

Herald

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1 EXT. MISSION STATION - DAY (1856)

In the veld of what is now the Eastern Cape of South Africa, in the heart of independent Xhosaland, stands a humble mission station with a small chapel and a cross above the main entrance.

2 INT.MISSION STATION - DAY

FATHER MAVO SHIYA (30), in the attire of an Anglican minister, is a tall, imposing man with alert eyes and a British accent. He sits at a table with an open Bible and a pile of parchment in front of him. He is translating the bible into Xhosa.

REVEREND TAYLOR (70), in Anglican minister's dress and a printer's apron, prepares the type for the printing press. He moves and speaks with precision and care. He has wispy grey hair and a slight sunburn.

MAVO

Lithini elagama? What is faith?

REVEREND TAYLOR

Hebrews 11:1 tells us 'Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.'
What do you think?

MAVO

Oh, no I was wondering what it is in isiXhosa. I was speaking to myself.

REVEREND TAYLOR

Try to make it simple, Mavo.

MAVO

The Xhosa may be heathen, Reverend, but they are not simple.

REVEREND TAYLOR

Please, Father. I hadn't meant to imply...

He pauses embarrassed and Mavo's face lights up.

MAVO

Ukholo! It's ukholo.

He continues writing.

REVEREND TAYLOR
Ukholo. Is that the word for faith?

MAVO
It is and it isn't. So much seems
untranslatable to me, Father.

MNCEDISI (15) runs in breathless. He wears traditional Xhosa dress but a large wooden cross hangs around his neck. Reverend Taylor rises from his seat and Mavo turns to look.

MNCEDISI
Father Shiya!

REVEREND TAYLOR
What is it, my child?

MNCEDISI
(in isiXhosa)
The British are in the village.
They are searching for the
prophetess.

MAVO
(in isiXhosa)
Let the chief deal with it.

REVEREND TAYLOR
Has something happened?

MNCEDISI
(in isiXhosa)
Khanyisa is with her.

Mavo jumps to his feet, grabbing his jacket.

MAVO
(in isiXhosa)
My daughter? With the prophetess?
(to Reverend Taylor)
The British are after the
prophetess. The Xhosa will need a
translator to speak with the
soldiers.

MNCEDISI
(in isiXhosa)
Yes, Captain Pringle's men.

MAVO
Pringle?

At mention of the name, Mavo freezes, alert. Reverend Taylor looks anxious. Mavo rushes out through the empty chapel and its dusty pews, with Reverend Taylor.

REVEREND TAYLOR

Mavo, he may be no relation.

They exit through the front entrance.

3 EXT. MISSION STATION - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Mavo untethers his horse and mounts it. He reaches out a hand to Mncedisi who shrinks back.

MAVO

(in isiXhosa)

It is only a horse, son.

Mncedisi clammers up behind Mavo and clings to him.

REVEREND TAYLOR

Remember why you joined the church,
Mavo. You sought redemption.

MAVO

Khanyisa is with her.

Mavo reaches into his saddle bag. He takes out a revolver and loads it ably. He tries to put it back in the saddle bag but the Reverend stops his hand. Mavo moves the Reverend's hand, replaces the gun and begins to gallop away. The Reverend begins to pray.

REVEREND TAYLOR

Dear Lord God. Kindle, I pray, in
the hearts of all, the true love of
peace and guide with your pure and
peaceable wisdom...

4 EXT. XHOSA VILLAGE - DAY

Mavo and Mncedisi gallop into the village and Mncedisi points at a hut. Mavo slows his horse and dismounts. He helps Mncedisi down from the horse and tethers it to a shrub. Mavo tucks his gun in his trousers and hides it with his jacket. Mncedisi motions to him and they creep along the ground along the side of the hut. Voices are heard from the other side of the building.

PROPHETESS (O.S)

(in isiXhosa)

Why have you not done your share of
the killing, old man?

OLD MAN (O.S)
 (in isiXhosa)
 Get out of my kraal! You can kill
 your own cattle if you want to and
 starve to death waiting for the
 ancestors to bring you miracles.
 But you do not touch mine!

In the Old Man's kraal stands a small group of women carrying knives. At the fore stands the PROPHETESS (19) who is short but muscular and holds her head high. Her angular facial structure renders her fierce. She holds a rope in one hand by which she is leading a cow. The women stand antagonistically facing the OLD MAN (70) who stands in front of his hut holding a knobkerrie and shaking with anger. His grey eyebrows are so thick they almost obscure his vision. His warrior's physique has grown frail.

PROPHETESS
 (in isiXhosa)
 Have you been seduced by the white
 man's God, old man?

OLD MAN
 (in isiXhosa)
 I am not Christian.

PROPHETESS
 (in isiXhosa)
 Ah, then you fear power in a woman?

She laughs mockingly and the women laugh too. Mavo and Mncedisi drop to the ground and disappear into the tall grass.

MAVO
 (whispering in isiXhosa)
 Where are the British?

MNCEDISI
 (whispering in isiXhosa)
 Not far. I saw them crossing the
 river before I came to you.

A female voice begins to sing. Mavo recognises it.

MAVO
 (whispering)
 Khanyisa!

KHANYISA (16) leads the women in song. She is the youngest. She has large trusting eyes. Mavo watches her sadly. The women dance, shouting approval at the prophetess' words.

MNCEDISI

(in isiXhosa)

She joined them some time ago,
 Father. I was afraid to tell you. I
 think she likes the singing.

Mavo scowls.

PROPHETESS

(shouting in isiXhosa)

The white man steals our land. The
 white man imprisons our Chiefs. The
 white man brings his European lung
 sickness to infect and kill our
 cattle. The War of the Axe has
 weakened us all. Have the men done
 anything to stop them? Do you think
 the British will become our
 friends? No! It is time for women
 to take charge. To listen to our
 fallen mothers and send the white
 man back across the ocean. The
 ancestors tell us to kill the
 cattle, to cleanse the land. Do you
 not wish to prepare for a new and
 prosperous Xhosa nation, Old Man?

The sound of the women's singing builds to a crescendo and,
 as one song leads into another, a new voice rises about the
 rest to lead the others. Khanyisa falls back and Mavo moves
 closer, crouching in the bushes.

MAVO

Khanyisa!

She turns, bowing her head in surprise and embarrassment, and comes to him.

KHANYISA
(in isiXhosa)
Father.

MAVO
(in isiXhosa)
What are you doing with this woman? She is leading the Xhosa down a dangerous path.

She looks from him to the prophetess and breathes deeply.

KHANYISA
(in isiXhosa)
Do you really want to know, father?

MAVO
(in isiXhosa)
Don't be afraid.

Khanyisa's eyes light. Her words are rushed, excited.

KHANYISA
(in isiXhosa)
I went with the prophetess to the river. I saw mamma. Her shadow was dancing on the water and she shook the leaves on the trees. She wants to come back and be with us.

Mavo touches his daughter's arm.

MAVO
(in isiXhosa)
Mamma is in heaven, Khanyisa.

She pulls her arm away and continues, almost delirious.

KHANYISA
(in isiXhosa)
The cattle are contaminated. We need to kill them so that everything is ready for when mamma and the others come home.

MAVO
(commanding, in isiXhosa)
Go home. It isn't Christian.

KHANYISA
(in isiXhosa, passionate)
Noah sacrificed a cow to God after the flood. Cain sacrificed a sheep. Is this different?

MAVO
(in isiXhosa)

Go!

Khanyisa sighs tearfully and turns to go.

KHANYISA
(in isiXhosa)
I miss her.

OLD MAN
(in isiXhosa)
You will dance us all to
starvation. Get out of here or I
will fetch a rifle.

The sound of horses' hooves is heard. A group of British soldiers gallop into the kraal led by CAPTAIN JULIAN PRINGLE (40). He is ruddy with dark eyes, a thin, neat moustache and perfectly greased hair. The women make disapproving sounds. Khanyisa crouches in the grass.

MAVO
(to Mncedisi, in isiXhosa)
Fetch the chief.

Mncedisi creeps away into the long grass.

CAPTAIN PRINGLE
Who among you is the so-called
prophetess?

PROPHETESS
(in isiXhosa)
What would he do if I went to his
Queen in London and spoke Xhosa?

The women laugh and heckle. Some soldiers dismount.

WOMAN 1
(in isiXhosa) How
can we be ruled by
uncircumcised men?

WOMAN 2
(in isiXhosa)
How does he ride his horse with a
dangling foreskin?

The women laugh and make disapproving sounds.

CAPTAIN PRINGLE
If you do not present the
prophetess, you will all be under
arrest.

Mavo rises quickly from the long grass, hands in the air.

MAVO
Halt, sir.

The women and the British turn to look. Khanyisa looks on with concern.

CAPTAIN PRINGLE
Sir? How civil. Someone has
trained you.

Mavo walks forward to stand between Pringle and the women.

MAVO
That woman is the prophetess.

He points at the prophetess.

KHANYISA
Baba!

The women utter noises of anger at Mavo.

CAPTAIN PRINGLE
You do not wish to protect her? Are
you not Xhosa?

MAVO
I am a Christian. I do not pretend
to support her heathen prophecies.
The Xhosa are divided on this
issue.

CAPTAIN PRINGLE
A Christian, you say?

MAVO
I am a preacher at the mission
station. My name is Father Shiya.
What do you want with the
prophetess?

PROPHETESS
(in isiXhosa)
Why are we always waiting for men
to speak?

She raises her knife to slit the cow's throat. Captain Pringle raises his pistol and shoots into the air. CHIEF LANGA (50) appears with several armed men. He is muscular and battle-scarred, traditionally dressed and carrying a spear.

MAVO
(in English to Pringle)
Why are you shooting?

CAPTAIN PRINGLE
It was merely a warning. She raised
a weapon.

MAVO
To kill a cow!

CAPTAIN PRINGLE
I have a warrant of arrest.

MAVO
Not a warrant to kill. The chief may not be a supporter of the prophetess but he is a protector of his people. Do you have permission from London for a war?

CAPTAIN PRINGLE
I don't understand, preacher. We offer you medicine and metal ploughs. This woman offers nothing but starvation. Yet we are the enemy. God help you.

CHIEF LANGA
(in isiXhosa)
Pringle!

Khanyisa watches anxiously.

CHIEF LANGA (CONT'D)
Arrest the prophetess if you like but put away your guns.

CAPTAIN PRINGLE
What is he saying?

MAVO
He says you can arrest her but you must put away your guns.

CAPTAIN PRINGLE
He's making it easy. Arrest her!

The soldiers move to arrest her.

PROPHETESS
(in isiXhosa)
You cannot hurt me. I am protected by the ancestors.

She cuts one of the soldiers across the cheek with her knife. Pringle shoots right at her, his gun emitting a puff of smoke. She is unharmed.

WOMAN 1
(in isiXhosa)
She is unharmed.

PROPHETESS
 (in isiXhosa)
 You see. I am immortal.

The Chief falls to his knees, aghast. Mavo frowns in confusion.

CHIEF LANGA
 (in isiXhosa)
 She is alive. This woman is truly a messenger of the ancestors. Protect her.

There are murmurs of amazement from the Chief's men and the women ululate in celebration.

MAVO
 (to Pringle)
 It seems that your failure to aim straight has been interpreted as a miracle. The chief has become convinced of this woman's supernatural powers.

CAPTAIN PRINGLE
 Fool!

The soldiers try again to arrest the prophetess and fighting breaks out as the Chief and his men defend her. The British open fire. The Xhosa scream and scatter. Mavo draws his gun and Pringle, dropping his percussion revolver, draws a rifle from his saddle and points it at Mavo. Frightened, Mavo backs a few paces away, stumbles and falls. Khanyisa rushes from the grass, grabs Mavo's gun and shoots at Pringle but misses and hits his horse. Pringle shoots her and his horse falls.

CAPTAIN PRINGLE
 My horse is down. Retreat! Retreat!

The Prophetess stands unscathed. She yells after the British.

PROPHETESS
 (in isiXhosa)
 Coward.

CHIEF LANGA
 (in isiXhosa)
 Animals!

The men mount their horses and ride away. His horse dead, Pringle is helped onto another man's horse. A few lie dead. Mavo kneels down and touches Khanyisa's face.

KHANYISA
(in isiXhosa)
I remember him, baba. Pringle. He
killed mama.

MAVO
(in isiXhosa)

Yes.

KHANYISA
(in isiXhosa)
I thought he was dead. I didn't
know it was him till I heard his
name.

MAVO
(in isiXhosa)
Khanyisa...I'm so sorry.

KHANYISA
(in isiXhosa)
Stop him, baba.

MAVO
(in isiXhosa)
My darling.

KHANYISA
(in isiXhosa)
Pray for me.

She dies. Mavo cries, holding her limp hand between his. After a moment he wipes his eyes and picks up Pringle's abandoned percussion revolver. The handle is engraved with "CAPT J PRINGLE". Mavo looks closely at the engraving and then notices that each cylinder in the drum, except for those that are empty, is topped with a bit of cloth rather than a bullet. He looks at the prophetess and her fawning followers.

MAVO
(to himself)
Blanks.

5 INT. MISSION STATION - DAY

Mavo enters. Reverend Taylor kneels at the alter praying. He turns when he hears Mavo walk in and rushes towards him.

REVEREND TAYLOR
You're back. You are bloodied. What
happened?

Tears run down Mavo's face but he does not stop walking.

MAVO
Khanyisa is dead.

REVEREND TAYLOR
No. God help us.

Mavo marches through to a room with a small bed, a trunk and a wash basin. The Reverend follows. Mavo opens the trunk and takes out a couple shirts, some handkerchiefs and a pair of pants, a piece of soap and a razor blade.

REVEREND TAYLOR (CONT'D)
Where are you going?

MAVO
To the Cape. I think Pringle...the British want war. He shot the prophetess with blanks. Something strange is happening. He must be exposed. I think I can stop him.

Mavo pours water into his wash basin from a jug and washes the blood of his daughter from his hands. He is shaking. Mavo pauses and looks at Reverend Taylor.

MAVO
I will miss your guidance,
Reverend.

REVEREND TAYLOR
I think I will learn how little
this mission can do without you.

As Mavo folds his belongings into a bundle of cloth. The Reverend hands him a Bible and Mavo adds it to the bundle.

MAVO
I will return when it is done.

6 EXT. MISSION STATION - DAY

Mavo rides away. The Reverend watches from the doorway.

7 EXT. CAPE TOWN - DAY

Ships are docked in the blue bay. The Castle of Good Hope and the city of Cape Town stand dwarfed by Table Mountain. Further south in Rondebosch lies the vast Brownlow estate. The house is double-storey with white walls, a thatched roof and a veranda with a green tin roof. It sits in a pretty garden, surrounded by rolling vineyards and backed by the mountain.

8

INT. LADY CHARLOTTE'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY

LADY CHARLOTTE BROWNLOW(40) stands in front of a full length mirror in an evening dress. She has pale, porcelain skin and thick brown curls. She observes her appearance with pleasure.

ROSE JANTJES (45) kneels, ably pinning the hem of the dress. Rose is an elegant, petite Malay woman with a worn face.

LADY CHARLOTTE
Do you think the new governor will like it?

ROSE
Yes, ma'am. It becomes you.

LADY CHARLOTTE
In London, the ladies wear twice as many petticoats.

ROSE
You have the good opinion of all of Cape Town, my lady.
(cheekily)
I am quite sure he will like you, whether he wants to or not.

LADY CHARLOTTE
I'll pretend I didn't hear that. He will soon have favourites, Rose, and I only mean to present Mr. Brownlow as a contender.

Lady Charlotte smiles at her reflection. Rose rises.

ROSE
I have finished the other dress, my lady.

Lady Charlotte spins around, delighted.

LADY CHARLOTTE
Oh, how wonderful! Let me see it.

Lady Charlotte sinks into a small chair and Rose produces a small white Christening dress from her wicker basket.

LADY CHARLOTTE
Rose! It is quite the most beautiful Christening dress I have ever seen.

Rose is very pleased. Lady Charlotte rises, takes the dress in her hands and lays it out on her dressing table. She takes off her own dress with Rose's help.

LADY CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

I'm going to present it to dear Lizzie tonight. Oh, she and Pringle must be in such bliss!

Rose turns to pack Lady Charlotte's dress into her basket.

ROSE

(mumbling in Dutch and English) Vreemde soort van bliss.

LADY CHARLOTTE

What was that, Rose?

ROSE

Nothing, my lady. I spoke out of turn. I will return your dress in good time.

Rose curtsies. Lady Charlotte frowns and watches Rose leave.

9

EXT CAPE TOWN - DAY

Mavo rides into Cape Town. The wood-paved streets are muddy and windswept. Soldiers, merchants and servants wander on foot, ankle deep in the mud in places. On the hillside black and Malay women hang up sheets to dry in the sun, covering a section of the mountain in billowing white. British ladies and gentlemen bounce by in an omnibus horse carriage, thudding into potholes and wobbling precariously in the biting wind. Mavo nervously approaches a GROUP OF SETTLER LADIES looking into the window of a dress shop.

MAVO

Pardon me, ladies.

The ladies shy away, anxiously.

LADY 1

We haven't any pennies.

MAVO

Is this the right way to the castle?

LADY 2

Why is he talking to us?

LADY 1

Go on with you.

As Mavo turns away, a carriage races by covering him in a spray of mud. He leads his horse along dejectedly. As he rounds a corner he sees a large crowd gathered. The crowd are mostly white men. Curious, he approaches. At the front of the crowd on a little platform, the CONVICT a Xhosa man of a similar age and stature to Mavo stands with a noose around his neck. A soldier waits to hang him. Some people in the crowd boo at the convict. A XHOSA GIRL kneels sobbing nearby. A line of prisoners await their turn. The convict looks straight ahead, stony faced. An OFFICIAL stands with a large book open in his hands.

OFFICIAL

For the theft of two pence, the sentence is death by hanging.

Mavo rushes away, not wishing to watch. He hears singing and follows the sound. He finds a small church. He ties up his horse and goes inside.

10 INT. CHURCH - DAY

A group of CHOIR BOYS are rehearsing, lead by their MASTER.

CHOIR

(singing)

*I once was lost but now am found,
was blind but now I see. Through
many dangers, toils and snares I
have already come.*

Mavo sneaks in, unnoticed, and sinks to his knees in a pew at the back. MRS ELIZABETH PRINGLE (24) sits a few rows ahead. She turns and sees him then continues to pray. A tear runs down her face. Mavo does not see her. He begins to pray. He takes out his Bible. A little piece of paper falls out. It reads 'Mr. Marks. *Cape Herald*. 13 Strand Street. Cape Town. An old friend. Yours, Rev. T' Mavo smiles, reading it.

MAVO

(whispering in isiXhosa)

Thank you, God.

CHOIR

(singing)

*'Tis Grace hath brought me safe
thus far and Grace will lead me
home.*

11 INT. BROWNLOW'S LIBRARY - DAY

MR BROWNLOW (35) sits writing letters at a table in the library. He is a pale man in aristocratic dress. Lady Charlotte enters carrying her parasol and bonnet.

LADY CHARLOTTE

Mr. B, do you need anything from town?

MR BROWNLOW

Oh. Yes. Have you...um... a minute, Charlotte?

LADY CHARLOTTE

Of course.

MR BROWNLOW

A ship called the *Hermes*.
(he pronounces it her-meez, then frowns)

Oh dear. Perhaps the *Hermes*
(he says it with a silent 'h')

LADY CHARLOTTE

No matter.

MR BROWNLOW

Ah, yes. A ship has anchored at Simon's Bay and the sailors are riddled with smallpox. The military has prevented them from docking.

LADY CHARLOTTE

But they are no doubt short of supplies! The poor men will die.

MR BROWNLOW

Oh, dear. Yes, precisely. I have entreated the General to allow the men off the boat and into a quarantined area but he has not given me a response. I've written a letter imploring Captain Pringle to change the General's mind.

LADY CHARLOTTE

How can I help?

MR BROWNLOW

If you wouldn't mind looking it over, dear. For spelling and so on.

LADY CHARLOTTE

Of course!

He rises and she sits at the desk. He kisses her hand.

MR BROWNLOW

Thank you, darling. I dread his response.

LADY CHARLOTTE

Why is that?

MR BROWNLOW

Pringle's temper is considerable.

He dabs sweat from his furrowed brow with his handkerchief.

LADY CHARLOTTE

Is it? He's always been civil towards me.

MR BROWNLOW

Oh yes. Dear dear.

He nods insistently and turns to leave. Lady Charlotte looks down at the letter and shakes her head.

LADY CHARLOTTE

No, this won't do.

She leans back to peer out the door and sees that Mr. Brownlow is gone. She takes a fresh sheet of paper from the desk drawer and writes "Dear Captain Pringle", carefully copying Mr. Brownlow's handwriting from the previous letter.

12 INT. CAPE HERALD NEWSPAPER OFFICE - DAY

On the wall there are several framed front pages from previous editions of the *Cape Herald*. The headlines read 'Frontier war ends', 'Queen grants non-racial parliament' and 'African males granted vote'.

HARVEY (25) and GUS (25) sit at their desks. They are foppishly dressed. Gus is a squat, round man with a comb-over and oversized moustache. Harvey is gangly with a barely-there moustache. Gus carefully dusts a collection of small model ships and arranges them on his desk. Harvey scribbles furiously. He reaches to dip his pen into his inkwell and freezes with a revelation. His pen hovers near the inkwell, dipping in and out of thin air as he thinks.

HARVEY
 (anxiously)
 But if we leave them on the boat,
 Gus, they'll all starve.

GUS
 (disinterested)
 It is a dilemma, Harv.

HARVEY
 Well, what kind of people would we
 be if we let a whole ship of
 sailors die?

GUS
 Survivors, fools and brigands. Who
 else comes to a colony?

HARVEY
 But if they've all got smallpox we
 can't let them off or there will be
 an epidemic.

GUS
 And that is precisely why I used
 the word dilemma, Harvey.

MARKS (65) opens the door from his private office. He wears
 a worn suit and has a greying beard.

MARKS
 Harvey, Gus.

They look up, awaiting instruction.

MARKS (CONT'D)
 We have the arrival of the new
 Governor on the front page. I want
 these farm murders on page 2. Get
 me the article on the De Villiers
 farm attack from last year.

Marks closes his office door. Harvey leaps up, knocking one
 of Gus' boats off his desk.

HARVEY
 Oh! So sorry!
 He begins immediately to pick up the pieces.

GUS
 Leave it! Leave it!

Harvey backs away. Gus closes his eyes and balls up his fists.

GUS (CONT'D)
Foolish mackerel! Just do us a
favour and sit back down.

Harvey sits down with a sheepish grin.

13 EXT. CAPE HERALD NEWSPAPER OFFICE - DAY

Mavo looks down at the address on the piece of paper and looks up to the office. The words 'CAPE HERALD' are neatly painted onto the window. He approaches. A note on the door reads 'Don't knock. Just come in.' Mavo ties up his horse and opens the door.

14 INT. CAPE HERALD NEWSPAPER OFFICE - DAY

Gus stands on a chair straining to reach a file on a top shelf. Harvey easily reaches it.

MAVO
Good day.

They look up to see Mavo standing at the door, twisting his hat in his hands. Gus tidies his tie, steps down from the chair and approaches the front desk.

GUS
What can I do for you?

MAVO
My name is Father Mavo Shiya. I'd
like to see Mr. Marks.

GUS
And why is that, may I ask?

MAVO
Oh. Um.

GUS
We can't have just anyone waltzing
in there. He's a very important
man. This is a very busy office.

MAVO
Certainly.

Mavo looks down at the little note with the address.

MAVO (CONT'D)

I work for an old friend of his, I think...perhaps if I could just introduce-

HARVEY

Gus! Look! He's back.

GUS

(mumbling) Bloody...stupid...He was here this morning, silly pickerel!

Harvey has spotted MR FREDERICK STRANGE (40) approaching the office. Mr. Strange snuffles into his silk handkerchief.

HARVEY

Well, good luck then.

Harvey sits down and gets back to working.

GUS

It's your turn, Harv.

HARVEY

(whiny)
I did it yesterday.

GUS

(firm)
But I did it this morning!

Harvey covers his face with his hands, woeful.

HARVEY

Fine, then.

Harvey approaches the front desk. Mr. Strange enters and rings the bell at the counter, even though Harvey is standing right in front of him. Mavo stands by awkwardly.

HARVEY (CONT'D)

Hello, Mr. Strange. What can I do for you?

Gus chuckles. Mr. Strange clears his throat in preparation.

GUS

(to Mavo)
Come on. Let's see if he'll talk to you.

Mavo follows Gus to Marks' office door. Gus knocks on and opens it a crack.

MARKS (O.S)

One minute!

Gus closes the door and shrugs. He heads back to his desk, leaving Mavo standing awkwardly. Mr. Strange begins to speak with a slow, dull drawling voice at an excessively loud volume, sniffing into his handkerchief at regular intervals. He produces a folded up page of newspaper from his pocket and spreads it out on the counter.

MR STRANGE

It's about the *Hermes*. The ship anchored at Simon's Bay. The sailors are riddled with smallpox.

HARVEY

I'm aware of it, Mr. Strange. I wrote that arti-

MR STRANGE

(interrupting)

I hope you will take a firm stance, here at the Herald, against allowing the ship to dock.

HARVEY

The Governor has already announced-

MR STRANGE

(interrupting)

Now, I don't know if you are aware but I have suffered from a variety of illnesses in my life. These include, but are not limited to, influenza, whooping cough, dysentery, malaria-

MARKS (O.S)

Okay!

15 INT. MARKS' OFFICE - DAY

Mavo enters to find Marks searching through files. His desk is covered in papers and books and ink.

MARKS

Have you got the article?

MAVO

No.

He turns, see Mavo, and squints at him, appraising him, then moves to sit at his desk. His responses are always quick as though he is a rush to end the conversation.

MAVO (CONT'D)

I was given your name by Reverend Taylor.

MARKS

Yes. A friend from Oxford. Good man. How is he?

MAVO

He is well sir, but concerned. There has been a terrible incident and I am here to ensure that justice takes its course.

MARKS

(not without irony)

How noble. And what has it to do with the Herald?

MAVO

Captain Pringle and his men came to Xhosaland. Their declared purpose was to arrest a woman, a so-called prophetess, in order to help the Xhosa but they opened fire. A number of people were killed. The Chief had not heretofore been a supporter of the prophetess but I fear this incident has converted him and he may be prepared to fight for her protection.

MARKS

You don't expect me to write about that do you?

MAVO

The whole community is at risk. If the governor only knew...

MARKS

Why should I believe you?

MAVO

I am an honest God-fearing man. Reverend Taylor can vouch for me.

(pause)

Have a little faith, sir

MARKS

Listen,...Father?

MAVO
Father Shiya

MARKS
Listen, Father Shiya, even if I trusted you and even if Pringle did shoot a group of innocents, which cannot be the whole story, I can't print it. We don't have time to cover the Cape and Xhosaland.

MAVO
If you don't have time, I can write it. I am a preacher. I use my words to tell stories, to persuade people, every day.

MARKS
But I can't print it.

MAVO
Because you only print white news?

MARKS
On the contrary, Father. Do you realise how unusual it is that the Cape has a black vote? The Herald has always defended it. And I like to believe we played a considerable role in the establishment of the multi-racial parliament. But we are only powerful because we are popular. High society reads this paper. If I accuse a military official of murder, the Herald has no hope in the Cape. They'll slaughter us.

MAVO
So Pringle will simply go free.

MARKS
You must learn to pick your battles wisely, Father.

MAVO
I should like to see you say that when your daughter has a bullet in her chest. Good day.

Mavo marches out of the office. Marks looks after him.

16 INT. CAPE HERALD NEWSPAPER OFFICE - DAY

Mr. Strange is still at it. Gus chuckles quietly at his desk. Harvey leans on the counter, miserable.

MR STRANGE
...seasickness, a broken collar
bone, boils, biliousness-

HARVEY
(yelling)
Marks, incoming!

GUS
Strange and Brownlow in one day!

Gus gives a long, low whistle and shakes his head. Mavo storms from Marks' office and out into the street. Lady Charlotte enters a moment later, parasol in hand, and pauses in the doorway watching Mavo gallop away.

MR STRANGE
...and the most stubborn lice!

HARVEY
For the third time, Mr. Strange.
Government agrees with you. See
here is the announcement in
Governor Green's own hand!

Harvey pokes repeatedly at the signature on a document on the counter. Mr. Strange examines the document and Harvey turns with a forced smile to Lady Charlotte.

HARVEY (CONT'D)
Good morning, my Lady.

MR STRANGE
Oh, Lady Charlotte! What an honour!

Obsequious, Mr. Strange bows deeply.

LADY CHARLOTTE
I don't believe we have been
introduced?

MR STRANGE
My name is Mr. Frederick Strange.
We met at the horse races, one
breezy Saturday in August, if I am
not mistaken. I was most humbled
by your presence and it is not an
exaggeration to say that my

(MORE)

MR STRANGE (CONT'D)
 felicity on that day relied upon
 your-

LADY CHARLOTTE
 (interrupting)
 Indeed. Very good.

Marks comes out of his office.

MARKS
 Good afternoon, Lady Charlotte.

LADY CHARLOTTE
 Good afternoon.

MARKS
 Would you mind terribly, Mr.
 Strange? We've a rather important
 visitor.

MR STRANGE
 Would I mind! My dear man, you do
 not flatter me to suggest I would
 intrude upon Lady Charlotte's-

Harvey opens the door and bodily ushers him through the
 door, shutting it before he can finish his sentence. Mr.
 Strange looks startled and wanders off, muttering.

LADY CHARLOTTE
 What a curious fellow. You mustn't
 lie to the poor fool to quiet him.

HARVEY
 I beg your pardon, my lady.

LADY CHARLOTTE
 That's not Green's hand, of course.
 Poor Green. Such a tragedy!

Harvey looks confused and takes the document to his desk.

MARKS
 What can I do for you?

LADY CHARLOTTE
 I am hosting a little intimate
 dinner party this evening, Mr.
 Marks. I wouldn't mention such a
 little thing but as it happens the
 new governor will be in attendance.
 It is his first social call since
 (MORE)

LADY CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
 his arrival at the Cape. Might that
 be something you could mention in
 the paper?

MARKS
 Of course, Lady Charlotte.

LADY CHARLOTTE
 Wonderful. That's settled. Come
 along at seven and join us. It will
 make a marvelous front page.

MARKS
 With all due respect, Lady
 Charlotte, I can prepare
 something for the social pages
 but I can't put it on the front
 page.

LADY CHARLOTTE
 Come now, Mr. Marks. Do you not
 enjoy Mr. Brownlow's donations?

MARKS
 Of course, but...

LADY CHARLOTTE
 We all know the Herald isn't the
 gritty political publication it
 once was. Why, just last week
 Captain Pringle lost his hat in the
 wind and it made the second page.
 Good day to you.

She leaves. Mr. Marks is silent. Harvey and Gus look over
 to see how Marks will respond. The framed headline about
 the multi-racial parliament falls down.

17 INT. MRS. PRINGLE'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Mrs. Pringle sits at her dressing table. She has a face like
 a cherub. She is heavily pregnant. She gingerly powders a
 dark bruise on her cheek. There is a knock on the door.
 She picks up her fan, obscuring the bruise.

MRS. PRINGLE
 Come in.

A MAID enters and curtseys.

MAID

Lady Charlotte is here to see you,
Mrs. Pringle.

MRS. PRINGLE

Thank you.

18 INT. PRINGLE'S DRAWING ROOM - DAY

Lady Charlotte sits on the sofa. Tea has been laid out on a coffee table. Mrs. Pringle enters, still fanning herself.

LADY CHARLOTTE

My dear Lizzie!

MRS. PRINGLE

Charlotte, what a lovely surprise.

They embrace then sit on the sofa.

LADY CHARLOTTE

You have grown. Oh how exciting! I cannot wait for the new arrival.

Mrs. Pringle smiles sadly. Lady Charlotte sips her tea.

MRS. PRINGLE

It is very generous of you to visit me with your dinner tonight.

LADY CHARLOTTE

Lizzie, it is nothing of the sort. I have so missed you these last months. It is nonsense that I should be deprived of your company simply because you are expecting.

MRS. PRINGLE

I am sure everyone gets on perfectly without me.

LADY CHARLOTTE

We did not! We will all be thrilled to see you this evening. I've a letter for the Captain from Mr. B. Men's business of some sort.

She hands over the letter.

MRS. PRINGLE

I'll give it to him when he comes home.

LADY CHARLOTTE
I don't know how you can wear long
sleeves in this Cape heat.

Mrs. Pringle anxiously pulls down her sleeves, forgetting to hold up her fan. Lady Charlotte gasps, spilling some tea.

LADY CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
Lizzie!

Mrs. Pringle covers her face with her hands.

MRS. PRINGLE
Oh, I was out riding and I didn't
notice a branch.

Lady Charlotte takes Mrs. Pringle's hand in her own and looks earnestly into her eyes.

LADY CHARLOTTE
You must tell me the truth.
Whatever you say next, I will
believe you. If it was a riding
accident, do say so. But know that
I am your most devoted friend.

Mrs. Pringle looks back quivering. Her eyes fill with tears.

MRS. PRINGLE
It's only when he drinks really. He
has a right to be angry.

LADY CHARLOTTE
The Captain did this?

MRS. PRINGLE
It's the baby. He...

LADY CHARLOTTE
Tell me.

Tears run down Mrs. Pringle's face. She looks into Lady Charlotte's eyes then sighs and wipes her eyes.

MRS. PRINGLE
It is nothing really, Charlotte.
Would you help to keep him away
from the wine tonight? That would
be a great act of friendship.

LADY CHARLOTTE
Of course. What will happen if he
drinks?

MRS. PRINGLE

Let us hope that his desire to
impress the new Governor prevents
it and we never find out.

19

EXT. GRAND PARADE - DAY

Mavo leads his horse along and sulks.

OFFICIAL (O.S)

For the invasion of a farm and the
murder of the farmer and his wife,
Ayabonga Dlanga is sentenced to
death by hanging.

CAPTAIN PRINGLE (O.S)

Ladies and gentlemen. Pardon the
interruption. My name is Captain
Pringle.

Mavo looks up. At a distance he can see Pringle addressing
the crowd.

CAPTAIN PRINGLE (CONT'D)

Many of you are feeling angry, sad,
neglected. These farm murders are
truly a scourge on our society. But
I ask you as civilised men not to
let these terrible events breed
hate in your heart. These events
must not drive us to abandon the
savage men to our east but to
increase our involvement. To
believe that man in a savage state
is not endowed with freedom of
thought or action is erroneous at
best. He is deprived of those
faculties of intellect, benevolence
and morality that form the very
foundation of our society and we
must strive to impart upon the
Xhosa these very values or suffer
the consequences of their
barbarism. Trust in your
government. We mourn with the
farmers today. Thank you.

There are cheers. Mavo's fist tightens on the reigns.
Pringle emerges from the crowd and marches towards the
castle. Mavo follows at a distance, breathing heavily. He
takes a revolver from his saddle bag, loads it, then sighs.

MAVO
 (in isiXhosa, to himself)
 You know you could never do it,
 Mavo.

MARKS
 What the hell are you doing?

Marks pulls a struggling Mavo down a side alley.

MAVO
 Get off me!

MARKS
 I'm trying to help you. There are
 hundreds of soldiers marching
 around. Do you want to die?

MAVO
 Give me back my gun!

MARKS
 Black men don't carry guns at the
 Cape. They'll hang a man for less.

Marks conceals that gun in his jacket.

MAVO
 I wasn't going to do anything.

MARKS
 Aren't you a religious man? You'd
 never get past the gates of the
 castle anyway.

Mavo slumps to the ground, head in hands. Marks leans
 against a wall, pondering. He disarms the gun.

MARKS (CONT'D)
 I'll put something in the paper but
 I need to back up your story.

MAVO
 I only have my word.

MARKS
 We will have to do some
 investigating.

Mavo looks up. Hopeful.

MAVO

What precipitated this change of heart?

MARKS

I've been reminded of my reasons for starting the Herald. Popularity was not one of them. Popularity at the Cape is a mark of stupidity.

He helps Mavo up and they dust themselves off.

20

INT. CAPE HERALD NEWSPAPER OFFICE - DAY

Mavo and Marks enter. Harvey and Gus look up. They are huddled over something on Harvey's desk and Harvey is looking at it with a magnifying glass.

MARKS

Father Shiya is going to be helping us out for a few days.

(to Mavo)

You can start with some filing.

Mavo looks surprised.

MARKS (CONT'D)

Gus, see to it that he finds some accommodation.

Marks marches towards his office.

GUS

Certainly. Er, Marks. We have stumbled upon something odd.

Marks turns.

MARKS

What?

HARVEY

Do you recall Governor Green's announcement from a few days ago regarding the *Hermes*?

MARKS

Yes. Declaring it unfit to dock on account of the pox.

HARVEY

Well...

MARKS

Yes?

HARVEY

I'm not sure that it is Green's handwriting.

Marks marches over and takes the magnifying glass. Gus points to the documents as he speaks.

GUS

This is a document he signed several weeks ago. This is the announcement about the *Hermes*.

The signatures on the two documents are similar but do not match.

MARKS

There's nothing obviously different about them.

MAVO

May I have a look?

MARKS

By all means but I don't see why you should see anything I can't.

Mavo approaches. He is handed the magnifying glass but he does not use it.

MAVO

Ah, definitely different writers.

GUS

How can you tell?

MAVO

One of them is left handed.

HARVEY

But what makes you say that?

MAVO

May I have a pen and paper?

Harvey hands him both and Mavo writes 'Father Mavo Shiya'. As he writes, his left hand smudges what he has already written. He holds the smudged writing up against the announcement, which is also smudged.

MAVO (CONT'D)

Took me years to train my right hand. Left hand smudges.

GUS

Green was never left handed. He was first batsman at the parliamentary cricket match.

MARKS

Why would someone forge this?

GUS

Someone's hiding something on that ship.

MAVO

Could the post from London come on that ship?

They all look at Mavo. Mavo smiles.

21 EXT. DOCK AT SIMON'S BAY - DAY

Mavo and Marks disembark from the carriage and look towards the ship. Mavo is wearing a tie instead of his collar.

MARKS

(firmly)

It goes against my grain to ask you this but you'd best carry my bag and act like a real servant

Mavo glares at him, considering.

MAVO

Do I have a choice?

MARKS

Do you want me to report on Xhosaland? We have to fit in if we want to get anything done.

Mavo sighs and takes the bag. He walks a few paces behind Marks. Several British military men stand guard.

MARKS (CONT'D)

(hushed)

These boys are going to give us some trouble

SOLDIER 1 shifts his weapon from hand to hand, menacingly.

SOLDIER 1

Can I help you?

MARKS

Good afternoon. My name is Doctor Smith and this is my man Parker. We've come to do an inspection.

SOLDIER 1

Doesn't look like a Parker.

SOLDIER 2

We have orders not to let anyone on or off the ship. Smallpox, you see. Highly contagious.

MARKS

Yes, I'm aware of its properties. I am a doctor.

SOLDIER 1

Sorry, doc. Nothing we can do.

A CORPORAL approaches with a swagger.

CORPORAL

Hang on, now, Privates.

The privates salute.

SOLDIER 1 AND SOLDIER 2

Corporal!

CORPORAL

Who did you say you are?

MARKS

I am Doctor Smith.

The Corporal grins.

CORPORAL

Oh yes. You're here for the inspection are you?

He places emphasis on the word 'inspection'.

MARKS

Indeed.

CORPORAL

Yes, I was told to expect you. The Captain will be pleased.

The soldiers seem surprised. Marks glances at Mavo.

MARKS

Wonderful.

CORPORAL

I'll get one of the lads to row you
out, doctor.
(yelling)
William!

He places especial emphasis on 'doctor'.

22 EXT. ROW BOAT - DAY

Mavo and Marks sit in the row boat as WILLIAM rows them out to the *Hermes*. They reach the ship and a rope ladder is dropped. Mavo bows slightly.

MAVO

(obsequious)
After you, my lord.

Marks rolls his eyes and goes ahead.

23 EXT. DECK OF THE HERMES - DAY

Marks and Mavo clamber onto the deck where the sailors are playing cards and dice. One plays the fiddle. CAPTAIN JOHNSTONE (45) is waiting for them. He is dressed as a gentleman. He grins and shakes Marks firmly by the hand.

CAPTAIN JOHNSTONE

I am very pleased to see you, sir.
I'm Captain Johnstone.

MARKS

My name is Doctor Smith. This is my
assistant.

Mavo looks around at all the merriment in confusion.

CAPTAIN JOHNSTONE

Ah, doctor you say. Haha! Very
good. Let's step into my cabin.

24 INT. CAPTAIN'S CABIN - DAY

Mavo, Marks and Captain Johnstone enter the cabin which is sparsely but luxuriously furnished. The Captain takes a seat at his desk and leans back in his chair.

MARKS

We'd like to evaluate the men's
health, inspect the ship and make a
report.

CAPTAIN JOHNSTONE
Inspect the ship?

MARKS
A smallpox epidemic is a major concern but let me evaluate the situation and speak to the Colonial Secretary-

CAPTAIN JOHNSTONE
You can drop the ruse now. I've had enough fun and games.

Marks looks confused. Mavo notices a letter on the desk addressed to Governor Green.

CAPTAIN JOHNSTONE
(CONT'D)
I've held up my end, kept offshore. Now I want my reward.

MARKS
Reward?

The Captain grabs Marks' by the tie from across the desk.

CAPTAIN JOHNSTONE
You haven't forgotten it have you?
Your boss and I had a deal.

MAVO
Here!

Mavo jumps forward and places the bag on the desk.

CAPTAIN JOHNSTONE
Aha! You almost had me angry. I'll put this straight in the safe. My men are restless with this pox gag.

The Captain grabs the bag, cackling with glee and kneels to unlock his safe. Marks looks with confusion at Mavo and Mavo gestures towards the door.

MARKS
Lovely to have met you, Captain.
We'll see ourselves off.

Marks and Mavo make their way quickly to the door.

25 EXT. DECK OF THE HERMES -DAY

Mavo and Marks rush onto the deck and climb down the rope ladder to their row boat. Some sailors watch, confused.

MARKS

What the hell were you thinking?

MAVO

I was trying to keep us alive. Is that unservantly?

Marks groans.

26 EXT. ROW BOAT -DAY

Marks and Mavo jump down into the boat. Both are visibly shaken.

WILLIAM

Everything alright, sir?

MARKS

Yes. Ship's riddled with smallpox of course. Let's get out of here quick. We've got a ship full of hungry men. They could make a dash for shore at any minute.

WILLIAM

Hell's teeth!

Marks and Mavo grab an oar and assist. Mavo stops rowing for a moment.

MAVO

Doctor, you dropped this earlier.

Mavo produces the letter and hands it to Marks.

MARKS

What's this?

He glances at William.

MARKS (CONT'D)

I'll review it in the carriage.

27 INT.MARK'S CARRIAGE - EVENING

Mavo and Marks sit side by side in a carriage in formal wear. The road is bumpy and they are thrown about. Mavo is reading the letter found on the ship.

MAVO

The Queen wants land returned to the Xhosa. She refuses permission for war. Pringle will certainly be punished for his actions.

MARKS

Not everything is about Pringle!

MAVO

Of course it is! He is at the center of this.

Mavo hands the letter back to Marks and taps his foot agitatedly against the wood of the carriage.

MARKS

Stop that. I will observe Pringle's reaction when he sees you this evening. Perhaps he will give something away.

MAVO

Pringle will be there?

Mavo sits bolt upright.

MARKS

Yes. You need to follow my lead, Mavo.

MAVO

What will that entail?

MARKS

It is not common practice to bring a man like yourself to a dinner party at the Cape. Especially to a welcoming reception for the new Governor at the home of the colonial Secretary.

MAVO

A man like myself? Do you mean an educated man? A man of the cloth?

There is a large bump and they bash into one another.

MARKS

It won't do to pretend your colour is irrelevant, Mavo.

MAVO

It is irrelevant.

MARKS

It ought to be, maybe. I am not of noble birth. I'm Jewish. I rank below the other guests. It is best to accept these things.

MAVO

(seething)

And where will I rank?

They go over another bump and Marks inadvertently grabs Mavo's arm to steady himself.

MARKS

Not somewhere you'll enjoy, I suspect. Wasn't it this way for you in London?

MAVO

It was most fashionable to have an educated African at a London party. A different kind of indignity. Never mind. I am comforted that soon I will tell Pringle just what I think of him.

MARKS

Comforts you! Good God, man! I can hardly think for fear that Pringle might shoot you on sight. You will say nothing to the man!

Mavo scowls.

28 INT. LADY CHARLOTTE'S DRESSING ROOM - EVENING

Lady Charlotte stands in her dress in front of the mirror and powders her face. She sighs anxiously.

29 INT. BROWNLOW'S HALL - EVENING

FEBRUARY (15), Lady Charlotte's young maid, peers through the window at the front door then yells.

FEBRUARY

He's here, miss!

30 INT. BROWNLOW'S STAIRCASE - EVENING

Lady Charlotte comes racing down the stairs, putting in one of her earrings as she does. February rushes in.

LADY CHARLOTTE
(shouting)
Mr. B!

Mr. Brownlow comes down the stairs.

MR BROWNLOW
Hello. How's the dinner looking?

LADY CHARLOTTE
There's no soup. We will have to manage. Please darling. Don't serve any wine until dinner.

MR BROWNLOW
Is that customary? The Governor may be thirsty. What happened to the soup?

LADY CHARLOTTE
Please. I can't explain now.

MR BROWNLOW
I've already had the wine put out in the drawing room.

LADY CHARLOTTE
Must you be exasperating, Mr. Brownlow?

Mr. Brownlow is surprised and hurt.

FEBRUARY (O.S)
Good evening, sir.

Lady Charlotte smooths her dress and rushes to the door.

31 INT. BROWNLOW'S HALL - EVENING

LADY CHARLOTTE
Governor!

GOVERNOR JASPER PLUNKET (43) bows deeply and kisses her hand. He is a tall, slender, clean shaven man with well-groomed hair and a scarf stylishly draped around his neck.

LADY CHARLOTTE
How was the journey from England,
Governor?

GOVERNOR PLUNKET
Marvellous! A real daredevil
adventure. I love that sort of
thing. Terrifying waves of course.

LADY CHARLOTTE
Please come through.

32 INT. MARKS' CARRIAGE - EVENING

The carriage stops and Mavo moves to exit. Marks stops him.

MARKS
Let me go first.

Marks exits and Mavo scowls and follows after.

33 INT. BROWNLOW'S HALL - EVENING

As they reach the front door, Lady Charlotte opens it.

LADY CHARLOTTE
Good evening, Mr. Marks.

MARKS
Good evening.

Lady Charlotte glances from Marks to Mavo and back.

MARKS
This is Mr. Mavo Shiya, my valet.
I seem to have sprained my wrist
operating the printing press so
I've brought him along to sketch
your party for the Herald.

LADY CHARLOTTE
It is a little unusual to bring a
valet to dinner, Mr. Marks.

MARKS
Of course you may use him as a
footmen for serving and so on if
you are short, Lady Charlotte.

Lady Charlotte's eyes light up.

LADY CHARLOTTE

Oh, may I? I've only kitchen maids at the moment. The Governor can hardly be impressed! Do come in.

Mavo pointedly steps in front of Marks and enters first, to Marks' irritation and Lady Charlotte's surprise.

34 INT. BROWNLOW'S DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

Marks, Mavo and Lady Charlotte enter the drawing room where Mr. Brownlow and the Governor are chatting.

GOVERNOR PLUNKET

I will need a great deal of guidance.

MR BROWNLOW

I will be most happy to assist.

LADY CHARLOTTE

Governor, may I introduce Mr. Marks? He is the editor of our local newspaper, the *Cape Herald*.

GOVERNOR PLUNKET

Oh what fun! I didn't realise the colony had its own newspaper.

Marks and the Governor shake hands.

MARKS

It's not quite the London Evening Standard but we do our best.

The Governor looks with great curiosity at Mavo, who is hanging back a little.

GOVERNOR PLUNKET

I hope you don't mind me asking, good man, but are you Xhosa?

MAVO

I am, yes, sir.

GOVERNOR PLUNKET

Oh marvellous! I've never met a Xhosa. And you speak English?

MAVO

London educated, in fact.

GOVERNOR PLUNKET

Well I never!

The door creaks open and Mavo and Marks turn their heads quickly towards the door. MAJOR-GENERAL LLOYD BAGOT aka THE GENERAL (55) enters. He is a man of considerable moustache, eyebrows and girth. He wears full military regalia. He barks his words revealing chipped yellow teeth.

LADY CHARLOTTE

General! I'm so sorry there was no one to meet you at the door.

Lady Charlotte stares accusingly at Mr. Brownlow.

GENERAL

Not to worry. One learns to do things for oneself out here. Yes, yes.

He hikes up his trousers, rubs his hands together and looks around the room.

GENERAL (CONT'D)

Now which one of you is the Governor?

GOVERNOR PLUNKET

That would be me.

LADY CHARLOTTE

Governor, this is Major-General Bagot.

The Governor steps forward and shakes his hand enthusiastically.

GENERAL

We have an awful lot to discuss, Plunket. Yes, yes.

LADY CHARLOTTE

I don't know if you've met Mr. Marks from the Herald?

MARKS

How do you do, General?

The General gives him a perfunctory disinterested nod.

GENERAL

Hope you're not serving any pork, Lady Charlotte. You see, Governor,

(MORE)

GENERAL (CONT'D)
 it's just like home. Jews running
 the papers. Damned hot in here!
 Brownlow, open a window.

Marks appears unaffected. The General removes his jacket as he speaks and Mr. Brownlow scuttles over to the windows to open them. The General hands his jacket to Mavo.

GENERAL (CONT'D)
 Thank you.

LADY CHARLOTTE
 (to Mavo)
 You can just leave it in the hall.

Marks gives Mavo a pointed look and Mavo turns to exit.

35 INT. BROWNLOW'S HALLWAY - NIGHT

Mavo hangs up the General's jacket on the hat stand. There is a knock at the door. He pauses then opens it. Captain and Mrs. Pringle stand at the door. Pringle is shocked to see Mavo. Mavo glares at Pringle, then bows.

MAVO
 Good evening.

MRS. PRINGLE
 (sweetly)
 Good evening. I don't think I've
 seen you here before?

She enters, giving her shawl to Mavo. Mavo takes it. His eyes keep darting back to the Captain's face. Captain Pringle stays frozen.

MAVO
 My name is Mavo Shiya. I am here
 with Mr. Marks from the Herald and
 I'm assisting as a footman.

MRS. PRINGLE
 Nice to meet you, Mr. Shiya.

Mrs. Pringle turns, frowning with confusion at the Captain.

MRS. PRINGLE (CONT'D)
 Julian? Are you alright?

CAPTAIN PRINGLE
 Go on ahead of me.

She hesitates and then does as he has told her. As soon as she is gone, Captain Pringle grabs Mavo by the collar.

CAPTAIN PRINGLE (CONT'D)
What are you playing at?

MAVO
I'd like to ask you the same thing.

Mr. Brownlow comes panting around the corner and Pringle drops Mavo.

MR BROWNLOW
Ah! Mr. Shiya has received you. Do come in!

36 INT. BROWNLOW'S DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

Mrs. Pringle and Lady Charlotte are having a tête-à-tête in the doorway when Captain Pringle enters. The General and the Governor stand together talking across the room.

CAPTAIN PRINGLE
Good evening, Lady Charlotte. So kind of you to have us.

LADY CHARLOTTE
Good evening, Captain.

CAPTAIN PRINGLE
Shall we introduce ourselves to the Governor, Elizabeth?

He takes Mrs. Pringle by the elbow. She hesitates.

CAPTAIN PRINGLE
Come now.

MRS. PRINGLE
Ow! (quietly)

PRINGLE
(quietly)
I'm hardly touching you.

Pringle pulls her towards the Governor and the General. Lady Charlotte is shocked.

PRINGLE (CONT'D)
 (quietly to Mrs. Pringle)
 That's enough.
 (to the Governor)
 Good evening, Governor Plunket.
 Allow me to introduce my-

Pringle's words are drowned out by a loud smack. The General slaps the Governor on the neck. The Governor jumps, eyes wide.

GOVERNOR PLUNKET
 What was that?

GENERAL
 Ha! Mosquito. Full of blood too,
 look there.

The Governor is horrified.

GOVERNOR PLUNKET
 Is it malarial?

GENERAL
 Unlikely. Close those windows,
 Brownlow. We'll be eaten alive.

The Governor rubs his neck anxiously then begins to itch. Mr. Brownlow closes the windows.

PRINGLE
 I was just introducing my-

Mrs. Pringle whimpers. Everyone turns to look.

PRINGLE (CONT'D)
 (angrily to Mrs. Pringle)
 That's enough!

LADY CHARLOTTE
 Are you quite alright, Lizzie?

MRS. PRINGLE
 I'm terribly sorry. I just- oh!

Tears run down her face. Lady Charlotte rushes to her side.

LADY CHARLOTTE
 We ought to take you somewhere to
 lie down.

MRS. PRINGLE
Perhaps. Just briefly. I'm so
sorry.

PRINGLE
(in hushed tones to Mrs.
Pringle)
You are humiliating us both.

LADY CHARLOTTE
Hush, dear girl. Don't you worry.

Mrs. Pringle clings to Lady Charlotte who helps her towards
the door.

LORD PRINGLE
Lie down if you must. It will keep
your moaning out of earshot.

He laughs cruelly. Mr. Brownlow holds the door open for the
ladies.

MR BROWNLOW
I'll send for the doctor.

37 INT. LADY CHARLOTTE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lady Charlotte settles Mrs. Pringle on the bed and tucks a
large pillow behind her.

LADY CHARLOTTE
You just rest here, Lizzie.

MRS. PRINGLE
Thank you.

LADY CHARLOTTE
I'll fetch you a cold cloth.

38 INT. BROWNLOW'S DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

Captain Pringle, the General and Marks sit in an awkward
silence. Mavo sits in the corner pretending to sketch. Mr.
Brownlow enters.

MR BROWNLOW
I must apologise for leaving you
unattended to, gentlemen.

CAPTAIN PRINGLE
Where is Elizabeth?

MR BROWNLOW

She is resting upstairs. I'm afraid I don't know more than that.

GOVERNOR PLUNKET

Should we leave, Mr. Brownlow? I should hate for Mrs. Pringle's health to be compromised at my expense.

MR BROWNLOW

No no. Lady Charlotte has prepared a meal and she would not wish it to go to waste. I'll have the maids bring it through here and we'll have an informal meal.

GENERAL

In that case why don't we play at something?

GOVERNOR PLUNKET

Has poker arrived at the Cape yet?

GENERAL

Oh yes! How do you think I paid for my new horse?

MR BROWNLOW

Shall I have it set up?

GOVERNOR PLUNKET

That would be marvellous.

GENERAL

Yes, yes. Jolly good thing we've got a money lender here. In case we get carried away.

He gestures towards Marks, chuckling. Marks forces a smile.

39

INT. LADY CHARLOTTE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lady Charlotte presses a cloth to Mrs. Pringle's forehead.

LADY CHARLOTTE

There now, just rest.

MRS. PRINGLE

The baby's here.

LADY CHARLOTTE

It's far too early, Lizzie. Perhaps the carriage ride just made baby a little irritable-

MRS. PRINGLE
 (insistently)
 He's here.

Lady Charlotte pauses and looks anxiously at her friend.

40 INT.BROWNLOW'S DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

All the guests except Mavo sit around a card table playing poker. February clears the last remains of dinner from the table. They are seated, going clockwise, Captain Pringle, Marks, the General, the Governor and Mr. Brownlow. Mavo sits in the corner, sulking and pretending to draw a sketch.

CAPTAIN PRINGLE
 Check.

GOVERNOR PLUNKET
 Your play, Mr. Marks.

Mr. Marks slides some chips into the pot in the middle of the table.

MR BROWNLOW
 (nervously)
 Perhaps later this week we could meet to discuss the crisis in Xhosaland, Captain?

CAPTAIN PRINGLE
 This is hardly a suitable occasion for political matters.

Pringle pulls at his collar, sweating.

GENERAL
 Nonsense, I intend to brief the Governor of all the goings on. I call.

CAPTAIN PRINGLE
 In front of the paper man?

He moves some of his chips into the pot.

MR BROWNLOW
 Perhaps I should be the one-

GOVERNOR PLUNKET
 What's it all about, then?

GENERAL
 We've been having trouble with the Xhosa, Governor. They seem to be
 (MORE)

GENERAL (CONT'D)
killing off all their cattle for no
reason whatsoever.

GOVERNOR PLUNKET
Killing them off? Astounding. I
call.

He adds some of his chips to the pot. Brownlow eyes his
cards, as it is his turn.

CAPTAIN PRINGLE
Brownlow, won't you bring us a
drink? What with dinner so delayed.

MR BROWNLOW
I'd rather not.

GOVERNOR PLUNKET
Oh, I'd love a drink thank you!
Have you any idea why they're
killing them off?

Mr. Brownlow sighs and puts his cards on the discard
pile.

MR BROWNLOW
A poor hand.

He rises and opens the liquor cabinet. He pours glasses of
whiskey and hands them out. Mavo makes a sound as though he
will respond to the Governor but Marks glares at him and he
stops.

GENERAL
It's some sort of plot, no doubt.
The Chiefs will use it to goad us
into a war. Don't you say, Pringle?

Pringle glances at Mavo and takes a long sip, devouring much
of his drink. Mr. Brownlow looks on in horror.

CAPTAIN PRINGLE
I believe it's complicated but
there is a so-called prophetess at
the heart of it. I'll fold this
round.

He lays down his cards and Marks and Mavo exchange a look.

GOVERNOR PLUNKET
How exotic! I do have my work cut
out for me.

MARKS

Captain Pringle, I was under the impression that you had already taken some measures to deal with this problem? I'll raise.

Marks places more chips on the table.

CAPTAIN PRINGLE

Were you? Mr. Brownlow, more whiskey if you please.

41 INT. LADY CHARLOTTE'S BEDROOM -

NIGHT Mrs. Pringle's waters break

LADY CHARLOTTE

Your waters! I do hope the doctor comes soon.

MRS. PRINGLE

(anxiously)

No I don't need a doctor. The Dutch women do it by themselves all the time. My mother did it.

LADY CHARLOTTE

What nonsense. Of course you need a doctor!

MRS. PRINGLE

No. Please. I can't let the doctor see.

LADY CHARLOTTE

See what. He's a professional-

MRS. PRINGLE

I'm begging you. Don't let a doctor in here.

Lady Charlotte mops Mrs. Pringle's brow and frowns.

42 INT. BROWNLOW'S DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

The poker game continues.

GOVERNOR PLUNKET

And what did Governor Green plan to do about this?

They speak all at once.

GENERAL

Of course-

CAPTAIN PRINGLE

You see-

Mr. Brownlow, desperate to be heard, has a burst of confidence. He blurts this out in a rush.

MR BROWNLOW

If I may, Governor, Green had applied to London for permission to return land to the Xhosa if the Chiefs would allow us to arrest the prophetess. We waited for permission to arrive but, well, nothing has come on any of the ships.

GENERAL

Green knew we had to act.

MR BROWNLOW

(bewildered)

It was strangely impulsive.

MARKS

Then of course, Green's untimely passing.

MR BROWNLOW

(sighing)

I'll fold.

CAPTAIN PRINGLE

A hunting accident. All in!

Pringle slides all his chips into the pot. Marks folds, followed quickly by the General.

GENERAL

Damnit!

GOVERNOR PLUNKET

I call.

The Governor slides his chips into the pile. Pringle bristles and reveals his poor hand.

GOVERNOR PLUNKET

Ha! I win! A full house.

MARKS

Pringle, what is your tell?

The Governor begins to collect and stack the substantial pile of chips in the middle of the table.

GOVERNOR PLUNKET

What fun! Tough luck, Pringle.

CAPTAIN PRINGLE

(schemingly)

You may not win every time,
Governor.

The Governor ignores him and keeps stacking.

CAPTAIN PRINGLE

Under Brownlow's instruction I went
out to Xhosaland

MR BROWNLOW

I wouldn't say it was my-

CAPTAIN PRINGLE

-but unfortunately the Xhosa
refused to give the woman up. War
may be necessary.

Lady Charlotte enters.

MAVO

That's a damned lie and you know it
Pringle!

Mavo jumps to his feet, pointing accusingly at Pringle. Everyone turns in shock. Pringle pushes against the table to stand up and the Governor's carefully stacked chips collapse with a crash.

MARKS

Mavo!

PRINGLE

You ought to know your place, boy.

MAVO

You are cold blooded killer masquerading
as a gentlemen and I will not be silent.

Pringle punches Mavo. The General pulls Pringle away.

GENERAL

Steady on, man.

GOVERNOR PLUNKET

Goodness gracious!

Pringle moves to hit him again.

LADY CHARLOTTE

Please! Captain! Let us throw him
out. I don't believe the Governor
wishes to view a beating and I
don't need blood on my rug.

GENERAL

Scoundrel! What are you doing with
this sort of chap, Marks?

CAPTAIN PRINGLE

Alright. Get him out then.

Pringle pants with fury. Marks pulls Mavo up by the arm.
Mavo looks with anger at Marks and Marks returns the glare.
The Governor is wide-eyed.

Mavo looks around at all the men. He drops his head,
despondent, and leaves.

43 EXT. BROWNLOW'S HOME -NIGHT

Mavo exits the house, blood pouring from his nose. Lady
Charlotte appears at the door.

LADY CHARLOTTE

Psst!

Mavo turns, surprised. She gestures for him to come
back.

LADY CHARLOTTE

I could have you arrested for your
behaviour. But Mrs. Pringle has
expressly asked to speak with you.
I cannot imagine why but you'd best
come upstairs.

Mavo pauses and dabs at his bleeding nose with the sleeve of

his shirt. Lady Charlotte sighs and hands Mavo her handkerchief and he uses it to stem the bleeding from his nose.

LADY CHARLOTTE
Will you come or not?

He nods and follows her inside.

44 INT. BROWNLOW'S DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

Pringle stretches out his hand, examining his bloodied knuckles. He drinks heavily from his glass. The men are seated on the sofas in a stunned silence, watching Pringle. The Governor sighs.

GOVERNOR PLUNKET
My hat! I feel quite exhilarated.

Marks rises.

MARKS
I think it would be best if I left,
Mr Brownlow. Thank you for your
hospitality.

Mr. Brownlow nods and Marks leaves.

MR BROWNLOW
(nervously)
Perhaps it would be best if you
left too...when your wife is well,
Captain.

CAPTAIN PRINGLE
You're defending the native?

MR BROWNLOW
I do not like violence in my home.

GENERAL
He has a point, old chap.

Pringle scowls and takes a gulp of his drink.

45 INT. LADY CHARLOTTE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT
Mavo enters. Mrs. Pringle is weeping.

MRS. PRINGLE
Thank you for coming.

MAVO
How can I help?

Mavo approaches and sits at her bedside, wiping the last of the blood from his nose.

MRS. PRINGLE

I saw you in town earlier. In the church. You were wearing a collar. Are you a minister?

MAVO

I am, yes. Do you wish to pray?

She looks up at him earnestly, breathing heavily.

MRS. PRINGLE

No, but I need to know that you are merciful and kind.

MAVO

(sadly)

I strive always to be Christ-like but I do not always succeed.

He dabs at his nose. She reaches out and clings to his arm.

MRS. PRINGLE

I have a terrible favour to ask you.

MAVO

What is it?

MRS. PRINGLE

My baby is going to be born here tonight. I need you to take him away from here before my husband sees him.

She begins to cry, clinging to the crucifix around her neck.

MAVO

Why should I do such a thing?

MRS. PRINGLE

He'll kill him.

MAVO

Who, my lady?

MRS. PRINGLE

Lord Pringle. The baby is going to be black, Father.

Mavo stands up, aghast.

MAVO

Nkosi yam'! You've committed adultery. It is a grave sin.

He moves towards the door. She grows desperate.

MRS. PRINGLE

And for that I must repent. But my baby. Have you a child of your own,

Father?

Mavo pauses.

MRS. PRINGLE (CONT'D)
 Would you not do anything to
 protect her life if you knew she
 were in danger?

He turns back and looks at her.

INT. BROWNLOW'S DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

CAPTAIN PRINGLE
 Well, if you are all in agreement
 then I'll go.

He does not move. Mr. Brownlow looks at the floor. Captain Pringle looks at him expectantly.

GOVERNOR PLUNKET
 Lovely to have met you, Captain.

Captain Pringle storms out.

46 INT. LADY CHARLOTTE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Having cleaned the newborn child, Lady Charlotte dries her and wraps her in a blanket.

LADY CHARLOTTE
 Oh well done, Lizzie.
 (pause)
 She is beautiful.

Lady Charlotte moves to hand the child to Mrs. Pringle but Mrs. Pringle turns away.

MRS. PRINGLE
 Just take her away.

Lady Charlotte is saddened but does not speak. There is a banging on the door.

CAPTAIN PRINGLE (O.S)
 Shiya, you had better not be in
 there with my wife!

Mrs. Pringle sits bolt upright and pulls the sheets higher up over her.

MRS. PRINGLE
 (in urgent hushed tones)
 What should we do?

They all look at one another. There is more banging. Lady Charlotte thrusts the child into Mrs. Pringle's arms,

59.
takes a chamber pot from under the bed and covers it with a small cloth. She unlocks and opens the door, steps out and closes it behind her.

47 EXT. LADY CHARLOTTE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Captain Pringle tries to reach around her to get at the door but she places the chamber pot between them. He sways a little as he talks.

CAPTAIN PRINGLE
Let me in, woman.

LADY CHARLOTTE
Captain, I can see you've been drinking.

CAPTAIN PRINGLE
Get out my way!

LADY CHARLOTTE
Certainly. As soon as I get by with the afterbirth.

CAPTAIN PRINGLE
Good God! In there?

He indicates the chamber pot.

LADY CHARLOTTE
Oh yes. Here it is.

She raises just the corner of the cloth and Captain Pringle recoils.

CAPTAIN PRINGLE
Keep that away from me.

LADY CHARLOTTE
Now why don't you wait downstairs while I finish cleaning up and your wife recovers?

Captain Pringle grumbles and stumbles back down the stairs.

48 INT. LADY CHARLOTTE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lady Charlotte enters, giving a heavy sigh. She rushes to her writing desk and scribbles a note.

LADY CHARLOTTE
Quick. You must go now, Father.

Mrs. Pringle looks at the child in her arms. Mavo approaches her with arms open to take the child.

MAVO

It's time.

Mrs. Pringle clings tighter to the child, panicked.

MRS. PRINGLE

Charlotte, I don't think I can.

Lady Charlotte rushes to her side.

LADY CHARLOTTE

You must make a decision now that only you can make, Lizzie. I am afraid you will face pain either way. Which will you least regret?

Lady Charlotte touches Mrs. Pringle on her wrist and she flinches because there is a large bruise on that wrist. She closes her eyes and nods then kisses her baby again and pulls her close. Finally, she hands him to Mavo.

LADY CHARLOTTE

Father, can you ride a horse?

MAVO

Yes.

LADY CHARLOTTE

The stable is just out the back door. Take the baby to Rose Jantjes on Longmarket Street. Here's the address. Be discreet.

Mavo nods, bewildered and sneaks off. Lady Charlotte turns with a sigh and sees the bed soaked with blood.

LADY CHARLOTTE

Oh no!

She rushes over to Mrs. Pringle, finding her unconscious.

49

EXT. ROSE'S HOUSE - DAY

Mavo walks quickly along the pavement in the Bo-Kaap. A dog barks. Some drunk men stumble along the road and break a bottle.

WOMAN (O.S)

Bly stil!

Mavo looks down at the address on the scrap of paper and looks at the number on Rose's door. He knocks. There is a pause. Rose opens the door. She looks suspiciously at Mavo.

ROSE

Hello?

MAVO
(hushed)
Lady Charlotte sent me.

ROSE
(hushed)
Lady Charlotte? What's going on?

The baby starts to cry. Rose looks surprised and disturbed at the sound. Mavo shows her the baby. Rose looks more confused.

MAVO
(hushed)
This is Mrs. Pringle's child

ROSE
Come inside.

Mavo enters the house and Rose closes the door behind him.

50 INT. ROSE'S HOUSE - DAY

Rose's house is just a small room with a bed and a wood stove with a hob. A wooden table with two chairs is largely taken up by a sewing machine and fabric. The room is lit by candles. Rose takes the baby, and it quietens.

ROSE
Where is Mrs. Pringle?

MAVO
She's went into labour at Lady Charlotte's dinner party. She feared for the child's life if her husband saw his colour.
(pause)
Can you keep her for a while?

ROSE
I can keep her.

Mavo opens the door to leave.

MAVO
Poor Mrs. Pringle. To lose a daughter...well...it is almost enough to shake one's faith.

Rose's face falls and she seems troubled. Recovering, she asks after Mrs. Pringle.

ROSE
Was she well when you left her, Father?

MAVO
Oh, Mrs. Pringle is saddened but I

believe she is in good health. Good night.

ROSE

Good night. Thank you for bringing her.

Mavo leaves. Rose notices patches of moisture at her breasts and begins to feed the baby.

51 INT. DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

Captain Pringle paces back and forth, still drinking and rambling. The General, Marks and Mr. Brownlow sit quietly.

CAPTAIN PRINGLE

How do you like the heat, Governor? Booked your passage home yet? You could get back to England in the time it's taking to show me my damned baby.

Lady Charlotte enters.

LADY CHARLOTTE

Captain Pringle. I'm so sorry-

February enters with the doctor.

FEBRUARY

The doctor's here madam!

LADY CHARLOTTE

It's too late.

CAPTAIN PRINGLE

What?

52 EXT. CAPE HERALD OFFICE - DAY

Mavo stands outside the newspaper office. It is locked and no one is in the office. Marks arrives. He looks blankly at Mavo. He looks irritated as he unlocks the door.

MARKS

I didn't think you'd have the audacity to appear here again.

MAVO

I have something to show you.

MARKS

What the devil is wrong with you, man? You have humiliated me in front of members of government, the military and high society. I gave you a chance but now you must leave.

MAVO

I think you will want to see this.

MARKS

You go about doing whatever the hell you please with no thought for the consequences.

MAVO

I know and for that I am truly sorry. You put your faith in me and I betrayed you.

(pause)

It's to do with Governor Green.

Marks glares at him.

MARKS

Get inside then.

53 INT. MARKS' OFFICE - DAY

Marks storms in and stands behind his desk. He puts his hands on his desk and leans forward. The framed headline that fell off the wall earlier lies on the desk, the glass cracked.

MARKS

Okay, go.

Mavo puts down the piece of paper with Rose's address on it. He places it upside down in his excitement. He speaks with urgency.

MAVO

Read this.

MARKS

(suspicious)

Where did you get this?

MAVO

Someone is lying.

Marks picks up the piece of paper and reads what is written.

MARKS
18 Longmarket Street...

MAVO
On the other side.

Marks turns the paper over.

MARKS
"will fight against war at all costs. We must offer the Xhosa nothing but our aid. Yours sincerely, Governor Green". But who was this written to?

MAVO
It believe it is a letter to Mr. Brownlow.

MARKS
So the Governor was against war.

MAVO
Yes. And I don't believe he changed his mind.
(pause)
I think Pringle is behind all this.

Marks groans and shakes his head. Mavo starts to pace back and forth.

MAVO (CONT'D)
He tried to rile up the Xhosa by shooting the prophetess with blanks. He knew Green was against war so he got rid of him with a fake hunting accident.

MARKS
That is completely unfounded!

MAVO
He knew London would say no to war so he held up the post.

MARKS
You can't prove any of this!

MAVO
And last night, when he hit me, he hit me with his left hand!

Marks pauses.

MARKS

Did he?

MAVO

Have you anything written by him?
Compare it to the announcement.

Marks sighs and looks through some papers.

54 EXT. ROSE'S HOUSE - DAY

Lady Charlotte walks along the pavement, looking about her constantly. She has a black scarf draped around her face and wears a black dress. Two old ladies sit on a stoep drinking tea. They look at her and laugh.

OLD LADY

(in Afrikaans)

Does she think we can't see she's
from the other side of town?

OLD LADY 2

(in Afrikaans)

If she's not careful her shoes will
get dirty.

Lady Charlotte knocks on Rose's door.

55 INT. ROSE'S HOUSE - DAY

Rose hears the knock. She grows anxious and puts the baby in her sewing basket, draping a piece of cloth over the top. She opens the door a crack, suspiciously then, seeing Lady Charlotte, opens the door.

ROSE

(relieved)

My lady. Please come in.

The baby cries. Lady Charlotte enters quickly and Rose closes the door behind her. Lady Charlotte slips off her scarf. Rose picks up the baby and quiets him.

LADY CHARLOTTE

(distracted)

The child is dear, isn't he?

ROSE

Please sit down.

LADY CHARLOTTE

Thank you.

Lady Charlotte sits down in a chair at the table.

ROSE

I'm afraid I haven't anything to offer you. You have never visited a home so humble, I am sure.

LADY CHARLOTTE

Please don't trouble yourself. It's a lovely home.

Lady Charlotte wrings her scarf in her hands. Tears form in her eyes. Rose holds the baby close, rocking him back and forth.

LADY CHARLOTTE

Something awful has happened, Rose.

ROSE

What is it, my lady?

LADY CHARLOTTE

My dear, Rose. Our precious Mrs. Pringle has passed away.

Rose begins to shake and falls into a chair. Clinging to the child. Lady Charlotte reaches across and squeezes her arm.

LADY CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

I know there is a lot to absorb. But I must ask. Could you raise the child? I will pay for everything and give you all my help of course and-

ROSE

Yes, my lady. I will raise her as my own.

56 INT. MARKS' OFFICE - DAY

Mavo and Marks look down at the documents on the desk.

MARKS

It is Pringle.

Mavo's eyes widen and he paces back and forth.

MAVO

He sees the prophetess as an opportunity, Marks. I don't know his end goal but I believe it spells disaster for my people and perhaps for yours. Will you help me bring him down?

Marks touches the broken glass on the fallen
headline.

MARKS
I'll help you.

Writing *Herald*: redesigning the period drama for a South African context

The original idea behind *Herald* was to create a South African *Downton Abbey* (ITV and PBS, 2010 -2015). Historical television is currently popular and *Downton* is appealing because it communicates interesting history, finds comedy in the manners and behaviours of the day and indulges in the visual pleasures of opulent aristocratic society. A historical setting is as foreign and exciting as a fantasy realm but it can still provide a platform to explore themes that are relevant and familiar to a contemporary viewer.

Members of local government, military officers and other nobles and wealthy Britons at the Cape lived aristocratic lives not unlike the fictional inhabitants of *Downton* and yet a wholesale pastiche of the structure of *Downton* or the conventions of the period drama genre is inappropriate. The racial tensions that have defined the colonial and postcolonial periods of South African history and the Eurocentric, androcentric approach to that history necessitate a new approach. It is with this in mind that I have attempted to create a television miniseries inspired by the traditional period drama and by *Downton Abbey* specifically, but remoulded by the contexts of past and present day South Africa.

I had several main goals in mind for this miniseries: to provide South Africans with entertaining television that tells local stories and, in so doing, encourage South Africans to engage with their own history; to grapple with contentious issues of the present such as race, gender and land, by exploring the past; to place strong black, Malay and female characters at the center of history and give them the agency to effect history; to provide a critique of the British and their actions at the Cape.

The market for history on television

T. Hunt describes a flourishing interest in history in the west, including greater interest in everything from genealogy magazines to historical transport museums (2006, p843). In the early 2000s British television producers started introducing historical programming to the market in a variety of genres and “these series performed exceptionally well, with viewing figures into the millions” (Hunt, 2006, p844).

The subsequent decade and a half has provided a wealth of successful historical television series, both British and American, many of which enjoy vast viewership, critical acclaim and awards. *Downton Abbey*, which portrays life on an aristocratic estate in post-Edwardian England, has received an Emmy and became the most watched series on both British and American networks.

The continuing success of *Downton Abbey* “reveals that on-television heritage remains as popular, marketable and significant as ever” (Byrne, 2013, p312). Similarly BBC’s *Call the Midwife* (2012 -), which follows a group of nurse midwives working in London in the 1950s and 1960s, has a host of BAFTAs and boasts sterling critical acclaim.

In the US, PBS’ *Mad Men* (2007-2015), which is about advertising executives in New York in the 1960s, has won sixteen Emmys and four Golden Globes. On British reality series *Who do you think you are?* (BBC One, 2004-) celebrities trace their family trees. The show boasts 6 million viewers (French, 2009). Even Comedy Central’s *Drunk History* (2013 -), in which drunk comedians attempt to recount historical events, picked up a Sundance award.

There is a market for historical television in various forms in the west and a television series set in the South African past, with some British characters, could be appealing to that Western market. It is not certain that a South African historical drama would appeal to the history loving western market, nor is it certain that South Africans will devour their own history as hungrily as the British have enjoyed *Downton*. It is clear, however, that historical programming can have appeal for contemporary audiences across the board because, “as well as its popularity in America, *Downton* has a growing following in Denmark, Netherlands, Italy, Australia, Norway, Belgium, Israel and Iceland, and is screened around the world” (Runcie, 2014).

The Cape Colony in 1856 as a space primed for drama

Historical television which is available to South Africans ought not to be limited to Western history but acknowledge the import of our own past. In fact, there is so much interesting and important history in South Africa that it was challenging to select an era and location for my series.

Downton Abbey portrays “a period of instability and rapid change, which its writers have identified as having much in common with our own present” (Byrne, 2013, 311). These are qualities which I sought out in selecting my location and period. Periods of change allow for conflict between those who wish things to stay the same and those who support change and this allows for debate and exploration of themes. When these debates reflect contemporary debates television has relevance. For example, in *Herald*, Mr. Marks supports change because he chooses to work with Mavo whilst Captain Pringle opposes change because he does not believe Mavo should even be present at a dinner party. This disagreement brings the theme of race to the fore and may

encourage viewers to consider where they stand in terms of possible race related changes in their own society.

Besides *Downton Abbey* I was inspired by two other period texts and I used these to help me establish criteria for the location of my miniseries. *The Luminaries* (2013), a novel by Eleanor Catton, takes place at the goldfields of New Zealand during the Gold Rush in 1866. It is a thrilling mystery story populated by opium dealers, prostitutes, a broody Maori hunter, a medium and a hatter amongst others. The goldfields are a place where everyone is new, no one belongs and everyone is starting afresh.

There is a similar 'no man's land' atmosphere in the television series *Hell on Wheels* (AMC, 2011-). The nomad town, which bears the same name as the series, is based around the construction of the First Transcontinental Railroad and it therefore moves as the railroad progresses. The Railroad like the goldfields attracts many single men who soon fill the brothels, the bars and the prisons. Both texts are in a new and fast changing space in which the rules and ranks of the society are still under negotiation. These are exciting spaces with lots of potential for conflict and drama and I such I sought out a similar context for my miniseries

The Cape colony in the 1850s seemed a suitable space. The negotiation of power between original inhabitants, settlers and colonisers offered considerable conflict. The changing, chaotic space of a colony clashes head on with hundreds of years of sturdy tradition embodied by the church, the manners of British high society and the ranks and titles of the army and the aristocracy. Those who come to a colony come because they are dissatisfied, unwanted or out of place in their home nation or because they believe they can achieve fortune or power that they cannot at home. There is potential for complex characters as a result. The ending of slavery, the black vote, the multiracial parliament, the advance of Christianity in Xhosaland, and the battle between the Xhosa chiefs and the British over Xhosaland are all examples of major changes at the Cape during the 1800s and these all present opportunities for conflict and drama.

The Xhosa Cattle Killing

There was an additional appeal to this period in history. 1856 was the year that the Xhosa cattle killing, a bizarre and momentous event in South Africa's history, began to reach its peak. The Cattle Killing seemed to me a rich source of drama and a story which ought to be kept alive because of its importance in

our past. V.Bickford-Smith provides a comprehensive summary which reflects much of the literature on the event:

the Cattle-Killing began as a logical 'veterinary' response to the appearance of lung-disease before developing into a religiously syncretic millenarian movement...in which the killing of cattle was seen as a means to resurrect warrior ancestors and drive the British into the sea. An estimated 400,000 cattle were slain by followers of Ngqika (Gaika) Paramount Chief Sandile, and grain stocks were destroyed. The population of British Kaffraria was reduced from around 105,000 to about 37,000 by starvation and diseases associated with malnutrition. The British Cape colonial government under Sir George Grey was subsequently able to undermine Ngqika's chiefly authority, independence and power and assert that of the British crown...Chiefs were reduced to being dependents of the British state. (2011, p77-78)

A dramatic element of the tale is that, according to some versions of the story, a teenage girl, a prophetess named Nonqawuse, convinced a huge portion of the Xhosa nation that an army would save the Xhosa if they killed their cattle. This was an army of dead Xhosa soldiers who had been resurrected and waited below the ground. She continued to have power over people even when her promises failed to materialise. In a patriarchal society, this kind of power for a woman, let alone a teenager, would have been rare and for a young black girl to have caused a stir that attained her the ear of the Chiefs and required a response as high up as the Queen of England would have been rarer.

The immediate question that springs to mind when one is told of the Cattle Killing is "Why did they do it? Why did they listen to this girl?" According to Xhosa oral tradition and some black academics, Sir George Grey, Governor of the Cape, coerced Nonqawuse into spreading the prophecies in order to destroy the Xhosa nation (Bradford, 2001, p1). According to this version of history, missionaries in Xhosaland were encouraged to preach about resurrection to lend power to Nonqawuse's promise that the ancestors would rise up as an army and defeat the British (Bradford, 2001, p1). H.I.E. Dhlomo's play *The Girl Who Killed to Save: Nongqause the Liberator* (1936) presents the prophetess as having "paved the way for Christian conversion" (Bickford Smith, 2011, p80).

White academics, however, claims H. Bradford, view the event as classic millenarianism and describe the Cattle Killing as a religious response to the European lung sickness epidemic that was killing Xhosa cattle and the

dislocation of the Xhosa nation (Bradford, 2001, p1). This version stresses spiritualism and hysteria, sometimes drawing on the feminised description of Nonqawuse as a frail child under male mentorship, driven mad by sexual frustration (Bradford, 2001, p51).

Zakes Mda, in his novel based on the Cattle Killing, depicts contemporary Xhosa South Africans who place blame firmly on Nonqawuse's shoulders, describing her as "a foolish girl [who] once lied that she saw miracles" and "killed the nation of the amaXhosa" (2000, p67).

Bradford argues that Nonqawuse was only one of many 'amagogo' or prophetesses who were highly influential in the movement and she was not among the first to encourage cattle killing (2001, p11). In fact, Bradford sees Nonqawuse as a scapegoat for a movement driven by men whose defeat at the hands of the British in the War of the Axe made them eager for the rise of an army of militant black ancestors (2001). Even the prophetess' name was disputed: was she Nonqawuse, Nongawule, Nongowlie, Nonqakule, Nonqawule? There are references to all these names (Bradford, 2001).

What is clear from this is that it should not be assumed that there is a single objective, accurate version of history which all accounts must choose either to adhere to or dismiss. Such a version of history is neither self-evident in sources nor is it faithfully recorded in textbooks. K. Byrne writes in agreement with Munslow,

in a post-modern world we must accept that we cannot hope to really know the past: all we are really doing is considering a number of possible versions of 'the past-as-history'. Given that all history is an 'aesthetic, subjective and ironically construed cultural creation', essentially a story about the past, it is also necessary to accept that the evaluation of one as more authentic or true than another is a problematic concept (Munslow 2010, 6) (Byrne, 2012, p313).

Any account of history, including *Herald*, ought to be historically rigorous and yet it ought to be judged knowing that these many versions of the past are available.

Putting contested history on the screen

When history is as contested and unclear as this, written history seems to have the upper hand over history on screen. Robert Rosenstone outlines

philosopher Ian Jarvie's view on history on screen:

The moving image carries such a "poor information load" and suffers from such "discursive weakness" that there is no way to do meaningful history on film. History, he explained, does not consist primarily of "a descriptive narrative of what actually happened." It consists mostly of "debates between historians about just what exactly did happen, why it happened, and what would be an adequate account of its significance." While it is true that a "historian could embody his view in a film" the real question is this: "How could he defend it, rebut objections and criticize the opposition?" (Rosenstone, 1988, 1176).

The conventions and visual nature of television make it difficult to depict multiple accounts of the Cattle Killing or indicate how much we simply do not know about Nonqawuse. It is not even possible to provide context by noting sources. Seeing is believing, to a degree, or to put it more elegantly, doubt is not visual. And yet, in her book "Slaves on Screen: Film and Historical Vision", N. Davis asks,

Can there be lively cinematic equivalents to what prose histories try to accomplish in prefaces, bibliographies, and notes and through their modifying and qualifying words "perhaps," "maybe," and "we are uncertain about"? (2000, p131).

One narrative technique which allows for multiple possible truths is the 'forking path' or 'what if?' narrative (Bordwell, 2014). Narratives using this technique "purportedly present mutually exclusive lines of action, leading to different futures" (Bordwell, 2008, p172). Peter Howitt's *Sliding Doors* (1998) we see the protagonist catching a train and going home where she finds her husband in bed with another woman, and we also see her missing that same train and continuing her life in a parallel universe, ignorant of the affair. Similar devices are used in Krzysztof Kieslowski's *Blind Chance* (1987), Doug Liman's *Edge of Tomorrow* (2014).

Intercutting between parallel versions of history would communicate a lot about the past but also a lot about how history is written and offer the opportunity for historical debate through the contrasting of various narrative elements. One could, for example, portray the Cattle Killing as a colonial plot and intercut this narrative with a narrative in which the Cattle Killing was led by several generations of Xhosa prophets with no colonial input. I came to the conclusion, however, that employing such a complex technique would require

a severe simplification of events in order to allow both plots to fit into dense structure of a television drama.

Instead I have chosen to give Nonqawuse and the Cattle Killing very limited screen time and to present this controversial piece of history largely through the varied perspectives of other characters. In doing so I have attempted to present the Cattle Killing as a contested piece of history with varied explanations and descriptions, all mediated by the prejudices and interests of the sources. Khanyisa recounts seeing her resurrected mother the prophetess promised, but perhaps she is convinced only because of her deep longing to see her mother (Macleod, 2016, p6). The General argues that the Cattle Killing is a plot the Chiefs will use to goad the British into war (Macleod, 2016, p50). Mavo suspects Captain Pringle of using the Cattle Killing as a means to start a war (Macleod, 2016, p65).

What is important is that, Nonqawuse, a young black girl and the consequences of her words loom as a backdrop throughout *Herald* so that even though she is largely off screen, she has a powerful influence over this account of history. The Cattle Killing is what causes Captain Pringle to kill Mavo's daughter. It is what propels Pringle to kill Governor Green and caucus for war. It is what brings Mavo to the Cape. When she is on screen she is, though perhaps misguided, an independent and commanding presence.

I hoped also to contextualise the prophetess' words and actions. She speaks of the encroachment of Christianity into Xhosa society saying "Have you been seduced by the white man's God?" (Macleod, 2016, p4). In a long speech on page five of the screenplay she refers to colonial appropriation of land, imprisonment of Chiefs, European lung sickness which has killed the cattle and the War of the Axe. The prophetess is therefore not foolish or insane but a woman driven by circumstance to take action.

Criticising Britain

Having selected a period in South African history when Britain played an important role, I decided there was value in offering up an alternative, South African written version of colonial history as a foil to existing British heritage productions.

In 1806 when the British gained control of the Cape, they viewed the Empire as a philanthropic venture and therefore banned the slave trade to British colonies in 1808 and regulated the treatment of Khoisan labourers (Ross, 1999, p36). However, despite preventing explicit violence, these regulations gave farmers considerable power over their employees and slavery itself was not

abolished at the Cape until 1834 (Ross, 1999, p36). Furthermore, 'freed' slaves were required to work for another four years as 'apprentices' for their former slave owners after abolition with conditions little better than slavery (Ross, 1999, p37). This particular series of events demonstrates the paradox of colonial philanthropy.

Britain had annexed an area of the Eastern Cape known then as British Kaffraria and placed the Xhosa under colonial rule, ignoring their existing power structures. The beloved Xhosa King Hintsa had entered Sir Harry Smith's camp assured of his safety and was assassinated there, like several others who fell prey to the "time-honoured British trick" (Peires, 1989, p16). The Xhosa 'were cramped and restricted in strange territories while their fertile land across the Keiskamma was occupied and desecrated by white intruders" (Peires, 1989, p7).

In 1851, Harry Smith, now Governor of the colony, gave orders to settlers to "rise en masse...to destroy and exterminate these most barbarous and treacherous savages" by which he meant the Xhosa (Peires, 1989, p12). Smith is known to have gathered together all the Xhosa chiefs and demanded that they kiss his boot (Peires, 1989, p6). In 1852 during the Riverman's War he had his men burn to the ground vast tracts of Xhosa land and dwellings and the Xhosa began to starve (Peires, 1989, p21). There are also reports of British soldiers mutilating Xhosa corpses in order to take home "souvenirs" such as skulls (Peires, 1989, p24).

The traditional period drama offers a portrayal of Britain far removed from these horrible events. In fact, the period drama genre tends to encourage a rosy view of the past. Johnson and Turnock note that,

it has become critically orthodox in the context of the heritage/costume drama to argue that at times of social upheaval the genre offers the viewer an image of a 'golden age in which life was easier and more settled. [This is a theory evident in] discussions of *Upstairs Downstairs* that focus on the issue of class representation, reading the heritage drama as restorative, conservative and potentially ameliorative of feelings of alienation and class inequity within the viewer (2005, p149).

To their credit, television series such as *Downton Abbey* and *Upstairs, Downstairs* (ITV, 1971 -1975 and BBC, 2010-2012) and the film *Gosford Park* (2001) display the pretty dresses and shiny dinnerware of the aristocracy as

well as the tedious lives of the servants who dressed and served them, thus acknowledging the injustices of the period.

To a degree *Downton Abbey* acknowledges the inequality of British society and the disempowerment of the poor and of women. Lord Grantham threatens to disown his daughter Sybil when she wants to marry the estate driver, Branson, who is found to be present at the burning of an Irish aristocratic home in a later season. However, the younger characters accuse him of being cruel and old fashioned and the family come to accept and love Branson in a later season. Similarly, when the butler Carson, rather than Lord Grantham, is chosen to be the head of the village war memorial committee most of the characters recognise this as a natural change in the social order. The cruelty and foolishness of class division are illustrated and the viewer is guided towards favouring greater equality. Lady Edith makes the controversial decision to write a weekly column for a magazine, in a time when ladies did not work, and again the viewer is guided towards supporting greater equality, this time for women.

Nonetheless, as the Dowager Countess says, “Principles are like prayers. Noble of course. But awkward at a party” (Season 5, Episode 1, 2014). Whilst the series may paint some changes in the social order as favourable, at its core *Downton* evokes nostalgia for this period and finds its characters guilty of nothing more than being old-fashioned.

In addition, narrative developments which cast British class politics of the era in a negative light are undermined by the visual glamourisation of the period. Higson argues that in British heritage cinema “the past is displayed as visually spectacular pastiche, inviting a nostalgic gaze that resists the ironies and social critiques so often suggested narratively” (1993, p91).

Of *Downton Abbey*, Byrne suggests that “Its largely straightforward plot and sumptuous mise-en-scene create a ‘seductive’ and not intellectually burdensome spectacle for the audience” (2013, p312). D.Harlan suggests that historical fiction “opens the heart but castrates the intellect’ and therefore limits our ability to engage with history meaningfully (2007, 120). This is clear even in the opening credits of *Downton Abbey*. The polished brass bell in the kitchen rings so quaintly that it is easy to forget that it would summon a servant at any hour off day or night. The Earl’s stroll across the beautiful green lawns is too dazzling for the viewer to consider who did the mowing or observe the contrast between that vast estate and the cramped living conditions of the working class.

One aspect of British heritage which is certainly not portrayed in romantic historical fiction, is the brutality of colonization at the Cape. Britain's involvement at the Cape makes nostalgia for the era morally questionable.

It is not simple to portray the atrocities of colonialism on screen. N.Alexander encapsulates the challenge of portraying historical atrocities:

The strategic-political and ultimately moral-historical question is how to move towards understanding without ever forgetting, but to remember without constantly rekindling the divisive passions of the past. Such an approach is the only one which would allow us to look down into the darkness of the atrocities of the past and to speculate on their causes at the same time as we haul up the waters of hope for a future of dignity and equality. (Alexander, 2003).

I do not wish, in criticising British colonial rule, to fuel anger or revive trauma, nor do I wish to portray a simplistic and harmful binary according to which white equals evil and black equals good. I have tried instead to select characters that symbolize various groups and attitudes of the period.

In terms of criticizing colonialism, Captain Pringle is intended to be the symbol of all that is wrong and evil about colonialism. He ruthlessly seeks to gain land and power, at the expense of lost livelihoods and lives. He is a racist, a drunk and an abusive husband and a liar and as such he embodies the brutality and selfishness of colonialism. In the pilot he kills Mavo's daughter and, it will be revealed, Mavo's wife too. In this way, perhaps, colonialism 'causes' the Cattle Killing because it is the loss of her mother that draws Khanyisa to join the prophetess. Pringle's murder of Khanyisa creates a personal revenge motive for Mavo which propels him into action.

Grappling with the present

The impacts of colonialism are still visible in South Africa and many of the issues dealt with an account of colonial South Africa are relevant issues today. *Herald* is an attempt to encourage viewers, through interaction with the past, to grapple with contentious issues of the present, and perhaps to grapple with them with the wisdom of distance. D. LaCapra describes the importance of "working through" past trauma and allowing the victim "to gain critical distance on a problem and to distinguish between past, present and future" without entirely disengaging from that past (2001, 144). I have chosen to explore themes in *Herald* which are also themes in contemporary South Africa

in the hopes that television and history can act as accessible, non-confrontational channels for engagement on contentious issues.

A narrative set in colonial times can hardly ignore the issue of race. The very underpinnings of colonial expansion relied on a belief in racial hierarchy and racial determinism (Lester, 1997, 5). This racism manifested in all aspects of life from political policy to the geographical divide between the white metropolitan Cape and the peripheral 'black frontier' of Xhosaland, to the media and even science (Lester 1997). A. Lester notes that *The Graham's Town Journal* printed a variety of comments on the Xhosa character "from analogies between the Xhosa and incurably spoilt children to those which were genocidal in nature" (Lester, 1997, 9). Dr H. E. Macartney "offered a series of well-received public lectures on the 'now popular science of phrenology'" making using of Xhosa skulls most likely acquired during war (Lester, 1997, 9).

Tiyo Soga, from whom I drew inspiration for Mavo's character, was active during this period in history and is described by some as the "father of Black Consciousness" (Bickford-Smith, 2011, 2). Soga said to his children, who had a Scottish mother, "take your place in the world as coloured, not as white men; as Kafirs not as Englishmen" (Bickford-Smith, 2011, 1).

Race is instantly visible in *Herald*, from the Reverend's unintended implication on page one that the Xhosa are simple to the Prophetess' description of the Christian God as 'the white man's God' on page four. Mavo is required to act always as Marks' inferior, regardless of his equal education and intellect. Rose is a former slave and continues to be a servant because she is of Malay descent. The major subplot of the pilot is the birth of a mixed-race child and the danger that Mrs. Pringle would find herself in should it be discovered that she had an affair with a black man.

Race is still a clear theme in contemporary South African. Severe poverty and economic inequality run on racial lines (Mcgroarty 2013). Race features in public policies such as Black Economic Empowerment, in private sector employment strategies, in university admissions policies (Malala 2012). Nothing fires public discourse quite like racial comments such as the recent comment by Penny Sparrow, which could just as well have come from the mouth of aforementioned Dr Macartney (Pilane 2016).

Land was also a major issue during the 1800s at the Cape. The Xhosa were removed from tracts of land at the frontier in 1809 and 1812 and battled British settlers for land throughout the 19th century, when "access to broader

swathes of grazing land was essential for the Xhosa pastoral political economy” (Lester, 1997, 5). The Cattle Killing is a story that culminates in the occupation of much of Xhosa land by white settlers (Stapleton. 1991, 383).

As the Prophetess character says in *Herald*, “The white man steals our land” (Macleod, 2016, p5). Land (and with it power) drives the villain Pringle’s desire to go to war with Xhosa and yet, paradoxically, the greatest symbol of colonial rule, the Queen of England, determines that the land must be returned to the Xhosa. Land drives the behavior of the villain in *Herald* and fuels the Prophetess’ hunger for vengeance.

Land continues to be a contentious, high stakes matter in contemporary South Africa with government “under growing pressure to put more land in the hands of the country's black majority” (BBC, 2015) and land expropriation at the top of the list for opposition party the EFF (Mngxitamam 2015), to paint only a small part of the complex picture. A thematic exploration of colonialism must surely turn the viewer’s mind to contemporary land reform issues.

Captain Pringle is, for the contemporary viewer, a criticism against those in power who continually work against the interests of the black majority for their own gain. Furthermore, he is criticism against those who exclude black South Africans from social and public spaces.

Mavo at the Cape is a black man in a white space. He should evoke from the viewer empathy for his exclusion from those spaces and remind the viewer of spaces in our own society where black people feel that they do not belong, where they are made unwelcome or are powerless.

Mavo, I hope, models an approach to social issues that is critical and yet not overly aggressive so as not to unnecessarily reinforce division or evoke trauma. He is at once sympathetic to the concerns of both black and white characters and critical of wrongdoing on both sides.

When Pringle asks Mavo why he does not defend the Prophetess he says, “The Xhosa are divided on this issue” (Macleod, 2016, p8). He speaks without judgement and reflects the complexity of a situation rather than whitewashing all people in a group with one description. Even as Mavo rallies against the cruel behavior of the British military, he boasts to the Governor that he is London educated (Macleod, 2016, p42), revealing an attitude both critical and appreciative of English culture. Similarly when he says, “The Xhosa may be heathen, Reverend, but they are not simple” he reveals an attitude both critical and defensive of Xhosa culture (Macleod, 2016, 1).

Whilst I do not intend to promote a Christian or Western academic ideology, I do intend for Mavo to model a measured approach to social conflict. No South African viewer should be alienated by the content of the series.

Writing strong black, Malay and female characters

It was with this spirit of inclusivity that I approached my character selections. I want to engage with South African history afresh by placing black, Malay and female characters at the center of the narrative and giving them agency to impact history. A diverse character set which includes Xhosa, British, Malay, male and female characters may appeal to a more diverse set of viewers, which is important when dealing with potentially divisive themes. Diversity may make it easier to market the miniseries to local and international markets. More importantly, black and Malay people and women need to be placed at the center of the narrative in order to emphasise their role in history.

I wanted to avoid favouring a white, male perspective and further perpetuating historical patterns of disempowerment. There is a tendency for history to be written from an androcentric, Eurocentric perspective. E. Shohat and R. Stam write,

History is assumed to be European history, everything else being reduced to what Hugh Trevor-Roper patronizingly called the “unrewarding gyrations of barbarous tribes in picturesque but irrelevant corners of the globe”. Even “Western civilization” is usually taught without reference to the central role of European colonialism within capitalist modernity. (2014, p1)

An androcentric, Eurocentric approach would be particularly problematic in this text because it is a text which seeks to criticise colonial rule and undermine patriarchal ideologies. Shohat and Stam write that,

Eurocentrism first emerged as a rationale for colonialism...as an ideological substratum common to colonial, imperialist and racist discourse.... (2014, p2)

P. Gran notes that

Standard world history is so focused on the Western countries, their elites, and high cultures, that it does not permit much critical analysis of them. (1996, 4).

Selecting diverse characters is not merely a nod to political correctness. “Multiculturalism is actually an assault on Eurocentrism”, an ideological act that allows for criticisms of the West (Shohat and Stam, 2014, p1).

Historical writing on African history is broadly criticised for the stark absence of women (Bradford, 1996). In her paper on “Women, gender and colonialism”, Bradford notes that women are so woefully invisible in South African history that one “1987 general history of South Africa accords Portugal more index entries than women” (1996). When history tells us “the Nguni were preoccupied with cattle” or that British settlers were granted “100 acres for each immigrant” it portrays a world in which women do not exist because these statements apply only to men (Bradford, 1996).

Where women are referred to in colonial history, they are referred to as wives, mothers, daughters and housemaids, describing their role in relation to men (Bradford, 1996). The segregation of history into ‘the important male sphere of economics and politics’ and the ‘unimportant domestic female sphere’ ignores the economic importance of the institution of marriage and of African women’s agricultural labour and the fact that families are not only mothers and wives but also fathers and sons (Bradford, 1996). It is important to redress this marginalisation by displaying the role women played in this part of history, not only because their roles are equally deserving of acknowledgement but because there is an intellectual loss to writing women out of history (Bradford, 1996).

With the goal of finding diverse characters, I went in search of first personal accounts of the era by black and female writers. Two were particularly useful and ended up being the basis of my main characters. The first is the diary of Tiyo Soga.

Soga, born in the Eastern Cape in 1829, was the son of a councilor to Sandile (Bickford-Smith, 2011, p4). He was educated at a mission school and fled with the missionaries during the war of 1846 (Bickford-Smith, 2011, p4). A teacher took him to Scotland where he was baptized (Bickford-Smith, 2011, p4). When he returned to South Africa he worked as “an interpreter, evangelist, catechist and writer of hymns in Xhosa” in British territory east of the Cape but he fled with the missionaries again in the war of 1850 and studied to become a minister at the University of Glasgow (Bickford-Smith, 2011, p4). In 1856 he became the first black South African ordained in the Presbyterian Church (Bickford-Smith, 2011, p4). He married a Scottish woman and return to the Eastern Cape to work as a missionary (Bickford-Smith, p5). He also wrote

articles for a Xhosa journal and translated English texts into Xhosa (Bickford-Smith, 2011, p5).

Soga had a complicated relationship to race. He wrote to his children “take your place in the world as coloured, not as white men; as Kafirs, not as Englishmen” (Bickford-Smith, 2011, p75). He was fond of British culture and “once walked from Glasgow to Dumbarton to catch a glimpse of Queen Victoria” (Bickford-Smith, 2011, p75). He expelled a group of boys from the church for engaging in traditional initiation practices (Saayman, 1989, p97). Yet, he did not believe that Xhosa culture should be destroyed to make room for Christianity. Soga wished to preserve “Xhosa history, folk-lore and at least some customs” (Bickford-Smith, 2011, p79) yet his colleagues believed he was ashamed of being uncircumcised (Saayman, 1989, p97).

These complexities are represented by the variety of his fans and descriptions. During his presidency, Thabo Mbeki “hailed Soga as one of the pioneers of the struggle” (Bickford-Smith, 2011, p1). John Chalmers, who was a missionary in the same era as Soga, described him as “a loyal British subject, devoted to the monarchy” (Bickford-Smith, 2011, p5) but Soga had also spoken out against “English ‘vices’, including settler racism’ (Bickford-Smith, 2011, p14).

Regardless of how Soga racially self-identified or where his greatest loyalties lay, he “attached positive and negative qualities to both Xhosa and English behavior and ‘custom’ alike; neither ‘nationality’ was definitely better” (Bickford-Smith, 2011, p14).

The power of Tiyo Soga as a potential character is that he straddled two worlds. He was bilingual, Xhosa born but British educated and raised by Christian mother and a father who advised a Xhosa Chief. As an educated man he belonged to the elite middle class at the Cape and yet as a black man married to a white woman he was constantly subject to racism (Saayman, 1989, p97).

Like Hermes and Persephone in Greek myth, he belonged to two worlds and also acted as a translator between them and yet he did not belong in either. His character unites the binaries of religion, race, language, nationality and class. Soga could therefore act as the inspiration for a torn character who represents the racial tensions of the 1850s and also the identity crisis suffered by people within a multiracial post-apartheid South Africa. Both black, white, British and local audiences can find something about Mavo to which they relate and that makes him a marketable character.

It is easy to impose upon this real life man some of the conventions of the cowboy from Hollywood Westerns. The character I based on Tiyo Soga, Mavo, arrives at the Cape as a “lone stranger” who “emerges from the wilderness” and finds himself in a “frontier community” where British rule maintains only tenuous control of the Western Cape and parts of the Eastern Cape (Wright, 2001, p15). It is here that our hero “fights the villains, saving the community and winning respect” before riding back into the wilderness, shrugging off any opportunity to take social control (Wright, 2001, p15). At the end of the day, the cowboy is always an individual. Unlike traditional heroes like Achilles or Arthur who fought to retain privilege, the cowboy fights for equality (Wright, 2001, p21). The serial nature of television means that, unlike a film cowboy, Mavo’s struggle is never really complete and he cannot ride off home without returning soon after.

Hell on Wheels’ cowboy character, former Confederate Soldier Cullen Bohannon is good example of the conventions of the cowboy mythology adapted to television. He is individualistic, seeking only to avenge his wife’s murder but he reluctantly becomes involved in restoring justice and equality at several junctures. Justice and equality are seen as entirely separate from the tenuous rule of the government and the law, for whom he has no regard. The distinction between justice and law is a useful convention in a narrative, like *Herald*, which aims to criticise those in power.

Bohannon lies, like Mavo, between two worlds. He fought as a Confederate but he freed his slaves before the war, because of a personal aversion to slavery, and fought only to keep his land. He is too liberal for his Confederate compatriots and his past as a slave owner makes him abhorrent to his black colleagues on the railroad. He is in a unique position of having access to the worlds of the rich and the poor, the black and the white, the Confederates and the Union soldiers and this allows *Hell on Wheels* to negotiate the complexities of American society and construct ideological debate. Furthermore, in *Hell on Wheels* as in classic Western, the conflict between settlers and indigenous people (cowboys and ‘Indians’) is central. Bohannon is a man who chooses to make allies or enemies of any man who suits his needs, regardless of their race so again he chooses a personal code over established social norms.

Similarly, Mavo, who has lived and worked amongst the rural Xhosa, through his British education, has limited access to the dining rooms of the British aristocracy at the Cape and this too allows for the construction of ideological debate around the binaries of black and white, English and Xhosa, rich and working class, indigenous and settler. The most obvious example of this is the

varying attitudes towards the Cattle Killing with which Mavo interacts. When Captain Pringle expresses surprise that Mavo does not wish to protect the prophetess, Mavo explains that he is Xhosa but Christian and not a supporter of the prophetess. The women are angered by what they see as Mavo's betrayal of the Xhosa. Mavo's individualism dissuades the viewer from lumping all Xhosa into a single category. At the dinner party at Lady Charlotte's, however, Mavo is required to take coats and sit separately from the other men indicating that he does not fit in British society either. In short, his character allows for interesting conflict.

The second personal account I found useful is the letters of Lady Anne Barnard. In 1797 Andrew Barnard was appointed as the Secretary to the first British administration of the Cape and thus lived at the Cape with his wife, Lady Anne, until 1802. For some of that time they were stationed at the Castle but they later settled in Newlands at the location where the Vineyard Hotel now stands. Lady Anne was the official hostess of the administration and she played a major role at the Cape. M. Lenta remarks,

she achieved, with difficulty and at times by the sacrifice of personal happiness, a role in public and private life which women, it was believed in her time, should be denied...She moved of her own free will from a society in which aristocratic women lived purely domestic lives to one in which some at least were active in social life outside the family and in politics [...,and] she became a trusted adviser to her husband and to others. She was always willing to concede token authority to Andrew, but it seems to have been clearer to both parties that her husband's position...depended on her gifts as a hostess and her political contacts. (2006, 16-18)

She brought with her political skills and contacts (Lenta, 2006). She learnt, whilst she was at the Cape, domestic skills like decorating and cooking for large parties, that were unfashionable for aristocratic women in the eighteenth century and invited resentment from men (Lenta, 2006).

Of course Lady Anne Barnard was white and of the upper class, so in these ways her version of history is Eurocentric and does not assist me in writing black or working class people back into the history of South Africa. The character of Rose who is a Malay seamstress achieves this more successfully. She was, however, a woman – a woman who was very successful both in the so-called masculine pursuits of politics, deemed important by the history books, and the so-called feminine pursuits in the domestic realm. Lady Anne Barnard is therefore evidence of the important role women play in history.

Lady Charlotte Brownlow is inspired by Lady Anne Barnard because she is an example of a strong woman at the Cape and embodies early struggles for gender equality, even if these struggles are within the limited structures of the white upper classes. Her journals and letters, written whilst she was at the Cape, give insight into the politics and culture of the era, although she was at the Cape around fifty years before *Herald* is set.

The character of Mr. Marks is also based on a real person. Saul Solomon was born in 1817 in St. Helena to devoutly Jewish parents (Drus, 1939, p6). He was sent to England for primary school and when he was thirteen his entire family moved to the Cape (Drus, 1939, p6).

He left school early, perhaps for financial reasons, and became an apprentice at a printing company (Drus, 1939, p7). Solomon progressed well in the company, becoming manager, then began his own printing company which succeeded in winning the government printing tender (Drus, 1939, p7). He began to publish and print his own advertising and newsheet, 'The Cape Mercantile Advertiser' (Drus, 1939, p7). In 1857 he co-founded the *Cape Argus* newspaper which still exists.

Solomon began to get involved in amateur politics (Drus, 1939, p8). He had contact with rival newsheet editor John Fairburn and with liberal missionary Dr Philips and these interactions made him concerned about the treatment of indigenous people in South Africa (Drus, 1939, p8). His interaction with Dr Philips may also have been the cause of his conversion to Christianity (Drus, 1939, p8).

Cape liberals at the time favoured a representative assembly and were against legislation which unfairly treated black people (Drus, 1939, p8). Solomon was pelted with rotten eggs for these liberal views and associations but he was greatly respected by some and was soon asked to become a Member of Parliament (Drus, 1939, p8). He advocated for a lower property qualification for the black (male) vote and for what is now the Eastern Cape to become independent of the Cape colony, amongst many other things (Drus, 1939, p9).

For all his talk of democracy and equality, and his fame as a Cape Liberal, Solomon was a paternalist and had beliefs which belie a sense of superiority over black Africans. He believed that the colonists had a mission to bring "civilization and Christianity into the interior of this vast and unhappy continent" (Drus, 1939, p12).

Like Soga, Solomon felt torn in his loyalties. He declared himself an "Afrikander" because he felt English and yet also had been born in St. Helena and lived much of his life at the Cape so he felt himself a settler too (Drus,

1939, p10).

If Captain Pringle symbolises the brutality of colonialism, Mr. Marks represents the well-meaning paternalism that was considered liberal at the time. This is particularly evident in his strict but kind mentorship of Mavo. One of the very first things Marks says to Mavo is, “I’m trying to help you” (Macleod, 2015, p30). It is important to show a different facet of colonialism and to portray the important role of white, male activists in a society where those are the people with the most power.

He represents a working class settler and a self-made man whilst Lady Charlotte and her company represent the British aristocracy who are mere visitors at the Cape. There is an opportunity for conflict in these oppositions. Furthermore, Solomon represents a different kind of disempowerment besides race. As a working class Jew, Marks is also somewhat unwelcome in Lady Charlotte’s home and this is interesting to compare with race-based discrimination.

The character of Mr. Marks brings with him a newspaper, the fictional *Cape Herald* based loosely on early editions of the *Cape Argus*. The value of the newspaper is that it offers an opportunity to structure the miniseries as a procedural drama. According to C.Harriss,

Procedurals filter the ratiocinative action through characters who actively investigate the mystery for the viewer, following procedures that are prescribed by their professions (e.g. police detectives, forensic scientists etc.) (2008, p43).

Mavo and Marks act as investigative journalists in the pilot, trying to figure out who stopped the *Hermes* from docking and why. Each episode that follows can revolve around a particular case and getting out a new edition of the *Cape Herald*.

The newspaper is also valuable because it allows for controversial historical events to be pieced together through mediated evidence, rather than shown on screen as complete narratives. I can, for example, have the *Herald* receive several contradicting accounts of the Battle of Ndongakasuka and have the journalists remark on the reliability of each source. This, I think, is a method of communicating history which replicates to a degree what can be done in written history.

The character of Rose Jantjes represents a hugely disempowered group in 1850s Cape Town: the Cape Malay community. Rose is a woman, a Muslim, Malay and a former slave. She would have existed on the peripheries of Cape society and this is why I wanted to write Rose as a strong, rebellious character. However, as a former slave, it is necessary for her to behave subserviently. A little bit of rebellion comes through in her subtle mockery of Lady Charlotte. When Lady Charlotte worries whether the new Governor will like her, Rose says, “I am quite sure he will like you, whether he wants to or not.” In doing so she mocks Lady Charlotte’s bossy nature and reveals that she is more than a sounding board.

Interactions between Lady Charlotte and Rose are interesting because they have relationship at once like an intimate friendship and like a master and servant. I hope to use these interactions more in future episodes to satirise the complicated relationship between white women and domestic workers in contemporary South Africa. In particular, I wish to look at paternalism and the requirement that a domestic worker act as confidante.

Tiyo Soga, Lady Anne Barnard, Mr. Marks and Rose offer a spectrum of diverse experiences at the Cape in the 1850s: The white, aristocratic Cape lady, a black, bilingual, Christian Xhosa man, who straddles two worlds, a white, working class, Jewish man, and a Muslim, former slave woman of Malay decent. They represent conflicting interests at the Cape and therefore are both representative and suitable for a drama.

The challenges of history on screen

I have laid out a number of intentions for *Herald*. A number of these goals could be achieved without accurately representing history but it is important also to take into account that “the chief source of historical knowledge for the majority of the population – outside of the much despised textbook – must surely be the visual media” (Rosenstone, 1988, p1174). Many historians are skeptical as to whether history can be effectively communicated on screen through “institutions that lie almost wholly outside the control of those who devote [their] lives to history” (Rosenstone, 1988, p1174). One may ask whether *Herald* would be considered inadequate if it were examined by an academic historian. I have already discussed the difficulties of showing historical debate in fiction television.

It is not reasonable to judge fiction history on screen by the same standards as written history. They are different media with different demands and expectations on them. Criticisms of *The King’s Speech* (2010) reveal that many

of the complaints are unnecessarily severe responses to the minutiae of the facts.

Critics alleged that it was “historically inaccurate, entirely misleading” (Chotiner, 2011), containing “very many glaring and egregious inaccuracies and tired old myths” (Roberts, 2010), set “in a history which didn’t quite exist” (White, 2011), with “many of the details...skewed and exaggerated” (Oster, 2013). Critics complained of “the truly annoying...representation of Winston Churchill as a supporter of George during the abdication” (French, 2011). Roger Ebert wrote that the film “largely sidesteps the story that loomed over this whole period, Edward’s startling decision to give up the crown to marry a woman who was already divorced three times” (2010). Another review complained that the King would not have been on first name terms with his speech therapist (White, 2011).

Hugo Vickers, the royal adviser for *The King’s Speech*, argues,

My view is that a film is a film, and you have to move the drama on. People can say, for example, that Churchill didn't play nearly as big a role as he does in the film – he wasn't actually there at such and such a point, he never uttered those words, and so on. But the average viewer knows who Churchill is; he doesn't know who Lord Halifax and Lord Hoare are. I don't mind these things at all. Of course, when the king made his famous speech after Chamberlain had declared war on Germany, none of those high-ranking officials who appear with him in the film were present. But they need to speak to the king, there's a point that needs to be made. It's the essence of the story that counts, and the essence of the story here is very sound indeed. (Vickers, 2011)

A television series, much like a film, must impose a beginning, middle and end on fluid, unending history. It must impose a single protagonist and antagonist on a world of people. It must condense the complexities of that individual’s past, feelings, qualities and acquaintances into a character that can be easily understood in minutes by the audience. It must distil the vast number of things going on at any period in time, down to a manageable plot that fits into the time allocation and has a well-timed climax and neat denouement. This will necessarily require some alteration of the facts here and there.

But written history is subject to its own conventions, structures and stylistic choices. Written history must, like history on screen, impose a beginning, middle and end on what is in reality a continuous flow of events. It must limit

itself to a certain location and set of events that it deems relevant to an argument or interesting just as historical fiction must create conflict and drama rather than portraying the mundane. Rosenstone writes,

If, by its very nature, the dramatic film will include human conflict and will shape its material in some conventions of storytelling, this does not entirely differentiate it from much written history (1988, p1178).

Byrne takes a harder line, arguing,

As all perspectives of the past are subject to the demands of form, the expectations of the readership/audience, the morals and agenda of the author and, in post-structuralist terms, the limitations and problems of language, we might want to consider a historical media fiction on an equal footing with its more 'academic' written cousin (2013, p313)

Diction, register, context and the length will all constrain a written account and the writer's ideological standpoint or academic background will filter into the manner in which events and times are presented just as a genre, network, the director's stylistic preferences and even things like the choice of commercials played during an episode, filter into a television drama and effect its meaning.

The two media may be on 'equal footing' in this regard but I would argue that history on screen has a unique advantage because it makes tangible the sensory details of the past. In order to complete the *mise en scene*, television history must take note of minute details that academic history would often otherwise ignore (Byrne, 2013, p313). The documentary, available as part of the *Downton Abbey* DVD box sets, *The Manners of Downton* is a response to the fetishization of every detail of life at that time, from the table settings to the servant hierarchy.

Television offers us an immersive experience in which we can imagine "the anxiety caused by the arrival of the telephone" (Byrne, 2013, p313) or the relief of a woman in labour when she inhaled 'gas and air' as portrayed in *Call the Midwife*. History on screen is an accessible medium that can provide an audiovisual and spatio-temporal experience of history uncommunicable on the page.

Downton Abbey is history as addictive fun. South African history is history for the strong-stomached. *Herald* is an attempt to combine the two in an entertaining and thought provoking historical miniseries that brings local characters and stories to our screens but also engages critically with the

colonial era and contemporary issues of race, land and class, amongst others. *Herald* makes use of conventions of the period drama, the newspaper procedural and even the Western. As a pilot episode, however, its primary aim is to set the scene in the Cape in 1856 and introduce the diverse set of characters. Television presents the opportunity to make tangible this fascinating period of history: to see the strange wood-paved streets of Cape Town, to hear the familiar horse carriages racing by and to feel angered by injustice as we rightly should.

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