

NURSE

You probably want to be pregnant, so your body is trying to be. You retaining water. Some people call it a "phantom pregnancy". Don't worry about it, you not pregnant.

GERALDINE

*(picking up child, chips and pacifier)* I understand. Avvie let's go.

NURSE

You must try to relax.

AVVIE

So what happened to the baby?

NURSE

You were never pregnant.

AVVIE

*(confused)* Oh

INT. SARA'S KITCHEN TWO DAYS LATER

*Sara and Grandmother are peeping through the terrilene. They see Charlene and Shane coming up the garden path. Their confused and horrified expressions can be seen through the terrilene on the outside.*

GRANDMOTHER

That's your boy, Sara. Oh my God! Liewe land! She said she had a boy she wanted to introduce you to. Your son...

*Charlene and Shane come closer to the door, they look lovingly at each other.*

GRANDMOTHER

Sara, don't just sit there like you saw a ghost. It's really him!

*Charlene and Shane come in. Sara has gone very pale. Charlene is just about to introduce Shane.*

GRANDMOTHER

Don't. He's your...

*The grandmother looks at her daughter-in-law, who looks at her son, and turns away.*

SARA

It was a long time ago, with another man.

*Shane walks around to look his mother in the face, then he looks at his sister. The grandmother, not knowing what to do, switches the kettle on.*

SARA

What have you been doing around here?

SHANE

Working, and getting to know Charlene.

*In a big hurry, the grandmother starts closing the windows in the front of the house.*

SARA

*(shouting)* Don't you go around closing windows and curtains! If people must know, they must know!

SHANE

Know what? What's going on? Charlene?

GRANDMOTHER

*(to Sara)* You never thought you'd see the day when he would walk into your house. *(to Shane)* You can't see Charlene anymore, you know her well enough. You don't need to know her better, she's your sister.

SARA  
(to Shane and Grandmother) Your father-

GRANDMOTHER  
I don't need to hear your filth!

SARA  
Keith was drinking a lot that time!

GRANDMOTHER  
And you thought it was okay to go around with another man. Two children you had behind my son's back, at least Stella don't look so much like that man you were with. You never had any respect for anyone.

SARA  
Respect? You talk about respect? You were the one who forced me to give my son away!

GRANDMOTHER  
What did you want to do? Walk around parading this child that you can see wasn't Keith's? I had to think of my son, and what the family would say.

SARA  
So you rather told him his son died after birth while he was away at sea! Look what you put your own son through!

GRANDMOTHER  
But it wasn't his. You lucky I didn't tell him!

SARA  
Look at him now, so 'n mooi ou.

GRANDMOTHER  
I can see his good-for-nothing father in him.

*Throughout the "revelation" we see reaction shots of Charlene and Shane. They are, by turns, horrified, shocked and distressed.*

SARA  
Oh, don't you go around judging. Look at you and your son. Try for white! You were the ones who tried to have your papers changed. Where was your self-respect? You weren't expecting to be turned down, were you? I always knew it, the hotnot cheekbones came from your side of the family, not mine.

GRANDMOTHER

Our cheekbones is not so broad, that policeman was just in a bad mood, that's all.  
And everything I did, I did for Stella. I was trying to give her a better life.

SARA

Ja, until Charlene came along and she was a bit too dark and spoilt your plans.

GRANDMOTHER

That's a lie!

CHARLENE

Grandma? Did you want to reclassify the family?

GRANDMOTHER

I wanted to take you all away from your mother. Sleeping around while her  
husband was away at work!

SARA

But I loved my children, all of them. (*pointing to Shane*) This one I loved the  
most, my first-born....

CHARLENE

(*softly*) But I also love him.

GRANDMOTHER

You can't!

SHANE

(*to his mother*) How can I love you? And how can I not love her? (*looks at  
Charlene*) When people around here didn't want to speak to me, she talked to  
me. All this years you didn't see me, you didn't know if I was dead or alive.

SARA

I did ask the people who

SHANE

I never knew why people treated me like one with scabies.

CHARLENE

But Shane, listen. We

SHANE

And who is Stella?

SARA

*(quietly)* Your sister, by the same man.

SHANE

Naai man...I'm getting out of this house.

CHARLENE

Don't go. Please. Will I see you again? Talk to me Shane.

*Shane's eyes are welling up with tears. He is extremely distracted by all the shouting and doesn't hear what Charlene says next.*

CHARLENE

Meet me Wednesday night, 11 o'clock, at the boats, in Elica.

*Charlene looks very distressed but thinks he has heard the arrangement. She grabs his hand as he passes.*

SHANE

*(shouting from garden gate)* Don't worry! I'll never set foot in this house again!

SARA

What a skandaal!

GRANDMOTHER

Skandaal? Skandaal? You caused it.

SARA

Nothing to Stella about this. You hear me? Nothing! *(to Charlene)* And you, you not to see him. The people who know will talk.

GRANDMOTHER

I can't listen to such talk. I won't have it in my home. If you want to think that way, then not under this roof.

CHARLENE

No, I'll go. I'll share a place with him!

SARA

You did already, in my bloody womb! What more do you want? Sies!

*Charlene starts running away, across the garden in the front of the house. She runs into her father and Stella a bit further down the road. Charlene is crying bitterly. Her father drags her back to the house.*

INT. KITCHEN

KEITH

*(angrily)* What's going on? Why is this child crying so?

GRANDMOTHER

She almost broke that ornament of yours, so Sara smacked her.

KEITH

You'd swear a bloody ship is sinking, with all the shouting and swearing we heard from the road. *(looks around)* What's for supper?

SARA

Mutton breyani. I'll put the stove on.

EXT. SUNRISE CIRCLE MORNING, TWO WEEKS LATER

*It is getting dark, the sun has slipped over the horizon. A very strong wind is blowing and the waves are rather rough-looking. Some men are land line fishing. They are standing, their rods anchored in the sand. Some are packing up. Some children are running behind the lines playing "on on". Five girls are combing the area, looking for shells.*

INT. SARA'S KITCHEN TIME. 10 AM TWO WEEKS LATER

*Although some of the tension between the grandmother and Sara has dissipated, there is still a sense of anger between them. They are looking in a kitchen drawer for some baking trays.*

SARA

I think we mus' use the deep baking tray.

GRANDMOTHER

Maybe, but remember, we catering for a lot of people, the shallow one will make the dough go further.

INT. PATIO AREA 9 PM

*Grandmother and Sara, as well as various "older aunties" are supervising the men, younger women and children. The men are mumbling amongst themselves. The older women are moving constantly between the kitchen and patio area. The men are busy with trestles and table-tops. [The pre-party planning is normally regarded as an excellent opportunity for children to learn about community service, group work and proper social behaviour.]*

GRANDMOTHER

*(to one of the men)* No, you esel. Turn it more this way. No, don't be...turn it more...that's it.

AUNTY MINNIE

No, it looks better the other way. The table must face this side. Turn it more the other way. *(The man moves the trestles)*

UNCLE TERRIL

*(to younger man)* Give me hand.

AUNTY MINNIE

So ja, that looks better.

GRANDMOTHER

But what about the birthday sign that Lesley made? Sorry ouens. Turn it again the other way.

AUNTY MINNIE

Okay, make it at a angle. *(the men oblige)* How's that?

UNCLE TERRIL

Okay.

AUNTY MINNIE

We not asking you.

UNCLE TERRIL

*(to other men)* Die vroumense!

NEPHEW

*(to Sara)* Aunty, can I set up the music now?

SARA

Ja. I think it will be nice at a angle. Very different.

GRANDMOTHER

How about a L-shape?

AUNTY MINNIE

Okay, come we try that. Ouens, bring that other table here, and put it next to the other one. *(The men look at each other in a sense of solidarity before moving the tables)*

STELLA

*(appearing at back door)* Mom, tell gran the mutton's ready.

GRANDMOTHER

Okay, I better go see. Leave it rather at a angle.

UNCLE TERRIL

That's what I said.

AUNTY MINNIE

*(ignoring him)* Is alright like that, hey Sara? Okay, thanks ouens. Now you can get the boxes from the garage.

SARA

Let them set up the music, then they can sort out the wires and all that, and where they going to put the speakers?

AUNTY MINNIE

Ja, and the lights. It can go in that corner. I'm going to check on the crayfish.

*There are about thirty or forty people in the house, but the number is never constant because people are coming and going all the time. A few of the men go to a shebeen to buy the alcohol, neighbours are dropping off cakes and sweets.*

INT. KITCHEN

STELLA

It still looks such a mess.

AUNTY GLADYS

Don't worry, we'll get it all together. Lekker party tomorrow. *(slaps a child's hand)* Don't touch on that!

CHILD

Ma always give me.

AUNTY GLADYS

Ma always give you icing sugar. This isn't icing sugar, it's flour.

CHILD

Ma always let me and Andrea eat from the bowl. She let us lick the spoon.

AUNTY GLADYS

*(taking pity)* Okay, you and Andrea can sit here at the table and count the raisins, in groups of five. Can you count?

CHILD

*(gleefully)* Yes aunty.

AUNTY GLADYS  
And Andrea?

ANDREA  
One, four, five, seven, eight

AUNTY GLADYS  
Okay, you count one, two, three, then you stick them on the biscuit like this. Sit nicely here.

*The girls are delighted and get to work, taking their job very seriously.*

AUNTY HEATHER  
(*Coming in from patio*) Where's Bridgette and Andrea? They had a long day at pre-school today, they must go to bed.

BRIDGETTE  
(*looks up in horror*) No mommy. I'm making biscuits. Andrea go to bed.

ANDREA  
No

AUNTY HEATHER  
Bridgette's older than you.

BRIDGETTE  
Please mommy, one more hour please.

AUNTY GLADYS  
(*winking eye at Auntie Heather*) Just one more hour. They really helping us out. Look how nice they work.

AUNTY HEATHER  
Okay. (*the children grin with delight*)

*About six or seven children are sitting in a circle in the patio area, blowing up balloons. Most of them are between the ages of six and nine. A toddler keeps threatening to burst the balloons.*

BRANDON  
I'm going to tell mommy.

VANESSA  
Then I tell you eat from the sweets.

BRANDON  
I didn't.

CHRISTOPHER  
I saw you.

VANESSA  
You eat from the sweets.

BRANDON  
(to Christopher) And you broke the music player.

CHRISTOPHER  
Oh no! Nuraan touched it in the garage.

NURAAN  
I only pressed "stop". You pressed the red button.

CHRISTOPHER  
You told me to press it.

NURAAN  
But you pressed it.

CHRISTOPHER  
No, I didn't.

*Some of the older boys/men, between the ages of seventeen and twenty-three overhear the squabble. They nudge each other as they set up the music equipment.*

LINDSAY  
(loudly) Who pressed on this red button?

HILTON  
I wonder...look, there's chocolate on here. Someone who was eating chocolate touched it.

*The children, who are not sitting too far, look very worriedly at each other, then at their hands.*

LINDSAY  
Do you think maybe Uncle Frans pressed on here?

CHRISTOPHER

*(runs up to the older boys)* Yes. It was Uncle Frans. I saw him with my own eyes.

LINDSAY

Oh...I see. Now I'm going to have to give Uncle Frans this new cassette, because this button wasn't working, now it's fine.

*All the children run up.*

VANESSA

I touch it first.

NURAAN

No, I touched it. I fixed it.

CHRISTOPHER

No, you said I fixed it.

BRANDON

I pressed the button.

LINDSAY

*(looking carefully at music system)* No...actually, I made a mistake it's broken.

*The children run away and go back to blowing up the balloons, looking angrily at each other. Vanessa breaks the tension by accidentally bursting a balloon. The music starts playing and the young men start sorting out the music.*

*A group of girls, aged eleven to thirteen, are sitting in a bedroom, making paper carnations. They peep through the curtains from time to time, watching the older boys on the patio.*

INT. BEDROOM

GISELLE

Pass the stapler, please.

TESSA

*(looking out)* Craig's friend is cute. I never saw him before.

GISELLE

I saw him first, at Aunty Geraldine's house.

NICOLE  
I know his brother.

GISELLE  
He hasn't got a brother.

NICOLE  
Yes he has... a baby brother.

GISELLE  
That doesn't count.

TESSA  
What's his name?

GISELLE  
Lee. (*admiring her handiwork, and fluffing the carnation up a bit*) Go closer to the window. (*They all start giggling*) He's seventeen.

TESSA  
He's old. (*going nearer*) He looks like-

*Suddenly, Nicole pulls the curtain open too far. They all shriek and fall over the bed as they try to get away from the window, making a lot of noise.*

GISELLE  
Ssshhh!

*The older boys look confusedly in the direction of the room.*

GISELLE  
You all sitting on the carnations! You squashing it! And now Lee is going to think we all stupid.

NICOLE  
Oh no. My mom said I can get any boy I want, because I got green eyes and straight hair. And my daddy said so. I don't even need nice clothes.

GISELLE  
That's because your mommy can't buy you clothes.

TESSA  
You rude. You not going to be part of the group anymore.

NICOLE

I don't care. *(goes on stapling)* That's for children. And why must Giselle always be the leader.

TESSA

Because she's the oldest, and she knows about big people's things.

NICOLE

I don't care. I also know.

TESSA

She knows who Stella's real daddy is. Her mommy told her. Even Stella doesn't know anything.

INT. LOUNGE    LATER THE SAME EVENING

*Although there is still a pre-party atmosphere, the evening is winding down. The women are sitting in the lounge, sorting out the old carnations and placing them in a box with some of the new ones that the girls have made. There is a pot of coffee and home-made biscuits on the table.*

AUNTY MINNIE

This flowers look old. I think we must make some more new ones. Did Keith get the crinkle paper?

GERALDINE

I don't know. Laat ek gaan sien. *(walks over to a box and checks inside)* Here it is.

AUNTY MINNIE

Okay, we can cut out the shapes, then Stella and Charlene can fold the rest.

GERALDINE

Did you show the girls how?

AUNTY MINNIE

Yes, last time for Shukeraan's wedding. They sat up till late the night before. The girls know how. Stella! *(Stella appears in hallway)* Come sit here. I don't want you in the kitchen. Call Charlene. You girls will make you too tired. Then what will you look like at the party? *(to herself)* Julle's darem íe mooi meisies nie.

GERALDINE

*(hearing comment)* Haai, aunty! Hoe kan jy daai sê?

AUNTY MINNIE

I mean they not pretty, fine features, like white girls. Beautiful maybe, no...attractive, but not pretty. Come sit here.

JUNE

I'm feeling tired. I'm going to get done here.

STELLA

You know what I feel like now? Tamaleedjies, made into lekker sweets, in kadoesies.

AUNTY MINNIE

Where you going to get tamaleedjies, at this time of year? Impossible.

AUNTY JUNE

You never know.

INT. PATIO NEXT EVENING

*It is the night of the party. The guests are just finishing singing "Happy Birthday". Stella is dressed in traditional white. Everyone is still on their best behaviour. She goes around, greeting and talking to everyone.*

JANTJIES

(To Keith) Wanner trek 'ie dop?

KEITH

Wait till I finish this beer. I got something lekker for us. (points to a packet behind a flower arrangement) I'm clever. That's for us, when all this people is gone.

JANTJIES

(rubbing his hands together) Lekker. Brannewyn? What smokkie did you get that from?

KEITH

Don't worry.

*The children are playing a game of "on-on" in between the dancing guests. An older child leads them away. The scene is quite chaotic, even the family dog is running around between the guests, with a ribbon around it's neck. Two domestic workers are singing and dancing to the music as they wash up and dry off the never-ending stream of plates. Sara is supervising the "kitchen staff" and the grandmother is presiding over the general outflow of food from the kitchen.*

GRANDMOTHER  
(*to domestic worker*) Did you heat that up in the oven?

DOMESTIC WORKER 1  
Nee, ouma.

GRANDMOTHER  
Now why's it here? How can you serve cold roast potatoes?

DOMESTIC WORKER 1  
Jammer

GRANDMOTHER  
Fill that pot up. Then put some more serviettes and forks out for the people.  
Betty, bring that dish in. Is almost empty. Here, fill it up.

GERALDINE  
(*mumbling to herself*) Where did I leave that packet?

GRANDMOTHER  
What you looking for?

GERALDINE  
Just a packet.

GRANDMOTHER  
What was in it?

GERALDINE  
Oh, nothing. Just some old jam jars. Valerie said I must make some jam for her.  
She gave me the jars. It doesn't matter.

GRANDMOTHER  
Good, because I threw a packet away by accident. Sounded like glass inside.

GERALDINE  
Okay, but if you find it...

GRANDMOTHER  
I'm not going to scratch in the rubbish! Like a bergie looking for a bottle of  
wine! Sies!

GERALDINE  
I'm going to join the others now.

EXT. GARDEN

KEITH

I couldn't believe it! I was throwing some stuff away and there it was, in this packet. Jackpot! Somebody must of thrown it away by mistake. It's a sign. Luck is coming my way.

JANTJIES

I wish I could get a bottle of brannewyn every time I go clean out the bin. I'll clean it every time. Geraldine complain all the time about me. Come we have some more beers first.

KEITH

Okay

*He and Jantjies take a walk to the bar. The merriment continues. While everyone is dancing, Geraldine spots the packet with the wine in. She goes to the kitchen, gets an old coke bottle and fills the coke bottle with brandy. She fills the brandy bottle with water and places the packet back behind the flower arrangement.*

EXT. PATIO

AUNTY JUNE

Stella, there's a guest for you. He's outside.

STELLA

Tell him to come in, aunty.

AUNTY JUNE

He can't. *(pulls her gently by the arm, away from the guests)* He's in a hurry. He just wants to wish you.

STELLA

Who is it?

AUNTY JUNE

I don't know. He's in the front, by the syringa tree.

STELLA

Must I take some cake out?

JUNE

*(handing her a paper plate packed high with cake and covered in foil)* Here, I already made up a parcel. Go.

*Stella goes to the front of the house. The street is quiet, since most of the neighbours are at the party. She goes up to the visitor.*

STELLA

Hello? Aunty June said you wanted to see me, uncle.

MAN

Yes. I heard it was your birthday. Twenty one years old!

STELLA

Do you want to come in? And meet my mother?

MAN

No, it's okay. I know you mother. Tell her a old friend, called Dossie, was here.

STELLA

Okay. Are you sure?

MAN

I must be on my way again. Here's a very small present, and some flowers.

STELLA

Here's some cake. My Aunty June packed it.

MAN

Open the present. But let me wish you first, child. *(kisses her on her forehead)*

STELLA

*(opening present)* Tamaleedjies! I thought a person couldn't get it this time of year.

MAN

I'm from up country. We got it there.

STELLA

It's so strange. I was just saying that I feel like eating nothing but this. It's so strange that you brought this. A lot of people don't eat it. How did you know I would like it?

MAN

I took a chance. I love it myself. It was my favourite when I was young. *(hands her the posy and says goodbye)*

*Stella re-enters the house, with the posy in her hand.*

INT. HALLWAY

SARA

Where were you? What a strange bunch of flowers! It was years ago that I saw flowers like this. Kom kyk, ouma.

GRANDMOTHER

Ja! Wild flowers all mixed up with it. And day and night flowers. Why will someone mix that?

SARA

(pointing) What did you call this flower again? I can't remember.

GRANDMOTHER

You should. It's a nagbloem. Only opens three days a year, at night. You must separate this flowers, Stella. Put the other nagblomme in Charlene and Megan's room. It's pointless leaving it in the lounge with your other bouquets. It goes closed during the day.

STELLA

So why must I put it in Charlene's room?

GRANDMOTHER

There's more moonlight there, that's all. It likes moonlight. I suppose you can put it in your room. I never liked that flower. Who likes a flower that blooms once a year when you sleeping?

AUNTY MINNIE

(on seeing small children playing under the wooden table in the dining room)

Hey! Get out there! That's bad luck. Get out, now!

SARA

Leave them. They not bothering anyone.

AUNTY MINNIE

Just you watch. Someone's going to die. (to children) Get out before I give you a hiding. It's all nonsense, allowing children to play under tables.

SARA

They just playing.

AUNTY MINNIE

Playing? Just playing? Wood over their heads, like a coffin lid! Stella, help me pull this children out. And Charlene, put the stoep light back on. This children were playing with it, naughty buggers, and they left it off. There's a lot of moths

tonight. I don't want them on the table linen. And who is Charlene talking to so long on the 'phone?

CHARLENE

*(whispering into telephone receiver)* Kim, I can't get away now. Maybe tomorrow. There was a big argument here, I didn't see him yet. I'll take him some cake. Ja, there's mebos. I'm supposed to meet him ...Okay. I'll try to 'phone you later, but I don't think I can. Yes, I know. I also wish I can just get away from everything but it's nog'al a beautiful night. It's times like this I'm happy to be here and part of all this people and laughing and talking together but I know what you mean. *(An aunt walks past and appears to be eavesdropping.)* I better go now. I can't talk. Okay, bye.

*The evening is winding down. A very tipsy Keith and Jantjies fetch the packet from behind the flower arrangement. Geraldine looks as though she is fast asleep on a chair, in the cool night air. Jantjies gleefully takes out the bottle. He and Keith go around the corner in the yard to have a drink.*

JANTJIES

Aah! This is going to be lekker. *(pours for himself and Keith from the brandy bottle, long pause as they swallow their drinks)*

KEITH

Wat is dié, nou?

JANTJIES

Water

KEITH

Karate water!

JANTJIES

No. Just water. You said is brannewyn! Why you take me for a poes?

KEITH

I'm not joking. It was brandy! I promise.

JANTJIES

Look at your gedagte. I'm supposed to be your chommie.

KEITH

It was brandy! I opened it! I smelled it myself!

JANTJIES

You sieker suiped it by yourself, ja...

KEITH

How can one man alone finish this? It must have turned to water or something, from the heat. It was very near the urn.

JANTJIES

What kind of party is this? Where the wine turns to water! Ek gat liewes kerk toe, waar ek wiet ek kry wyn, net 'n klein doppie. They don't play jokes on you in the church. You 'n kak chommie. Make a man wait whole night for a glass of water!

EXT. SARA'S BACKYARD      NEXT AFTERNOON

*It is the day after the party. The women are sitting around, eating leftovers.*

AUNTY MINNIE

Het jy vir Geraldine's se oudste gesien?

SARA  
Blou vy!

STELLA  
Mom, she's not so dark!

SARA  
Her gums are blue. As ek haar is... I will never open my mouth to laugh.

STELLA  
I think she's pretty.

SARA  
What do you know about pretty?

AUNTY MINNIE  
Is Geraldine's fault. She went to lay with that man. When everybody told her he's too dark. She can't come be sorry now.

STELLA  
For what?

AUNTY MINNIE  
And did you see that child's hair?

STELLA  
Oh, stop talking about him. He's cute. And he's only two, his hair can still change.

AUNTY MINNIE

It will probably get worse. I keep telling Gerry to use some vaseline on his hair. And treat it. But she don't listen. So whose fault is it if people talk about the child?

SARA

Remember, Venetia's hair was also like that, but look how nice her mother straightened it out. You can do something about it.

AUNTY MINNIE

I still say, "Prevention is better than cure". Choose the right man, and you won't go wrong.

STELLA

It's so difficult to choose right.

AUNTY MINNIE

That's why *we* will tell you what's right. First, don't choose in isolation. Look at the mother, the sisters, the brothers. Sometimes there is an indication of what's wrong. Like I always said, Venetia's not going to have her mother's hair, because all her mother's sisters got kroes hair. So what is the chance of her having nice hair?

STELLA

I think Charlene's learning about that at school in biology. Hey Charlene? It's called recessive genes or what?

*Charlene has been quietly listening to the conversation. She puts on a brave face for the family and friends. The camera, however, manages to catch her at moments when she is unaware that she looks completely morose.*

CHARLENE

Yes. You can get a red flower from two white flowers. It's to do with cross-pollination. But the main thing is, a flower before the two white ones, was red, so the red comes out in the baby flower, not the parents.

AUNTY MINNIE

Yes! Exactly. So the scientists also know what we talking about. I'm telling you that kroes hair and even dark skin can skip a whole generation or two, and come out in the grandchildren. That's why I say, you must choose a man from a big family, so you can see what you might get.

SARA

It's true! Like a man from up country might come work here. He's good-looking, but you don't see his family, and when you do...hottie blood.

AUNTY MINNIE  
Ja, gebastardeer hotnotte.

STELLA  
What's that?

AUNTY MINNIE  
(to Sara) Remember how flat that child's nose was, from Rhoda hulle.

SARA  
Ja, skoon plat. A regte platgevriet. But she don't look so bad now.

AUNTY MINNIE  
Ja, children can change when they get older. And the dark ones can stay out of the sun, why make yourself uglier?

SARA  
I hear that if you let the children suck lollipops, that's good. Daai's 'ie nuwe ding nou, brings the cheekbones right.

AUNTY MINNIE  
I'm telling you now, girls. Don't make babies with four 'o clock hair. Choose right.

STELLA  
Four 'o clock hair!

AUNTY MINNIE  
Ja. You must stand up at four 'o clock in the morning to get the children's hair ready for school.

EXT. ROAD IN KALK BAY      NEXT DAY

*Charlene and her mother are walking back from the local supermarket. Charlene is looking very morose. Her mother is looking extremely agitated at her mood.*

SARA  
Stop thinking of yourself! That's the problem with today's people. Selfish. Full of moods. We just had to vasbyt and do what's best for all. Whatever the problem was.

CHARLENE  
I don't like it when Aunty Minnie goes on like that.

SARA

You musn't take notice of her. You take things too serious.

CHARLENE

Why do you people always talk so much about kroes hair and blou lippe? I'm also dark.

SARA

You not so dark!

CHARLENE

It's not the point.

SARA

Then what's your problem?

CHARLENE

I know I'm dark. Or darker then you, but it don't bother me.

SARA

It's obviously does. You got a chip on your shoulder about it. When Aunty Minnie brought you the cream

CHARLENE

Why must I use it?

SARA

You just said you dark, so why don't you...ek verstaan nie. You want to be dark?

CHARLENE

Yes

SARA

But then you say people say you dark, and you don't like it. Why you want to be insulted?

CHARLENE

No! You don't understand!

SARA

All this talk about skin colour.

CHARLENE

It's important to the family! And to all the people here.

SARA

I never said you were dark. Aunty Minnie said it. Ignore her then.

CHARLENE

Why mus' you's always go on about it. It makes me sick.

SARA

Jy's mal. Nes Avvie. You must stop thinking. That's her problem, thinking too much. Too much in your own company and your own thoughts. You must stop thinking so much. Today you can help me polish the stoep. Take your mind off that crap.

EXT. KALK BAY HARBOUR     A BIT LATER

*The water is looking a bit rough. People are bringing their boats in and tying them up. It has suddenly become overcast. Massive clouds are rolling by very quickly.*

EXT. GRASSY PARK

*Some very solemn muslim children are walking past Geraldine's house. They are coming from Madressa and they are wearing scarves and kufiyahs, with copies of the Qu'ran tucked under their arms. Geraldine looks at them, then turns around to carry on sweeping her stoep.*

INT. SARA'S KITCHEN

*Charlene and her mother are looking for floor polish and dishcloths. It is rather dark in the house, due to the overcast sky.*

CHARLENE

How's this one?

SARA

Alright. But we need more. No. that one's too dirty.

CHARLENE

It's not dirty.

SARA

It is, it's black.

CHARLENE

*(pauses before speaking)* If it's too black, then why can't we use this? *(reaches for new, clean cloths)*

SARA

*(looks up in horror)* Are you mad? That's my new dishtowels, and washing up cloths. For special occasions, we can't dirty that!

CHARLENE

So... this is too white and this is too black?

SARA

No. that's too clean and that's too dirty.

INT. GRANDMOTHER'S BEDROOM LATE THAT NIGHT

*The grandmother appears to be getting ready for bed. She loosens her shoulder length hair, brushes it out, and smears some Vaseline on the parting.*

INT. CHARLENE AND MEGAN'S ROOM

*Charlene leaves her bedroom, draping the white cloth from the trousseau box over her shoulders.*

EXT. PIER

*Charlene nears the edge of the pier but stands back a bit, because she sees a rather mysterious figure looking into the water. It appears to be a woman. Her hair is blowing in the sea breeze. Charlene looks at the woman's shoes.*

CHARLENE

Ma\ Grandma\ *(woman turns around)* Grandma, it is you. You gave me a fright. What you doing here?

GRANDMOTHER

Remember I told you about the people who walk around at night?...the naglopers\...well, I am out, looking for them and it looks like I've found one.

CHARLENE

Oh, no. I just felt like getting some fresh air.

GRANDMOTHER

What you doing with that material? You better go back to bed.

CHARLENE

The weather is so disturbing tonight, I can't sleep.

GRANDMOTHER

Ja, the wind is picking up. Mõre wei die skape. But that can't be the only reason you can't sleep. Is it about that fight you had with your mother?

CHARLENE

Yes

GRANDMOTHER

Ja, nobody wants to see.

CHARLENE

See what?

GRANDMOTHER

What's going on, how we hurt each other. Just carry on smiling like a coon and play the game finished.

CHARLENE

I wish I can just feel what I want.

GRANDMOTHER

Our family is part of the people here. You can't leave, it's impossible. Go to bed, now. It's school tomorrow.

*Charlene walks away, leaving the grandmother at the pier. She is interested to see where her grandmother will go. Charlene watches from behind a shed. The grandmother passes her and heads back for the house, thinking Charlene has gone ahead of her. Charlene looks around for Shane, checking her watch. It is working. She loosens the moorings on Elrica and makes herself comfortable. Shane failed to hear the arrangement to meet Charlene. He is quietly carving a small wooden ornament with a penknife in another boat quite far from where she is. From Charlene's vantage point, Shane can't be seen. He is obscured by some other boats. He, however, can see her. He keeps looking at the pier, thinking she is waiting to meet another man. He wants to see who it is. Clearly upset at watching her check her watch every few seconds, he throws down his fishing rod and goes to sleep in his boat, which is firmly moored.*

INT. PASSAGE IN SARA'S HOUSE EARLY NEXT MORNING

STELLA

(on way to bathroom) Where's Charlene?

SARA

What do you mean?

EXT. SEA KALK BAY HARBOUR

*A search party has been sent out. The boat is found, as well as the body. Shane is awakened by all the commotion as the fishermen bring the body onto the pier.*

FISHERMAN 1  
Found her floating, not too far.

KEITH  
Oh my God. Sara. Our child. My flesh and blood.

SHANE  
*(visibly distressed)* What happened?

FISHERMAN 2  
Looks like she must have been washed out of the boat. Why she was in such a small, shallow one, I don't know.  
*Keith, Sara and Shane are completely distraught. Various people in the community are waking up and coming to have a look at what's going on. Jantjies runs over to where Shane is standing.*

SHANE  
*(to fisherman)* I think someone did this to her. I really think so. She was waiting last night for someone!

FISHERMAN 1  
You saw her last night?

SHANE  
I saw her in the boat, checking her watch.  
*Keith breaks loose from the crowd.*

KEITH  
You saw her last! You were with her last! *(lunging at Shane with a paring knife)*

SHANE  
No, I just saw her. She was meeting some other man!

KEITH  
You bastard. You calling my girl a slut?

SARA  
I heard her whispering to you, that last day you were at my house.

KEITH  
When were you at my house?

SARA  
She told you to meet her here last night.

SHANE  
What? I didn't hear her!

SARA  
I heard her, I thought she wouldn't go. What did you do with my child?

SHANE  
I'm also your child. What did you do with me? Hey? What did you do with me?

*Keith is very confused and Sara collapses into a heap of despair. The grandmother takes the paring knife from Keith, who is most bewildered. The grandmother starts cutting away the white cloth (shroud), which is wound very tightly around Charlene's neck. She holds it against her chest before putting it in her pocket.*

INT. SARA'S LOUNGE

*No-one is home. The doors and windows have been left ajar due to everyone hurrying down to the harbour. A strong breeze blows through the window, causing the front door to slam shut. The ship-in-a-bottle rolls slowly off the mantelpiece, smashing on the ground. We do not hear it smash. There is no soundtrack at that point.*

*Credits appear and after a short while we hear some music being played by a traditional Cape Malay "goema" band.*

END

