

Philida

written by

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based on the novel by André Brink

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Made in Highland

FADE IN

1

EXT. BAMBOO COPSE ZANDVLIET FARM. DAY. THE YEAR 1817.

1

PHILIDA (10) stands on a wood stump, while FRANS (7) parades around her.

FRANS

(in a sing-song, play-acting voice)

Mijne heeren, here we have a young *slaaf meisie*. Take a look.

[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]

Mijne Heeren - Gentlemen

Slaaf meisie - Slave girl

As Frans speaks, Philida has to open her mouth to show off her tongue and teeth. Then her hands, to show the "gentlemen" all her fingers, one by one.

FRANS

This *slaaf meisie* can do clever things with these thin fingers. She can knit and sew. A girl like her is worth more than money or corals to a farmer's wife.

Philida climbs down off the stump.

PHILIDA

That's now enough. It's your turn to be the *slaaf* and I'll be the *baas*.

(assuming the play-acting voice)

Off with your shirt, and move your *poephol*; the *baas* don't have time to waste.

[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]

Baas - Master

Poephol - Arse

FRANS

No, man, Philida, you can't be the *baas*.

She whacks him on the buttocks and unceremoniously lifts him on to the stump.

PHILIDA

Mijne heeren, take a look at this fine young boy.

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PHILIDA (CONT'D)

His two eyes are so good, they can see a *duiker* three days away and they shine in the dark. He can see round a corner if there's any game coming.

[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]

Duiker - Small antelope

Frans can't help laughing.

PHILIDA

Now look at his ears. Let me tell you, *mijne heeren*, he can hear from a hundred paces away when a chameleon turn its left eye to you. It's a bargain, *mijne heeren*, and you won't get a better buy in this *Caab* of ours. *Caab* of Storms, *Caab* of Good Hope, *Caab* of Anything You Wish For in the wide world. His name is Francois Gerhard Jacob Brink, they call him Frans for short. Who will make me a bid?

[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]

Caab - Cape

2

EXT. THE ELEPHANT TRAIL. DAY. SATURDAY 17 NOVEMBER 1832.

2

Early morning. The mountains around Franschhoek in South Africa's Western Cape.

Near the farm Zandvliet in the Drakenstein, the slave woman Philida (25) crosses an earthen bridge over a stream and walks towards the Elephant Trail, casting a long shadow. She is thin, with a narrow face, wide cheekbones, and large pitch-black eyes. She is barefoot and wears a simple blue dress, thin and faded from many washings. She carries a child, WILLEMPIE (six months old), in an *abbadoek* on her back.

[ENGLISH TRANSLATION]

Abbadoek - Baby's blanket

Mid morning. The solitary figure of Philida, with the baby on her back, trudges on in the far distance.

Midday. Along a street in the small town of Stellenbosch, Philida's bare feet stir up the dust as she walks alongside her shadow.

3 EXT. THE SQUARE IN FRONT OF THE STELLENBOSCH DROSTDY. DAY. 3

[ENGLISH TRANSLATION]

Drostdy - The office or residence of a Landdrost
Landdrost - Magistrate

At a planted square in front of the Stellenbosch Drostdy, Philida stoops at a water pump and drinks deeply.

In the high noonday sun, her face is reflected in the swirling runoff from the water. Briefly, her face morphs into that of a newborn baby. She draws back sharply, and stands still to collect herself.

She crosses a bridge over the small stream that runs past the front door of the Drostdy.

4 INT. THE STELLENBOSCH DROSTDY. DAY. 4

In the dim interior, Philida approaches a clerk.

PHILIDA

I am here to see the Slave Protector.

OFFICIAL

Why?

PHILIDA

I want to make a complaint.

OFFICIAL

What about?

PHILIDA

Are you the Slave Protector?

OFFICIAL

No.

PHILIDA

I want to talk to the Slave Protector.

OFFICIAL

(jerking his head towards an open door)

Mijnheer Lindenberg is through there.

[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]

Mijnheer - Mister

Philida crosses to the door and knocks.

LINDENBERG (O.S.)

Yes?

5 INT. LINDENBERG'S OFFICE. DAY.

5

Mijnheer LINDENBERG, an older man, sits behind a large desk in a hand carved chair with armrests. He is tall, white, thin, and bony, with deep furrows in his forehead, like a ploughed wheat field, and a nose like a sweet potato that has grown past itself. He wears thick spectacles.

Philida stands in front of him while he remains seated, looking at her over his spectacles.

LINDENBERG

Yes?

PHILIDA

I have come to make a complaint.

With fastidious care, Lindenberg pulls a big book towards him, dips a quill in the ink, and holds it poised over the page.

LINDENBERG

What is your name?

PHILIDA

Philida.

Lindenberg writes her name down in the big book, along with each answer she gives. Every now and then, he dips the quill in the ink, or sprinkles fine sand on the thick paper and blows it off.

LINDENBERG

Where do you come from?

PHILIDA

Before, I was in the *Caab*, but then we had to come with the *baas* to a farm here in the Drakenstein.

LINDENBERG

What is the name of your *baas*?

PHILIDA

Oubaas Cornelis Brink.
[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]
Oubas - Old Master

LINDENBERG

What is the name of the farm?

PHILIDA
Zandvliet.

LINDENBERG
How long have you been working
there?

PHILIDA
Since I was nine.

LINDENBERG
How old are you?

PHILIDA
Twenty-five.

Lindenberg continues writing everything down meticulously.

LINDENBERG
What work do you do at Zandvliet?

PHILIDA
I'm the knitter.

FLASHBACK

6 INT. PETRONELLA'S ROOM AT ZANDVLIET. DAY.

6

The room is dominated by a high bed, covered with a feather stuffed *bulsak*. In one corner is a hearth for cooking, in another a spindle. A door opens to the exterior, and the other door leads to the interior of the house. On the smooth dung floor is a small red carpet.

[ENGLISH TRANSLATION]
Bulsak - Mattress

In this flashback, Philida is 10.

PETRONELLA (mid 40s in this flashback) was brought as a slave from Java, but is now a free woman. As such, she wears shoes, which click against the flooring as she comes quickly into the room through the interior door.

PETRONELLA
(triumph tinged with relief)
Philida - I just talked to Nooi
Janna, and she says you can be the
knitter. So, you not just a
farmyard girl, you a knitting
girl. That's *something*.
[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]
Nooi - Madam

PHILIDA

What must a knitting girl do, *Ouma Nella*?

[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]

Ouma - Grandma

PETRONELLA

You knit the socks and jerseys and cardigans and scarves and everything for the whole household.

PHILIDA

(anxious)

But I don't know *how*.

PETRONELLA

Come, I show you.

From a basket next to the spindle she takes a ball of wool and two ivory knitting needles. She seats herself on the side of the high bed, and pats the space next to her.

PETRONELLA

Come sit by me.

Philida climbs up to sit beside her, her feet dangling.

The needles flash as Petronella casts on a short row.

PETRONELLA

Now watch closely.

Philida leans up against Petronella to get a closer look.

PETRONELLA

In-over-through-and-off. In-over-through-and-off. You see?

Philida nods. Petronella hands the knitting to her.

PETRONELLA

Now you try.

Philida fumbles with the unfamiliar procedure.

PETRONELLA

In. Over. Through. Off. Good girl! Try again. Good! Now you just go on and make the whole row like that. Then, when you get to the end, you turn it around and you go back the other way. This is called garter stitch.

END FLASHBACK

7

INT. LINDENBERG'S OFFICE. DAY.

7

LINDENBERG

Did you get a pass for coming here?

PHILIDA

No. I know I do not need a pass to complain.

LINDENBERG

When did you leave?

PHILIDA

When the sun came up.

LINDENBERGH

How long did you walk?

PHILIDA

I got here just now.

Lindenberg checks his fob watch

LINDENBERG

So, about seven hours.

He makes a note of this.

LINDENBERG

Where did you sleep last night?

PHILIDA

On the farm.

LINDENBERG

What do you think is going to happen to you when you get home again?

PHILIDA

Maybe I will get a flogging.

LINDENBERG

What is your complaint?

PHILIDA

It is *Baas Frans* that I come to complain about.

LINDENBERG
 (an edge of impatience)
What are you complaining about?

PHILIDA
 He take me.

Lindenberg peers at her over the top of his spectacles.

LINDENBERG
 How did he take you?

Philida hesitates.

LINDENBERG
 I have to know all the
 particulars. The law demands that
 I must find out everything that
 happened. So that it can all be
 written down very precisely in
 this book.

PHILIDA
 He *naai* me.
 [ENGLISH SUBTITLES]
 Naai - Fuck

Lindenberg gives a dry cough, as if his spit has dried up.
 Then, he writes this fact down.

LINDENBERG
 Did you resist?

PHILIDA
Grootbaas, in the beginning I try
 to ...
 [ENGLISH SUBTITLES]
 Grootbaas - Big Baas

BEGIN FLASHBACK

8

EXT. BAMBOO COPSE. DAY. 1826

8

PHILIDA (V.O.)
 ... but that is when he begin to
 talk to me very nicely ...

FRANS (16) is already tall, with blonde hair and blue eyes. He fumbles Philida (19) against his body, pushing her backwards and down until she loses her balance and topples awkwardly. He falls on top of her, pinning her there, pulling at her clothes.

PHILIDA

Nee man, Frans, nee! Hou op!
 [ENGLISH SUBTITLES]
Nee man, Frans, nee! Hou op! -
No man, Frans, no! Stop it!

FRANS

(with frantic urgency)
 You mustn't be scared, I won't
 hurt you, I just want to make you
 happy. If you let me push into
 you, then I shall buy you free.
 Then you can walk everywhere with
schoene on your feet.
 [ENGLISH SUBTITLES]
 Schoene - Shoes

He pushes roughly into her, and she cries out in pain.

FRANS

(as if unaware of what he is
 saying in the fever of the
 moment)
 I promise and I promise and I
 promise, from now on you are mine,
 for ever and ever, for us there
 will never be a *slaaf* and a *baas*
 any more, just me and you, I
 promise and promise and promise
 from now on we shall both wear
schoene, forever and ever, amen.

END FLASHBACK

9

INT. LINDENBERG'S OFFICE. DAY.

9

LINDENBERG

And then what happened?

PHILIDA

When he finish, he get up again
 and tie the *riem* of his breeches.
 [ENGLISH SUBTITLES]
 Riem - Belt

LINDENBERG

I want to know what happened
afterwards. This thing you did
 together ... did it lead to
 anything?

Philida just looks at him, trying to grasp his meaning.
 Lindenberg gets very red in the face.

LINDENBERG

Did anything happen inside you –
to your body?

PHILIDA

Not right away, *Grootbaas*. Only
after he lie with me a few times,
I start to swell.

LINDENBERG

How many times?

PHILIDA

Many times, *Grootbaas*.

LINDENBERG

Two times? Three times? Ten?
Twenty?

Philida folds her hands around her shoulders. Willempie frets
and then settles.

PHILIDA

Many times, *Grootbaas*.

LINDENBERG

Did he hurt you?

PHILIDA

I had badder things happen to me,
Grootbaas.

LINDENBERG

Then what are you complaining
about?

PHILIDA

Because he take me and he promise
me he will buy me freedom from the
Landdrost, from the government,
and I can wear *schoene* because I
will no longer be a *slaaf*. But now
instead of buying my freedom he
want to marry a white woman. Not a
slaaf or a Khoi but one of his own
kind. So now he want to sell me
upcountry.

LINDENBERG

How do you know that?

BEGIN FLASHBACK

10 INT. OUTSIDE THE KITCHEN AT ZANDVLIET. DAY. 1832 10

Philida peers through the crack between the door and the doorjamb at Frans (22) and his mother, JANNA BRINK (around 50), who is a large woman, both physically and temperamentally. She has the aggrieved attitude of someone who has airs above her station and believes that she has been forced to come down in the world by marrying into this family.

11 INT. THE KITCHEN AT ZANDVLIET. DAY. 11

JANNA

Your *pa* and I have decided that Philida can't stay here, and that's all there is to it.
[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]
Pa - Father

FRANS

But she's got nowhere else to live!

JANNA

We'll sell her upcountry.

FRANS

(dismayed)
You mean put her up on auction!?

JANNA

That is exactly what I mean. You can't marry well with that *meid* underfoot.
[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]
Meid - Maid servant (pejorative)

FRANS

Ma -
[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]
Ma - Mother

JANNA

You are a Brink, Francois, and all you Brinks have is money. Not class. That is why I decided right from the beginning that my children should marry well one day. You will marry the Berangé girl, and that *meid* and her children must be away from the farm before your new wife comes to live here.

END FLASHBACK

LINDENBERG
What about your children?

PHILIDA
That's *mos* why I'm here,
Grootbaas.
[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]
Mos - Actually

LINDENBERG
How many children do you have?

PHILIDA
There's two left. There was four
altogether.

LINDENBERG
Who is their father?

PHILIDA
Frans and I made them.

LINDENBERG
Baas Frans.

PHILIDA
Baas Frans.

LINDENBERG
Where are the two who are still
alive?

PHILIDA
One is at *Zandvliet* where we made
her. She's *Lena*. My *Ouma Nella*
look after her. The last one is
this one I bring on my back with
me.

Philida turns sideways so that Lindenberg can see the sleeping
baby in the *abbadoek* on her back.

PHILIDA
He is my youngest. He was born
only six months ago. His name is
Willempie.

LINDENBERG
When did the other two die?

Philida looks up into the corner of the room above Lindenberg's
head, her face inscrutable.

PHILIDA

The second one, her name was
Mamie, she was only three months
old.

LINDENBERG

And the other one?

PHILIDA

I have nothing to say about the
first one.

LINDENBERG

Why not?

PHILIDA

He die too soon.

Lindenberg gives her a hard look, then he lets the matter drop.

LINDENBERG

All right. And you say they are
all your *baas* Frans's children?

PHILIDA

Yes, that is the truth, before the
LordGod.

Lindenberg makes one last note then moves his books and papers
aside, puts his quill on top, and stands.

PHILIDA

(taken aback)
Is that all now?

LINDENBERG

What makes you think it's all? We
haven't even started. All you have
done is to lay your complaint. We
still have to investigate. I will
send a message to Zandvliet for
your *baas* to come and make his
reply.

PHILIDA

So what do I do now?

LINDENBERG

You don't do anything. You just
wait here in the jail behind the
Drostdy until he comes.

13 EXT. ZANDVLIET FARM. DAY.

13

A Drostdy MESSENGER on horseback rides into the backyard of the longhouse, and comes to standstill, his horse stamping and sweating. Without dismounting, the messenger calls to a SLAVE.

MESSENGER
Where's your *Kleinbaas*?
[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]
Kleinbaas - Young master

The slave points to where Frans is supervising a small group of slaves in the vineyard just beyond the yard, and the messenger, still mounted, walks the horse over to him.

MESSENGER
You Francois Gerhard Jacob Brink?

Frans straightens and squints up at the messenger in the sunlight.

FRANS
Yes?

The messenger reaches down from horseback to hand him a document.

MESSENGER
I've got a summons from Mijnheer
Lindenberg at the Stellenbosch
Drostdy.

FRANS
What about?

MESSENGER
You've got to go and answer a
complaint brought against you by
your *slaaf* woman, Philida.

The slaves shift and murmur, and Frans quells them with a look. He reads the summons. He looks up, and stares out over the vineyard. He reads the document again. Then he squints back up at the messenger.

FRANS
This is a bad time for me to go.
The fruit are getting ripe, the
early apricots, and the plums, and
the grapes are beginning to
cluster, they need attention all
the time.

MESSENGER

You've got to obey the summons
now. It's right there. In English.

14 INT. THE VOORHUIS [FRONT ROOM] AT ZANDVLIET. DAY.

14

CORNELIS (around 50) is small, with a strut like a bantam cock. He wears gold-framed spectacles, and he walks with a limp. His tanned face looks like a thunderstorm as he glowers at Frans, who is half a head taller than he is.

CORNELIS

You have to listen very closely,
because I am a notable man, and I
don't want my name to be dragged
through *kak* just because you're
too hopeless to deny something a
damn *slaaf meisie* did with you.

[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]

Kak - Shit

FRANS

There was a time when you yourself
had a lot of good things to say
about Philida, even when everybody
could see that she had her first
child inside her. And most of the
men at the *Caab* do it, anyway, so
you can't pretend you don't know.

CORNELIS

(furious)

Don't say things you know nothing
about, Frans!

FRANS

Well, what if the man at the
Drostdy starts asking me
questions? What do I say then?

CORNELIS

Then you just tell him about two
slawe of Izak Marais who *naaied*
Philida.

[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]

Slawe - Slaves

FRANS

(aghast)

How can Pa say a thing like that?

CORNELIS

All I can say is that you are *not* going to drag the Brinks' name through the mud. You got to take responsibility for what you tell the Protector and not just mess everything up like you always do.

FRANS

I won't, *Pa*.

Cornelis looks up at Frans, measuring him. Up and down. Then up again.

CORNELIS

I'll go with you.

FRANS

This is not your *kak*. It is mine. I'm going to the Protector on my own. You stay right here at home.

CORNELIS

(quiet, menacing)

I'm still your *Pa*, Francois.

Frans says nothing. He just keeps looking down at his father. It is Cornelis who looks away first.

CORNELIS

When will you go?

FRANS

Tomorrow morning.

15 INT. LINDENBERG'S OFFICE. DAY.

15

A fly buzzes at the window pane. Mijnheer Lindenberg sits writing at his desk.

The door opens, and the Drostdy official shoves Philida into the room. Willimpie's white curls stick out from the *abbadoek* on her back. He whimpers, and Philida jogs him up and down to soothe him.

Without acknowledging Philida, Lindenberg speaks to the official.

LINDENBERG

You can show him in.

Lindenberg continues writing; the fly buzzes.

Frans walks into the room. Philida looks at him, but he avoids meeting her eyes.

FRANS
Goeie dag, Philida.
 [ENGLISH SUBTITLES]
 Goeie Dag - Good Day

PHILIDA
Goeie dag, Baas Frans.

Lindenberg finishes what he is writing, and looks up at Frans over his spectacles. He indicates for Frans to sit in a chair opposite his desk. Philida remains standing.

LINDENBERG
 (addressing Frans)
 State your name for the record.

FRANS
 My name is Francois Gerhard Jacob
 Brink. I am the second son of
 Cornelis Brink of Zandvliet.

As before, Lindenberg writes down all the answers in his book, his quill scratching out the words.

LINDENBERG
 This *slaaf* woman has laid a
 complaint that you forced her to
 lie with you on the promise that
 you would set her free.

FRANS
 There is nothing I know about this
slaaf woman, *Mijnheer*.
 [ENGLISH SUBTITLES]
 Mijnheer - Sir

Philida's gaze jerks towards Frans. A cock crows outside.

FRANS
 How could I have ever promised to
 set her free if she would lie with
 me? She is not my *slaaf*. She
 belongs to my father. It is not
 for me to say what must happen to
 her.

Philida averts her face and fixes her eyes on the fly buzzing against the window pane.

LINDENBERG
 And what about this child? Are you
 not the father?

FRANS

How can I be the father? *Mijnheer* Lindenberg, I have never had anything to do with this *slaaf* woman. My mother would never have allowed anything like that to happen in her house.

LINDENBERG

Then where do these children come from?

Frans stares straight ahead, not looking at either Lindenberg or Philida.

FRANS

That I cannot tell you, *Mijnheer*. All I know is that she lay with two of our neighbour's *slawe*.

A cock crows outside a second time.

PHILIDA

Grootbaas -

LINDENBERG

Quiet! You will get your chance to speak.

Philida closes her eyes and bites her lips to stop them from trembling.

LINDENBERG

To be clear: this *slaaf* woman says that you promised her from the beginning that if she lay with you and a child was born you would go to the the *Landdrost* and the government and buy her freedom and her child's.

FRANS

What the *meid* is saying is just as true as it is false.

Lindenberg looks at him with a hint of asperity.

LINDENBERG

What is that supposed to mean?

FRANS

It doesn't mean anything, *Mijnheer*. It's a *slaaf's* word, and mine is a white man's word.

LINDENBERG

I want to know what it means if you say that her complaint is just as true as it is false.

FRANS

It means exactly what I said, *Mijnheer*. Her word means nothing against mine because I already told you she is a *slaaf* and not even mine. She belongs to my father. I have no say over her, my father is the only one who can decide about setting her free or not. So I could never have promised her such a thing. There is nothing, good or bad, I can do for her.

The fly buzzes around Philida, and she brushes it away.

FRANS

The *meid* has already brought enough shame on me and our family. If I try to do anything more for her, it'll be finished and *klaar* with me.

[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]

Klaar - Done

Silently, Lindenberg writes and writes in his book. Then he looks up at Philida over his spectacles.

LINDENBERG

If all this is true, how can you still expect your *baas* to set you free?

PHILIDA

(her voice shaky and husky)
I'm not asking to be set free any more, *Grootbaas*. I been lied to too many times by too many people. All I'm asking you today is not to let them sell me and the children upcountry.

(beseeking)

Please, *Grootbaas*. They're too small and the inland is too far away.

LINDENBERG

There's nothing I can do about what happens inland.

Lindenberg takes off his spectacles, pulling a handkerchief from his pocket to polish them, not looking at her as he speaks.

LINDENBERG

After all the lies you told
there's nothing I can do for you
anyway.

PHILIDA

Then the *Grootbaas* must *maar* do
what he want.

[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]

Maar - Just

Philida leans forward and unties the knot of the *abbadoek*. With a deft movement of her body she shifts Willempie round to her front and opens her arms to make him sit up in her embrace. The blonde child stares at Lindenberg out of two bright blue eyes.

PHILIDA

Here is the lie I told, *Grootbaas*.

Lindenberg replaces his spectacles and slowly stands as he peers at the child. He shoots a look towards Frans, then motions with his head towards the door.

Frans stands without looking towards Philida and the child. He turns on his heel, and leaves the office. The cock crows a third time outside.

Philida turns to go, Willempie still held in her arms.

LINDENBERG

Where do you think you're going?

Philida stops. The fly buzzes.

LINDENBERG

You made your *baas* come all this
way just to listen to a heap of
lies.

PHILIDA

(turning)

How can it be lies? Didn't the
Grootbaas see the child for
himself?

Lindenberg steadfastly does not meet her eyes.

LINDENBERG

Shut up!

(MORE)

LINDENBERG (CONT'D)
 You're a *slaaf* and you've done a
 wicked thing to tell all those
 lies.
 (shouting through the open
 door)
 Come!

The *Drostdy* official comes into the room.

LINDENBERG
 This *meid* lied to me, and thereby
 the court. Give her a flogging and
 then she can go.

Philida stares at him in disbelief. Silence hangs in the room.
 The fly buzzes on the desk. Lindenberg lifts the heavy book and
 smashes it down on the desk, killing the fly. Willempie starts
 to cry in fright.

16 **EXT. BEHIND THE DROSDTY BUILDING. DAY.** 16

Willempie lies on his back on the open *abbadoek*, crying with
 such force that it is akin to screaming.

In the background, Philida, naked, is strapped to a flogging
 bench as the *Drostdy* official administers twenty lashes.

17 **EXT. THE BACK YARD AT ZANDFLIET. DAY.** 17

The black stallion, with Frans astride, clops haltingly into
 the yard, exhausted, his breath rattling and wheezing in his
 throat.

Cornelis struts from the *stoep*.
 [ENGLISH TRANSLATION]
 Stoep - Porch

CORNELIS
 This horse looks as if he's going
 to collapse. If you ever do that
 again I'll kill you with my own
 two hands, you little *stront*.
 [ENGLISH SUBTITLES]
 Stront - Shit

An outside slave comes to takes the reins of the horse.

Frans slides himself down the side of the horse, and stands on
 wobbly legs.

FRANS

I'm dead tired too, Pa. I'm going straight to bed.

CORNELIS

That's what you think. You will come to the *voorhuis* so you can tell me everything that happened in Stellenbosch. I'm your father, I am the *baas* of Zandvliet, I got to know.

[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]

Voorhuis - Front Parlour

18 EXT. THE ELEPHANT TRAIL. DAY.

18

In the middle distance, Philida, holding Willempie in her arms, casts a long shadow as she walks back the way she came, her pain evident in the hesitance of her gait. Blood has seeped through onto the back of her dress.

19 INT. THE VOORHUIS AT ZANDVLIET. NIGHT.

19

The flickering candlelight casts dancing shadows on the walls. The family Bible lies on a pedestal in pride of place. The whole family is gathered. Cornelis is in the high-backed chair. Frans sits on his father's left and, in descending order of age, KleinCornelis (21), Daniel (18), and Lodewyk (12). Janna sits on the couch, and next to her, in descending order of age, sit Maria Elisabet (14), Fransien (11), and Alida (9).

CORNELIS

(holding forth)

Frans has told me everything that happened in Stellenbosch. He told the Protector, a man called Lindenberg, that two *slaaf* youths had been with Philida and that, Frans said, was how the man recorded it. This is all that matters in the end: that it was recorded. One day in the future, when no one of us is still around, that is all the world will know and all that needs to be known.

JANNA

(in a low, trembling voice)

The *skande*! The *skande* of it. This is what comes of marrying a Brink.

(MORE)

JANNA (CONT'D)

This I will never be able to wash
from my hands, this taste of gall
and vinegar I will never get
rinsed from my mouth.

[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]

Skande - Shame

(her quavering voice begins
to rise to a crescendo)

That I, a de Wet, have to see a
day like this. It will be the
death of me. My heart cannot stand
this. The *skande*. And I, born a de
Wet -

CORNELIS

(lashing out)

You've been a Brink for years. You
can thank the Lord that I gave you
an honorable name and a roof over
your head and a broad couch for
your broad *boude*. When I married
you, you were like a precious
piece of porcelain on a high
shelf. But look at you now!

[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]

Boude - Buttocks

Janna gasps for breath and starts howling like a biblical
deluge in the wintertime.

20 INT. THE KITCHEN AT ZANDVLIET. NIGHT.

20

Twelve Zandvliet slaves and their children - excepting Philida,
Lena, and Willempie - are waiting silently in the kitchen. As
they peer through cracks in doors and overhear the tumult in
the *voorhuis*, they exchange looks that range from alarm to
suppressed levity.

21 INT. THE VOORHUIS AT ZANDVLIET. NIGHT.

21

Janna's eyes alight on Frans.

JANNA

(screaming)

And what about you? It's all your
fault. It's you who started
consorting with that *meid* Philida.
If it hadn't been for you, we
would all have been living
together happily and like good
Christians.

(MORE)

Made in Highland

JANNA (CONT'D)

Aren't you ashamed, Frans? Do you have no respect left in your sinful body? God damn, don't you have any shame?

Her weeping starts whirling upwards out of her chest like a *hadeda*.

[ENGLISH TRANSLATION]

Hadedda - African Ibis

JANNA

(a shuddering wail)

Francoooooooooois!

It is deathly quiet in the *voorhuis* and in the adjoining kitchen.

CORNELIS

(with the no-nonsense air of someone bringing a meeting to order)

From what Frans told me about what happened in Stellenbosch, one thing is very clear: this *slaaf meisie* has become a threat to us. We Brinks are a boat that has always hugged the coast, no matter what storms have come ...

Cornelis eyes the storm that is Janna, who is trying to pull herself together.

CORNELIS

But Philida has now cut a hole into it and we may sink if we don't watch out. And that I'll *verdomp goed* not allow. This is how I have come to my final decision. What used to be a possibility in the past has now been sealed. It won't be enough to punish Philida. She has to be removed from among us.

[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]

Verdomp goed - Damned well

JANNA

(gathering together the shreds of her dignity)

The easiest, I'm sure, would be an accident on the farm. A dead person won't talk and a dead *slaaf* even less.

FRANS

Ma!

22 INT. THE KITCHEN AT ZANDVLIET. NIGHT. 22

The slaves' eyes seek out each others' at Janna's suggestion.

23 INT. THE VOORHUIS AT ZANDVLIET. NIGHT. 23

CORNELIS

Frans, bring the Bible.

Frans stands to fetch the Bible from its pedestal. As he takes his seat again, Cornelis places the Bible on his knees, rests his right hand on top of it, and closes his eyes.

CORNELIS

(declamatory)

And on this blessed day, it is our will, in the presence of God and all his angels, that the maidservant that is within our gates, Philida of the *Caab*, should be cast out from our company, to the everlasting glory of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in the highest heaven.

(opening his eyes and resuming his normal voice)

Is there anyone here present who wishes to rise up against the will of Our Lord?

FRANS

Pa, shouldn't we wait until Philida is back to tell us herself what happened?

CORNELIS

You were there, Frans, were you not? You heard everything that was spoken, so we know exactly what happened in that *onheilege plek*.

[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]

Onheilige plek - Unholy place

Silence. Maria Elisabet coughs, and Cornelis's head jerks in her direction, his glasses glinting in the candlelight. Maria Elisabet tries to smother her cough.

CORNELIS

(to Frans)

Is that so, or isn't it?

Made in Highland

Frans remains sitting without moving, staring at the floor in front of him. KleinCornelis's eyes swivel right to his older brother, his lips set into a slightly smug smile. Janna clears her throat.

CORNELIS
(chilling menace)
Frans, what I said: was that true,
or wasn't it?

FRANS
(almost inaudible)
It's like *Pa* said.

CORNELIS
In that case we are united before
the Lord. Call in the *slawe*,
KleinCornelis.

KleinCornelis stands and walks to the door of the *voorhuis*.

KLEINCORNELIS
(shouting peremptorily)
Kom!
[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]
Kom - Come

The slaves shuffle in, and take up their places standing with their backs to the walls.

Cornelis opens the heavy Bible and pages to Genesis, Chapter 22. As the cadence of Cornelis's sing-song reading rises and falls like a drone in the background, Janna, gleaming with perspiration, sits with her face tilted up to the ceiling, her eyes squeezed shut. The exhausted Frans smothers a yawn. The smaller children fidget. The slaves stand, perfectly still, with their heads bowed.

CORNELIS
*And they came to the place which
God had told him of; and Abraham
built an altar there, and laid the
wood in order, and bound Isaac his
son, and laid him on the altar
upon the wood. And Abraham
stretched forth his hand, and took
the knife to slay his son.*

The shadows are long in the clear moonlight when Philida reaches an overhang of red rocks. Gingerly, she lowers herself to the ground.

Willempie starts fussing, and she gives him her breast, looking down into his blue eyes as he suckles.

PHILIDA

(murmuring half to him, half to herself)

This is what it is to be a *slaaf*, Willempie. Just this, and nothing more. This: that everything is decided for you from out there. You don't say no. You don't ask questions. You just do what they tell you.

25 INT. THE VOORHUIS AT ZANDVLIET. NIGHT.

25

CORNELIS

And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son from me.

26 EXT. THE ELEPHANT TRAIL. NIGHT.

26

Willempie has had his fill and is starting to drowse. Philida stares out over the dark mountains.

PHILIDA

And far at the back of your head you think: Soon there must come a day when I can say for myself: This and that I shall do, this and that I shall not. But such a day never come.

27 INT. THE VOORHUIS AT ZANDVLIET. NIGHT.

27

Cornelis reverently closes the Bible.

CORNELIS

You may go.

All the members of the household begin shuffling towards the door.

CORNELIS

Not you, Frans.

Frans stops, half turning towards his father.

CORNELIS

Do you understand now why I obey the Lord? He always sees to it that the right things happen. You see what a God-fearing father Abraham was.

FRANS

Who would want a father like that?

CORNELIS

(his temper flaring)

That is exactly the kind of father you've got. And if that isn't good enough for you, I'll give you what you *verdoemde* deserve!

[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]

Verdoemde - Damned

28 EXT. ZANDVLIET FARM. DAY.

28

Philida crosses the earthen bridge over the stream, and passes through the gates of Zandvliet.

The thick white walls of the farm reflect the afternoon light among the many greens of the vineyards and fruit trees.

Philida skirts the farm, and takes the dusty white path along the vineyards.

29 EXT. THE BACK STOEP AT ZANDVLIET. DAY.

29

Frans sits on the *stoep*, waiting. He catches sight of Philida walking along the vineyard path. He stands, looks furtively towards towards the kitchen, and sets off to follow Philida.

30 EXT. THE DWARS RIVER. DAY.

30

Philida makes a little hollow for Willempie on the grassy bank. He kicks his feet, gurgling in the freedom from the *abbadoek*. Gingerly, she pulls her thin dress over her head and kneels by the riverbank to scrub out the blood stains against a rock. She spreads the dress on the vegetation to dry, and wades into the water, the gashes on her back vivid in the afternoon sun. She scoops the water over her body again and again, as if there isn't enough to wash herself clean.

Frans emerges out of the vegetation from the direction of the bamboo copse.

Philida, hearing the sound, turns to face him and stands, the water streaming from her body, not attempting to cover herself.

FRANS

I've been waiting for you all day.

PHILIDA

(unflinching)

What is it you been waiting for, Frans.

FRANS

I must speak to you.

She eyes him, saying nothing.

FRANS

You ran away.

PHILIDA

I did not run away. I tell *Ouma Nella* I go to lay a charge in Stellenbosch, and she tell *Nooi Janna*. I walk there and now I am back. No one try to stop me.

FRANS

How could you do that, Philida?

PHILIDA

Do what?

FRANS

Lay a charge against me.

PHILIDA

How could *I*? How could *you*? You *promised* me! And now you break your promise. You lied. You still lying.

FRANS

I had to! What else could I do? My *Pa* would have killed me.

PHILIDA

And me? What about me? Me and our children are going to be sold upcountry. After you *promised*.

FRANS

But I *had* to, can't you see? I'll make it up you, I swear.

PHILIDA

Like you swore all those other times?

FRANS

I didn't make you do anything you didn't want to do, and you know that bladdy well. We had good times together.

PHILIDA

It was good to *naai*. So good I could see your eyes turn up. But when you saw I had a child in me, what then? And what now?

FRANS

Maybe I can talk him out of it.

PHILIDA

Maybe. Maybe. I'm sick of your "maybes," Frans.

She turns and wades deeper into the river, the wounds on her back visible to Frans for the first time.

FRANS

(horrified)
Philida!

She stops, half turning.

FRANS

(barely above a whisper)
What did they do to you?

PHILIDA

(lashing out)
They flogged me, Frans! That's what they did to me. For telling the truth. They chose your lies instead.

Frans's face contorts and tears are suddenly streaming down his face. He wades into the water in his clothes and boots and reaches for her.

FRANS

I'm sorry, Philida. I'm so, so sorry. I never thought -

She flinches away from him.

PHILIDA

That's the trouble with you people. You never think. You only care about your own skin. Just leave me alone.

FRANS

Philida!

He reaches for her again.

PHILIDA

Leave me!

She plunges into the water and swims away out of his reach.

Frans stands thigh deep in water, watching her. He lifts his face to the sky and lets out a guttural cry. Willempie start to wail. Frans walks out of the water, towards the child, but he just walks on past him and disappears again into the vegetation.

Philida comes out of the water and picks up the wailing child, bouncing him and shushing him to soothe him.

31 EXT. THE BACK YARD AT ZANDFLIET. DAY.

31

Cornelis rides the black stallion into the yard, calling for a slave to come and take the reins. He dismounts, and surveys his domain.

Over at the Dwars River, Cornelis sees Philida, holding Willempie in her arms, wading into the river, her wet body glistening in the sun.

Cornelis starts to walk down the hill. He comes to a small green gate in the ring wall around the graveyard. He turns the rusty handle, and goes inside.

32 EXT. THE GRAVEYARD AT ZANDVLIET FARM. DAY.

32

Cornelis stops at a gravestone that reads: *Woudrien Andries Brink - Son of Cornelis and Janna Brink - Died 1822*

He moves on to study the gravestones of unknown strangers: Du Toit, Van Niekerk, Joubert, Hugo, several de Villiers.

Some of the mounds are marked only by a stone.

A shadow moves in between the slanting sun and Cornelis, and he looks up. It is Petronella (late 60s).

PETRONELLA

What are you doing here among the graves?

CORNELIS

I'm just looking at the place where I will come to rest one day. I and my children and my children's children.

PETRONELLA

I don't think you'll come to rest here. There are many names here you don't know anything about and will never know.

CORNELIS

There will be enough time later to get to know them.

Petronella gestures towards a group of unmarked mounds.

PETRONELLA

And here's lots of stones that are not even marked and still they're graves. There's people buried here – in this corner, in that one over there, everywhere – that go back hundreds and thousand of years. My people. Khoi people. San people. And one day they'll stand up and come to ask for what belongs to them.

CORNELIS

There's nothing here that belongs to them.

PETRONELLA

What you think is theirs and what they know is theirs are two different things.

CORNELIS

You talk too much, Petronella. You always come when I need you least.

PETRONELLA

No, Cornelis. I come when you most need me. Only you don't want to hear it. And what I say is what you got to hear.

CORNELIS

There's nothing I got to hear.

His eyes wander involuntarily to the river, and Petronella sees.

PETRONELLA
What is this plan of yours I'm
hearing about Philida?

CORNELIS
It's none of your business.

He tries to walk away, but she steps in front of him.

PETRONELLA
It is precisely my business,
Cornelis.

CORNELIS
It's nothing, man. Now leave me
alone, Ma!

PETRONELLA
I know about everything.

She takes a small, sharp peeling knife from her pocket, and gently strokes the blade on the palm of her hand.

He shifts to try and get past her, but she blocks his way again.

CORNELIS
What's the matter with you today?
I tell you, anything that happens
to that *verdoemde slaaf* is her own
fault for all the trouble she
caused us.

PETRONELLA
"A dead person won't talk and a
dead *slaaf* even less," eh?

She takes a step closer.

PETRONELLA
(speaking almost affably)
Now you listen to me. You try to
hurt Philida, and I will get you
by the balls with this little
peeling knife you gave me years
ago. I'm not joking.

CORNELIS
(snarling)
You're out of sorts today.

PETRONELLA
 (very quietly, her voice
 pulling in the way a cat
 draws in its nails)
 I'm just telling you so you can be
 warned. Do we two understand each
 other, my son?

He doesn't answer. She moves in still closer.

PETRONELLA
 (almost a whisper)
 We don't want our little secret to
 get out, do we, Cornelis? Do we
 understand each other?

CORNELIS
 (after a long pause, very
 quietly)
 I understand, Ma Petronella.

33 EXT. ZANDVLIET FARM. DAY.

33

Philida, carrying Willempie in the crook of her arm, walks from the Dwars River towards Petronella's room. Her damp blue dress clings to her body.

34 INT. PETRONELLA'S ROOM. DAY.

34

LENA (3) squats on the floor with a skein of wool in her hand, playing with a small tabby cat.

The outer door opens quietly, and Philida slips in.

The game is instantly forgotten, and Lena runs to her mother.

LENA
 Mama!

Philida crouches to encircle Lena with her free arm, flinching as the wounds on her back stretch taut. The small tabby cat twines herself around the small group, mewing and chirruping.

PHILIDA
 Hullo Kleinkat. Did you also miss
 your ma?

The cat purrs, rubbing herself against Philida.

FLASHBACK

35

EXT. OUTSIDE PETRONELLA'S ROOM. DAY. THE YEAR 1817.

35

Philida (10) is sitting on the ground underneath the window of Petronella's room, bent in deep concentration over her knitting.

JANNA (O.S.)
Frans! *Frans!* Come here!

FRANS (O.S.)
Yes, *Ma?*

JANNA (O.S.)
Langkat has had six more *verdoemde*
kittens.
[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]
Verdoemde - Darned

Philida looks up from her work, her movements arrested.

JANNA (O.S.)
(speaking indistinctly)

FRANS (O.S.)
Ma!

JANNA
(her voice raised)
Not tomorrow, or the day after,
but right now, today. Go!

Frans (7) comes into Philida's view, stumbling off in the direction of the Dwars River, holding a bushel basket in front of him with two hands. Philida stares after him, then sets her knitting aside and follows him.

36

EXT. THE TRACK TO THE DWARS RIVER. DAY.

36

Philida catches up to Frans on the narrow pathway.

PHILIDA
What's going on?

Frans keeps on doggedly walking with the uneven load of mewling kittens in the bushel basket.

FRANS
She told me to drown them in the
Dwars River and all I can do is
follow orders.

PHILIDA

(speaking fast, words
tumbling out in urgency)

No! You can't do it, not to
Langkat's babies, because Langkat
is *my* cat, the *ounooi* say so
herself the day I knitted her the
pretty red-and-blue cardigan with
the double moss-stitching, she say
I can *mos* keep Langkat for myself,
and so the kittens is mine also.

FRANS

How can I say no to her? If I
don't listen to her she will tell
my *pa*.

PHILIDA

Are you a *slaaf* then who must do
everything she say?

FRANS

Her word is her word.

Philida tries to dart in front of him, but the track is too
narrow. Their breath is coming fast now.

PHILIDA

Those kittens also want to live,
don't they?

37

EXT. THE BANK OF THE DWARS RIVER. DAY.

37

Away from the track, Frans starts to run towards the Dwars
River. Philida outruns him and grabs at the basket. They tussle
the basket back and forth between them, and the lid begins to
slip off. With a final wrench, Frans plunges into the river
with the basket, the lid half-on and half-off. The water eddies
and bubbles in the silence of the stilled mewing.

One bedraggled kitten claws to the surface and Philida lunges
for it in the split second before Frans can get to it. She
cradles it, mewing, against her thin chest as she backs away
out of the reach of Frans.

FRANS

Philida! Give it back! I'm going
to get into bad trouble.

PHILIDA

Then it's *your* problem. I'm
keeping this one. I'll make sure
the *ounooi* won't get her.

He tries to catch her, but she darts away.

FRANS
Philida! I'm going to tell my ma!

PHILIDA
(changing her tactic)
Listen, I won't tell anybody.
Nobody will ever find out.

FRANS
You promise before the LordGod you
won't tell anybody?

PHILIDA
I promise before the LordGod.

FRANS
(after an internal tussle)
Then it's all right. You can have
the little one.

Immediately, Philida turns and runs back towards the path.

END FLASHBACK

38

INT. PETRONELLA'S ROOM. DAY.

38

Philida stands and she lies Willempie down on the high bed. Immediately, Kleinkat jumps up to curl next to his warmth. Philida strokes Kleinkat and rests her hand on Lena's head as the child presses up close against her mother.

Petronella comes in through the exterior door, and stops on the threshold to take in the tableau.

PETRONELLA
So ... you back.

PHILIDA
Yes.
(in a low, flat voice)
There's is no more hope for me.
They going to take me upcountry
and sell me inland. Me and my
children. A place we don't know,
in a land we don't know and don't
want to know.

She stands, silent, lost in her hopeless thoughts. Petronella closes the door and comes over to her. She tucks a damp strand of Philida's hair behind her ear.

PHILIDA
 Why is it like this, *Ouma Nella*?
 There must be something more.
 Something that is not like this.

She gives Petronella a piercing, imploring look.

PHILIDA
Ouma Nella, where am I not?

PETRONELLA
 You right here with me, Philida,
 so there's many places you are
 not.

PHILIDA
 But I don't know where's those
 places. I don't want to know. I
 just want to be here, where I
 know, with my *Ouma Nella*.

39 INT. CELLAR AT ZANDVLIET. NIGHT.

39

By candlelight, Frans is rinsing out a few half-aum wine barrels.* He lifts his head at an uneven footstep as Cornelis limps into the dim interior.

*[An aum is between 30 and 32 gallons]

CORNELIS
 Frans, you and I still have a
hoender om te pluk.
 [ENGLISH SUBTITLES]
 Hoender om te pluk -
 Chicken to pluck

Frans carries on rinsing.

FRANS
Pa?

CORNELIS
 I'm off to Worcester tomorrow.
 There's an auction.

FRANS
 What kind of auction?

CORNELIS
Slawe, of course. What else?

Frans stops his work and looks sharply at Cornelis.

FRANS
 Is this about Philida?

Made in Highland

CORNELIS
Of course it's about Philida.

FRANS
But it's too soon. The child is
still too small.

CORNELIS
Who's child?

FRANS
Philida's child.

CORNELIS
Why should a *slaaf* woman's child
concern you?

Frans is silent.

CORNELIS
You mean *your* child too?

Frans still doesn't answer.

CORNELIS
Anyway, when I was in the *Caab* the
last time, the people were talking
about this auction in Worcester.
They even put it in the *Gazette*.

FRANS
This is no time to buy or sell
slawe, Pa. The market is gone down
a big hole.

CORNELIS
(angry)
If Philida stays here there'll be
no end to the *kak*. And it's all
because of you. Because you can't
control yourself.

FRANS
You can't sell Philida, *Pa!* She's
the best knitter.

CORNELIS
What choice do I have?
(self pitying)
We're always on the losing side,
Frans. Whether it's the government
or God, no difference.
(MORE)

CORNELIS (CONT'D)

God gets the Devil or somebody else to do his dirty work for him so nobody knows who to blame for it.

FRANS

And who's to blame for selling Philida now?

CORNELIS

It's her own *verdomde* fault. All her doing. And yours. You heard all the things she said about us. Your *ma* cannot stand it any longer. And how do you think you'll ever get that Berrangé girl to marry you with Philida always underfoot?

FRANS

Who says I want to marry Berrangé girl?

Cornelis glares at him

CORNELIS

What utter *kak* are you talking now, Frans?

FRANS

Everything we discussed and talked about tells me I got no chance with Maria Magdalena.

CORNELIS

You should have thought about all of that long ago. Now it's time to get it arranged. The Berrangés are important people, we can't play the *gek* with them. And today we need them, otherwise we've had it.

[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]

Gek - Fool

FRANS

What makes the difference this time?

CORNELIS

(in a torrent of aggrieved
bitterness)

It was only I went to the *Caab*
last time that it really hit me
how bad it's going with us. You
know what I got for my wine in the
Caab? Thirty-six *rix-dollars* a
leaguer. 'n *Verdomde skande*. How
are we supposed to keep up?

[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]

'n *Verdomde skande* - A damn shame

He gives a deep sigh that seems to draw from between his
backbone and his gut.

CORNELIS

And this whole *slaaf* business -
nobody can say for sure yet what
will happen next year when the
vervloekte English let the whole
verdomde lot of them loose on us.
They say that each will stay with
his *baas* for for four more years,
but who says it's going to work
out like that? I lie awake at
night and behind my closed eyes I
can see strangers trampling
Zandvliet to dust. Everybody
coming here for our bankruptcy
auction.

[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]

Vervloekte - Cursed

FRANS

If that's how bad it is, how can
you stop it? And how will it help
to sell *Philida*?

CORNELIS

We've got to get rid of *Philida*.
She's making the water *modderig*
for all of us. I'm going to get on
the road before sunrise tomorrow
to get to *Worcester* in time. They
say the prices for *slawe* in that
part of the world are still better
than in the *Caab*, but not for
long.

[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]

Modderig - Muddy

FRANS
Surely we wait a little bit longer!

CORNELIS
Who is your we?

FRANS
(startled)
Pa?

CORNELIS
Don't look at me like that. You're not going with me. I won't allow you to bring even more shame on the family. It's not games we're playing. I tell you it's life or death.

FRANS
But, Pa!

CORNELIS
That's all I got to say. You've caused us enough trouble. Tomorrow when I take Philida to Worcester you will stay right here. And as soon as I get back, you better see to it that you get married to Maria Berrangé. I hope that's clear.

Without waiting for an answer, he stalks out of the cellar as fast as his limp will allow him.

Frans stands still in the growing dark, looking as if a bucket full of cold water has been thrown in his face.

Then, he turns and runs from the cellar.

40 INT. PETRONELLA'S ROOM. NIGHT.

40

Petronella is cooking at the hearth in the corner. Philida sits on a small red carpet on the smoothly polished dung floor, with Willempie on her breast and Kleinkat on her lap. Next to her, Lena plays with a little green elephant carved from a block of camphor wood.

The door leading to the interior of the house crashes open, and Frans stands there.

Petronella crosses the room swiftly and positions herself in front of him, with her hands on her wide hips, blocking his way.

PETRONELLA

What are you doing here? There's nothing here that belongs to you.

FRANS

I've got to speak to Philida.

PETRONELLA

You got nothing to do with Philida. Let her be.

FRANS

This is important business, Petronella.

PHILIDA

(listless)

You and I got nothing to talk about any more, Frans.

FRANS

But you don't know what is going to happen tomorrow, Philida!

PHILIDA

I don't want to know nothing. Just leave me alone.

Cornelis is suddenly standing right behind Frans, brandishing a long *kierie*.

[ENGLISH TRANSLATION]

Kierie - Wooden club

CORNELIS

What do you think you're doing here, Frans?

Frans ducks under the *kierie* and runs back into the longhouse.

Petronella looks long and hard at Cornelis before closing the door in his face.

41 INT. KITCHEN AT ZANDVLIET. NIGHT.

41

Frans bursts in, startling the kitchen slaves. He snatches up a lantern from the shelf above the hearth, and goes out quickly through the back door.

42 INT. THE BRIDLE ROOM IN THE BACKYARD OF ZANDVLIET. NIGHT. 42

Frans crashes the door open, scans the shelves with his eyes, and grabs a small hatchet. He leaves as quickly as he came.

43 EXT. ZANDVLIET FARM. NIGHT. 43

In the East, the moon is already out, a deep orange yellow, and huge.

Hugging close to the buildings so that he can remain unseen from the longhouse, Frans makes his way down to the bamboo copse. The moon casts Frans's shadow deep and black, keeping pace with him as he runs.

44 EXT. THE BAMBOO COPSE. NIGHT. 44

Frans enters the copse, and the bamboos close up behind him. His shadow disappears in the sudden darkness. The bamboos shift in the evening breeze, making an eerie whispering, groaning, grinding sound.

Frans strikes a small flame from his tinderbox and lights the lantern. The wan circle of light around him barely touches the black trunks and stems. He places the lantern on the ground, and starts hacking down bamboos, seeking out thin, straight ones. From time to time, he stops to make calculations and to measure. He hacks, and hacks some more, wiping away the sweat from his forehead.

At last, he has a bundle large enough, and he hoists it onto his shoulder. In his haste, he is careless and he kicks over the oil lamp. All of a sudden, in a whoosh of flame, everything around him turns into dancing arms and fingers of bright, blazing, burning fire.

45 EXT. ZANDVLIET FARM. NIGHT. 45

Frans tumbles out of the bamboo copse with the load of bamboos on his shoulder and the hatchet still in his hand. From outside, he stands staring at the flames engulfing the clump of bamboo in front of his eyes.

FRANS
(muttering to himself)
May the whole *verdoemde* Zandvliet
burn to soot and ashes.

The breeze has come up more strongly now, and the bamboo sways with it in the direction of the Dwars River, running the flames in front of it. The fire licks at the edge of the water and, having nowhere to go, peters out with a hissing sigh. The inferno is gone as quickly as it came.

Frans turns and walks quickly along the narrow white moon-road back to the bridle room, churning up dust with his boots.

46

INT. PETRONELLA'S ROOM. NIGHT.

46

Lena sleeps with the abandon of childhood on her palliasse in the corner, while Philida and Petronella, with Willempie between them, are asleep on the high bed. Kleinkat is curled up at the foot of the bed.

Suddenly, there's indistinct yelling from Cornelis, the cock crows, and the slave bell clangs.

Philida sits up in bed, looking down at Willempie and over at Lena to check on them. Petronella turns over with a small grunt and settles deeper into the bed.

A banging on the inner door startles Petronella upright. With a yowl of fright, Kleinkat scuttles underneath the bed.

CORNELIS (O.S.)

Petronella! Philida! Open up!

Willempie starts to wail and Philida pulls him into her arms to soothe him. Lena sits up on her palliasse, tousled with sleep. Petronella pulls a shawl around her and pads to the door to open it.

Cornelis looks into the room past Petronella at Philida.

CORNELIS

Get your things together, Philida!
We leave for upcountry in fifteen
minutes.

PETRONELLA

We won't be ready in fifteen
minutes.

CORNELIS

You're not coming, Petronella.
It's just Philida and her
children.

PETRONELLA

I'm coming too, otherwise Philida
stays right here.

CORNELIS
 (suddenly furious)
 You can't come, Petronella, man!
 It's just Philida and her
 children.

PETRONELLA
 No, Cornelis.

Janna waddles up behind Cornelis and joins in the fray with a voice that hasn't woken up yet and sounds like a cackling goose.

JANNA
 Why must you always be making
 trouble, Petronella? You've got to
 stay here. Only Philida and her
 children go.

PETRONELLA
 No. No stay no.

CORNELIS
 (irate)
 Ag, come then! We leave in half an
 hour.

JANNA
 You can't just—

Cornelis slams the inner door behind him, cutting off the rest of Janna's speech.

Petronella turns to look at Philida, sitting in the bed, cradling Willempie. Lena climbs up onto the bed to be near her mother.

LENA
 Where we going, *Ouma Nella*?

PETRONELLA
 Upcountry, my child.

PHILIDA
 How do we come to this upcountry,
Ouma Nella?

PETRONELLA
 Man, if you don't know where you
 are going, any road will bring you
 there.

LENA
 Will we come back?

PETRONELLA

It don't matter how far a river
run, Lenatjie, it never forget
where it come from. That is all
that is important.

PHILIDA

I heard it's a dry place, this
upcountry.

PETRONELLA

If it's wet or dry, as long as you
keep a green branch in your heart,
there will always be a bird that
come to sing in it.

47 **EXT. BACKYARD OF ZANDVLIET FARM. DAY.**

47

Frans emerges from the bridle room, carrying a bamboo cage in
one hand. He keeps close to the outside wall of the homestead,
and creeps up to Petronella's room.

48 **EXT. OUTSIDE PETRONELLA'S ROOM. DAY.**

48

Frans peers inside the window. Philida sits on the edge of the
neatly made bed with Willempie at her breast. She is wearing a
cast-off chintz dress. Next to her is Lena, quiet and
frightened, staring as if she's seen a ghost. Pressed up
against Philida, Kleinkat lies stretched out as if there is
nothing at all wrong in the world.

In response to Frans tapping on the window, Petronella yanks
open the door.

PETRONELLA

Well? What good-for-nothing
business brings you here now?

FRANS

I brought something for Philida to
take with her.

PETRONELLA

(flying at him in anger)
You mean to tell me that you knew
it all along?

FRANS

I came to tell you last night but
then we were interrupted by Pa.
Eerlik tot God, I did try to warn
you, but it wasn't possible.

(MORE)

Made in Highland

FRANS (CONT'D)
 [ENGLISH SUBTITLES]
 Eerlik tot God - Honest to God
 (speaking past Petronella to
 Philida)
 I made this bamboo cage for
 Kleinkat. So you can take her with
 you if you want to.

PHILIDA
 (biting back tears)
 There's nothing I want from you.

As if sensing his mother's distress, Willempie starts to cry.

FRANS
 I worked all through the night to
 make it for you, Philida.

49 INT. PETRONELLA'S ROOM. DAY.

49

He steps deftly past Petronella and puts the cage on the floor next to the bed, then stands back again.

Philida is holding the crying Willempie up to her shoulder. She says something, but it isn't possible to hear her words over Willempie's wails.

The interior door opens, and Janna's bulk appears in frame.

JANNA
 What are you doing here, Frans?

FRANS
 I just wanted - I just brought
 Philida something, *Ma*.

JANNA
 You've got a *verdomde* cheek,
 Frans.

FRANS
 Just leave us alone, *Ma*! It's bad
 enough as it is.

CORNELIS (O.S.)
 Philida!

Frans gives a panicked look towards the open outside door. As he turns to run, he looks once more at Philida.

FRANS
I nearly burned down our bamboo
copse, Philida.

He ducks past Janna and flees through the interior door.

JANNA
What?!

She waddles after him.

JANNA
What did you say, Frans?

FRANS (O.S.)
Los my uit!
[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]
Los my uit! - Leave me alone!

A door slams shut, and there is silence in the house.

CORNELIS (O.S.)
Philida!

Willempie has stopped crying. Philida lies him down on the bed, and tidies the front of her dress. She stands up and a shiver runs through her. She cradles Willempie in one arm, takes Lena's hand to help her down from the bed, then she turns and walks from Petronella's room through the open inner door.

CORNELIS (O.S.)
Philida! I'm not calling for you
again. Get your *agterkant* out
here!
[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]
Afterkant - Backside

Petronella picks up her brightly coloured Javanese cotton bag, and pulls it over her shoulder. She stations herself at the outer door.

PETRONELLA
Just give us five more minutes,
Cornelis. That's all we asking.

CORNELIS
"Asking" my *poephol*.

PETRONELLA
Nobody's *poephol*. If you want to
get rid of the child, then you do
it properly, otherwise you got me
to deal with.

50

INT. THE VOORHUIS AT ZANDVLIET. DAY.

50

Janna is sitting on the couch dunking a rusk into a cup of tea.

Philida walks in, still cradling Willempie in one arm and holding Lena by the hand.

PHILIDA
(very quietly)
Ounooi, I just brought the
children so they can say goodbye
to their *ouma*, before we get on
the cart.

As Philida speaks, Janna half rises, but sinks back onto the couch.

PHILIDA
Because I don't suppose we'll see
each other again very soon.

Janna opens her mouth, but no sound comes out. She drops the rusk into her tea, and puts her big soft hand on her chest.

JANNA
(aghast, outraged)
Huh - Huh ...

Janna reaches out to support herself against the couch.

JANNA
(words fail her)
Huh ...

PHILIDA
We wish the *Ounooi* all the
blessings of the LordGod.

At the door, Philida turns to look back for one last time.

Janna is still sitting on the couch shaping with her small round mouth the sound: Huh.

There is the faintest trace of a smile at the corner of Philida's mouth.

51

EXT. ON THE ROAD NORTHEAST FROM ZANDVLIET TO WORCESTER. DAY.

51

Cornelis is driving the mule cart, sipping intermittently from a flagon of brandy. In the back are Philida, Petronella, the children, and Klienkat inside the bamboo cage that Frans made for her. She mews in mild protest.

It is raining. Not hard but consistently. Philida takes off her shawl and drapes it over Kleinkat's cage.

PETRONELLA

My kind, there is something I got to tell you now.

[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]

My kind - My child

PHILIDA

What, *Ouma Nella*?

PETRONELLA

For a long time I never told you, not because I did not know, but because you or I can do nothing about it. But now it is time.

PHILIDA

So tell me.

PETRONELLA

I have to tell you where you came from.

For a while, Petronella just sits, doing nothing, saying nothing.

PHILIDA

Do I also come from a far place like you?

PETRONELLA

No, you come from the *Caab*.

Petronella breathes a deep sigh. She glances up at Cornelis's back, as if to make sure that he is out of earshot, and, as the cart plods steadily towards Worcester, she tells her story.

PETRONELLA

From very far back, more than twenty-five years back, I got to know the young girl Farieda that used to work for a family called Berrangé.

PHILIDA

Is that the family of the white woman who Frans want to marry?

PETRONELLA

It's not that he want to marry her, but his family is telling him so.

(MORE)

PETRONELLA (CONT'D)

Anyway, Farieda was a girl-woman, not quite woman yet. Just getting ripe, like a quince. Her mother came from Malabar, the people said, came out on the ship, like I did from Java. It's not something I like to talk about.

(she gathers her thoughts,
weighing her words)

So, somebody bought Farieda, then somebody else bought her, then somebody else again – and that somebody else was called Daniel Fredrik Berrangé, and it's Maria Magdalena, one of his big brood of daughters, that they say Frans will now have to marry.

PHILIDA

Is – ?

PETRONELLA

(cutting her off and doggedly
continuing with her story)

Now, Daniel Fredrik Berrangé's brother was a *dominee* – that is a man of the spirit. But all that was needed was one look, and you could see he was a man of the flesh. Such big, sweaty hands and a face that said only one thing: Come here, little sister, and lie down, and let your bridegroom enter you with singing psalms and lots of prayers. It didn't take long before Farieda was swollen with child, even though our man of God was already a father of five children by that time, three of them from *slaaf* women.

[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]

Dominee - Preacher

Willempie whimpers in his sleep, and Philida settles him again.

PETRONELLA

Farieda was still a child, like I said, and she just wanted to –

Her eyes flicker towards Philida.

PETRONELLA

She wanted to drown the baby.

Philida looks sharply into Petronella's face, and their eyes meet.

PETRONELLA

It was I who stopped her and took the little thing away from that house and gave her to a *slaaf* woman in the *Bo-Kaap* whose little boy had just died.

She stops, lost in memory.

PHILIDA

And then, *Ouma Nella*?

Petronella reaches to take Philida's hand.

PETRONELLA

That baby was you, Philida.

PHILIDA

(an inarticulate sound – part shock, part bewilderment)

PETRONELLA

I helped to bring you up and later I took you in with me.

Petronella pats Philida's hand to punctuate the end of her story, and then folds her hands together.

PETRONELLA

So that is where you come from, and how and why, and I had to tell you before you go away.

PHILIDA

(urgent)

But what about my mother, *Ouma Nella*? What about *Farieda*?

PETRONELLA

All those things have been buried away far and deep and long ago.

PHILIDA

I still got to know about my *ma*.

PETRONELLA

Ai, man. Is it really necessary?

PHILIDA

I want to know.

(pleading)

I got to know.

A long silence.

PHILIDA

So tell me, *Ouma Nella*.

PETRONELLA

She didn't live much longer, *my kind*. She tried to run away, *sommer* up into the mountain, and the Berrangés sent a commando after her. They were already rich and important people and they could pay anybody to do what they asked. So Farieda was brought back. All I can tell you is that they didn't handle her softly. So to those rich people she wasn't worth anything any more. They just let her bleed, and so she died.

[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]

Sommer - Just

Philida stares at Petronella, her black eyes wide, but dry.

PETRONELLA

So you moved in with me and I brought you up.

Philida is silent. She sits staring out in front of her. Petronella too. Then Philida turns her eyes on Petronella again.

PHILIDA

And you, *Ouma Nella*? Why didn't you ever have a baby of your own?

Petronella looks instinctively, involuntarily, towards Cornelis's back, and Philida follows her look. Then she turns turns back to Petronella, aghast, comprehension slowly dawning.

PETRONELLA

(her voice so low it is barely audible)

Nobody could know. The wife said she would bring him up as her own son as long as nobody knows. But when the father is dying, he told Cornelis everything and made him promise on his life to take care of me. So he bought me my freedom after his *ma* and *pa* were both dead.

PHILIDA
 (wide-eyed, barely above a
 whisper)
 So that is why you can wear
skoene.

Petronella nods.

PHILIDA
 And why you have your own room.

Petronella nods again. Philida stares into Petronella's face as if trying to come to terms with all this new information.

The mule cart creaks and sways on towards the inland.

52 **EXT. OPEN SQUARE IN FRONT OF THE WORCESTER DROSTDY. 52**
DAY. FRIDAY 22 FEBRUARY 1833.

The day is now clear and unbearably hot. Cicadas shrill with piercing volume. Townsfolk are gathered together with a number of farmers from the district.

A red carpet is spread open on the dust in front of the *Drostdy*, with a long sturdy table set upon it. Two bulky chairs are occupied by the COMMISSIONER and his pale, officious ASSISTANT. The Commissioner, a middle-aged Englishman of indeterminate years, is deeply tanned and wears a starched uniform.

In front of the Commissioner is a pile of heavy, leather-bound books and a stoneware jug around which swirls a swarm of *miggies*.

[ENGLISH TRANSLATION]
 Miggies - Gnats

In the crowd, bottles and jugs and pitchers are passed from hand to hand, and the throng is rowdy. Cornelis, still continuing to swig from his flagon of brandy, is seated on the mule cart. Petronella remains in the back of the cart to watch the proceedings. Philida, her children, with Kleinkat in her cage, are to one side slightly apart.

On top of the table stands a family of slaves - the FATHER from Macassar, the MOTHER from Java, two DAUGHTERS aged 14 and 11, and a SON aged 8.

COMMISSIONER
 I will start the bidding at one
 thousand rix-dollars. Who will
 advance me on one thousand?

BIDDER 1
 One thousand one hundred.

BIDDER 2
One thousand two hundred.

COMMISSIONER
Come, gentlemen, we can do better
than that.

There is a raucous outburst near the back, and STEPHANUS
GOTLIEB MAREE calls out.

STEPHANUS
Two thousand.

BIDDER 1
Two thousand five hundred.

STEPHANUS
Three thousand.

BIDDER 2
Three thousand five hundred

STEPHANUS
(starting to get strident)
Four thousand.

BIDDER 1
Four thousand one hundred.

STEPHANUS
Four thousand two hundred.

There is a pause in the bidding. The cicadas shrill.

COMMISSIONER
Any advance on four thousand two
hundred?

STEPHANUS
Wag! Wag!
[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]
Wag - Wait

He pushes through the crowd from the back, and presses himself
right up against the table to address the 14 year old girl.

STEPHANUS
Open your mouth so I can study
your teeth!

The girl shakes her head, keeping her mouth firmly shut.

PETRUS JACOBUS CONRADIE, the seller, a skinny sunburned farmer,
lurches forward and waves a *sjambok* in front of her.

[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]
Sjambok - stiff whip

The girl opens her mouth.

STEPHANUS
Now lower the top of your dress so
I can see more of you.

COMMISSIONER
Is this strictly necessary?

STEPHANUS
Of course it is! I want to use her
for breeding purposes, so it's
obvious that I must make very sure
she is properly equipped for the
task.

He reaches up and, together, Stephanus and Petrus manhandle the girl, pulling at her until she loses her balance and lands on her bottom on top of the table. They rip the dress, exposing young breasts before the girl scrambles up again, covering herself. She is openly crying by this time. The parents stare straight ahead. The younger children cringe back.

COMMISSIONER
That's enough!

A few women in the crowd mumble sullenly, but the men grow more vociferous.

STEPHANUS
I'll take them.

COMMISSIONER
Sold to Stephanus Gotlieb Maree.

ASSISTANT
Sold for four thousand two hundred
rix-dollars.

He makes a calculation.

ASSISTANT
That's three hundred pounds.

The Commissioner looks over to Philida's little group.

COMMISSIONER
Next!

Philida, with Willempie in the *abbadoek* on her back, places the cage with Kleinkat on the table, climbs up, and reaches down to pull Lena up next to her. She gives Lena the carved green elephant to play with.

As she stands with Kleinkat's cage at her bare feet, Philida fixes her eyes on a spot in the distance as she stares out towards the distant blue mountains. There seems to be something remote and untouchable about her.

Still seated in the back of the cart, Petronella's eyes are fixed on Philida. Cornelis takes another swig of brandy and has difficulty judging the right distance between the cart bench and the bottom of the flagon as he places it down.

ASSISTANT

(reading from a list of
slaves for sale)

A woman from the Cape, age 26, a knitter, and her two children; the boy aged almost one year old, the girl aged three.

COMMISSIONER

I'll start the bid at one hundred pounds. Do I hear anybody say a hundred and ten?

ASSISTANT

The bidding starts at one thousand four hundred rix-dollars.

MAGIEL CHRISTOFFEL BOTMA (Emcee) pushes through the crowd to the front, up against the solid table, with a long *kierie* in his hand. He is evidently inebriated. He puts the *kierie* in between Philida's ankles and starts pushing up the hem of her long dress.

Without shifting her eyes from the mountains in the distance, Philida takes a step back.

Emcee leans forward to stay close to her and proceeds to inspect her with *kierie* once again, now between her knees.

The men in the crowd start to laugh and jeer.

COMMISSIONER

(shouting suddenly)

Silence! Stop this commotion!

Emcee starts violently at the Commissioner's outburst and drops his *kierie*. He bends down to pick it up, and, as he straightens up unsteadily, he slams the back of his small bullet head against the edge of the table.

The Commissioner puts out a hand to steady his pile of books.

COMMISSIONER

What are you doing, you clumsy
lout?

Lena has recoiled to the back of the table. Willempie is wailing. As Philida jogs him to quieten him again, she keeps her eyes fixed on the distant mountains.

BIDDER 1

He just wanted to make sure the
meid's legs meet somewhere.

Ribald laughter from the crowd.

BIDDER 2

A man's got to make sure before he
buys.

COMMISSIONER

(in a stentorian voice)
Stand back!

Emcee staggers back one step.

Lena looks anxiously up at her mother.

COMMISSIONER

Now, again: one hundred pounds. Do
I hear anybody say a hundred and
ten?

ASSISTANT

And hurry up, His Worship does not
have all day.

Emcee returns to the table and clasps the edge in his two hands, craning up at Philida. Lena edges further away. The table begins to wobble. Philida stomps on Emcee's fingers with her bare foot.

EMCEE

(howls)

This is the moment when Petronella climbs down from the mule cart and moves in closer, behind Emcee.

PETRONELLA

Leave her alone, you!

Emcee looks round, staggering and unsteady. He raises his long *kierie*.

EMCEE

Shut up, you *verdomde meid*!

Now it is Cornelis's turn to climb down from the mule cart and stumble forwards, flagon in hand. He grabs Emcee by a shoulder and angrily shoves him aside. Emcee almost loses his balance.

CORNELIS

She is not your *meid* you *drol*!

[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]

Drol - Turd

EMCEE

Drol yourself! Why you stick up for her? She's only a *meid*?

CORNELIS

(right in Emcee's face)

Didn't you hear me? She is not your *meid*.

EMCEE

(whining and suddenly
tearful)

Why are you getting so worked up over a *verdomde meid*?

Emcee turns to go, but Cornelis pulls him back so fast that Emcee gasps for breath.

CORNELIS

(sounding for all the world
like a growling dog)

She's nobody's *meid*, you hear me?

(enunciating every word
through the blur of alcohol)

She ... is ... my ... mother.

It is dead quiet on the dusty square in front of the Drostdy.

PETRONELLA

I am a free woman.

She pulls from her Javanese cotton shoulder bag a sheet of paper with an embossed red seal on it.

PETRONELLA

I can say what I want. Now you shut your mouth or I'll do it for you.

As Emcee slithers out of the way, enraged and sorry for himself, the crowd hums and rumbles like a bees' nest.

Cornelis looks about him, disorientated, his glasses glinting in the sunlight. He turns and makes his way heavily to his seat on the mule cart.

COMMISSIONER

(like a command to a firing squad)

Let us proceed! The bidding will start at one hundred pounds. Any advance on one hundred pounds?

DOCTOR ATHERSTONE, a haughty doctor with a well trimmed beard, raises his hand.

ATHERSTONE

One hundred and five.

BERNABÉ JAN GERHARD DE LA BAT (around 40) rushes up, flustered, and joins the gathering. He is tall and thin, with a pronounced Adam's apple, and he has a stiff walk reminiscent of a secretary bird. His hair is combed flat on his scalp, and he wears thick glasses, behind which his eyes look rather worried as if unsure whether someone is going to scold him or find him ridiculous.

DE LA BAT

(out of breath)

One hundred and ten.

ATHERSTONE

One hundred and fifteen.

DE LA BAT

One hundred and eighteen.

COMMISSIONER

Any advance on one hundred and eighteen?

ATHERSTONE

One hundred and twenty.

DE LA BAT

One hundred and twenty-one.

ATHERSTONE

One hundred and twenty-two.

de la Bat searches through his pockets and counts out his change.

ATHERSTONE

(speaking to his neighbor)

Have you seen this one's eyes?
Pure obsidian.

NEIGHBOUR
What is obsidian?

ATHERSTONE
(condescending)
Oh, don't you know? It's a very
special gemstone. Pitch black.

Philida's black eyes flick briefly to Atherstone, and then fix again on the the distant blue mountains.

COMMISSIONER
Do I hear one hundred and twenty-
three?

DE LA BAT
One hundred and twenty-three
pounds, two shillings and
sixpence.

The Commissioner looks at Doctor Atherstone, who shakes his head.

COMMISSIONER
Any advance on one hundred and
twenty-three pounds, two shillings
and sixpence?

There are no takers.

COMMISSIONER
Sold to Bernabé Jan Gerhard de la
Bat for one hundred and twenty-
three pounds, two shillings and
sixpence.

ASSISTANT
(making another calculation)
That equals one thousand seven
hundred and twenty-five rix-
dollars.

Philida climbs down from the table, lifts Lena to the ground, and picks up Kleinkat in her cage.

de la Bat approaches her with his stiff walk.

DE LA BAT
My house is on Church Street. It
is not far. You can follow me.

PHILIDA
Please, *Meester*, I must just say
goodbye to my *Ouma*.

(MORE)

PHILIDA (CONT'D)
 [ENGLISH SUBTITLES]
 Meester - Sir

DE LA BAT
 I will wait here.

Philida turns towards Petronella, who envelopes her and the children in a hug.

PHILIDA
 (whispering)
 You better hurry back home now,
Ouma Nella. I can see the *ouman* is
 on fire. He must be *heeltemal*
poegaai to say what he said.
 [ENGLISH SUBTITLES]
 Ouman - Old man
 Heeltemal poeggai -
 completely drunk

PETRONELLA
 Never mind that now. You must
 watch out and take care of
 yourself.
 (suddenly tearful)
 How will you ever manage on your
 own?

PHILIDA
 (quietly)
 You teach me *mos*, *Ouma Nella*.
 (with a small smile)
 Remember one thing, I now learn to
 say *No*.

Petronella presses Philida against her once again, stares into her face one last time, then walks to the cart as Philida turns to her new owner.

53 **EXT. CHURCH STREET, WORCESTER. DAY.** 53

de la Bat leads the way, with his stiff gait, along Church Street, Philida and her small entourage following. They stop at a modest house with no gable, and Philida follows de la Bat inside.

54 **INT. HOUSE ON CHURCH STREET. DAY.** 54

The layout of the house is a *voorhuis* and dining room on one side of the passage and two smallish bedrooms on the other, with a kitchen and pantry at the back.

Lena sits down next to her brother on the palliasse, and looks around the unfamiliar room with a mixture of timidity and curiosity. Willempie plays with his toes, contented enough for the moment.

Philida closes the door and kneels to let Kleinkat out of her cage. Kleinkat darts out and explores her new surroundings, sniffing everything she comes across. Philida stays sitting on her haunches.

PHILIDA

What kind of person is *Meester de la Bat*?

DELPHINA

He's an important man. He's the first lawyer this town has ever known, they say.

PHILIDA

A lawyer?

DELPHINA

That is a man who knows the law, who you can go to if you have problems. The *Meester* is not a man for jokes or games.

PHILIDA

And she?

DELPHINA

Nooi Anna is a member of one of the top families in the *Caab*.

PHILIDA

Who else work here?

DELPHINA

Only *Labyn*, from *Batavia*. He does woodwork and sometimes works for other people too. There was also *Floris*, who made shoes. But he ran away.

(after a slight pause)

I must go back in the house now.

58

INT. THE VOORHUIS ON CHURCH STREET. DAY.

58

Anna sits on the couch with her hands resting on her pregnant belly, gazing out of the window, while one-year-old *Josef* totters from one piece of furniture to another as he babbles, and three-year-old *Gerard* sits astride the arm of the couch

boisterously pretending that he is riding a horse.

Philida comes to the door and both children stop their activities, observing the intruder.

PHILIDA
Does Nooi Anna have anything she
want me to knit?

Anna waves her hand ineffectually in front of her face.

ANNA
Oh! It's so hot. I don't want to
think about knitting.

The children resume their noisy play.

PHILIDA
(speaking above the noise)
I can make some small things for
your new baby.

ANNA
Oh ... yes.

Philida waits to see if there are any further instructions. When none are forthcoming, she turns to leave.

ANNA
I ...

Philida turns back again and waits as Anna regards her indecisively.

PHILIDA
Yes, Nooi?

ANNA
I want you also to be the
minnemoer of the family.
[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]
Minnemoer - Nursemaid

PHILIDA
Minnemoer, Nooi?

ANNA
You must look after the children -
change their clothes, bathe them,
take care of them. I am too tired.

PHILIDA
Yes, Nooi.

Philida crouches down next to the arm of the couch so that her eyes are on the same level as Gerard's. He stops his noisy pretend horse riding and gazes back at her in silence.

PHILIDA

Kom!

[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]

Kom - Come

There is something about her manner that brooks no argument, and he slides off the couch. Philida takes Gerard's hand, scoops Josef up, and leaves the room with the two boys.

In the restored quietude of the room, Anna rests her head back on the couch and covers her eyes with her hand.

59 **EXT. THE BACK YARD OF THE HOUSE ON CHURCH STREET. DAY.** 59

LABYN (50s) sits on the step of his room carving the delicately curved handle of a yellowwood serving spoon. He is a peaceful man who takes his time with everything, and is invariably to be found with his calabash pipe in his mouth.

Lena stands near to Labyn - but not too near - watching as he works. Kleinkat is making up her own game with the wood shavings. Labyn is telling Lena a story in his deep and resonant voice.

LABYN

With wood it is like talking to family: do you by chance know this one or that one? Isn't he an uncle or a cousin or a grandchild of so-and-so?

Lena giggles, and moves a little closer. Labyn shows her the wooden spoon.

LABYN

It's like this yellowwood: when it is a child it is creamy white, when it is in middle age, like this, you see it's deep yellow like butter, and when it's an old man it's like burnt sugar.

By this time, Lena is leaning up against Labyn's leg, looking closely at the spoon.

Philida, with Willempie asleep in the *abbadoek* on her back, comes out of the kitchen door and stops to take in the scene for a moment before she approaches.

PHILIDA

You must be like the father of
Jesus, Labyn.

Labyn looks up at her, a question on his face.

PHILIDA

That's the only other carpenter I
have heard of.

LABYN

(matter of fact)

All the *kak* we got in the Colony
comes from the Christian people.

He holds up the carving to the light to check the curve.

LABYN

You and me here working and
working all the time, while the
white people are sitting on their
boude in the sun, or in the shade
as the case may be – it all comes
from that Jesus of theirs. It is
his fault. So I think it's time
for you to come over to the Slams
like me.

PHILIDA

What's the Slams?

Philida comes to sit on the deep step next to Labyn. He shifts
to accommodate her, and Lena moves off to play with Kleinkat.

LABYN

With us there is no *baas* or *slaaf*.
We're all just people. They always
say to us that the LordGod looks
after us, but that is not what
happens. The LordGod looks after
the white people, not us. Muhammad
is our man, he's our Lord, and
almost the first thing Muhammad
did after the Lord Al-lah spoke to
him, was to free his slave Zaid.
For him there wasn't a place for
slawe in the world any more.

Philida pulls her work from her apron pocket and soon her
fingers are busy with her knitting.

PHILIDA

But here at the *Caab* they also
talking about freeing us.

(MORE)

PHILIDA (CONT'D)

And then we shall wear *skoene* for ever and ever.

LABYN

This thing I must first see with my own eyes before I believe it. Even if they free us, it will only come little bit by little bit, and we must still stay booked in with the *Meester* for four more years, for six more years – so we will still be like slaves, though maybe we are called free. All Muhammad said to Zaid was: Now you're free. You can go where you want to. And that is what he wants for all of us. Now that is why I'm saying: He's the man I stand with.

Kleinkat is now basking in a patch of sun, and Lena comes to lean up against her mother to watch Labyn work.

PHILIDA

And where do all this come from? Does Muhammad also speak in a thick book like the *ouman's* LordGod?

LABYN

Yes, he speaks in a thick book just like that. Only, it isn't called Bible, its name is Koran.

PHILIDA

Korhaan is a funny name. Isn't that the name of a bird? Why would the Lord Al-lah want to have a book like that?

[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]

Korhaan - Bustard

LABYN

Maybe because you can say it flies in its own way. It puts wings in your head. Once you read what it says you won't think it's funny any more.

PHILIDA

(teasing)

And how and where did you ever read, if I may ask?

LABYN
I'll show you how.

PHILIDA
You? Where did you ever learn?

LABYN
I learned, I tell you. I even went
to school, before they sold me.
I'll teach you.

She stops her knitting and remains silent for a time.

PHILIDA
Will you really teach me to read,
Labyn?

LABYN
My word is the word of a Slams. If
I promise something it is
promised.

He is finished with the spoon, and he hands it to Lena, who
explores its smooth surfaces with her small fingers.

60

INT. THE CARPENTRY SHED. DAY.

60

Philida sits beside Labyn at a long wooden workbench with
massive legs. Its surface, which is six feet long and as wide
as a man's shoulders, is stained with dark, red-brown patches
that have seeped into the wood.

Sun slants into the shed through a small window, and dust motes
hang suspended in the shaft of light. A small oil lamp on the
table gives off a soft glow.

Labyn has a copy of the Koran open in front of him, and
Willempie is in an *abbadoek* on his back. Lena stacks small
pieces of wood one on top of the other on a *kaross* on the
floor. Kleinkat is asleep on the workbench.

[ENGLISH TRANSLATION]
Kaross - Sheepskin rug

Labyn reads from the Koran, pointing out the words to Philida.

LABYN
*And indeed We have created man,
and We know whatever thoughts his
inner self develops, and We are
closer to him than the vein of his
neck.*

PHILIDA

I'll knit you a jersey for the winter, then you'll find out what is closest to you.

Labyn sucks on his pipe with a deep, rumbling laugh.

LABYN

Now you try.

He holds his finger under each letter of the word.

LABYN

This is "And." That's "A" and "N" and "D." Say each one, then join the sounds together.

PHILIDA

Æ. Nn. Duh. And.

LABYN

Good! Now, let's try the next word ...

61

INT. THE KITCHEN OF THE HOUSE ON CHURCH STREET. NIGHT.

61

Sitting in a zinc bath by the flickering fire of the hearth, are Lena (4), Gerard (4), and Josef (2). Philida kneels at the side of the bath, bathing Willempie (1).

Delphina takes a kettle of hot water from the hearth.

DELPHINA

(to the children)

Be careful while I pour in more hot water.

The three bigger children make space, and Delphina pours the water from the kettle into the bath.

The swirling water and flickering light conspire to create the image of a baby's face just beneath the surface.

Philida snatches Willempie out of the bath and holds his wet body against hers, her face taugth with fright.

DELPHINA

What?

PHILIDA

(releasing her tension)

No, it's nothing.

Philida folds Willempie into an *abbadoek* and seats him near the hearth.

She kneels again next to the bath and begins washing the de la Bat boys.

DELPHINA

Bathing the boys used to be my job.

PHILIDA

The easiest way is to bring them up with my own.

DELPHINA

It seems to me when Anna de la Bat sees how easily you handle it, she more and more often leaves her children with yours.

PHILIDA

Ag, feeding or bathing or putting to bed four children is not much more trouble than two.

DREAM

The Dwars River is in full spate, swirling around Philida's billowing skirt, forming eddies. Emerging from one of the eddies is a face, the face of a baby. It disappears, and then reappears, its mouth wide in a silent scream. Philida reaches out a hand towards the face, and she pushes it - slowly but inexorably - down into the water. But it re-emerges. She lunges to push it down again, and the face dissolves into the face of a cat.

END OF DREAM

62

INT. DELPHINA'S ROOM. NIGHT.

62

LENA

(shaking Philida on the palliasse)

Mama! Mama, wake up! You dreaming again.

Philida wakes with a start, her black eyes wide and unfocused. She pulls Lena to her and buries her face in her neck.

PHILIDA

Ai, thank you. Thank you for waking me.

A pitiful mewing makes Philida turn her head to listen. It comes again. She gets up off the palliasse, and crosses to the door to open it, letting in a shaft of moonlight as Klienkat darts inside.

63 INT. THE CARPENTRY SHED. DAY.

63

Philida and Labyn are seated side by side at the long workbench once again, a slate in front of them. This time, they are alone.

LABYN

Today, I will show you how to write your name.

He traces out a capital P, followed in exquisite copperplate script by each letter of her name. He pushes the slate towards her.

LABYN

You try and write it below.

He guides her hand to make the P.

LABYN

Now, never lift your hand when you make the letters for the rest of your name. Soft up, hard down. Good!

She looks up at him, her face alight with accomplishment. She looks down again at her name on the slate.

PHILIDA

Can you show me how to write Frans Brink's name?

LABYN

(uneasy)

Why do you want to know? From what you've told me that man is a *skelm*.

[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]

Skelm - Good-for-nothing

PHILIDA

Just show me.

LABYN

That's not a name you need to worry about, Philida. Forget about him. Shake him off.

PHILIDA

No, I got to learn. If I can write
his name, I can send him to hell.
Otherwise he'll keep haunting me.

Labyn sighs and shakes his head, but pulls the slate towards
him to wipe it clean.

He writes the name in his beautiful script, and pushes the
slate to Philida.

64

INT. PETRONELLA'S ROOM. DAY.

64

Petronella is brewing *rooibos* tea at the hearth in the corner.

Frans taps on the outside window. Petronella reluctantly opens
the door. Frans has a wan, haunted look.

PETRONELLA

What's with you now?

FRANS

Can I come in?

Petronella hesitates, then steps aside and jerks her head to
indicate that he may come inside. He stands in the middle of
the room, irresolute.

PETRONELLA

Well?

FRANS

I just need to talk.

PETRONELLA

About what?

FRANS

(a beat)
Philida.

PETRONELLA

It's too late for that now.

FRANS

(utter dejection)
It's her name. I hear it over and
over in my mind, and it's like a
feeling ... a weight. And I know
it's a name from the past, but
it's a past that will never - even
if I try to make it happen - it
will never let go of me.

(MORE)

FRANS (CONT'D)
(his voice breaks)

Petronella's motherly instincts get the better of her.

PETRONELLA
Come sit. I'm just making some
tea.

Frans sits on a low bench while Petronella busies herself at the hearth. He is trying to get control of his emotions, but he has to wipe away tears.

FRANS
I just wanted her to be with me.
Not because of the children or
because of the law or because of
needing her to help out on the
farm or because of anything else.
But because of *her*.

He sniffs and wipes his nose on his wrist.

FRANS
To me, Philida is not like just
any other woman. I knew her ever
since she looked after me when I
was a baby. I know her and she
knows me. I *need* her.

Petronella hands him and mug of tea and sits beside him on the bench.

PETRONELLA
But, that was a terrible thing you
did to her, Frans, when you
betrayed her in front of the Slave
Protector.

FRANS
I *know!* I can see that now. I was
obeying my *pa*, but I wish I can
undo it.

PETRONELLA
The past is the past.

FRANS
I wish ...
(the deepest of sighs)
I just wish everything could be as
it was with her. I only know that
now she's gone.

65 INT. DELPHINA'S ROOM. NIGHT. 65

Candlelight. Delphina is asleep on her palliasse, and the children sleep next to Philida, where she sits up on her straw mattress, the slate on her lap, shaping her letters and building words.

66 INT. THE KITCHEN AT THE HOUSE ON CHURCH STREET. DAY. 66

Delphina stares absentmindedly out of the window as she rinses dishes: Kleinkat is dozing in a patch of sun and Lena is playing with her wooden Kleinkat on the step of the carpentry shed.

Delphina's attention focuses sharply when she sees FLORIS (around 40) walk into the backyard. He wears a cap of *dassie* skins with a sprig of rosemary on top, and a long buttonless shirt. He is covered by what seems like weeks of dust, and he is clearly exhausted, yet there is an irrepressible spring in the way he walks.

[ENGLISH TRANSLATION]

Dassie - Hyrax

Delphina quickly pours fresh water into a bowl and carries it outside.

67 EXT. THE BACKYARD AT THE HOUSE ON CHURCH STREET. DAY. 67

Wordlessly, Delphina offers the bowl of water to Floris, and he gulps it down like a horse. He hands the bowl back, and then he dunks his whole head into a water barrel by the back door, shaking off the excess water like a frisky dog.

FLORIS

(an exuberant shout)

Yooo-hooo!

Kleinkat is startled awake and Lena jumps up clutching the wooden cat to her chest. Labyn and Philida, with Willempie on her hip, appear at the door of carpentry shed.

A broad grin spreads over Labyn's face, like a rising sun.

LABYN

You back!

(to Philida)

This is Floris. He can make the most beautiful *schoen* in the whole world.

She looks down at Floris's bare feet.

PHILIDA

Skoen?

de la Bat emerges on the threshold of the kitchen door.

DE LA BAT

Floris ...?

FLORIS

Meester, here I am. I been walking all over the place and now I got home again. You can go and fetch the *riem* and give me a proper hiding because I got a lot to talk about. But we can only talk after you beat the *kak* out of me.

DE LA BAT

We can talk about it tomorrow.

FLORIS

(meek but adamant)

If it's all the same to *Meester*, I'd rather get it over and done with straight away.

DE LA BAT

(with a sigh)

All right then, come with me. You too, Labyn.

The three walk towards the carpentry shed.

FLORIS

In the past this used to be completely in the hands of the *baas*. It's different ever since the English took over. Now there is a rule and a regulation for everything.

DE LA BAT

I don't like it, but the law is the law.

FLORIS

Is what I also say.

68

INT. THE CARPENTRY SHED. DAY.

68

Labyn removes his work – a delicate table standing like a small *steenbok* on tall thin legs – from the workbench.

He and Floris bend to grip the massive legs and carry the bench outside. de la Bat selects four thongs from those hanging on a nail on the wall.

[ENGLISH TRANSLATION]

Steenbok - Antelope

69

EXT. THE BACKYARD AT THE HOUSE ON CHURCH STREET. DAY.

69

In the late afternoon sunlight, it is evident that Labyn's workbench is also the flogging bench, and that the dark stains on the surface are old blood. Low down on each the massive legs are rusty iron rings.

DE LA BAT

(to Floris)

Lie down.

Delphina helps Floris to take off his long loose shirt. Then the breeches that reach down to his knees, leaving him in just a loincloth. His lean back bears the dark criss-cross marks of old floggings.

Philida folds his clothes, and indicates to Lena to place them on the step of the carpentry shed, which the child does with wide-eyed solemnity.

Floris lies down on his stomach and tries to find a comfortable position on the flogging bench, letting his arms hang down the sides.

de la Bat goes down on his haunches to attach Floris's wrists to the rings on the side with the thongs. As he struggles laboriously, his pale face flushes a deep red from the effort.

When he gets to the ankles, he passes one of the thongs to Labyn.

DE LA BAT

(to Labyn)

You do that side.

Labyn makes no move to take the thong, and de la Bat looks at him with a frown.

DE LA BAT

(irritably)

What's up with you now?

LABYN

I am sorry, *Meester*. But I cannot help you with this thing. Floris and I come a long way together. He is my friend and I am his.

DE LA BAT

And if I order you to beat him?

LABYN

(shaking his head)

Then I shall have to say no to the Meester. That is not my work.

DE LA BAT

You are a *slaaf*, Labyn. You will do what I tell you to do.

LABYN

Not if Meester asks me to help in beating him.

DE LA BAT

Labyn!?

LABYN

(quietly)

I think it is against the law nowadays.

DE LA BAT

In this place I am the law. And you are a *slaaf* like Floris.

LABYN

In a month, a few months, we shall both be free.

DE LA BAT

Until that time you will do what I say.

LABYN

(very calmly)

I am sorry, Meester. Not if you ask me to beat him.

DE LA BAT

(in his lawyerly tone)

Floris ran away. A year ago he absconded from Worcester. The law is very strict about desertion.

LABYN

He came back of his own free will.

DE LA BAT

He stayed away for a full year.

LABYN

That doesn't make a difference.
Now he is here.

DE LA BAT

Do as I tell you, Labyn!

LABYN

(calmly and politely, more to
himself than to de la Bat)
Al-lah will hear about this.

DE LA BAT

What do you say?

LABYN

I'm just saying about Al-lah,
Meester. He sees everything and he
knows everything and he will not
like this.

DE LA BAT

(shouting, furious)
I have the LordGod on my side!

Lena starts to cry, and Philida shushes and comforts her quietly. Willempie is watching proceedings from his perch on Philida's hip.

LABYN

(in his quiet way)
Then bring your LordGod, *Meester*.
I shall call Al-lah. They can
fight it out. Al-lah is the God of
all the *slawe* and all the
oppressed people in this land, so
I already know who will win.

DE LA BAT

(snarling)
Now you are looking for trouble!

LABYN

Conceived and born in sin,
Meester. Made like that and left
like that. All of us, *baas* and
slaaf.

The two men take the measure of each other. Delphina and Philida look on in still tension, and Lena holds tightly to her mother's hand.

de la Bat squats and ties the thongs to Floris's ankles, then he stalks to the house with his secretary bird gait. On the threshold of the kitchen door, he turns.

DE LA BAT

(to Floris)

You can lie and wait here. I shall
come back when it suits me.

He closes the door behind him with not quite a slam.

For some time no one says a word. It is as if they're all
waiting for him to come back out, but the door remains closed.

DELPHINA

I think we got a long night ahead.

LABYN

Then why don't we just sit and
make ourselves comfortable? Now it
is in Al-lah's hands.

PHILIDA

(to Floris)

Can I bring you some water? I can
see you brought a big tiredness
with you.

FLORIS

Yes, thank you. That will help.

Philida goes into the kitchen to fetch water. Delphina settles
Lena and Willempie next to one of the massive legs of the
flogging bench, and she and Labyn make themselves comfortable
on the ground.

Philida returns with a bowl of water and some crusts of bread.
She helps Floris to eat and drink, then pulls her knitting from
her apron and sits beside Lena and Willempie, her fingers busy
with her work.

As they talk, the sun goes down in a big show of red. The huge
moon appears in the east, the first stars appear, and the night
spreads itself in all directions.

LABYN

You must tell us about the Gariep,
Floris.

FLORIS

(with a small, bleak chuckle)

That Gariep is a different kind of
place. You won't think there can
be so many people living on the
open veld on the other side.

(MORE)

FLORIS (CONT'D)

And of all sorts too, from the preachers and baptizers of Al-lah and the LordGod to runaways and murderers and robbers, everybody. There are deserters and free people among them, black and brown and yellow and white, all the colours under the sun and moon and stars, and in a way they all live happily together. As long as they keep the waters of the Gariep between themselves and the Colony, everybody is satisfied.

[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]

Veld - Plain

LABYN

If it goes so well, then why did you come back? It sounds like a good place to stay for the rest of your life.

FLORIS

To stay, yes. And that was what I *mos* wanted to do. Even took myself a wife. She was a good woman, and good to look at too.

He gives a soft groan and turns his head the other way, trying to get comfortable.

FLORIS

But then she got sick and she died, and the Gariep is a place without mercy for a man on his own. That's why I thought I must rather go back to where I come from.

The sky goes on wheeling overhead with its stars, big and small, like a slow dust-devil that refuses to be hurried on its way.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

70

EXT. THE BACKYARD OF THE HOUSE ON CHURCH STREET. DAY.

70

A red smudge stains the underside of the sky. Here and there, cocks start to crow, a dog barks in the distance, and a new day begins.

Made in Highland

Floris groans, and tries to ease his aching body. His companions sit and lie in various stages of half sleep.

The kitchen door opens, and de la Bat appears on the threshold like a bat with folded wings. He has a vicious-looking *sjambok* in his hand. He slaps it briefly against the black legs of his breeches, sending a small puff of dust up around him.

DE LA BAT
Morning, Floris.

FLORIS
(a half-groan)
Morning, *Meester*.

DE LA BAT
Slept well?

FLORIS
Not really, *Meester*.

DE LA BAT
Are you ready for me?

FLORIS
Ready for *Meester*.

DE LA BAT
(hands on his hips, with the
sjambok jutting out)
Where is Labyn?

Labyn stands up from the other side of the flogging bench.

LABYN
Meester, I am here.

DE LA BAT
(with a small nervous grin
towards Labyn)
You can untie him now. I think
he's had enough of a scare.

de la Bat turns and goes back inside.

Labyn and Delphina immediately begin to untie Floris and help him to sit up. He stretches stiffly, trying to ease his aching muscles.

LENA
Mama, I'm thirsty.

PHILIDA
I'll go make coffee for everyone.

71 INT. THE KITCHEN OF THE HOUSE ON CHURCH STREET. DAY. 71

Philida grinds coffee beans in the manual coffee grinder, tips the contents into the coffee pot, adds water, and sets the pot on the hearth.

She stands staring out of the kitchen window as Labyn and Floris, now dressed again, carry the flogging bench back into the carpentry shed.

DE LA BAT (O.S.)
The point is this, Anna: It's important for a *slaaf* to be reminded regularly of who is the *baas*.

ANNA (O.S.)
(meekly)
Yes, Bernabé. As you wish.

DE LA BAT (O.S.)
(calling)
Bring me my coffee!

PHILIDA
Yes, Meester. It's coming, Meester.

72 EXT. THE BACKYARD OF THE HOUSE ON CHURCH STREET. DAY. 72

Floris sits on the step of his reclaimed room, stitching a pair of shoes.

Labyn, sitting on the step of his room, is carving a small wooden cat. Lena leans against his leg in rapt attention.

Philida emerges from Delphina's room.

LENA
Look, Mama! Oupa Labyn is making me my own Kleinkat!
[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]
Oupa - Grandpa

Philida walks over to them, and Labyn holds up his half carved creation for her to see.

PHILIDA
Kleinkat looked just like that when she was still a kitten.

Labyn returns to his carving.

LABYN

What's become of the little cat?

PHILIDA

She's probably just hidden somewhere in the house or in the yard. There's so many hiding places or spots to play in.

LABYN

I haven't seen her for a while.

PHILIDA

I'll look.

73 **INT. THE KITCHEN OF THE HOUSE ON CHURCH STREET. DAY.** 73

Delphina is washing up plates in a basin.

PHILIDA

Have you seen Kleinkat?

DELPHINA

No. She sometimes like to make a nest on the *Meester's* desk. Maybe she's there.

74 **INT. THE VOORHUIS OF THE HOUSE ON CHURCH STREET. DAY.** 74

de la Bat sits writing at his desk.

Philida knocks on the door.

DE LA BAT

Yes?

PHILIDA

Excuse me, *Meester*. Has *Meester* seen Kleinkat?

DE LE BAT

No.

PHILIDA

I can't find her and I'm wondering if she's maybe walking back to Zandvliet. Will *Meester* give me permission to walk out to look for her, please *Meester*?

DE LA BAT

How do I know that you'll ever
come back?

PHILIDA

I shall give the *Meester* my word.

DE LA BAT

And you want me just to believe
you?

PHILIDA

Yes, *Meester*. Why not? Did I ever
lie to *Meester*?

DE LA BAT

Do you know what I paid for you
and your two children?

PHILIDA

Yes, *Meester*. One hundred and
twenty-three pounds two shillings
and sixpence. That is my price.

DE LA BAT

(blinking his eyes)

Yes, that is so. I see you kept
your ears open at the auction.

Philida stays silent

DE LA BAT

And suppose you go away and stay
away, how will I ever get my money
again, Philida?

PHILIDA

I told you *mos* I will come back,
Meester de la Bat.

DE LA BAT

(turning back to his desk)

We can talk about this again
later.

75

EXT. SOMEWHERE BETWEEN WORCESTER AND ZANDVLIET. DAY.

75

A small grey tabby cat – *Kleinkat* – trots across the open veld.

76

**EXT. THE BACK GARDEN AT THE HOUSE ON CHURCH STREET.
DAY. MONDAY 1 DECEMBER 1834.**

76

Philida sits on a low wall that runs along the vegetable garden behind the house. While her nimble fingers keep busy with her knitting, she looks out across to *Hoog Straat* and the open square in front of the *Drostdy*.

[ENGLISH TRANSLATION]

Hoog Straat - High Street

Slowly the square comes to life in the early morning sun. A number of revellers dance and run to and fro. They make bonfires and cavort around them. From all sides more and more slaves come running towards the *Drostdy* square. Some have brought their own music - fiddles, *ramkies*, a few accordions, the odd trumpet - and they all let go in an accelerating explosion of celebration.

[ENGLISH TRANSLATION]

Ramkie - Handmade guitar

Philida stands and lifts her face up to the blue sky. She just stands there, with her throat exposed, looking and looking, as if she is trying to prise something loose up there.

FLORIS (O.S.)

(an exuberant call like a
fish bugle)

Ek sê, ek sê! Aren't we also going
to churn up a bit of dust? Labyn!
Delphina! Philida! Come on, man!

[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]

Ek sê - I say

Philida pushes her knitting into the pocket of her apron and follows Floris's voice to the backyard.

77

EXT. THE BACKYARD OF THE HOUSE ON CHURCH STREET. DAY.

77

FLORIS

Look what I got here!

He takes an old folded jacket from under his arm, places it on the ground, and unfolds it with a flourish.

It is shoes.

He hands a pair to Delphina, a pair to Philida, a pair to Labyn, and he has made a pair for himself. He has even made shoes for Lena (5) and Willempie (2 1/2).

Immediately, they all sit down and start trying on their shoes. Lena puts hers on the wrong feet, and Delphina helps her while Philida wriggles Willempie's little feet into his shoes.

Labyn and Floris jump to their feet and start dancing a reel. Floris then scoops up Delphina and Philida, and the dust gets churned up by their shoes as if a few dust-devils have come to life.

The kitchen door flies open and de la Bat, in top hat and black suit, stands on the back stoep.

DE LA BAT
(raising his voice sternly
over their exuberance)
What is going on here today?

For a moment they all stop in their tracks.

PHILIDA
(out of breath)
Doesn't Meester know then? We're
mos free today.

FLORIS
Free and happy, Meester!

DE LA BAT
We shall talk again later.

de la Bat walks stiffly back into the house, and closes the door.

Everyone in the backyard looks at one another in suspended silence. Then they burst out laughing, and go back to churning up the dust. Philida throws her head back to look up into the blue, blue sky as she spins. Specks of birds soar overhead.

78 EXT. CHURCH STREET. DAY.

78

JAN FREDRIK BERRANGÉ, a sickly-looking young man in a black broadcloth suit, trots up to the de la Bat house, dismounts, ties up his horse, and unhooks from the saddle Petronella's brightly coloured Javanese cotton shoulder bag.

79 EXT. THE BACKYARD AT THE HOUSE ON CHURCH STREET. DAY.

79

Philida sits on the step of Delphina's room in her shoes, swearing under her breath as she tries to unravel a knot in the wool. She struggles and struggles. She gets hold of a loose end and pulls at it, and suddenly everything unwinds and her thread is untangled all the way – just as Anna opens the kitchen window and calls.

ANNA
Philida! You are needed in the
voorhuis!

Anna closes the window without waiting for a response.

80

INT. THE VOORHUIUS AT THE HOUSE ON CHURCH STREET. DAY.

80

When Philida enters the *voorhuis*, there are three white people seated there: de la Bat, Anna, and Jan Fredrik Berangé. Her eyes fall on Petronella's shoulder bag on the floor next to Jan Fredrik's chair.

ANNA

(quite animated in the
company of this visitor)
And where are you headed Meester
Berrangé?

JAN FREDRIK

To a village far inland called
Driefontien. I want to talk to
some people there before I leave
for overseas to study theology.

Anna catches sight of Philida.

ANNA

Ah, here she is. Philida, this is
Meester Jan Fredrik Berrangé. He
has brought something for you from
Zandvliet.

Jan Fredrik picks up Petronella's bag, and stands to give it to Philida.

JAN FREDRIK

When Francois Brink heard I was on
my way inland he asked me to bring
you this bag from your *ouma*. Maybe
you know Frans is engaged to my
sister, Maria Magdalena.

Philida takes the bag and hugs it to her chest.

PHILIDA

Are they still to be married?

JAN FREDRIK

Yes, still. But the Good Lord
alone knows when. She keeps
putting it off, and nobody has any
idea for how long.

PHILIDA

And how are things at Zandvliet?

JAN FREDRIK

(shrugging uneasily)

Well, I suppose. I prefer not to ask too many questions. *Tant* Janna seems to grow heavier by the day. *Oom* Cornelis says he has got a bad pain in his fundament, and there is no longer anyone around to help him with medicine now that your *ouma* has died.

[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]

Tant - Aunt

Oom - Uncle

On the word "died" Philida takes a step backwards as if she has been hit by an overpowering gust of wind. The three white people in the room are oblivious.

DE LA BAT

Well, they are all still alive by the grace of God.

PHILIDA

(though stiff lips, her voice strained)

Thank you for bringing me *Ouma* Nella's bag, Meester.

She starts to back away.

ANNA

Very well, you can go now, Philida.

Philida turns and runs from the room.

81 EXT. DELPHINA'S ROOM. DAY.

81

Philida sits on her palliasse, her back against the wall with her legs stretched out in front of her, holding Petronella's bag on her lap. She stares, dry eyed, straight ahead.

Delphina picks up Willempie and takes Lena by the hand.

DELPHINA

Come. Come with with me to where I am ironing.

Once they have left the room, Philida continues to sit, motionless.

PHILIDA
 (rocking back and forth,
 murmuring softly to herself)
 My poor old Ouma. Poor, poor me.

At last, she opens Petronella's bag and begins to inspect its contents: a beautiful pale blue and yellow cardigan; the pair of ivory knitting needles with which Petronella taught Philida to knit; a snuffbox with a fine inlaid wooden lid; a heavy soup spoon; a bolt of heavy red-and-white cloth; a bamboo box half filled with coins – several handfuls of rix-dollars and seven gold pounds; and a heavy golden ring. She stares at the array of items for a while, turning them over, inspecting them. Then she slowly returns them to the bag again, and rests her hand on top of it.

82 EXT. ZANDVLIET FARM. DAY.

82

Janna sits on the back *stoep*, fanning herself with her hat.

Cornelis and Frans are supervising the grape harvest, Frans closer to the house.

CORNELIS
 (shouting at the workers)
 Come on, man! The grapes will rot
 on the vine if you keep on picking
 them so slowly!

KLEINKAT
 Meow!

Frans looks quickly in the direction of the sound.

FRANS
 Kleinkat!

The one word galvanizes Janna and she sits bolt upright to the extent that her cumbersome form will allow.

JANNA
 (ranting)
 That cat ... that cat is going to
 infect all of us with diseases. It
 is all you can expect with
 something that *meid* brought here
 to the farm.

Kleinkat's fur is matted and filthy.

FRANS

(shouting across the yard to
his mother)
Philida didn't bring her here. I
gave her to Philida.

JANNA

If it puts its feet in this house
I shall personally get rid of it.

FRANS

You get rid of her, you get rid of
me. And then who will marry that
Berrangé girl?

The workers go on harvesting, as if oblivious to the shouted conversation, but Cornelis is drawn to the yelling, and immediately joins in, coming closer.

CORNELIS

You will marry her. I tell you,
she's our salvation.

FRANS

(turning to his father and
lowering his voice a notch)
It's unfair the way you and *Ma* are
trying to force me. It's the rest
of my life that is at stake and
all you care about is the money.

CORNELIS

(exploding)
For God's sake, man, don't you
understand anything? If you and
Maria Berrangé don't get married,
we'll be *heeltemal bankrot*.
[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]
Heltemal bankrot -
Completely bankrupt

FRANS

(shouting again)
And whose fault will that be? Not
mine.

JANNA

Don't talk to your *Pa* like that,
Frans!

FRANS

(rounding on his mother)
Then don't try to force me, *Ma*!
(MORE)

FRANS (CONT'D)

And don't you dare lay a finger on this cat. She is mine.

JANNA

She belongs to Philida, not to you. Used to belong. And that's bad enough.

FRANS

What is Philida's is mine.

CORNELIS

(storming at him)

Why do you keep on about Philida all the time? She's just a *meid*. She's a *meid* and she's long gone. For us she doesn't exist any more.

FRANS

(so quietly that only Cornelis can hear)

For me she does.

CORNELIS

(staring at him disbelievingly)

What's the matter with you, Frans? What do you still want with Philida?

FRANS

(a steely, faraway voice)

What I want from a woman who is my wife.

CORNELIS

(appalled)

You can't mean what you're saying!

JANNA

(shouting from the *stoep*)

What are you two talking about?

Both men ignore her.

FRANS

I want her to be with me. I need her. And now it is too late because you made me betray her.

CORNELIS

It is *definitely* too late.

(MORE)

CORNELIS (CONT'D)
 Too late for you, too late for all
 of us.

FRANS
 (pleading from deep inside)
 That is something I cannot accept,
Pa. I got to try again. I just got
 to.

CORNELIS
 You can't be with someone like
 her, man!

FRANS
 I won't accept that, *Pa*.

CORNELIS
 (suddenly losing his temper)
 I said what I got to say and that
 is now the end of it! That is
 that. Finished and *klaar*.

FRANS
 (urgently)
 For me it isn't, *Pa*, and it never
 will be.

CORNELIS
 Frans, you're not too old to get
 properly thrashed.

FRANS
 (squaring up to him)
 Just you try!

Cornelis pulls back his shoulders, his nostrils flaring as he
 looks up at Frans. Then he turns and walks away.

CORNELIS
 (muttering)
 Let me get out of this place
 before I strangle somebody.

Frans crouches and puts out his hand towards *Klienkat*.

83

EXT. THE OPEN SQUARE IN FRONT OF THE WORCESTER DROSTDY.

83

DAY.
 A small cluster of ex-slaves, now indentured servants, watch as
 Frans reins in his horse. Large white saltpeter stains are
 visible on the animal's trembling, shiny flanks. A bamboo cage,
 with *Klienkat* in it, is tied to the saddle.

FRANS
 (shouting at the group)
 I'm looking for *Meester de la*
Bat's house.

They all point in the same direction. Frans turns the horse and trots towards Church Street.

SERVANT
Sjoe! That man must be mad in his
 head. Did you see he got a cat
 with him?
 [ENGLISH SUBTITLES]
Sjoe - Whew

84 EXT. OUTSIDE THE HOUSE ON CHURCH STREET. DAY.

84

As Frans approaches the house, he looks down the side towards the backyard, and sees Labyn sitting on the step of his room with the calabash pipe in his mouth.

FRANS
 (calling)
 Is *Meester de la Bat* here?

LABYN
 (standing, and calling back)
 He's at work now, but if the *baas*
 waits for a while he'll be back.

FRANS
 I'm really looking for *Philida*.
 She works here.

LABYN
 (after a beat)
 I'll go find out if she can come.

Frans dismounts and loops the reins of the horse around a fence post. He unties the bamboo cage and sets it on the ground.

Philida approaches from the backyard and stands before him. She has on an old bluish dress that hangs down to her feet. She is wearing shoes.

Frans is against the sun, and she screws up her black eyes in the bright light.

FRANS
 (hesitantly)
Philida?

PHILIDA
 My *JesusGod!*

Made in Highland

She moves forward very suddenly, but it is not to come to Frans; she has seen the bamboo cage on the ground.

PHILIDA
My *Kleinkat!*

She squats down on her haunches, tugging at the gate that keeps the cage shut.

FRANS
Watch out! If she gets out she'll be gone for ever.

But it is already too late. The little gate is wide open. *Kleinkat* jumps out and crawls deep into Philida's arms, purring and chirping like a small nightbird. Philida presses the cat against her, and turns her over to push her face into the grey-and-white belly.

PHILIDA
(cooing)
Has my *Kleinkat* come back to its *ounooi*?

FRANS
I knew she wanted to be back with you. I *had* to bring her.

Philida glances up, quickly and almost furtively, towards Frans, where he is silhouetted against the sun.

PHILIDA
Why did you do it? What you doing here?

FRANS
I came to find you. Both of us missed you.

PHILIDA
(tonelessly)
We got nothing for you here.

FRANS
But I had to bring *Kleinkat* back to you.

PHILIDA
(standing, the cat still pressed against her)
Kleinkat is one thing. You are something else.

FRANS
Philida, please understand!

PHILIDA

I understand blarry well. If you tell me *Come*, you want me to come. If you tell me you want me gone, I got to go. How many more times do you want me to do that?

FRANS

(wretchedly)

That's not what I came for.

PHILIDA

(sharply)

What is it then?

Kleinkat wriggles out of Philida's arms and darts towards the back of the house.

PHILIDA

You want to push your *dinges* into me? Or is it your old *pa* that needs me again?

[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]

Dinges - Thing

FRANS

Philida!

PHILIDA

Don't pretend you didn't know.

LENA AND FRANS

Kleinkat! Kleinkat!

They rush into view in the back yard to stroke and fondle Kleinkat.

FRANS

(hoarsely)

Our children have grown -

PHILIDA

(jumping in to interrupt him)

No! They're *mine*. They don't know nothing about you and they don't want to know.

FRANS

(desperate)

Philida! I am the children's father. It's time for you to come back now.

PHILIDA

Now you expect me to come back?
After everything you done? After
everything you made *me* do?

She holds her fist against her stomach.

PHILIDA

Until the end of my days I'll
carry this thing with me like a
half-chewed lump of meat in my
guts.

FRANS

What else could we do? *Pa* and *Ma* -

PHILIDA

To hell with your *pa* and *ma*, man!
What you made me do was more than
anyone got a right to do.

FRANS

You chose to do it.

PHILIDA

Chose!?

She stares at him, taking a measure of his obtuseness.

PHILIDA

To choose something you got to be
free to choose or not to choose.
What did I have? I was a *slaaf*.
Your blarry slaaf.

(her voice is so low that
it's as if she is speaking
to herself)

What I did I *had* to do.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

85

EXT. DWARS RIVER. NIGHT.

85

A newborn infant, from the perspective of his mother looking down at him in her arms. He is frail, like a little kitten. He half lifts his head to look into her face. There is a small frown between his eyes. He puts out one of his tiny hands and touches her cheek.

She plunges him into the river. There is a feeble struggle. The water swirls and eddies around his face, the tightly shut eyes, the open mouth. Then nothing. He goes limp in her hands.

Made in Highland

END FLASHBACK

86

EXT. OUTSIDE THE HOUSE ON CHURCH STREET. DAY.

86

PHILIDA

(her voice hardened against
tears)

And there is only one reason why I
got to do it, and that is to stop
you from doing it.

FRANS

We can put that all in the past
now and start again.

PHILIDA

How does a person start again
after a thing like that?

FRANS

Philida, please! I want you to be
with me. *Ek verlang*.

[ENGLISH SUBTITLES]

Ek verlang - I miss you.

Her black eyes hold his blue ones, with an infinitesimal
softening.

PHILIDA

You had time enough to say that,
Frans. That time is long past. I'm
getting on with my life here now.
Go home.

FRANS

But I've come all this way from
Zandvliet! It was all I could do.

PHILIDA

No, Frans. It can never be. It
could never be. Your *ma*. Your *pa*.
This white woman they want you to
marry.

(a whisper)

KleinFrans.

She takes a step away.

PHILIDA

So just please let me be. And
never come back here.

She turns and walks down the side of the house towards the backyard without looking back. Frans remains staring after her, a hollowed out look on his face.

87 INT. THE CARPENTRY SHED. DAY.

87

At the workbench, Labyn is making a coffin with smooth pale panels and fine stinkwood struts in between. Too beautiful, really, to be buried in the earth.

Lena and Willempie play on a *kaross* in the corner, She with her wooden "Kleinkat" and he with a wooden cart.

Labyn glances up as Philida comes in, then goes on with his work.

Philida just stands, saying nothing.

LABYN
Who was that man?

PHILIDA
Frans Brink.

Labyn looks up at her and nods, as if he had guessed at her answer. He returns to his work without speaking.

PHILIDA
He want me to go back.

LABYN
And?

PHILIDA
I'm staying right here. This is my place now.

Labyn goes on smoothing one of the darker struts between the pale panels.

Philida comes to sit at the bench with him. She pulls her work basket towards her, and starts her knitting.

PHILIDA
I once ask my *Ouma Nella*: where am I not? And today, in this place, I know: In this place I *am*.

They work in silence for a while.

PHILIDA
And you know what, Labyn?

LABYN

No, I don't know, Philida. But you tell me and then we shall both know.

PHILIDA

I can tell you something about knitting: In the past I hate correcting a dropped stitch, or two knitted together, or a purl too soon, but now I know that one of the best things that can happen to you is to find a mistake in the knitting. When you find it you feel so happy because you can make it right. You unravel and you unravel until you get to the right place, and then you pick up the wrong stitches and you knit them right. Every stitch is just where it must be.

With a little chirrup, Kleinkat jumps up onto the table and curls up next to Philida. Absentmindedly, Philida strokes her, then picks up her knitting again.

PHILIDA

To find what is wrong and then to make it right. Old Labyn is here. And Lena and Willempie. Kleinkat is here. I am here. I, Philida of the *Caab*.

She knits in silence for a while.

PHILIDA

And that I is free, not because somebody said that on such-and-such a day I must be free. I am free because I am free. Because I myself take my freedom. I take it and I choose it. The I who was a *slaaf* and who now is free, who is a woman, who is everything.

I

FADE OUT

Philida of the *Caab* worked as a knitting girl on the wine farm Zandvliet – present day Solms-Delta – from 1824 until 1833.

After Philida was sold to Bernabé Jan Gerhard de la Bat on Friday 22 February 1833, there is no further record of her.

Francois Gerhard Jacob Brink married Maria Magdalena Berrangé on 28 August 1837.

Cornelis Brink was the brother of one of the direct ancestors of the writer, André Brink.