

PANORAMA

**BY
PIETER-DIRK UYS**

CHARACTERS

ROSA
KARIN
GROBBELAAR
SIBI MAKHALE

The play is set on Robben Island in Table Bay, from where there is a view on to Table Mountain and the city of Cape Town.

The action takes place in a small, carefully decorated sitting-room.

There is a couch looking out at the audience – i.e. the window – and a table and three chairs directly behind it. There is a large blocked picture of Table Mountain, seen from across the bay, on the wall, some colourful children's drawings of the panorama and a fish tank containing two goldfish.

The time is during the 1980s in South Africa.

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Panorama was first performed at the Grahamstown Festival on 5 July 1987, directed by Pieter-Dirk Uys with Lynn Maree (ROSA), Susan Coetzer-Opperman (KARIN), Richard van der Westhuizen (GROBBELAAR) and Thoko Ntshinga (SIBI).

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ACT ONE

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(KARIN is on the couch, fiddling with a portable tape recorder.)

KARIN: Hello? Testing, one, two, one, two ... oh, hells bells, what have I done wrong ... hello? Ah.
(It records.)
Hello, Mammie, it's me again, Karin. How are you? I hope you remembered Tannie Esme's birthday last week – she is older than you, isn't she? I sent her a few postcards of the panorama, I hope she likes them. It's so long since I've been over to Cape Town, because the sea is so rough ... anyway, I couldn't go and look for any new postcards for your collection, but I asked Rosa to have a look. She goes over quite often.
(Pauses the machine)
What else ...
(Takes a bite of a sandwich)
Mammie ...
(Switches on the machine)
It's a perfect day. No wind. The panorama here from our sitting-room is too wonderful – look at your postcards and imagine you're here. It's just like your postcards. Actually, not quite. Most of those pictures were taken from places on the mainland, but they say the view from here is the best, because we're far away enough to get the whole of Table Mountain in and everything. Looks quite unnatural. Funny when you think that the old explorers, like Jan van Riebeeck, sailed into Table Bay and saw all this beauty for the first time – of course, without those three horrible tower blocks up against the mountain, or the cableway ... and, of course, the prison wasn't here.
(Stops and rewinds: listens to herself)
'... of course, without those three horrible tower blocks up against the mountain, or the cableway ... and, of course, the prison wasn't here'.
(Records again)
Ag no sis, Mammie, I just listened to myself and I sound so awful ...

GROBBELAAR: *(Off)* Miss Rosa?

KARIN: Oh no, there's that baboon of a Grobbelaar again. Always sniffing around after Rosa.
(Switches off machine)
She's not here!

(Grobbelaar enters.)

GROBBELAAR: Oh, hello, Miss Karin. Where's Miss Rosa?

KARIN: She had to take detention at school today. Want a sandwich?

GROBBELAAR: I had lunch with the other warders.

KARIN: Shame, then you must really be hungry. Here.

(Hands him a piece of her sandwich. He takes it.)

GROBBELAAR: Thanks. Detention? Today?

KARIN: We two take turns; I took Monday, today's hers. You know that, Grobbelaar.

GROBBELAAR: *O ja.*

KARIN: I don't think there will be many kids: it's rugby practice. Our little boys are playing against Milnerton on Saturday.

GROBBELAAR: Our under-twelve team is much better than that lot across the bay.

KARIN: *Ja.* Well, rugby is king, so I don't suppose Rosa will be very late.

GROBBELAAR: *Ja,* rugby's the best.

KARIN: *Ja.* Who cut your hair?

GROBBELAAR: It's my day off.

KARIN: Why don't you go over to Cape Town? It's a lovely day ...

GROBBELAAR: Hey, the new window really makes a difference.

KARIN: Yes, now we can see the Milnerton and the Mouille Point lighthouses without even moving our positions on the couch.

GROBBELAAR: Hey? No, I was over in Cape Town last weekend. I don't have a nice time there any more.

KARIN: But don't you have friends there?

GROBBELAAR: *Ja,* but they're always on patrol in the black townships nowadays. Anyway, it's not so nice even with them.

KARIN: Not so nice as what, Grobbelaar? A nice girl?

GROBBELAAR: Miss Karin?

KARIN: Grobbelaar, man, you should really get yourself a nice girlfriend. You know Rosa won't go out with you.

GROBBELAAR: She teaches.

KARIN: Oh no, even if she was free. She told you: she's got a boyfriend up in Johannesburg. I know she has. They write to each other often.

GROBBELAAR: Really.

KARIN: Yes. So, Grobbelaar, why don't you look around for someone else?

GROBBELAAR: Who?

KARIN: Who? Isn't there someone here that you ... er ... you know?

GROBBELAAR: I was hoping Miss Rosa would come with me next month. They've got another nice function at work. Dinner and a dance. The hall will be all decorated with streamers and things, like last year, remember?

KARIN: *Ja.*

GROBBELAAR: There will also be a band.

KARIN: Sounds nice.

GROBBELAAR: I thought Miss Rosa would like it.

KARIN: You know Rosa won't go with you.

GROBBELAAR: But I can still ask. What's on the bread?

KARIN: Peanut butter.

GROBBELAAR: Hey? I used to eat it a lot when I was small. Black Cat Peanut Butter. I like it.

KARIN: Thank you. Want some more?

GROBBELAAR: If it's not too much trouble.

(KARIN exits pleased. GROBBELAAR snoops around: studies the full bottle of whisky. He creeps up to the goldfish and gives them a fright. Then he rewinds the tape and listens.)

TAPE: '... *ag no sis*, Mammie, I just listened to myself and I sound so awful ...'
 'Miss Rosa?'
 'Oh no, there's that baboon of a Grobbelaar again. Always sniffing around after Rosa.'

GROBBELAAR: Baboon, hey?
(*He laughs.*)

(*KARIN enters with a plate and sandwich.*)

KARIN: So, Grobbelaar, what are you going to do today?

GROBBELAAR: I don't know; maybe they need me at work. Today they brought in a new lot. Two white girls.

KARIN: Here. Brown bread. It's better for you.

GROBBELAAR: Funny, when I started working here it was just Kaffirs.

KARIN: I wonder, yes ...

GROBBELAAR: *Ja.*

(*Pause. KARIN looks out at the view.*)

KARIN: Looks so peaceful.

GROBBELAAR: We heard about some more shooting out in the black townships. Two bombs.

KARIN: Really? You people hear about all these things?

GROBBELAAR: Yes. So how's it at school?

KARIN: Oh, can't complain.

GROBBELAAR: Lots of work?

KARIN: The usual. And you?

GROBBELAAR: Also. Sometimes I really wish someone would try to escape, just to make the day a little more exciting.

KARIN: How could they escape?

GROBBELAAR: Impossible. But I just thought, wondered ...

KARIN: No, but how could people escape from here?

GROBBELAAR: Impossible.

KARIN: Swim?

GROBBELAAR: Too cold. No, they didn't choose this place for no reason.

KARIN: Not for the panorama.

GROBBELAAR: No. Nice sandwich.

KARIN: You'll get fat ... I'm just joking ...

GROBBELAAR: Hey?

KARIN: OK, Grobbelaar, I'll tell Rosa you came round visiting.

GROBBELAAR: *Ja*, no, it's OK.
(But he doesn't go. Pause.)
 Will they get married? Miss Rosa and that man from Johannesburg?

KARIN: Maybe.

GROBBELAAR: I'd like to get married. Kids. Nice house. But not here. This place is no good for kids. Too much wind.

KARIN: *Ja*. I'm going to give this place another year at the most and then I want to find a position somewhere else.

GROBBELAAR: Hey? I'll miss you, Miss Karin.

KARIN: Really?

(ROSA is heard off in a fury.)

ROSA: Shit! One day I swear I'll answer him back in spite of his rank and uniform.
(She enters)
 Why am I such a coward? I'm not even in the force. Karin, you could've asked me. It always happens: I make all the speeches in my head and say 'Go to hell' and resign, and then when I'm there in real life and let rip, I go all cute-cute and say 'Love your wife'. Why am I always bowing and scraping? 'Yes sir' this, 'No sir' that! The job's shit; the pay? That's a laugh. Hello, Grobbelaar, do you live here now?

GROBBELAAR: Hello, Miss Rosa. Sorry, Miss?

ROSA: And what are you eating?

KARIN: Peanut-butter sandwich. I made him one.

(Rosa looks at the view.)

ROSA: And look at that old cow grinning at me from Devils Peak to Lion's Head!
(Turns to KARIN)
 You could've at least asked me, Karin. I mean, we *do* live together in this house and it's not exactly a mansion. I don't mind for one

night. Shit, the whole thing around here is heavy enough as it is with the prison and the security and the secrets and now on top of it weeping relatives – but, please, you could've asked me. I would've probably said yes – eventually.

KARIN: Oh?

ROSA: Don't look so surprised. Generosity isn't one of my strong points, but I've also got the wobblies that pass for feelings. Hey, Grobbelaar, damn it, man, you've dropped crumbs all over the floor!

GROBBELAAR: Sorry, Miss ...

ROSA: Don't they feed you down there? Must you come here and eat us out of house and home? We're only teachers! No jackpot, you know ...

GROBBELAAR: Hell, Miss Rosa, I'm really sorry ...

KARIN: Never mind, Grobbelaar, she's just joking.

(She helps him with the crumbs.)

ROSA: Ow ... God, I felt my back go when I was demonstrating self-defence to the nine-year-old girls. Protection against molestation, Grobbelaar.
(He gives an embarrassed laugh. She fixes him with a stare.)
You've had your ... what is it? Shaved off your moustache?

GROBBELAAR: I never had a moustache.

ROSA: Beard?

KARIN: He's cut his hair.

ROSA: Going over to town? Have you also got part-time work in the townships?

GROBBELAAR: No, I'm full-time here. Miss Rosa, I was wondering if ...

ROSA: Karin, I think I'll go over on Saturday morning and spend the weekend ...

KARIN: Me too?

ROSA: And vomit all the way back and forth? Anyway, my boyfriend is coming down from Jo'burg.

KARIN: Oh.

ROSA: Then I can get the last boat on Sunday.

GROBBELAAR: I might also be on that boat, Miss Rosa.

ROSA: Amazing. Don't get up, Grobbelaar, feel at home.

(But GROBBELAAR does get up.)

GROBBELAAR: I also get up at home. It's good manners.

ROSA: There's something wrong with the sink. Would you have a look at it before you go?

GROBBELAAR: Of course, Miss Rosa.

KARIN: You don't mind, do you, Grobbelaar?

GROBBELAAR: No, Miss Rosa. Any time.

(He exits)

ROSA: I bet he pulls the wings off baby flies and laughs!

KARIN: Oh shame, Rosa, he's quite sweet, really.

ROSA: OK. So where do we put her?

KARIN: Who?

ROSA: Where does she sleep? I'm not giving up my bed for anyone, that's for sure.

KARIN: Who?

ROSA: I thought you'd know her name. You're the one who said yes.

KARIN: No.

ROSA: No? They said you said it was OK. Karin, the girl coming to stay over tonight! The copshop said you agreed.

KARIN: Where did they get that? I said nothing!

ROSA: So I said, well, OK, if you say it's OK, It's OK.

KARIN: I didn't say it was OK! What are you talking about?

ROSA: She's coming to see someone who's inside.

KARIN: And she's staying here with us?

ROSA: We said yes, didn't we?

KARIN: Oh no, I don't like having these people's relatives here, Rosa. They make me nervous.

ROSA: Oh, come on, this place isn't a leper colony any more. They're just people like me and you. Not quite like him in there, but then there was also only one King Kong.

KARIN: Can't she go and stay somewhere else? With the doctor or the principal or whoever? They've got the space.

ROSA: I suppose so. You tell them.

KARIN: Me?

ROSA: You tell them that you don't want her here and can't she stay with Doctor Hugo or Mr Pierce.

KARIN: Never.
(Pause.)
I suppose she could sleep in here, couldn't she? You did say it was only for one night, hey?

ROSA: And what about me? Where do I sit tonight? You know I like to watch the panorama before I go to bed. Where do I sit? The kitchen? Like hell, just because you've handed over my comforts to a stranger.

(KARIN thinks for a moment.)

KARIN: Grobbelaar said some white student-types were brought in this morning, two girls. Ja, well in that case I suppose she can have my room, I don't mind. I'll sleep in here once you've looked at the panorama and all that. I'll read.

ROSA: Well, that's your own business. I just don't want to be mucked about, OK?

KARIN: OK.

(GROBBELAAR enters beaming.)

GROBBELAAR: All fixed like new, Miss Rosa.

ROSA: What?

GROBBELAAR: The sink. Tea-leaves. Use tea-bags.

KARIN: Thanks, Grobbelaar.

ROSA: One of my small luxuries in life is a pot of real tea.

KARIN: We usually throw the tea-leaves outside in the garden.

GROBBELAAR: That's good.

ROSA: Well, I'm going to take that bath now.

(She exits)

GROBBELAAR: Is she cross with me?

KARIN: No, man, Grobbelaar. It's just your bosses cheated us into taking someone in for the night. She's cross about that. I'm also cross.

GROBBELAAR: *Ja*, but you know we don't have facilities here for people who want to spend the night. Except in the cells.
(He laughs.)

KARIN: Well, you people should create decent facilities.

GROBBELAAR: Listen, maybe someone's going to die. When they can't move them over to the mainland they let the family come over and say goodbye. Or maybe it's got something to do with those white detainees. You know they've got money, those Jews – fancy lawyers.

KARIN: Please, I really don't want to know, Grobbelaar. I refuse to listen. Just look out at that mountain and forget all the ugly things in the world, because that there is out of God's hands and that's the reality, Grobbelaar – that mass of rock and granite and the sea and the sky and the sun. That's what it's all about.

GROBBELAAR: Yes, Miss Karin. Maybe that's why we're here, hey? To make sure that what's over there stays there.

KARIN: What?

GROBBELAAR: No, I'm thinking suddenly. That's what happens to me when I get mixed up with you teacher-types.

KARIN: Oh.

GROBBELAAR: Yes.
(Pause. They look out at the view.)
Miss Karin, can I ask you a big favour?

KARIN: Yes.

GROBBELAAR: This function at work, you know? The dance?

KARIN: Yes. Thank you!

GROBBELAAR: Tell Miss Rosa she'll really have a nice time.

KARIN: Oh. OK.
(GROBBELAAR exits.)
Anyway, I don't even like dancing ...

(ROSA enters.)

ROSA: Is he gone?

KARIN: Yes.

ROSA: I wish he'd find a nice mousey-looking Afrikaans girl with thick ankles and marry her and move to South America. What's this function he's talking about?

KARIN: At the prison. A dance with a band.

ROSA: Grim.

KARIN: Is a public holiday coming up, or what?

ROSA: Forget it.

KARIN: Shame. He did fix the sink, Rosa.

ROSA: So let's restrict his plumbing to the sink.

KARIN: What?

ROSA: Never mind. Your usual?

KARIN: Hell's bells, no, I shouldn't ...

(But she does. ROSA pours them each a drink.)

ROSA: So how was your day?

KARIN: Oh, same as always. My Boer War maps still haven't come from Pretoria, you know.

ROSA: Maybe they still need them.

KARIN: Oh. And you?

ROSA: They still haven't fixed that damn window in my room. Thank God there was no wind today. Mmmm, looks quite clear for a change.

KARIN: It's so beautiful ...

ROSA: Any post?

KARIN: No, but I'm sure I'll get a letter soon. They don't take that long to decide.

ROSA: Don't you know the Department yet? Karin, I think you would've heard from them if you'd got that job.

KARIN: *Ja*. Maybe I still will.

ROSA: I hope so for your sake. Cheers.

KARIN: It's not so bad here: fresh air, nice house. Nice people.

ROSA: Well, I suppose I could've been stuck somewhere north of Pretoria with general class IQ of ten. I should be grateful. What's for supper?

KARIN: I got a nice fish ...

ROSA: Not fish again!

KARIN: Fish cakes!

ROSA: Did you buy some new tomato sauce? OK. I suppose we'll have to feed her.

KARIN: There'll be enough food for three. Grobbelaar says they only allow family to come when someone's dying. Maybe that's why she's coming. It really makes me nervous.

ROSA: Look, she sleeps here and then she goes and we don't have to be involved. We just remind the powers-that-be of our sacrifice, send them a bill for bed and breakfast and fish cakes and ask to have the front of the cottage repainted and a strong trellis put up for my red bougainvillea – which I know won't grow in the wind, but we can still try.

KARIN: *Ja*, and just when it flowers, I'll get that new job and have to leave and miss out on all the nice times and everything.

ROSA: And no white paint! I'm sick of all this over-emphasis. This time I want something really modern.

KARIN: Chocolate-brown or dark green ... where's that magazine ...?

ROSA: Something with class. I might lose my mind out here, but I'll be damned if I'm also going to lose my taste!
(*Sees the tape recorder*)
Talking to your ma?

KARIN: Just started. I feel so terrible, I've done nothing for weeks.

ROSA: Give her my love.
(A knock on the door.)
What's this now ...
(GROBBELAAR enters.)
You're too early, we're not eating yet.

GROBBELAAR: Miss Rosa?

ROSA: And please stop calling me Miss Rosa! I get that all day from the kids in class: 'Miss' this and 'Miss' that!

GROBBELAAR: OK, Miss. Listen, I shouldn't be doing this, you know, it's my day off. But the sergeant knows I'm a good friend of yours, so he said for me to come down here and bring the girl and tell you the rules.

KARIN: She's here?

GROBBELAAR: No, wait, Miss Karin. She's outside. But first the rules.

ROSA: What rules?

GROBBELAAR: There are rules, Miss Rosa. You see, when she comes into the room when I'm still here, then you both must leave. If I'm not here, then only one of you has to leave. And when you two want to be in the room together, like now – then she must leave.

(Pause. The women take this in.)

KARIN: Is that supposed to be a joke?

ROSA: What the hell are you talking about, Grobbelaar? We make the arrangements here, if you don't mind. She'll sleep in Karin's room, so there's no need for anyone to leave. You bloody police – who the hell do you think you are, anyway?

GROBBELAAR: She can only be allowed in a room with one other person at the same time. No, man, Miss Karin, tell her it's the rules.

KARIN: But I don't understand, Grobbelaar, is she sick?

GROBBELAAR: No, Miss Karin, she's just a banned person.

ROSA: I don't believe it!

KARIN: What? Why?

GROBBELAAR: Hey?

KARIN: Why is she banned? What did she do?

GROBBELAAR: Nothing, she's just banned.

ROSA: Well, I'm not moving, banned person or not. So you can take her straight back to the copshop and let them put her up for the night. I want nothing to do with this!

KARIN: You mean only one person in the same room everywhere? Even in her own house? With her own family? But that must be a joke!

ROSA: This is not her house. This is my house.

KARIN: Yes, this is our house.

GROBBELAAR: She's just a banned person. I don't know why. We don't have to know these things, just that she's banned. But they usually have a good reason. It's not for us to question.

ROSA: I question!

KARIN: But why isn't she locked up like the others? Why do they let her wander around free?

GROBBELAAR: They usually restrict them to certain areas and so make them harmless. This is a special case, Miss, the sergeant said so.

KARIN: No, but listen, isn't there a pamphlet or something to explain it all properly to us? I don't want to break any laws. Hey, Rosa?

ROSA: I just don't believe it!

GROBBELAAR: It will be all right, Miss Karin. Miss Rosa, it's only for twenty-four hours. She's got a permit to leave her restricted area, but she must be back there in twenty-four hours. Listen, if you want to come down to the sergeant, he'll explain it all to you, but it's really very easy. Just one person at a time and – oh yes, she may not address any meetings.

ROSA: Bang goes tonight's PTA! Wait for me, Grobbelaar, I'm coming with you!

GROBBELAAR: To the function?

ROSA: To the office! And bugger the sergeant – I want to talk to someone who's really in charge. There is a limit!

(She exits)

GROBBELAAR: I thought she'd say she'd come with me to the function ...

KARIN: But what did this girl do?

GROBBELAAR: Probably politics again, Miss Karin. I don't know.

KARIN: Where is she ...

GROBBELAAR: No, hang on, she's just outside ... it's OK. She's young. Looks quite clean. Just for this one night, Miss Karin. I know they'll really be grateful at the office, really. I mean, just in case you're applying for a nice new job at another school? I'm sure the sergeant will put in a good word ...

KARIN: How do you know about that application? No one knows ...

GROBBELAAR: We'll all put in a good word, Miss Karin, I promise.

KARIN: Did Rosa tell you about that? How do you people know these things?

GROBBELAAR: Shall I bring her in now or what?

KARIN: No, wait ... Rosa?

(SIBI enters and stands, impassive. She is wearing dark glasses.)

GROBBELAAR: Oh yes, I meant to say, she's ...

KARIN: Oh.
(Pause.)
Grobbelaar?

GROBBELAAR: Sorry, I should've told you sooner.

KARIN: Grobbelaar, we're one too many.

GROBBELAAR: Hey?

KARIN: One, two, three ...

GROBBELAAR: Oh. Never mind, I'll go. I can stand outside and talk to you through the window, that's OK.

KARIN: No, no, let me rather go ...

ROSA: *(Off)* ... there are a few pertinent things I have to say to ...

(She enters and see SIBI. Stops. Pause.)

KARIN: And now we're four.

GROBBELAAR: I'll walk you up to the office, Miss Rosa.

ROSA: Is this ... er ...

GROBBELAAR: Only for twenty-four hours.

KARIN: There are four of us. Two of us must go. Please! We'll get into trouble!

ROSA: I can't leave the house now ...

GROBBELAAR: Come, Miss Rosa ...

ROSA: Will Karin be OK? Maybe she should come too.

KARIN: Yes, I think so ...

GROBBELAAR: No, Miss Karin, you'll be quite all right. Listen, man, this is Robben Island, the safest place in the world!

(GROBBELAAR and ROSA exit; ROSA backs out, visibly concerned. Pause.)

KARIN: *Ja.*
(Pause.)
Was the sea rough?
(No reaction)
Oh, you're lucky. I get terribly seasick, you know. Can you believe it? Living on an island and always getting terribly seasick?
Chronic. *Ja.* That's why I try and avoid going over to Cape Town. I can't face those hours of hell. You're lucky.
(Pause. SIBI just stands and looks at KARIN. KARIN desperately looks around for something to talk about.)
Ja, it's beautiful when the sea is calm, the mountain is so big and blue, *nê?* And everything's so pretty. That's to say, if there's no wind. A really beautiful view of the mountain from here. Did you see? Rosa calls it our panorama, free from the gods ...
(Pause.)
Ja. I used to collect postcards of Table Mountain because each one was so different and colourful. You'll be amazed how many – each one somehow not the same as the others. *Ja.* I sent them all to my mother in the Free State. Shame. She made a big ... what do you call it ... collage! You know, a collage, and hung it in the lounge. I think she must have most of the postcards ever taken by now. I'm sending her a little tape ... So you weren't seasick?
That's nice.
(Pause.)
Ja. Is this your first visit here? I mean to the Cape? The Cape of Good Hope!
(Pause.)
Why are you a banned person?

SIBI: I'm black.

KARIN: Oh.
(Pause.)

Er ... did you know that this island was a leper colony and all sorts of things like that in the past? They used stone from the quarry here to build the castle in Cape Town. You know, the castle? With its five points: er ... Buren ... Leiden ... Oranje, Katzenellenbogen and ... oh, hell, I teach the children history, but I'll never remember all five.

SIBI: Nassau.

KARIN: Of course, Nassau. That's fantastic. Did you finish school and all that?

SIBI: Yes.

KARIN: Fantastic. I really didn't want this job when I applied for it, I mean, I secretly hope I wouldn't get it, but I did get it and so here I am. It's the water, I suppose. I don't really like the sea all that much.
(Looks out of the window)
They say you're only staying till tomorrow. You won't really have a chance to see much of the island. They once built a church here, but there wasn't a preacher. There's a wreck. Quite a few wrecks.

SIBI: I've come to see my father.

KARIN: Oh, yes.

SIBI: He's sick, they say.

KARIN: Oh, I'm sorry.
(Pause.)
Would you like some tea?

SIBI: No, thanks.

KARIN: Gosh, but she's taking long.
(Pause.)
I'm sure they can put you up in a better place than this ... I mean, hell's bells, it's silly to squeeze you in here. There are much better places. You know, they still don't cater for visitors here. Silly, hey? When will they learn. Is that all you brought?

SIBI: I wasn't allowed more.

KARIN: Oh well, it's only for a day, isn't it? You don't need much for just twenty-four hours – I mean, hell's bells, it's like going over to Cape Town for a weekend.
(Pause. KARIN listens desperately for ROSA's return.)
I ... er ... I've never met a banned person before.

SIBI: It's no big deal.

KARIN: They all make it sound like ... well, like it's a disease, you know. But one with many rules and do's and don't's . I mean, you're not a murderer or something, are you? Are you? I just don't know what all this fuss is about ...
(Pause.)
No, hell's bells, I just don't know ...

SIBI: Can I sit down?

KARIN: Of course ... maybe you'd like a cooldrink or something? You must be thirsty.

SIBI: Do you have a phone?

KARIN: No, why?

SIBI: Just asking. Do you think I could use your bathroom?

KARIN: For what?

SIBI: I want to go to the toilet.

KARIN: Oh, you want the toilet. Next to the bathroom. But, you know, they'll be back just now, and then you'll be able to have a bath and do everything in proper comfort.

SIBI: I'd rather just wee first, OK? Down the passage to the end?

KARIN: How do you know?

SIBI: I can see it from here.
(SIBI exits. KARIN sits numbly.)

KARIN: Oh, hell's bells ...
(Looks out for ROSA. She is very disturbed. Looks off to the bathroom. Then she tides up the room and is seen to hide some valuables, i.e. the tape recorder and some ornaments. She checks the money in her bag.)
Please, Rosa ... please hurry ...
(She looks off to the left and right down the passage on both sides, wondering who will appear first; then she sees ROSA enter.)
Oh, thank God ... what's happened? Did you tell them? She's in the toilet – I couldn't stop her, she had to go. Did you tell them she can't stay here?

ROSA: Oh yes, I told them she can't stay here, but she's staying all the same.

KARIN: Oh no, we just don't have room for her!

ROSA: Then we'll just have to make room for her. I was ordered – ordered! – to make her stay here as pleasant as possible.

KARIN: For a banned black person, the office ordered you to do that? That's ridiculous!

ROSA: You'd better believe it. They're obviously scared the overseas Press will get hold of another stick to beat us with.

KARIN: Oh no, is the overseas Press also here?

ROSA: We're the local branch of the Holiday Inn.

KARIN: And if we refuse?

ROSA: You refuse. Go on, you tell them no!

KARIN: Never!

ROSA: Here she comes; I want to talk to her.

KARIN: But ...

(SIBI enters.)

ROSA: Make us some tea, Karin.

KARIN: She doesn't want tea ...

ROSA: I want tea.

SIBI: And anyway, three's an illegal gathering.

KARIN: Oh.

(She exits.)

ROSA: I'm Rosa.

SIBI: Sibi Makhale.

ROSA: Sibi.

SIBI: My mother was working as a nurse for a Doctor Baker in Soweto when I was born. I was called 'little Cathy Baker'. C.B. Now we say it quickly with an ethnic twang and it sounds OK. Sibi!

ROSA: I'll be quite honest with you, OK? I've never been interested in politics. I don't mind black people, I never did. I can't say they're my best friends, because, well, I just don't know any. But whatever, I just don't want you here. It's not political or racial or

anything. It's just selfish: this place isn't big enough for three. I work hard for my living and I need to relax. And besides all that, I really don't feel like getting involved with your problem, your black power or whatever it is you people stand for.

SIBI: The future?

ROSA: Or smart-arse comments like that. I do my job here and I like my life as it is, and that's that. So. Now you know where you stand.

SIBI: Thank you.

ROSA: I'll of course, within the framework of what's expected of me, try and make your stay here as comfortable as I can. But you're no friend of mine, OK?

SIBI: Sure. Don't worry about me, Miss Rosa. I'll just wait quietly till they come to get me and then I'll quietly go and see my father and quietly go back into obscurity tomorrow and you'll never know I was here. I won't even take the silver.

ROSA: I didn't mean it like that. And don't call me Miss Rosa. You're not one of my pupils.

(Pause.)

What time did they say?

SIBI: They didn't say.

(Pause. She looks out at the view.)

I believe the wind can blow very hard here.

ROSA: A beautiful sight, the cloud over the mountain. The tablecloth.

SIBI: A cruel wind that makes men mad.

ROSA: It just cleans the air.

SIBI: Your air. 'It blows the fine sand through the barbed windows, makes the stone floors rough under my bare feet. The food is crunchy with sand, the water muddy with sand and if I dare shed a tear, it leaves a print of my weakness against the sand on my cheek.'

ROSA: Where's that from?

SIBI: Oh, you don't think I could have thought that out for myself?

ROSA: Did you?

SIBI: No. That was from a letter from my father to me – written for a birthday of mine, years ago – in the days when he still could write. It's not that they stopped him from writing – he got sick ...

ROSA: I was just going to say, they now even have a nice TV in their cells ...

SIBI: In the beginning they never allowed him to write to anyone, but we found ways and means to get word from him. Then he got weaker and sicker and now they say he's dying. Of course, one learns not to believe anything in a brown envelope that comes from a private box in Pretoria, but in this case I'm willing to be proved wrong.

ROSA: They wouldn't joke about death.

SIBI: If I had to believe everything around me, I'd be as mad as you!

ROSA: I'm fine.

SIBI: Oh? In a prison like this, through choice? Sane? Fine?

ROSA: I'm a teacher.

SIBI: Of course. And what do you teach your kids? 'Boys and girls, behold the panorama, but don't look over your shoulders. Beyond those terrible walls are tortured people, angry people, hating people, who will one day come out and get you!' Do you teach that to your children, Rosa?

ROSA: The prison walls are ideal to practise tennis against and for ball games. I teach the kids about culture and beauty and hope and love and a good life.

SIBI: Then you are a great liar, schoolteacher. And a fool.

(KARIN enters with a tray.)

KARIN: Here's the tea. Now what happens? I also want tea. Must I now go and sit in the kitchen because of the rules?

SIBI: No, I'll go, I'm used to kitchens. They should come for me soon. 'd actually like to freshen up. Do you have a maid's quarters?

ROSA: No, we do our own housework.

SIBI: So where do I sleep?

ROSA: In Karin's room.

KARIN: No, Rosa! It's in such a terrible mess ...

ROSA: Then she can clean it. Hey, Sibi? Make yourself useful until you're fetched.

SIBI: *(To KARIN)* Yes, I take milk. One sugar?

(KARIN hesitates, then has to serve her. She stirs in the sugar and hands SIBI the cup.)

SIBI: Thanks.

(She exits.)

KARIN: Why are you fighting with her? She's one of them, Rosa, take care!

ROSA: One of them? Who's them?

KARIN: Those terrorists – communists – anti-whites – blacks ... oh, I don't know. I just know she wants to harm us. Everything we love and care about, she hates. She'll destroy our lives. Don't even answer her back, just say 'yes' and 'no' and let's get it over with. Please, Rosa, I'm so scared.

ROSA: Well, I'm not scared! I stand aside for no one, black or otherwise!

(KARIN peers down the corridor. ROSA pours a drink.)

KARIN: Should I give her clean sheets?

ROSA: What have you got that she might catch?

KARIN: Be serious! I just thought she ... oh God, I didn't make space for her in my cupboard ...

ROSA: I'm going to get those bastards at the office for this! I'm sure that baboon Grobbelaar had a finger in this little pie. 'Let's put the Kaffir in with the schoolteachers and see what happens!' Sibi Magala.

KARIN: Who?

ROSA: Madam in there. Sibi Magala or something ...

KARIN: Magala?

ROSA: Sibi ... like C.B.

KARIN: Magala ... Makhale?

ROSA: That's it, Makhala.

KARIN: Makhale! She must be the daughter of Alfred Makhale! Oh God, I won't have her here in my house ...

ROSA: You know this Alfred Makhala?

KARIN: Makhale! Remember, when I came here and met you and told you about him and you said it was OK, he was probably over at Pollsmore Prison with Nelson Mandela and the others. Remember, Rosa, I told you all about him. They say he helped plant that bomb in 1968. Seven people killed. My uncle lost a leg!

ROSA: Yes, but ...

KARIN: I didn't know he was still here ...

ROSA: He doesn't sound very important to me.

KARIN: Alfred Makhale. My parents talked about him. Even our dog's name was Makhale! My uncle had to stop working after that; I mean, what could he do with only one leg? Then he died. And all the time this murderer is just round the corner from me ...

ROSA: Karin, he's in a maximum-security prison! He's not windsurfing outside!

KARIN: I won't have that girl in my room. It *is* my room!

ROSA: But he's dying ...

KARIN: His daughter is here. I'm sure she's involved too. They all are!

ROSA: And I always thought you never got involved in politics.

KARIN: This is not politics, this is death! Oh God, it all comes back to me, all that whispering about him, all that fear. I swore I'd never listen to it again. And now they're here in my house, in my bed ... I won't ... I won't ...

(She cries. ROSA is helpless.)

ROSA: But he's dying ...

KARIN: Nobody can force me. I'll resign if I must. I won't be forced to be friendly!

ROSA: Well, for your information, I'm not going to resign. I like my job and my life here and I'm certainly not going to throw all that up because of having to play Kaffir-nanny for twenty-four hours.

KARIN: But my room ...

ROSA: So play ball, Karin, because things will be back to normal tomorrow and we have to live together happily ever after while she throws bombs and stones on the mainland!

KARIN: No one can force me!

ROSA: Oh?
(She twists KARIN's arm painfully.)
I'm not going to lose everything because of some cocky little black bitch, do you understand?

KARIN: Ow, Rosa ... please don't ... ow ...

ROSA: Do you understand!

KARIN: Yes ... yes ... yes ...

(A knock at the door. ROSA lets her go. KARIN pulls away, frightened. ROSA is suddenly horrified at what has happened.)

GROBBELAAR: *(Off)* Miss Rosa? It's me – Grobbelaar!

ROSA: I'll kill him ...

GROBBELAAR: *(Off)* How many of you are in there?

KARIN: Two ...

GROBBELAAR: *(Off)* Then I can't come in!

ROSA: It's two whites only!

GROBBELAAR: *(Off)* Then I'm coming in!
(He enters.)
I'm here for the Kaffir girl.

KARIN: You've found a place for her? Thank God ...

GROBBELAAR: No, Miss Karin, to see her father. What's wrong with your arm?

KARIN: Er ... nothing.

ROSA: She's in Karin's room, Grobbelaar.

GROBBELAAR: Oh.

KARIN: She's in *my* room, Grobbelaar.

ROSA: It was you, wasn't it?

GROBBELAAR: Hey?

ROSA: You suggested that we take her in!

GROBBELAAR: No, I don't make those sort of decisions. They are made from the top. They'll be grateful. You'll see, Miss Rosa, they'll make a special effort for you two now.

KARIN: Did you know she was the daughter of Alfred Makhale?

GROBBELAAR: They all sound the same to me.

ROSA: Oh, never mind! Just take her away, Grobbelaar, it's already been a far too exciting day for these two spinster ladies.

GROBBELAAR: Don't have to be, you know, Miss.

ROSA: Be what?

GROBBELAAR: A spinster, Miss.

ROSA: Thank you, Grobbelaar.

KARIN: Grobbelaar, please don't go ...

ROSA: But isn't this your day off?

GROBBELAAR: Yes, Miss Rosa.

ROSA: Then why are you working?

GROBBELAAR: No, I thought you might need me around today, what with the Kaffir girl and everything.

ROSA: Thank you, Grobbelaar.

KARIN: Thanks, Grobbelaar.

(SIBI enters wearing a colourful ethnic kaftan.)

GROBBELAAR: I've come for you, hurry up!

KARIN: Hell's bells, now there are four of us in the same room!

SIBI: Don't worry, I won't tell the boss.

GROBBELAAR: OK, Miss Rosa, Miss Karin.
(Gruffly to SIBI)
Get a move on, man, we're late!

SIBI: Just leave the key under the mat. I promise I won't bring back strange men.

(She exits after GROBBELAAR.)

KARIN: You see, she's making fun of us!

ROSA: Forget about her, Karin. Here, I'll pour you a nice drink. Relax!

KARIN: Hell's bells ... no, really, I shouldn't ...
(*But ROSA pours her a stiff drink, which she accepts. She then peers off to her room.*)
Do you think my room is OK?

ROSA: Here.

(*She tops up KARIN's drink.*)

KARIN: That's why I didn't want to come to this place with its walls and cells and horrible secrets. They frighten me more than anything in the world. I want children one day, Rosa, if I find the right man, but I can't with them waiting to kill my babies. And then I came here – remember, on the same boat as you? – and got trapped by seasickness ... and now ... I'm not also going to lose everything, Rosa, I swear!

ROSA: We'll both look back on this in a few days and laugh, you watch what I tell you. Change the subject.

KARIN: I'm not also going to lose everything, Rosa!

ROSA: Change the subject!

KARIN: To what?

ROSA: I said change the subject – talk about anything else!

(*Pause.*)

KARIN: Rosa?

ROSA: *Ja?*

KARIN: Have you slept with your friend from Jo'burg?

(*ROSA stares at her amazed.*)

ROSA: What on earth made you ask that?

KARIN: I don't know ...

ROSA: You've never asked me something like that before, Karin.

KARIN: I just ... well. Earlier on I was talking to Grobbelaar about children and marriage and ... suddenly I just wondered ... you know ...

ROSA: I don't have to tell you things like that!

KARIN: But you said ...

ROSA: I said change the subject – don't make conversation!

(Pause.)

KARIN: I lived with a man once. Well, not quite, he was still a boy. No, it's true ... a Rhodesian chap ... he was in college with me, and for one holiday we decided to share a place, you know, to see how it would be. Cheaper for two, you know ...

ROSA: You never told me!

(She laughs.)

KARIN: Sounds so silly. It wasn't a laughing matter then. I had to sneak my things out so my parents wouldn't know and stop me. He also. He lived with his widowed ma. Well ... anyway, when the holidays were over, he went back to his ma and I stayed on.

ROSA: And?

KARIN: *Ja*, maybe he missed home cooking and ... I don't know ... maybe we knew each other too well, because nothing ever happened, you know, like that. I can't say I liked it. Living with a man. It's off-putting seeing his things all over the place – socks and underpants and his toothpaste-tube all squeezed and the cap never on it – and he never washed the bath, and he used to ...

(Pause.)

ROSA: What? Come on, you must tell me!

KARIN: *(Whispers)* *Poep*.

ROSA: What?

(KARIN starts laughing.)

KARIN: *Fart! Poep!* You know? Even though he closed the door to his room every night, I'd hear them – like thunder!

(She demonstrates the poeps. They both fall about laughing. ROSA take up the noises. It is a welcome release.)

ROSA: No wonder you hate this place!

KARIN: Hey?

ROSA: The wind!
(More laughter. But Karin is slowly going over to tears. Rosa holds forth.)

Well, I'm afraid I've never had any experience like that. I'm sure my one never does that sort of thing. He's too English – they never *poep*.

(She laughs, then notices KARIN huddled.)

Hey, what's wrong?

KARIN: Just listen to me. Here I sit, nostalgic about something that hasn't even happened to me, and all I really have on this forgotten rock in the sea is the reality of Grobbelaar and my colour poster of the Springbok Rugby Team!

ROSA: *Ja, ja*, You're quite safe with the Springboks. We'll donate Grobbelaar to the SPCA. Come now, stop crying.

KARIN: Don't cry over spilt milk?

ROSA: That's right.

KARIN: That just makes it worse!
(She cries.)

ROSA: Karin. Listen, man, it's really terribly overrated, all this talk of sex and that sort of thing. Yes, I've slept with my man from Jo'burg. A few times. It keeps him happy to be so plunged in guilt that he can't wait for the next time. But it's really nothing to write home about.

KARIN: Then why's everybody doing it?

ROSA: Because waterskiing's too difficult. Come on, sit up. Look at the panorama. Just think of all the millions of eyes looking across at the island and wondering what strange things are happening here tonight. And if only they knew.

(She stands in front of the window and 'exposes' herself to the view.)

Look, you randy bastards! First one across the water gets a cookie!

(KARIN is horrified.)

Here, you chauvinist pigs! A meat pie and two cream puffs for the first one with the guts to leave his mummy.

(Then KARIN jumps up with a shriek of delight and does it too.)

KARIN: Go for it!
(She exposes herself. There is a large commotion outside.)
Oh, hell's bells, someone saw me!

SIBI: *(Off)* No, don't you make excuses, you pig! Don't you dare point a finger at my father, you white piece of rubbish!

(SIBI enters with GROBBELAAR.)

GROBBELAAR: Rubbish? You just listen here ...

SIBI: I don't listen to murderers and killers of children. Fuck off!

GROBBELAAR: *Jisis*, nobody talks to me like this!

SIBI: Then start getting used to it, Whitey!

GROBBELAAR: I'm not going to take this from a Kaffir, Miss Rosa ...

ROSA: Calm down, both of you ...

SIBI: And don't you come with your 'calm down' crap! Just stand away from me, all of you. OK?

ROSA: I said calm down!

KARIN: Rosa, there are four of us ...

ROSA: What?

KARIN: One, two, three, four ...

ROSA: Then you two get out!

KARIN: I'll go. It's OK, I'll go. And Grobbelaar too. Grobbelaar, come ...

GROBBELAAR: She's an animal. Like all the others – I warn you ...
(He sneers at SIBI.)
Ja, and you people want to run this land? Listen, necklacing is too good for you. They should chain people like you to the walls of the city and let the seagulls peck out your eyes, like in the Bible!

SIBI: Wonderful idea. I'll make a note of it in my book of lists and reserve that one specially for you, you racist pig!

(GROBBELAAR is about to grab her.)

KARIN: *(Screams)* Grobbelaar!

(She hangs on to him and forces him to leave the room with her.)

GROBBELAAR: Fucking Kaffir bitch ...

(They exit. SIBI sits with her hands covering her face. ROSA is visibly rattled.)

ROSA: You've got a damn cheek, causing a riot in my house. I think you owe me some explanation.

SIBI: I owe you nothing.

ROSA: An explanation.

SIBI: Nothing, Whitey!

(She gives ROSA an F.U. sign.)

ROSA: Now listen carefully to me, comrade. This is my house and you owe me some respect and manners, not because I'm your white madam, but because you're my guest, whether we like it or not! So pack away your 'radical chic', because here we do things my way, and my way is soft and civilized and do you hear me loud and clear? Hey? You haven't got a hope, Sibi! I'll just call the authorities and you'll be dead – because I'm white and I'm right. OK?

SIBI: OK.

ROSA: Calm?

SIBI: I said OK. I want a drink.

ROSA: Please?

SIBI: Please!

ROSA: I've only got whisky and cherry brandy.

SIBI: Soda-water. I don't drink.

ROSA: Oh, the purity of *amandla*. You don't drink, you don't smoke and you don't smile – what do you do? Do you *poep*?

SIBI: What?

ROSA: *Poep*, you know ... phhhhhhhhhhhhh!
(SIBI suddenly laughs.)
Ah, good morning, sunshine.

SIBI: Jesus, you people ... *poep*?

ROSA: Never mind, it was a means to an end. OK, soda-water. Sorry, no ice. It's in the fridge and I don't intend leaving you alone for one moment.

SIBI: In case I do what?

Rosa: In case you run away and then I'll never know your terrible secrets. Here. Say thank you?

SIBI: Thank you.

ROSA: That's better.
(Pause. She sits down.)
So, talk to me.

SIBI: Nice view.

ROSA: What was all that shouting about?

SIBI: He insulted my father.

ROSA: He was provoking you.

SIBI: I won't take shit from any man, especially not a Boer!

ROSA: I'll drink to that. Anyway, Grobbelaar's not a Boer: he's covered in fur and listens to the police radio in stereo by sticking two bananas in his ears. So, how's your father?

SIBI: They told the truth for once. He looked terrible.

ROSA: Yes, but admit one thing: in spite of what he did, we look after him. You saw for yourself.

SIBI: You people can't afford to take chances with black political prisoners, not after Biko.

ROSA: Was he conscious?

SIBI: You mean, did he see me? No. But I really wanted to sit with him tonight, just to be with him. It's been many years since I saw him. But they pushed me out, very politely, so as not to make any bruises.

ROSA: You can always go back tomorrow.

SIBI: My twenty-four hours is over at noon.

ROSA: Where must you go back to?

SIBI: Listen, leave me alone! Don't try and change the subject! I've got nothing to tell you, white teacher. That old man was a strong, healthy father and now look what you've done to him, so get off my back. I won't lie down so easily!

ROSA: Don't blame me for your star status! If you people want to rock the boat, then expect to get splashed and don't moan when you get wet! Right. The programme is as follows: we watch the early TV news to see what's happening over there in the real world and then we have supper. It's fish night tonight. You're very welcome to join us. Then we prepare classes and read and talk. That's how we relax. Any questions?

(Pause. Then eventually)

SIBI: Do you have a husband?

ROSA: A boyfriend, but he's not here.

SIBI: Ah, not one of the staff from the prison, then?

ROSA: Like hell. He's in Jo'burg.

SIBI: Jo'burg. I grew up there. What's it like nowadays? They say it's a war zone.

ROSA: I really wouldn't know. So you like fish?

SIBI: It's funny how after a time even the horrible things become romantic and you miss them. The train to Jo'burg from Soweto; location life; raids; the laughter; it's very quiet in the Free State. When you watch the sunset or look out in the streets there, all you see is nothing. You feel like the last human left.

(Pause.)

Yes, I like fish. So you're going to marry a man from Jo'burg and get a house with a garden and electricity and running water and a car and go to church every Sunday and show him photos of this place and remember the hot sun and the high tides and building sandcastles with the children between the barbed wire. Your friend tells me they used stone from the quarry here to build the Cape Town castle. Now that I really didn't know.

ROSA: Yes.

SIBI: Amazing. Now that's a really important bit of information. You know I'm having a wonderful time. You're a very good hostess, Rosa, my dear – soft and civilized and in a world so far from mine I can scarcely hear the sound of your voice ...

(She stops and seems to stumble.)

ROSA: What is it?

SIBI: Nothing ... I need fresh air. If it's not against the law, I'd like to go out. It's not every day that someone like me gets a chance to walk around outside the fences.

ROSA: It's probably also against the rules. For someone like you.

SIBI: You enjoy having me here, don't you? Makes you feel you're living in danger, but without guilt or risk.

ROSA: I suppose it's different ...

(KARIN calls from within.)

KARIN: Oh no, man, I also want to come in now. Grobbelaar and I are all talked out. Someone else must go now!

SIBI: Let me go for a walk.
(Calls)
It's OK. I'm going.

(KARIN peeps round the door.)

KARIN: And what are we going to do at supper? We're not allowed to sit around the table together. I mean, who eats in the kitchen?

ROSA: I'll give you three guesses.

(GROBBELAAR enters.)

GROBBELAAR: You're supposed to stay here till we fetch you tomorrow.

SIBI: So stop me. Go on, take out your gun or whatever and beat me over the head.

ROSA: You make yourself quite irresistible.

GROBBELAAR: If you let her walk about a restricted area, Miss Rosa, I'll have to put in a report.

KARIN: Please decide now!

SIBI: But why don't you come with me, Mr Grobbelaar? Surely I couldn't have a better alibi, and you a more talkative companion. I might even race you down to the beach, where we can play blind-man's-buff, or kick-the-Kaffir, or what's new around your playpen.

KARIN: Stop it, please. It's bad enough as it is, without you going on like this. Rosa, please, you tell them.

ROSA: Grobbelaar?

GROBBELAAR: Miss Rosa?

ROSA: Miss Makhale wants to go for a walk. Will you just stay with her so that there's no trouble?

GROBBELAAR: No way, Miss Rosa, that's not part of my orders.

ROSA: No, it's me asking. Please?

GROBBELAAR: Just a favour to you, Miss Rosa.

ROSA: Thank you, Grobbelaar.

GROBBELAAR: You owe me one. Come.

(He exits.)

SIBI: I promise – he says one word to me about my father, I'll take a stone and smash his face.

(She exits. ROSA gives a deep sigh.)

ROSA: Shit, I need a drink!

KARIN: Hell's bells, no, I shouldn't ...
(ROSA pours them a drink. KARIN peers outside.)
Was it OK for us to let her go with him? Maybe I should've gone along ... oh no, then there would be three ...

ROSA: 'Ten little Kaffir kids running from the law. The corporal opened fire and then there were four.' What a madhouse ... have you ever thought that maybe someone somewhere thinks we're all so crazy as these seagulls? Hell, please – 'no more than one person in a room at the same time' ...

KARIN: It's the law, Rosa.

ROSA: And just because suddenly the law affects us, we realize what a load of mindless lunacy it is? So what about the other laws that protect us, hey? Karin? You know more about politics than me, what about the other laws?

KARIN: If there were no laws, there would be chaos. It would be every man for himself. We'd have riots. We'd be fighting for our survival!

ROSA: Isn't that the story of our lives?
(She also peers outside.)
What are they doing down there ...?

KARIN: I don't think we should've let her go with Grobbelaar ...

ROSA: Oh, come on, Grobbelaar's harmless. And anyway, what do you think he'd do to her here?

KARIN: She's black. She's his target. He's her mortal enemy! There's no difference to them between one white face and another. We all look alike to them.

ROSA: Where did you hear that? Who told you that?

KARIN: Many people ... actually, my Auntie Gracie.

ROSA: Do I look like you? Or Grobbelaar?

KARIN: No ...

(She giggles)

ROSA: Let's get supper together.

KARIN: We'd better take out the good plates.

ROSA: What the hell for? It's nobody's birthday.

KARIN: I don't want her to think we're giving her food on our old set. I don't want her to think that we're treating her like a black.

ROSA: But she is a black!

KARIN: Come on, man, you know what I mean! In our kitchen at home we always had some tin plates and tin mugs for the garden boy and the maid and whoever came to do some work. It was always like that.

ROSA: We haven't got tin mugs and plates.

KARIN: That's what I mean, she might think we're hiding them ...

ROSA: This is a madhouse! Karin, we eat off these plates every day. We – you and me! Now she will also have a chance. *Our* plates! OK? We can always break her plate on the rocks when she's finished, if it'll make you happy.

KARIN: But the good plates ...

ROSA: The good plates stay locked up for an occasion, like always. This is not an occasion.

KARIN: No, but I just thought ...

ROSA: Yes, well, Karin, leave all that to me. I know how to handle this situation. OK?

(Pause.)

KARIN: OK.

ROSA: Just tell me something. At your house, you know, with the tin plates and mugs? Your dog ... Makhale?

KARIN: No, four dogs – Makhale was a Rottweiler, then Smuts, Doris and Henry.

ROSA: Didn't their tin plates get mixed up with the garden boys' tin plates?

KARIN: No, the dogs ate out of their own nice dishes with their names on them, and even, sometimes, from *my* plate. My father would get so cross ... oh no!

(During this GROBBELAAR enters carrying a motionless SIBI)

ROSA: Oh God ...

GROBBELAAR: No, really, Miss Rosa, I don't know what happened ...

ROSA: What happened?

GROBBELAAR: I really don't know ... we were just walking down there by the rocks, me behind her – but not close – when she ... I don't know ...

ROSA: I don't believe it ...

KARIN: What? Is she dead?

ROSA: You killed her?

KARIN: What!

GROBBELAAR: No, Miss Rosa, man, I swear she just fell ...

KARIN: Oh dear God, is she really dead?

ROSA: Dead?

GROBBELAAR: Miss Rosa, I'm telling you ...

KARIN: Put her down!

ROSA: Karin, don't go!

KARIN: I want to get a blanket ... anyway, we're four!

ROSA: But if she's dead, that law doesn't count!

(GROBBELAAR puts SIBI down on the couch.)

GROBBELAAR: Miss Rosa, all I can say is ...

KARIN: Hell's bells, Grobbelaar, did you shoot her? I can't believe it!

GROBBELAAR: Miss Karin, man ...

ROSA: I knew we shouldn't have let her go with him. It's just a way of life now, murdering babies, raping women ...

(She stops, horrified by what she has said.)

GROBBELAAR: OK, Miss Rosa, OK. I will remember all you just said to me. For ever I'll remember!

(He exits. KARIN runs after him.)

KARIN: No, wait, Grobbelaar, you can't leave her like this!

ROSA: I've walked with him alone at night on the beach. There but for the grace of God lie I ...

KARIN: It's just too terrible ... what are we going to do? Rosa, we must contact the police ... oh no, he is the police ... Rosa? What are we going to do?

ROSA: Er ... you did First Aid?

KARIN: No. Never.

ROSA: What about your bloody diploma from college! You always said you were the best in the class!

KARIN: Yes, but I never learnt anything.

ROSA: Then feel for her pulse.

KARIN: Maybe you should ...

ROSA: I don't know where her pulse is!

KARIN: It's here, man, same as us.

ROSA: Go on, Karin, she won't bite you!

(Pause.)

KARIN: Do you think he raped her?

ROSA: What do you think?

KARIN: There've been so many cases like this ...

ROSA: Oh God ...

KARIN: There's no blood ... oh, hell's bells, our new sofa! Can you see blood?

ROSA: But I didn't hear a shot, did you?

KARIN: No ...

ROSA: Look at her neck, maybe he strangled her.

KARIN: Do you think so? I can't see anything from here ...

(Pause.)

KARIN: Rosa, with a dead body in our house ... I mean, they won't think we did it, hey?

ROSA: Don't be ridiculous! Grobbelaar was with her!

KARIN: Yes, but what if he says he wasn't? It's his word against ours.

ROSA: He did it!

KARIN: *Ja*, but what if he says he didn't? They'll believe him – they stick together, the police. They'll say we did it! You said to them I didn't want her here!

(She starts crying.)

ROSA: Oh shit! Well, she can't lie here. Help me carry her into the kitchen.

KARIN: But she's dead!

ROSA: I don't expect her to cook the supper! Take her legs, Karin, for God's sake, don't make me angry!
(They tentatively pick up SIBI.)
She weighs a ton ...

KARIN: Dead people do. Oh, hell's bells ...

ROSA: Is the sofa ruined?

KARIN: I see no blood ... maybe she had a heart attack ...

ROSA: Hey?

KARIN: If there's no blood ...

ROSA: Anyone who sees Grobbelaar coming at them in a state of *sexualis erectus* is bound to have a heart attack ...

(She starts laughing. The more she tries to stop, the more she laughs. KARIN is shocked.)

KARIN: Rosa! How can you make a terrible joke like that!

ROSA: I'm sorry ... I'm sorry ...
(They lift SIBI again. Then ROSA starts giggling.)
We might have to bury her in the garden after dark.

KARIN: Rosa!

ROSA: ... near where we want the bougainvillea!

(ROSA collapses in hysterics. KARIN struggles with SIBI's weight. We see SIBI pull KARIN's hair hard.)

KARIN: Ow, Rosa, that was sore!

ROSA: I'm sorry ... I'll try and stop ...

(But she can't. SIBI pulls KARIN's hair again.)

KARIN: Ow, hell, man, that's not funny, Rosa!

ROSA: But I'm not doing anything.

(Then SIBI gives a loud, long poep sound. KARIN screams. They drop the 'body'. SIBI is helpless with laughter.)

SIBI: Oh my God, you're funny ...
(ROSA and KARIN can't believe their eyes.)
I must've hit my head when I fell out there. I fainted. OK? It happens quite often.

KARIN: You're alive!

ROSA: We thought you were dead!

SIBI: No, actually, I'm pregnant.

KARIN: No wonder you were so heavy.

ROSA: Pregnant?

SIBI: I fainted. I'm hungry. And at this moment I have this craving for chocolate cake and beer!

ROSA: Bloody pregnant?

KARIN: You're alive, thank God!

(She embraces SIBI impulsively.)

SIBI:

Now, will one of you two white bitches get me something to eat or
do I phone *The New York Times!*

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

_____ O _____

(The lights go up on ROSA at the table, stacking the soup plates. SIBI enters carrying a covered bowl, which holds the fish cakes. ROSA hands her the stacked soup plates.)

SIBI: Nice plates. You brought out the china specially for me?

ROSA: From the Indian market.

SIBI: Close enough.

(She exits with the plates. ROSA serves for all three. KARIN appears, looks around, then approaches the table and sits.)

KARIN: There wasn't enough salt in the soup.

ROSA: It was fine.

KARIN: No, not enough salt ...

(SIBI enters and sits. KARIN looks from one to the other, waiting, then gets up and exits. She sits calmly outside in the passage.)

ROSA: Eat, before it gets cold.

SIBI: There was too much salt in the soup.

ROSA: Shut up and eat, Sibi!

(They eat.)

KARIN: *(Off)* Do you want tomato sauce with the fish cakes?

SIBI: That would be nice.

ROSA: Good. It's in the kitchen.

(SIBI mutters in Xhosa and exits. KARIN enters and scuttles towards the table.)

KARIN: This is ridiculous! Where do I eat?

ROSA: Eat!

KARIN: *(Sitting)* I'm so hungry.
(She starts eating as SIBI enters with the tomato sauce and sits.)
Oh no ...

(She gets up.)

ROSA: Will you stop behaving like an idiot!

KARIN: Rosa ...

ROSA: Sit and eat your fucking food!

KARIN: But it's against the law.

SIBI: No, no – it *is* the law.
(She waits for KARIN to sit and nearly takes a mouthful before she says)
'No more than one person at a time.'

KARIN: I'm not hungry.

(She gets up, gives her plate a last, longing look and exits to her place in the passage.)

SIBI: Nice food.

ROSA: Not too much 'salt'?

SIBI: It's fish, what can I tell you.

ROSA: Karin? Sibi likes your food.

(Pause.)

KARIN: *(Off)* Oh.

SIBI: Especially the fish cakes ...

ROSA: Karin? Especially your fish cakes.

KARIN: *(Off)* There was too much salt in the soup!

SIBI: No, no ...

KARIN: *(Off)* Never mind, I heard you.

SIBI: I don't mind salt really ...
(To ROSA)
I'm sorry, I didn't mean to upset her.
(Calls)
I really liked the soup!

KARIN: *(Off)* Yes, thank you.

ROSA: Karin?

KARIN: Yes, Rosa!

ROSA: It'll be cold if you don't come now.

KARIN: *(Off)* Never mind.

(Pause.)

ROSA: What are you doing?

KARIN: *(Off)* I'm waiting for one of you to leave.

ROSA: We're not going anywhere.

(Pause as they eat. Then SIBI gets up.)

SIBI: I'll go ...

ROSA: Stay! She must grow up.

SIBI: Yes, she's hungry.

(She takes KARIN's plate and exits to the passage.)

KARIN: *(Off)* Yes, I'm hungry!

SIBI: *(Off)* Here.

KARIN: *(Off)* Thanks.

SIBI: *(Off)* You go back in.

KARIN: *(Off)* No, I'm all right here. Really, it's lovely here.

ROSA: Will you two come and sit down before I really get cross?

(SIBI enters.)

SIBI: I'll clear up the kitchen.

KARIN: *(Off)* We don't expect you to ...

ROSA: Karin!

(KARIN enters holding her plate.)

KARIN: All right, Rosa, count now – one, two, three ...

ROSA: I'm going! To get the pudding ready! Sit!

(ROSA exits. KARIN sits.)

KARIN: We don't have pudding. What pudding? Did you ask for pudding?

SIBI: No.

KARIN: Good heavens, what could it be?
(Looks down at her plate.)
Now it's all cold.

SIBI: Make a hamburger out of it.

KARIN: A fishburger – it's fish.

SIBI: A fishcake-hamburger!

KARIN: *(Giggles)* Sounds so funny – a fishcake-hamburger.

SIBI: Nice recipe.

KARIN: Yes, it's my favourite. It's also so simple.

SIBI: Surrounded by all the fish, all you need is the cake.

KARIN: Hey?

SIBI: Eat, Karin.
(KARIN eats. Chews. A fish-bone. She pretends it's not there.)
Don't swallow the fish-bone, Karin.

KARIN: Mmmmmmm?

SIBI: Spit it out.

KARIN: Eh ...
(Through clenched teeth)
No fish-bone ...

SIBI: I had an old aunt in Port Elizabeth who swallowed a fish-bone and died!
(KARIN immediately spits the bone into the palm of her hand.)
Put it on the plate.

KARIN: No, it's OK.

SIBI: You're going to sit all night with a fish-bone in your hand?

KARIN: There are no fish-bones in my fish cakes!

SIBI: No?

KARIN: No!

(She takes another forkful – and finds another fish-bone.)

SIBI: And what's that? A submarine?

(She laughs. ROSA enters with three small bowls of ice-cream. During this scene the wind has come up and can be heard constantly in the background from now to the end of the play.)

ROSA: The wind's coming up.

KARIN: Mmmmmmmmm.

ROSA: What's wrong with you?

SIBI: Fish-bone.

ROSA: Spit it out, Karin. I had an aunt who swallowed a fish-bone and died.

SIBI: Really?

(KARIN removes the bone and gets up stiffly. Takes her tape recorder and sits on the couch.)

KARIN: I don't feel like any pudding ... hello? Testing one, two, one, two ...

ROSA: Must you always do that?

KARIN: I have to check if it's working. I don't want to talk out everything and then find that nothing makes sense!

ROSA: True.

KARIN: Hello, Mammie, it's me again, Karin. Listen, it's now the evening of the same day that I spoke to Mammie earlier. It's now ...

ROSA: After supper.

KARIN: ... after supper.

SIBI: We had lovely fish cakes ...

KARIN: We had lovely fish cakes ... shhh, Sibi! ... Oh, Mammie, listen to Rosa making jokes again. Anyway, I don't know if you can hear, but the South-easter wind's blowing up a storm as usual. Mammie, remember you always found our South-easter so exciting and healthy because it supposedly blows away all the pollution, but this wind can also make people go mad ...
(ROSA and SIBI exchange glances.)

I can tell you, it makes the kids at school impossible ... er, what more can I say ... Oh, Mammie, today we had a bit of excitement. Today we had a visitor ...
(She stops the machine.)
This is ridiculous! I won't carry on with this pretending!

ROSA: That's what I said to the copshop, but our lives must carry on in spite of 'interruptions'. We've had supper. Now we prepare classes and read. Carry on with your tape to your ma.

KARIN: It can wait till tomorrow.

ROSA: You owe your ma a tape, Karin.

SIBI: Oh, please don't feel shy or think that I'm in the way, just in case you want to tell your ma there's a cheeky Kaffir girl in your bed.

KARIN: Shhhh, please! You promised not to say anything! They listen in.

ROSA: Oh, rubbish!

KARIN: Oh yes they do! They'll hear there are more than just two of us in this room. Please, I don't want trouble. And....
(to SIBI)
..... we never used the word 'Kaffir' in our house. We grew up as Christians.

ROSA: Amen. Get on with your tape, Karin. It's just us two, remember? You and me.

SIBI: You and I.

KARIN: But I'm embarrassed.

ROSA: Then look the other way and pretend you're on your own.

(KARIN gets her machine ready and starts again.)

KARIN: Right, now where was I?

SIBI: The visitor from outer space.

ROSA: Shhhh!

KARIN: Mammie, as I said, today we had a visitor. She's from ... from the North. She's come to visit her father. Shame, he's quite sick. She's ... er ... pregnant ...

(She stops. Exits weeping. SIBI gets up to follow her.)

ROSA: Leave her. She can't express herself. Let her cry.

SIBI: She's a teacher, for God's sake. If she can't express herself, what can she do?

ROSA: She recites and teaches others what she learnt parrot-fashion from someone else who learnt it blindly from someone else who made it up! She's a good teacher.

SIBI: Sounds like 'Bantu Education'.

ROSA: Mmmm. I had a good teacher when I was at school. I was one of the lucky ones, hey? She wasn't good at her subject – chemistry or something – but she took an interest in me, took me out in civvies to art galleries and even the ballet once; but it wasn't just that: it was being treated like a grown-up that made all the difference. She would listen to my point of view, for what it was worth. She didn't laugh at me – well, at least, not to my face. She said that teaching was her life. Funny, since I started teaching here my life seems to have stopped.

SIBI: What did you really want to do?

(SIBI sits down with ROSA and takes out of her bag a small baby-jacket that she is crocheting.)

ROSA: I wanted to be an athlete. I ran well once, can you believe it? But in those days athletics wasn't a career, it was a hobby. OK. So I did what everyone else was told to do: I got something to fall back on. My diploma. Funny what a difference it makes, hey? Something to fall back on! No one ever said to me, get something to fall *forward* on! Always the retreat mentality, the negative. 'Rosa, get something to fall back on, because no matter what you want to do with your dream, it will be a flop!' So look at me now.

SIBI: A good job, a nice house, a faithful friend – and you're white. What more do you want?

ROSA: Oh, please, I wanted so much more in the beginning! I had such big dreams! I can't remember them all now, but they kept me awake so many nights and made me feel so brave and important. What were your dreams?

SIBI: You talking to me?

ROSA: Who else?

SIBI: I don't know. I'm asking: are you making polite conversation because the bosses in the copshop are listening in, and if you play their game, you'll get a gold star in your homework book?

ROSA: Nobody listens in to me.

SIBI: You mean you're not even bugged?

ROSA: They're not interested.

SIBI: Shame. Dreams? I don't know. We blacks all have one dream, and after all that, all little dreams are silly.

ROSA: Don't drag politics in, please!

SIBI: Everything is political: eating, houses, schools, God, love, sex, hate. Even the sun shines down to make your skin dark, while it bleaches our land white.

ROSA: You're here because of politics!

SIBI: Only after you people forced it on me!
(Pause.)
Yes, I also had dreams. Not to be a jogger like you; I don't even run from the riot police. No, I wanted to be a nurse, like my mother was before she was forced to give it up.

ROSA: You became a nurse?

SIBI: I planned and then fought with my mother, who wanted me to get a decent job and not work for whites ... oh yes, I once worked for whites to earn money to make my dream come true.

ROSA: Couldn't you get a bursary?

SIBI: Come on, teacher, we're talking about the years when it wasn't fashionable to sponsor a black face. Not with a father in jail and a mother in exile.

ROSA: You could've gone to the Press.

SIBI: The overseas Press had just discovered the Ayatollah ... So I spent my dream carrying letters from his lawyer to her lawyer, keeping their marriage alive with little messages, dodging police and informers. I inherited the burden of their revenge. I got involved. So here I am.

ROSA: Did you also throw bombs?

SIBI: That would be so simple, wouldn't it? No, I talked. I made speeches. I visited friends.

ROSA: Russia?

SIBI: Russia? What the hell is this white obsession with fucking Russia? Why must everything anti-apartheid come from Russia? Look, I've never been north of Jo'burg! You teach history?

ROSA: No, Karin does.

SIBI: Ah yes, the one who can't express herself. Listen, I talk a lot about a future because I know it will happen. You people seem to live happily in the past because it makes you feel strong.

ROSA: History is history.

SIBI: History is now! My father is history. You and I are history! And Karin teaches 'history'?

(She indicates outside at the view.)

ROSA: So ... we all seem to have something in common.

(The conversation seems to be over. Pause. Then SIBI starts laughing.)

SIBI: Did you really think I was dead?

ROSA: Er ... no ... I don't know ...

SIBI: You were very funny.
(Pause.)
Have you ever seen someone die?

ROSA: No, I looked away.

SIBI: But you were there?

ROSA: Yes, but I didn't want to see.

SIBI: Strange, with all the deaths that surrounds me every day, I have also never seen someone die. Yes, I've seen bodies; I've dressed bodies for the grave; I've carried bodies out of the streets, but never *that moment* when someone just vanishes in a breath. Like the wind that you can't see, suddenly it's gone ... my father will be dead soon, oh yes, I know enough of the way dying people just lie there to be sure. Alone he will die, cross over without help.

ROSA: There are priests.

SIBI: I didn't mean he wanted his ID book stamped. I just want to be with him and hold his hand and touch him till he's gone on. It helps, they say.

ROSA: I wouldn't know. Oh, how morbid all this is.
(Shudders and gets up)
I want to be touched now, while I'm still alive, not just before I die, thank you very much! You don't drink?

SIBI: No, but go ahead.

ROSA: Hell, thanks. Whisky soda, no ice!
(*SIBI pours the drink while ROSA watches her carefully.*)
I've never spoken to a black before.

SIBI: Long live apartheid ...

ROSA: No, I mean like a person ... I mean ... you know what I mean?

SIBI: You mean you've never spoken to a black before like you would talk to a white?

ROSA: I'd never say these things to a white!

SIBI: Then to who?

ROSA: 'To whom'! Anyway, don't be so cheeky. I just wanted to say that it is a change to talk to ... well, just to talk. You didn't have to talk to me, Sibi, you could've gone to bed.

SIBI: The History Teacher, I think, has claimed back her couch.

ROSA: We'll sort that out when you get tired. Are you tired?

SIBI: No.

ROSA: Doesn't the baby make you tired?

SIBI: Not yet.

ROSA: You don't look pregnant.

SIBI: That's good.

ROSA: How many months?

SIBI: They say eighteen weeks.

ROSA: Do you have any other kids?

SIBI: No.

ROSA: Your first?

SIBI: For a schoolteacher you ask the most intelligent questions.

ROSA: I'm trying to show my interest. I've never entertained a pregnant, black, banned, terrorist's daughter before.

SIBI: I appreciate your interest. Can we talk about your sex life now?

ROSA: You husband? What does he do?

SIBI: Have you had any children?

ROSA: Don't be silly, I'm not married.

SIBI: Nor am I.

ROSA: Is that special? I thought all you blacks just had kids without ... er ...

SIBI: Without bothering to get married? I couldn't get married, because the man I fucked was already married, OK? I loved him. I wanted his child. I still do. I need a child. OK?

ROSA: OK. OK.

SIBI: I never really knew my father. He was arrested when I was very small. So I never knew a father at home. I've never walked with my father in the street. The few times I've seen him, we have to talk over the phone, looking through a glass window. I can't touch him. I can't tell him anything, because there are always warders, like – what-his-name? Your boyfriend?

ROSA: He's not my boyfriend!

SIBI: Like him – sitting on each side of the glass, listening. My baby will also maybe not know its father, but, like me, will come away strong when we talk of our struggle.

ROSA: Oh, blah, blah, blah! A baby needs a father, a man, real family warmth. The struggle, your politics, is cold. What have you got called Father? A photo from an overseas newspaper?

SIBI: I have a memory. Yes, I hope my father dies here soon. If they let him go free now, no one in the world will even recognize him. Alfred Makhale is strong in the dreams of many; my sick old father alone is my reality.

ROSA: But can you talk to him again tomorrow? Hold his hand?

SIBI: I don't know.

ROSA: You'll sit with him. There are some people around here who owe me some favours. What brutal rubbish! I'll make a plan.

SIBI: Do you really think you could –

(But she stops short as KARIN enters in a dressing-gown, carrying her duvet and a framed photograph.)

KARIN: I've brushed my teeth and my hair. Your bedroom is ready. I took everything I need.

ROSA: What's that in your hand?

KARIN: Just the picture of my parents. I always sleep with it next to my bed. It's good luck.

SIBI: That's nice. I'll go and prepare for bed. Oh, you won't mind if I put the picture of my parents next to the bed? You don't have to look at it. They're both banned people and their picture may not be seen. My secret. Good-night.

(She exits. KARIN sits and covers herself with the duvet.)

KARIN: Rosa, what is happening with us ...

ROSA: Don't think about it, Karin, just look at the panorama.

(They look out at the view.)

KARIN: Rosa, what do we do about the Grobbelaar?

ROSA: Hey?

KARIN: Those terrible things you said to him? You accused him of rape, even murder!

ROSA: No, I just thought she was dead ... so did you. I didn't say anything, really ... just shock.

KARIN: He'll never be the same towards us, Rosa. We've lost a friend.

ROSA: Grobbelaar was never a friend!

KARIN: He was my friend. You know, I've been thinking. I've been here so long, looking out at that view. I've never thought about the people back in there with no view.

ROSA: You mean Makhale.

KARIN: Imagine life here with no window, just the wind. Just the seagulls. Just the Grobbelaars. And maybe, once, a glimpse of us two white women playing with white children in the white sand, building sandcastles that the wind will blow back into the eyes of those watching us. I really want to leave here, Rosa. Please God, I must get that job.

ROSA: You will.

KARIN: No, I don't think I will. But I swear, if they turn me down again, I'd rather kill myself than stay here for ever, like now.
(She pulls herself together.)
Oh, I don't care ...

ROSA: I care.

KARIN: Then why did you say those terrible things to Grobbelaar? The only real friend we had? Just for the sake of a terrorist's daughter?

ROSA: There's much more to her than that, Karin. We talked.

KARIN: Talk? Oh, please, don't tell me about 'talk'! Don't tell me how suddenly you realize after ten minutes that she was a very nice girl in spite of everything.

ROSA: She's no fool.

KARIN: No, *I'm* the fool, she's in my bed! But that's all right, Rosa, I'll be the fool. I'll give her my bed, I'll give her supper and I'll give her clean sheets, but I will not talk to her and I will not listen to her and, oh God, I pray it's tomorrow and she's out of our lives.

(She cries. ROSA is at a loss.)

ROSA: Oh shit, why do you suddenly cry all the time? Stop crying all the time! You never cry! Are you sick?

KARIN: I'm frightened!

ROSA: Well, then ... take a pill and go to sleep. Here, take one of my special ones.

KARIN: No, I'm fine.

ROSA: Your nerves are getting on my nerves. Take the pill and settle down!

KARIN: Yes, but what will you do?

ROSA: I'm just going to check if the terrorist is comfortable and not wearing my best pyjamas. Karin, take the fucking pill and settle down!

KARIN: But will you be back?

ROSA: No, I'm running off to South America with Grobbelaar! Yes, I'll be back. I promise. I still need to prepare a lesson.

KARIN: This won't make me an addict, will it?

ROSA: If you don't take it, I might become one! It's only a pill ... shit ...

(She exits with the supper dishes. KARIN studies the pill, then hides it under the couch. Picks up the tape recorder)

KARIN: Dear Mammie ... don't be cross, but I just want to ask: why did you and Pa let me grow up so frightened? Too scared to be pretty, too terrified to talk back. I just always said 'I'm sorry'. About everything: 'sorry'. I never knew I could change things in my life. You made me so frightened that I'll never be free like her, and she's supposed to be banned! She laughs at me; they all laugh at me ... And if I killed myself, Mammie, would that really make any difference? Would I have to say 'I'm sorry' – because then there would be no one to send you postcards of the panorama? But I'm too frightened to commit suicide, just in case it would be the one thing I'd succeed in doing properly. I'm sorry, Mammie ...

(ROSA enters with her briefcase. Sees KARIN is still awake and peers down at the tape recorder.)

ROSA: It's not on 'record.'

KARIN: I know. I was just practicing.
(She settles down.)
I think I'll just lie like this.

ROSA: With your slippers on, just in case something terrible happens and you have to run out with the furniture?

KARIN: No, I meant to take them off. Night, Rosa.

ROSA: Good-night, Karin.

(Pause. KARIN pretends to settle down. ROSA takes a magazine out of her briefcase.)

KARIN: What are you doing?

ROSA: Shut up and sleep, Karin. You've taken the pill?

KARIN: Yes, I have. Is that your grammar lesson for tomorrow?

ROSA: No, it's a magazine article on Robben Island. I want to write some things down to give to Sibi before she goes. My boyfriend sent it to me.
(She takes her make-up off while reading from the magazine. KARIN listens, as she does throughout the rest of the scene, pretending to sleep in case one of them comes near her.)
'When people speak of the island, it is usually with abhorrence. Its history does not read like a fairy-tale. Like a monster guarding the gateway to Africa, it has become a symbol of hopelessness, its reputation going back centuries. But this beautiful island does not

deserve its ugly past, nor its offensive present. It is a forgotten paradise of teeming bird and marine life, probably the only stretch of totally unspoilt coast in southern Africa ... it squats in the sea like a pimple on the face of the fairest cape in the whole circumference of the earth.' I love that bit.

(SIBI enters.)

SIBI: Bedtime story?

ROSA: I gave her a pill ...

SIBI: Is she OK there?

ROSA: Look, let's just get this night over with, OK?

SIBI: OK

(Reads)

'South Africa's *Paradise Lost*'. I must remember to tell my father.

(Looks out at the view)

Funny, how liberal South African whites sat over there for years with this thorn in their eyes and carried on blindly sipping the good life.

ROSA: Say what you've come to say and go to bed. You'll wake Karin.

SIBI: Good-night.

(Pause.)

Rosa, you said I don't look pregnant.

ROSA: No.

SIBI: Are you sure?

ROSA: What's your problem? You're going to have a baby. It's happened before. Relax.

SIBI: I'm scared my father will know.

ROSA: Sibi, your father's got other problems.

SIBI: I can't lie to him, you see, Rosa. I can't pretend. He's very strong. Very strict. He'll sense it. He'll demand to know. What can I tell him?

ROSA: You say, 'Pa, you're not losing a daughter, you're gaining a grandchild.'

SIBI: He'll ask who the father is.

ROSA: Tell him.

SIBI: Never.

ROSA: Come on, Sibi, was your married man really from outer space?

SIBI: Yes; he was white.

(She exits.)

ROSA: Karin? Are you awake?
(KARIN pretends to sleep. ROSA checks and tucks her in. GROBBELAAR has been at the door, watching and listening.)
Karin?
(Sees GROBBELAAR.)
Damn it, Grobbelaar, can't you knock?

GROBBELAAR: Didn't want to wake Miss Karin.

ROSA: I'm working.

GROBBELAAR: You never work this late, Miss Rosa.

ROSA: And will you stop calling me that?

GROBBELAAR: What must I call you?

ROSA: Anything you like, just leave us alone.

GROBBELAAR: Murderer?

ROSA: What?

GROBBELAAR: Like you call me anything you liked? Murderer? Rapist? What was the others?

ROSA: We thought she was dead, Grobbelaar.

GROBBELAAR: And that I did it?

ROSA: What do you expect us to think? You're a policeman! You're trained to ...

GROBBELAAR: To kill girls? Is that what you're saying?

ROSA: Please go, Grobbelaar, we can sort it all out tomorrow.

GROBBELAAR: Haven't you noticed I don't carry a gun, Miss Rosa? I've never carried a gun on the island. I only once shot a gun, when I was at the charge office in Somerset West. There was a robber on Mrs Nellen's farm. I shot in the air. I don't know how to kill, Miss Rosa. I pray to God that I never have to do it, but if I have to do it in the

line of duty, I will do it, Miss Rosa. Just like you teach me lies because it's your duty.

ROSA: I do not teach lies! I have given my life to the education of our children, and what I teach them is the truth! How dare you accuse me of lies!

GROBBELAAR: You lie about your boyfriend.

(Pause.)

ROSA: What the hell do you know about my boyfriend? What did she tell you?

GROBBELAAR: Oh, Miss Karin never tells me anything. Miss Karin is scared of you, Miss Rosa. I think she's scared you might hurt her.

ROSA: Don't tar me with your brush, cop!

GROBBELAAR: I know you punish Miss Karin when she doesn't let you have your way. You keep her here away from the city, because you tell her how sick she will be on the boat.

ROSA: She gets seasick ...

GROBBELAAR: Only because you tell her to. There's nothing wrong with her.

ROSA: I don't really feel like this talk, Grobbelaar. It's been a hard day.

GROBBELAAR: The boyfriend from Johannesburg? I know you had one, long ago, Miss Rosa, before you came here to be a teacher; you had a boyfriend who was going out with another girl who was your best friend. And all the time you never knew they were in love till they were in that car smash. Shame. Nice friends you had.

ROSA: He still writes to me. I have letters!

GROBBELAAR: Which you write yourself and post them to yourself in Cape Town and get your post yourself so that Miss Karin can't see the postmark is Cape Town and not Jo'burg ...

ROSA: Stop ... stop ... STOP!

GROBBELAAR: It's OK. Miss Karin's asleep. She can't hear. You gave her one of your special pills.

ROSA: You listen in?

GROBBELAAR: When I fixed your house, I added a few wires. Don't worry, Miss Rosa. You're not a threat to national security, just something that makes us laugh at the office.

ROSA: You laugh at me?

GROBBELAAR: You tell some good jokes. And those sex stories you tell Miss Karin? Good. Not accurate, but funny.

ROSA: You bastard!

GROBBELAAR: Don't start on names again, Miss Rosa. Murderer and rapist is enough for one day. But it's OK, Miss Rosa, as you said, it's been a hard day. Where's the Kaffir girl?

ROSA: Sleeping in Karin's bed.

GROBBELAAR: *Jisis*, you'll do anything to get what you want. What's it this time? New coat of paint for the house? You put a Kaffir in her bed for what *you* want, and you know how she feels about the Kaffir girl's father and how frightened she is of anything to do with them.

ROSA: I was just doing what your office told me to do ...

(She looks beaten, tired. The audience is aware that KARIN is listening, while ROSA and GROBBELAAR are unaware of it.)

GROBBELAAR: *Ja*. Well, I just wanted to check that everything is OK here. It's not part of my duties, it's just that I feel you two might feel safer knowing someone cares.

ROSA: I'm sorry about what I said to you ...

GROBBELAAR: *Ja*, OK.
(He turns at the door.)
Oh, *ja*, by the way, Miss Rosa? Did Miss Karin give you my message?

ROSA: Message?

GROBBELAAR: About the function. I came round and she gave me a peanut-butter sandwich and I told her I wanted to take you to the function.

ROSA: Me? Go with you? To your function?

GROBBELAAR: You'll enjoy it, Miss Rosa. And who knows, maybe the day after the function Miss Karin might even hear that she got that job she wants so much. Who knows, hey, Miss Rosa?

(Pause.)

ROSA: How much do you know?

GROBBELAAR: No, I'm just a policeman, Miss Rosa, I don't know nothing.

(Pause.)

ROSA: Is it formal?

GROBBELAAR: Hey?

ROSA: Your function? A long dress?

GROBBELAAR: *Jisis*, you've got a long dress? Hell, that's nice, Miss Rosa. *Ja*, wear a long dress. It's formal, *ja*.
(*He is now very familiar with her. Goes close. She recoils but controls her feelings.*)
You'll like it. We can dance. Walk on the beach in the searchlights.

ROSA: The wind will blow.

GROBBELAAR: We'll make a plan. Cheer up, the Kaffir girl will be out of here tomorrow and then things will go back to like always.

ROSA: Like always?

GROBBELAAR: Let me cheer you up with a joke I heard today. You can tell it to Miss Karin, say you made it up yourself. I won't split on you. OK? There's this husband and wife living on a farm there past nowhere and nothing. Alone. The two. Together. No TV. So she gets pregnant. Her husband must go to the town there far away to get a ... what is it? Babycatcher ...

ROSA: Midwife.

GROBBELAAR: *Ja*, midwife. So he gets on his bicycle and rides for hours and miles to the *dorp* and tells the midwife she must come! So she gets into her little car and goes. And he must get back on the bike and *sukkels* his way back to the farm. But when he gets there –

ROSA: She's dead.

GROBBELAAR: No, Miss Rosa, she's not dead. Have you heard this joke before in a different way?

ROSA: No.

GROBBELAAR: Oh. Anyway, the midwife says, 'No. Hurry back to town and get the doctor, because there's a problem.' You know, with her woman's parts. Anyway, so the poor Boer goes all the way back to the dorp on the bicycle and gets the doctor and says, 'Hurry, Doctor'. So the doctor gets into his Mercedes and drives to the farm. And the poor husband has to struggle all the way back again on the bicycle. Hell, I can just see it on the dust-roads and up and down *koppies*. Anyway, he gets home, and what does the doctor

say? 'The water's broken.' And the poor husband cries, 'Hell no, I'm not going back for the plumber!'
(He laughs. Rosa has no reaction.)
The water, Miss Rosa? You know with the baby coming and all ... did you understand it?
(He goes closer to her. Touches her.)
It's OK, I'll explain it to you at the function. Good-night, Rosa.
(He kisses her. She breaks away from him as SIBI walks in holding a blanket round her. KARIN still pretends to sleep.)

SIBI: *Jisis*, Boer, can't you keep your voice down, there are Kaffirs trying to sleep in here!

ROSA: He was just leaving ...

SIBI: I heard. You OK, Rosa?

ROSA: Shhhh, Karin's sleeping ...

GROBBELAAR: They'll come and fetch you early, 'Miss Makhale'. As a special favour we'll let you see your father and then you go by helicopter straight across to the airport and then on a plane back to where you came from.

SIBI: Where I come from I can really identify with the farmer on his bicycle. Thank you, 'Meneer Grobbelaar' – see you on the battlefield.

GROBBELAAR: I'll be looking out for you.

SIBI: And I'll have a nice new tyre ready just for you.

(GROBBELAAR smiles at ROSA, who looks away. He peers down at KARIN and nods. Puts his finger to his lips.)

GROBBELAAR: Shhhh.

(He exits.)

SIBI: You don't have to go to that function.

ROSA: I know.

SIBI: Will you?

ROSA: I don't want to die a virgin ... I don't know ... Maybe if I go with him, Karin will get ...

SIBI: Shhhh.

(She indicates that they may be bugged.)

ROSA: Oh ... I ... er ... want to go to sleep now ...

SIBI: I'll leave very early. I'll also have to sort out my life tomorrow.

ROSA: Good luck.

SIBI: You too.

(Pause.)

ROSA: That white man. Did he rape you?

SIBI: No. He loved me.

(She exits. ROSA tries to control tears. Turns to the window and doesn't see KARIN sit up and look at her.)

ROSA: God, it's not fair ... Is there nobody out there who will love me?

(Pause. ROSA cries. The wind wails outside. KARIN lies down again and pretends to wake up. ROSA pulls herself together and blows her nose.)

KARIN: Oh ... oh, what's happening ... Rosa, is that you? Gosh, I really slept like the dead!

ROSA: It's the pill ... why are you awake? Did we wake you?

KARIN: We? Who was here?

ROSA: Nobody.

KARIN: Do you have a cold?

ROSA: Hay fever. The sand ...

KARIN: Well, I'm going to sleep again. It's nearly tomorrow.

ROSA: Thank God.

KARIN: Rosa?

ROSA: What is it?

KARIN: You can lie down here for a bit, if you want to. The view is so beautiful.

ROSA: It's pitch dark.

KARIN: Just imagine.

ROSA: Just for a while, OK?

KARIN: *Ja*, OK.

(ROSA slides on to the sofa next to KARIN, who arranges the duvet over them both. Pause.)

ROSA: Mind your head.

KARIN: Why?

ROSA: It's in the way of the lighthouse. That's better.

KARIN: Sorry, hey.
(Pause.)
Rosa?

ROSA: What is it?

KARIN: Do you think it will all be OK tomorrow?

ROSA: *Ja*.

KARIN: Promise?

ROSA: *Ja*, unless the wind blows again.

KARIN: Oh God, I hope not.

ROSA: Let's see what happens, OK?

KARIN: OK.

(Pause.)

ROSA: Night, Karin.

KARIN: Good-night, Rosa.

(Silence in the house. The wind wails around it. KARIN and ROSA stare out into the darkness.)

THE END

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