

IV. Three-Eyed Giants

Akuqaqa lazizwa ukunuka.

(The polecat does not know it smells.)

Afrikanerdom has spoken once more in tones of thunder and lightning. Once more it has summoned its sons and daughters to the parapets. Once more, it tells itself that it is threatened and that survival lies in withdrawing into itself. In the face of danger, its ancestors surrounded themselves with their wagons and from behind these, as walls or *laagers*, mowed down the Africans with gunfire.

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Like most Afrikaners, Piet and Marietjie du Toit van der Merwe adopt a peculiarly ambivalent attitude to the African. In one mood they fear and hate him because of history. In the era of the wars, the African often brought the Afrikaner face to face with the prospect of extermination.

King Dingane of the Zulus is represented in Afrikaner mythology as a monster in human form. As long as an Afrikaner lives, there seems no possibility that Dingane's name shall be forgotten. Stress is laid on how Dingane ordered the murder in cold blood of Piet Retief and his followers after Retief had returned to Dingane the cattle Sigonyela had stolen from the Zulus. The Zulus teach their children that Dingane paid the white people in their own coin.

Retief had invited Sigonyela to a party and, when the Pedi warlord was off his guard, had him arrested and handcuffed. Sigonyela was freed when he offered the Afrikaners the cattle which Retief took to the Zulus. Dingane, however, had taken the precaution to send his intelligence officers with Retief to keep an eye on what he did and, in particular, to make mental notes of what transpired between Retief and his "friend" Sigonyela. When the Afrikaners betrayed their friend, the Zulu spies rushed to the Zulu capital where they reported what had happened. Matters were not improved when Zulu guards responsible for the security of the Zulu capital of Umgungundlovu reported Retief's manoeuvres by night which were designed to enable the whites to encircle the capital and hold Dingane to ransom. Dingane, the Zulus say, would have been unworthy of his high office if he had not snuffed

out the nest of white traitors in his own capital.

After that the relations between the Zulus and the Afrikaners were so bad, an Afrikaner delegation to the king demanded hostages and seized Bongoza the son of Mefu, a distinguished Zulu jurist, as a guarantee of safe conduct through Zulu territory. To ensure that Bongoza played no dirty tricks on his white captors, they tied a leather thong around his neck and led him by the side of their horses on their way home. In the O'Pate Gorge, Bongoza complained of pains in the stomach, fouling up the air with loud rectal explosions. He begged the Afrikaners to allow him to relieve himself behind a boulder. His captors were suspicious; they showed him a boulder which they covered with their guns. The spectacle of a kaffer defecating in front of the white lords was more than the Afrikaners could bear. Behind the boulder, Bongoza gave the signal, whereupon the Zulus fell upon the Afrikaners and, except for one young man, wiped them out.

Against these experiences from history, Piet and Marietjie are often puzzled by the valour and humanity of Bhadama Ntuli, the young Zulu they employed as a gardener when they lived in Joubert Street, in the house Piet had inherited from his father. The sprawling bungalow had a long passage with rooms on either side. During a thunderstorm one night, a bolt struck the house setting it on fire. Piet and Marietjie were awakened by the flames and dashed to the passage to rescue their children, aged five and three in the next room. But the flames were so high and the smoke so thick neither Piet nor Marietjie could run through them. Piet's clothes caught fire and Marietjie dragged him to the front door where he collapsed as she tore the pyjamas off his body. Marietjie ran around the house to the children's room screaming for help. The window was too high from the ground for her to climb into it; at the same time the flames were billowing furiously out of one side of the large window.

Just then, Bhadama emerged out of the darkness, climbed the wall, smashed the windows and brought out the younger child first and then the older. By this time his clothes had caught fire. He held on to the wooden frame of the window and tried to climb out of the inferno; the wood, already in flames, crackled and collapsed. Bhadama fell to the floor and was a lump of charred and crinkled flesh when the fire brigade discovered his body under the debris.

By a happy coincidence Zandile comes from Empangeni in Natal, the town in which Bhadama's people paid their taxes and made their purchases. This has created a bond between Piet and Marietjie and their cook which goes a little beyond the master-servant relationship which Afrikanerdom insists upon when it comes to dealings with the African. More often than not, Piet and his wife generally feel little or no embarrassment when they lower the protective barriers they have to raise in dealing with an African. Zandile, for her part, is not only a very pretty woman, she also has very pleasant manners and performs magic

in the kitchen.

The last quality is particularly pleasing to the van der Merwes, now that Piet is private secretary to the prime minister and has moved to Waterkloof, the exclusive suburb where Afrikaner magnates, members of parliament and foreign diplomats have their homes. Marietjie has won fame in the diplomatic community as a hostess. During the hunting season every year Piet goes on leave and spends his holiday in the Hluhluwe Game Reserve in Zululand where he satisfies his passion for using the gun in killing game. On these occasions the family takes Zandile along. Adept at the preparation of biltong, the dried, pickled and salted beef which is so dear to the Afrikaner palate, she cuts up buffalo, elephant and rhinoceros steak, cures it and dresses it in such a way that to look at it is enough to make the mouth water. A dinner invitation from the van der Merwes is something which every gourmet in the upper brackets of Pretoria society looks forward to. Piet is proud that he has achieved good relations with the Malawi diplomats; so good, in fact, all of them, from the ambassador on down, call him by his first name, which he found difficult at first, but which he is now glad to reciprocate.

Paul Kunene, the ambassador, is a short, portly man with a ready smile and few words. An engineer by profession, he likes to talk about buildings, about Cape Dutch architecture and bridges and roads—that is, when he condescends to open his mouth. The prime minister finds it impossible to conceal his dislike for the Malawian diplomat. To start with, Mr. Kunene has a face so black and a skin texture so fine the prime minister is almost certain the Malawian gives his face a shine with black boot polish each time he goes into the bathroom in the morning. The ambassador was educated in Holland and speaks Dutch with a fluency most Afrikaners envy. This does not mean that they love the language; actually they feel no strong attachment to Holland. But they marvel at the ease with which the African has command of a white language; they never thought it could be so beautiful. The ambassador's thick lips and broad nostrils impart a resonance to the language which is most pleasing to the ear. To the prime minister, who does not speak Dutch at all, the African's mastery of it is affectation, pure and simple. What gets on the prime minister's nerves above everything is Kunene's reserve. The prime minister thinks he is the most spoilt kaffer he has ever known. He never has any dealings with him and at official gatherings he spends the shortest time possible with the Malawian, allowing his Minister of Foreign Affairs to have all the time with the African.

Ambassador Kunene has a soft spot for the van der Merwes and he thinks Marietjie is one of the finest white persons he has ever met anywhere in the world. When she talks to him she uses the etiquette he is used to in his own country. For example, she does not refer to him as Your Excellency or as Mr. Kunene; she addresses him by

his family title, Mtimande. When he passes her a salt cellar she does not say: Thank you, Mr. Ambassador, as most whites do. She stretches both her hands and receives it with: Mtimande! That melts the ambassador's heart, as he often says about her. That child is so well trained! he never tires of saying.

Piet's closest friend in the Malawian embassy is Dumakude Kumalo, the first secretary.

How comes it that you have Zulu names, he asked the Malawian when the friendship started.

Do you read Zulu history?

Well, er, I grew up in the Free State where the majority of the Africans are Basotho

I understand. During Shaka's revolution all sorts of things happened. He and his brother sent armies as far north as the tropics. Some of his generals deserted, conquered the peoples near the equator and established their own empires. Zwangendaba fought his way through Mozambique, smashed Portuguese opposition and finally settled in Malawi where his people are known to this day as the Angoni, the same word as your Ngunis of Natal and the Transkei. Some of these people trace their ancestry to the Zulus. We do not speak the Zulu language, just as you don't speak Dutch. But we retain many words from the language; that's true also of some of our names.

Dumakude is almost as black as the ambassador, but unlike him, he has a warm and likeable personality. A chemist by training, he was educated in Germany where Piet also went to university. Both are at home in German. The friendship is so close the van der Merwes and the Kumalos visit each other whenever the time permits. Marietjie surprised the Kumalos the first time they came to her house by welcoming them with the salutation: Mntungwa!

The architect of the van der Merwes' success in dealing with the Africans is their cook. Zandile never gets tired of answering Marietjie's endless questions while the latter relays the answers to her eagerly receptive husband. Over the years, the Afrikaner woman begins to note, timidly at first, that in some things she can deal with Zandile on a woman-to-woman basis and that she can even trust Zandile.

This man you were telling me about, what is his name, Zandile?

Dillo Mareka is his name, O Nooi.

And you say Kritzinger gave him the electric treatment?

Yes, Nooi.

That Kritzinger is a brute; he makes me sick! Is Dillo a friend of your family?

We are neighbours on the same street, Nooi. You know how we Africans are; people living on the same street form more or less a large family.

Do you know why Kritzinger burnt him with the electric

wires?

Ever since the death of the Ou Baas, your father, the police have been doing all sorts of things in the location.

Ah

They don't trust anybody. They search everybody, everyday, everywhere.

They search you, too?

They search me in the morning as I board the bus for work and they search me when I step off it in the evening.

That is ridiculous, just like Kritzinger. Just because he is police commander in the Pretoria area he thinks every black person was involved in my father's death. As a matter of fact the assassin, Theodore Darikwa, is not even a South African by birth; his parents came from Rhodesia. He grew up in Pretoria and regards himself as a Shangane. I think he was influenced by the English and the Jews to do that stupid thing. Poor boy; he will lose his life while the people who misled him escape.

The minds of the foolish are tools in the hands of the wise

I'm glad the prime minister intervened personally in the Darikwa case and took him out of Kritzinger's district. The brute would have killed the murderer before we knew all we could about the conspiracy.

Indeed, Nooi.

Some people find the prime minister a little difficult to understand; but he is such a nice man; so honest and so loyal to his people. You would love him too, if you were an Afrikaner.

Indeed; indeed! I hope they don't return the poor Darikwa to Kritzinger.

Never! The prime minister himself gave instructions that he must not be kept in one jail more than a month and ordered that instructions should be given to every prison where he is sent that the superintendent of the jail will be personally responsible for Darikwa's safety. Let's see It's August now and he's in Alberton; in September they'll send him to Heilbron, Vereeniging in October, Rustenburg in November and Standerton in December. After that, they hope to be ready to bring him up for trial.

I am not sorry for that stupid boy!

If you ever get into trouble with Kritzinger's police, let us know immediately. I nearly said you shouldn't tell his police you work for us He doesn't like Baas Piet.

Why, Nooi?

Well, Piet had been engaged to his daughter but changed his mind to marry me. Kritzinger thought his daughter had been rejected because she was the daughter of a policeman while I had been borne by the prime minister's wife. He called Baas Piet a chancer and hates him

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like poison; he doesn't like me either and I don't care for him. Then, after a pause, that Dillo Mareka, Zandile? His is a Pedi name. How does he come to live among the Zulus?

His mother is a Zulu; he grew up in Natal and married a Zulu. So, he's happy among the Zulus?

His wife is; so is his mother; I hope he is.

Women are the same in every nation, Zandile. I hope he's happy.

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V. The Pope And The Colour Bar

Izingane zasisu sinye zahlukaniselana intethe.

(In a famine children born of one woman will share even a locust.)

The African, the Afrikaner and the English are three-eyed giants; each uses the first eye to watch where it is going, the second to keep a look-out on the one opponent and the third on the other. Most English-speaking people have been shaken by the Groot Kerk choice of Willem Adriaan de Haas as prime minister. Nobody is shaken more violently than the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Pretoria, Reginald Postlethwait.

He is convinced that dark times have descended on the church, not only in South Africa but in the whole of the continent on his side of the equator. He has been a keen student of Afrikaner politics and in the preceding twenty-five years has been warning the church against the rise to power of an Afrikaner phenomenon like de Haas.

His theory is that the Afrikaner is unique among the peoples of South Africa. If the English lost their position of economic dominance, they would lose their money, but still be free to emigrate to other parts of the English-speaking world. The Africans have lost their land and freedom but survive because of their numbers and will win in the end because history, Free Africa, world opinion and numbers are on their side. The Afrikaner has political power; if he lost it he would lose everything. He has nowhere to go, for Holland would be too much of a foreign country for him to survive in.

People, the archbishop insists, are like animals; they are most dangerous when fighting for their lives. He thinks it is unrealistic for the church to define itself as antagonistic to Afrikaner aspirations. That will give phenomena like de Haas the reason they need finally to extirpate Roman Catholicism in South Africa.

The church is under siege in the whole of Africa; a generation of African leaders is emerging which is hostile to all forms of authority on the white side. These people argue that the Roman Catholic Church is the historical enemy of the African people; that it blessed slavery and ordered the seizure of African lands in the fifteenth century; that it was the ally of colonialism and is the handmaid of white supremacy. The

pope, they say, is a partisan for white financial, political and military power; in the changing dispositions of power in the world, he is ultimately on the side of the white race and the white government in Pretoria. That is why he straddles the fence on South Africa's colour problem.

Postlethwait says the Africans are perfectly correct when they say that the church is a white institution. It was set up to uphold moral values developed in the white world; these values produced the "finest" civilisation history had ever seen and in a world where black, brown, red and yellow pagans proliferated, the time would come when the white races would have to stand together against the non-white pagans of the world.

He speaks of a *White Consensus on Africa* as the only guarantee of white survival in all Africa. He sees the Roman Catholic Church as being uniquely placed to be the catalyst that would accelerate movement toward the formation of a united white front in Southern Africa against communism. No other organisation is as united in its operations in this part of the world as the church.

The pope is the supreme commander of the forces of the church in Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, South-West Africa, Rhodesia and Zambia. The various peoples in this part of the continent might speak a thousand different languages, but those of them who are Catholics are bound together by one supreme loyalty: their commitment to Rome. This is power, the archbishop always says; call it moral power or spiritual power or political power or cultural power; call it what you will, it is power in any language. Postlethwait urges that this power gives the Roman Catholic Church bargaining advantages which raise the prospects of a deal with Pretoria.

De Haas must be made to realise that Roman Catholicism can be an ally of Afrikaner nationalism against communism; that it can even be one of the guarantors of Afrikaner survival.

At this stage he thinks it would be imprudent to play up the role of guarantor. The Afrikaners are a proud people, stubborn Calvinists who see their relations with the Catholics from the angle of the Inquisition. Their fears of race equality and communism, however, are so deep-rooted and their need for allies almost so desperate as to awaken their interest in the use of the Roman Catholic Church as a catalyst in bringing together the English-speaking, in South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Swaziland, Rhodesia and Zambia, the Germans in South-West Africa and the Portuguese in Angola and Mozambique in a single united front led by the Afrikaner.

Ten years earlier, Postlethwait had convened a conference of the hierarchy of the church in Southern Africa, ostensibly to redefine the role of the Roman Catholic Church in changing Africa, but, in fact, to sound the reactions of the cardinals, the archbishops and the bishops

to his proposal.

Helvetius van Warmelo had been so impressed with the idea he had personally intervened and put pressure on the city council of Pretoria to allow the Roman Catholics to hold a rally in the Groot Saal (Great Hall) of the city hall which was attended by Catholics of all races. At the time, the hierarchy expressed interest in the idea but advised caution in implementing it. The churchmen had not made up their mind on Free African attitudes to domination by Rome. But van Warmelo thought the interest significant enough to justify the granting of permission to the Catholics to establish Boreneng mission, outside Atteridgeville, to preach the word to the kaffers and, at the same time, keep an eye on the communist agitators.

The prime minister's conciliation of the Catholics raised a storm, first in the cabinet. Willem Adriaan de Haas charged that everything precious in the Calvinistic protestant tradition and everything valuable for which the Afrikaner had shed his blood had been thrown down the drain. At the time he rejected the idea of a white consensus; he did not see how the disciplined Afrikaners could form an alliance with the easy-going, garlic-chewing Portuguese who spent a lot of their time in dalliance with African women. He took his objections to the caucus of the CNP where it divided the party sharply in two and threatened to bring the Afrikaner government crashing to the ground. At this point his opponents stood up, one by one and demanded that he should state clearly where he stood; if he was an agent of the English-Jewish-capitalist-communist-liberal conspirators, he would split the CNP and shatter Afrikaner unity. His friends rallied stoutly to his defence. Press reports of the time tell of blows exchanged on the floor of the conference room, for the collision of phenomena is quite a spectacle in the Afrikaner community. De Haas retreated, to fight on another day.

Postlethwait's victory gave him tremendous prestige in the Catholic hierarchy. He was invited to Rome and returned with the title of archbishop. With De Haas at the head of the government, he now thinks he should waste little time to rally the hierarchy behind the banner of a catalyst and to make concrete proposals to De Haas. His theory is that the evolution of an Afrikaner prime minister follows a fixed pattern. He starts from the extreme right in the CNP, breathing fire and brimstone and talking in tones of thunder and lightning against the *enemies* of Afrikanerdom. English economic pressures come into play first to isolate him in the CNP and finally to force him to break away from the party and retreat into the political wilderness where he starts from the bottom, rallying rural Afrikanerdom to his banner with jeremiads against the Black Peril, the English Peril, the Jewish Peril, the Indian Peril and, sometimes, the Brown (Coloured) Peril. A tornado of feeling rises which sweeps him into the prime minister's office in Union Buildings. Then, the responsibilities of office come into play, bevelling

off the angularities of the phenomenon.

Yesterday's fire-eating extremist, at whose roar mountains quaked, becomes the suave realist whose main concern is the internal balance of African-Afrikaner-English reserves of power. Postlethwait argues that de Haas is moving toward coming to terms with reality; the tide of African nationalism rolling southward gives him enough headaches to make him more amenable to reason on the White Consensus idea. The archbishop has gone on the offensive once more and has called a second conference of the Catholic hierarchy in Southern Africa.

The doyen of the Catholic prelates in Southern Africa is Dom Bartolomeo, Cardinal Machado de Marandellas, whose headquarters are in Lourenço Marques in Mozambique. He is a politically colourless man with opaque views on every major issue affecting Southern Africa. Friends and foes concede, however, that he is a wizard of an administrator. The cardinal is a key figure in the power alignments which Archbishop Postlethwait has in mind. He has the ear of powerful personalities in the Curia and the Foreign Office of the Vatican and is the confidante of the Portuguese head of state in Lisbon. In addition, he has a high regard for the work Postlethwait is doing in Boreneng, right under the nose of the Dutch Reformed Church in the South African capital. For this reason alone, he is inclined to give a lot of attention to Postlethwait's views. The cardinal has a passion for pomp and ceremony and the archbishop has moved heaven and earth to flatter this aspect of the cardinal's vanity.

The archbishop's residence is built in the style of a Texan ranch house in Waterkloof. Its two occupants are the archbishop, who is in his early fifties, and his twin sister, Adeline, a former nun. Tragedy has crashed into Adeline's life. She holds doctorates in education from the best universities in Britain, Holland and the United States. For many years she headed the prestigious St. Mary's College for Girls in Johannesburg and sat in commissions appointed by the Smuts government to inquire into different aspects of education. Then she was appointed head of the Secretariat for Education of the Roman Catholic Church, with headquarters in Bloemfontein. Her main interest was the education of the poor of all races and her work commanded the admiration of most members of the Smuts cabinet. De Haas has always regarded her as the Catholic-kaffer fifth column in South African education and his government has accordingly been creating all sorts of difficulties for her. Her health has broken down as a result and she has just been released from a mental hospital, at the request of her brother. She is making some progress, though she sometimes has occasional losses of memory.

The archbishop's African cook-housekeeper is a devout Roman Catholic in her early sixties who lives in a two-roomed structure in the archbishop's backyard. She is concerned about the strain on Adeline's

health during the conference of the church heads and one morning confronts the archbishop.

Monsignor, with so many people around during the conference, don't you think Sister Adeline should be taken to a quieter place in the country?

The African is standing inside the half open door.

I have been thinking, too, that so many people around

I thought something sinister was in the offing, screams Adeline from behind the cook. She almost bangs the door against the cook and crashes past the African to confront the archbishop behind his large desk.

Look, Adeline darling, you don't have your slippers on; you remember? Your doctor said you should never expose your feet to cold!

I don't care what he said. I'm expected to remember things designed to humiliate me And to lose my memory when your important friends are around? I've just had enough of all this And, I suppose that Dr. Hastings will be around again to drug me with sedatives, soporifics and other poisons I never expected this from you, Reggie!

She turns sharply, glares at the African and screams:

And you, too, Linah, after saving your son from the executioner's rope!

She storms through the door and leaves the archbishop and his cook staring at each other.

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Pretoria is a city of rallies; the Afrikaners are fond of mass gatherings, parades and similar assemblies. They want constantly to be assuring each other that they stand together. Every year, they drive from all parts of the country to the capital to celebrate Kruger Day. December 16 is, of course, the event of the year. But no gathering in living memory excels in its size and the quality of the pomp the Catholic rally in the City Hall. The Groot Saal accommodates 50,000 people and another 10,000 have gathered on the square around the main hall. Seven cardinals, two of whom are black, lead the procession which is headed by Cardinal de Marandellas. A white page carries a huge, brightly-coloured umbrella to shade the cardinal from the heat of the sun. A score of archbishops and bishops make a long procession of the princes of the church. The 50,000 in the hall, most of whom are black, rise to their feet as de Marandellas walks in; the thousand-voice choir welcomes the princes of the church with the *Angelicus*.

That night, the princes are hosts to the leaders of the government, the members of parliament who live in Pretoria and the ambassadors of foreign powers. The dinner is largely a business gathering at

which de Marandellas will make an important announcement on behalf of the Southern African hierarchy, and is attended by men only. The prime minister and Cardinal de Marandellas sit at the head of the table, in front of a small door. After dinner, Archbishop Postlethwait calls upon the senior prince of the church to convey to the prime minister the decision of the conference on the communist menace and the dual role of the christians in the situation of change in Southern Africa.

The cardinal is in the middle of his speech proclaiming that Catholicism and Afrikanerdom are allies with the same mission in Southern Africa when the door opens behind him. Adeline, naked from the top of her head to the soles of her feet, walks briskly to the cardinal's vacant chair and seats herself next to Willem Adriaan de Haas. In the consternation which follows, her brother rises quickly to his feet, makes a beeline for her and throws his cloak around her body and tries to pull her away gently. She rises to her feet, pulls the cloak off her body and throws it on the floor.

I'm not getting out of here, if that's what you're trying to do, she says quietly but firmly.

Cardinal de Marandellas orders Postlethwait to leave her alone and to pick up the cloak, which she picks up herself, covers her body with it and returns to the cardinal's chair. When the cardinal is over with his speech he descends the podium and de Haas is about to speak when Adeline rises to her feet, throws the cloak on the floor and protests:

I just can't stand him; not that man; not de Haas!
She walks angrily through the little door and leaves it shut.

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VI. People With An Untidy Conscience

Yisilima esihle esizazi ubuwula baso.

(He is a wise man who knows his limitations.)

Pumasilwe's health has been failing from shortly after the assassination of the prime minister. His doctors have not been able to diagnose his troubles. He has been complaining of a persistent headache and, sometimes, palpitations and dizziness. Zandile has noted that he is becoming increasingly hysterical. She took him to the best doctors in her community and when these failed she tried the whites, who seemed to make his condition worse. Some of his friends have told her that it is possible one of Pumasilwe's ancestors has set dangerous vibrations around Pumasilwe's life and that she should not rely wholly on the medicine of the white people, which contains more poisons than curative principles. In the end she urges him to go to his father's kraal in the Inanda mission station near Durban to get expert advice on what to do with his condition.

Hezekiya Makaye is a wiry old man of medium height in his mid-seventies, with an agile and restless mind. There never is a moment when he sits down to enjoy the company of his friends or to sip tea or even to sit down under his verandah on a hot summer afternoon to rest or stare vacantly into space. If he is not mending something, he is in the fields with his hand hoe removing the weeds between the rows of sweet potatoes or batata, for which he is famous. He returns to the house at about five, has a cold bath, attends to the mail and then settles down to read the English morning paper published in Durban. By the time he is through with all this, supper is ready. Every dinner is a party in Hezekiya's house. While he and his aging wife are the only inhabitants of the sprawling house built of stone, the table is set as though for six people. Hezekiya likes it that way; it makes him proud to know that any stranger can move into his house and have enough food. If there is nobody to join the couple, why, there always are the spirits of the Makaye family hovering around and who set the right vibrations in motion when they see their son take so much care of his family.

Pumasilwe arrived in his father's house shortly before lunch on the day when his parents enter this story. The arrival of a relative is an

important occasion in the life of every Zulu community. Members of the extended family, friends and neighbours come in to greet him and to hear of their own sons and daughters in the Transvaal. Some bring gifts, mainly food items, and many collect messages, letters, parcels and money from their relatives in Pretoria and Johannesburg. The process of greeting took the whole afternoon and Pumasilwe is tired. When dinner is over Pumasilwe's mother helps the girl who cooks for the family clear up the table to enable the father and his son to talk business freely.

You do not look well, Puma; what is wrong?

I can't tell, father; one of the diseases of the city, I think.

Do you know the woman?

You get me all wrong, father; venereal disease is not involved here.

We who live in the country think of venereal disease when people talk of city diseases.

There are tuberculosis and kwashiorkor in the city?

Yes, there are.

And, of course, the stress diseases, like *fufunyane*. I think my nerves are giving in.

Have you been working very hard of late?

As you know, I have always been a hard worker; I don't know what has gone wrong. I thought that I might come to you and we talk things over. I want to go and see a specialist of my own people; a sangoma, to diagnose my condition.

A sangoma, my child? And you say that in my own house?

That is why I came down to see you. Pretoria is a long way, father, and it costs a lot of money to travel from there to here.

Witchcraft is forbidden in this house; I never thought the day would come when my own son would turn to witchcraft in his hour of need. I am a Christian; I am serious about my religion and I intend to remain serious about it. No member of my family will go to a witchdoctor; not while I live!

Not even when my health is involved?

There are first-class doctors in Durban. I never preached faith in witchdoctors to any of my children. I have never been to a witchdoctor! What would your mother say if I told her you had travelled all the way from Pretoria to see a sangoma? What would the people of Inanda say? How would I face the world? How dare you say a thing like this, son?

Hezekiya resists with difficulty the tears which swell in his eyes.

Mother of Puma, come and hear this!

The old lady walks into the dining room and sits on an ancient armchair against the wall, from where she can see the faces of the two men.

Puma, tell your mother the nonsense you've just told me.

Tears roll down his mother's cheeks as Puma describes his illness and how, in desperation, he and his wife decided that he should consult a sangoma.

But we have never had any dealings with witchdoctors; we do not know their ways, Puma. Where did you learn about them? From your wife?

No. Suffering taught me that I could solve all my problems only if I used resources which belonged to me and which were controlled by me.

Child, you are tired and your father is upset; his health too is not so good. Why don't we all retire for the night and rest, so that we can talk when fresh to-morrow?

Hezekiya opens an obviously overworked bible and reads a few passages and then goes on his knees. Instead of leading in prayer, he is silent for a while and then calls out:

Pray, Puma!

Puma has not done this sort of thing in all the years he has been in Pretoria. But this is not his only difficulty; Puma is no longer a christian. He coughs a little, plotting a way out of his troubles.

I said pray, Puma!

All things commenced with the intention to do good end well. May it be so in these difficult times. Amen.

Puma, you have changed a lot, son. You no longer are the person I knew you to be. You, too, have become an enemy of Christ?

Would you say I have changed? I think I have grown, in body and mind, mother.

Growing backward? Growing toward superstition? Growing toward darkness? Growing away from the Lord and the light? What growth is that? You can't even pray? Your father was right. We did not bring you up to do these things; we did not send you to school, we did not deny ourselves so many comforts to develop your brain so that you should forget prayer!

It no longer matters to me whether or not I am an enemy or follower of Christ. He and I are not going the same way; I know now that he and I are moving in opposite directions. He is the Lord of people who steal persons and destroy souls; he is the Lord of people who steal other people's lands; he is the Lord of people who fulfil themselves in self-defilement. Whoever he is, he can't be my Lord. And, in any case, mother, I don't need a Lord. All I have to do is to look inward, as deeply as I can, into myself and there I will find that I am my own Lord!

Then, why can't you cure yourself?

Because I am ignorant.

Why can't you free yourself?

Because I am ignorant.

When will you know, son?

The sangoma will tell me.

Hezekiya rises abruptly, makes an angry clicking sound, flings his glass-case on the table and walks into his bedroom. His wife collects herself and beckons to her son. She speaks to him in a lowered tone.

Come, son; sit next to me so that we should not make noise. Father is tired and he wants to sleep But tell me, have you turned your back on the challenge of being a christian?

I have outgrown the white man's superstition. I am now a free man; I see things through my own eyes; I explain them on my own terms where, before, I saw them through borrowed eyes and understood them through borrowed perspectives. Now, mother, I am the person I should like to be; I am not the person the whites want me to be. Only he who is free from the white man's superstition is ready for freedom in his society and his country. This is what the quarrel with the whites is all about.

What did your wife say when you first told her these things?

She bought a goat, called in a Pedi witchdoctor, had me kill the goat and we called in our friends to celebrate the moment of liberation!

This freedom you constantly refer to . . . what is it that you really want to be free from? From the white man who brought the Word and Civilisation?

I want to realise the promise and the glory of being a person and not a creature. I have to take the white man out of my mind, to take his superstition out of my system, before I can summon the powers in me as a limb of God, a hand of God, an eye of God, call it what you will. Then, I can cure myself; then I can restore to my people and myself that which was stolen from us.

Curing yourself? You never were an arrogant boy. Science has most of the cures for the diseases that afflict us . . . and science was invented by the white people. But there is no cure for any illness that is more potent than the grace of God . . . and the white man brought God to us

Mama, I am tired to-day. We can talk about that until sunrise. But I want to say one thing: Have you ever thought of an alternative to the germ theory of disease?

How can you have an alternative to science? You negate the person himself; you destroy all meaning. But since yours is only one mind, you only destroy yourself with the illusion-like the hunted monkey which plucked a leaf, put it against its eyes when cornered and believed it had hidden itself safely.

You were a teacher at Inanda Seminary for a whole generation, mother, and yet you never said a thing about vibrations. Everything vibrates and therefore is alive; conversely, everything is alive and

therefore vibrates. The ignorant concentrate on treating the germ and not the vibrations which make it dangerous and which give it form. Vibrations are the key to the understanding of all things. One day, we shall know enough about vibrations to use them to cure every disease. Who knows more about vibrations and their effects on our lives than the sangoma? I came down to seek the fount of real knowledge

His mother rises from her chair slowly, without looking at him and moves heavily toward her bedroom.

Have a restful sleep, son; we'll talk to-morrow.

Good night, mama.

* * *

The seer's kraal stands on a hillock in the valley of the Mzinyati, about two thousand feet below Inanda. Hezekiya leads the way, followed by Puma and, after him, a nephew of Hezekiya's. The old man now and then mumbles something inaudible to himself and then shakes his head vigorously. Uppermost in his mind is how he will face the world with a sangoma consultation in his life. Everybody in Inanda and in the valley knows him. He was schools inspector in the district for twenty years and is deacon of the mission church at Inanda. He has never spoken to Mazani Lukele, the sangoma, though he has met her several times in the buses. He has never liked her because she represents the forces of darkness; she leads his people away from the light which the white missionaries brought from across the seas.

Mazani's place is more than a kraal; it is a village in its own right. White-walled rondavels surround a cattle enclosure filled with oxen, milk cows, donkeys and four horses. By every standard, Mazani is a woman of substance. Stories circulate that she has a bank balance which runs into thousands of rand. Hezekiya starts believing these stories against the affluence which meets his eyes. A beautiful hedge surrounds the village and, to his surprise, roses blossom around some of the rondavels. As custom requires, he stops at the gate, raises his walking-stick and announces his presence with salutations:

Hail, Daughter of Wisdom! Hail, Lukele!

A young girl, wearing only a skirt made of beads, opens one of the doors and is walking toward the gate when she recognises Hezekiya. Her breasts tell her age. They stand out like quaking cones from her chest, announcing that she is beginning to be conscious of her womanhood. She races back to the hut.

Mother! The inspector is at the gate!

Don't be silly! Are you awake?

Yes, mama; he's there, with two men; two mission people, to judge them by the way they're dressed.

Her husband sits on a low carved stool, sipping coffee from a large mug.

Father of Pasiwe! Do you hear what Pasiwe is saying?

Yes, I do; but what does it matter if Makaye is at the gate?

The inspector! To be received by a child? You are out of your mind. What would the world say if we sent a child to receive him?

He's obviously in trouble and is not coming here so early as a former inspector.

Go, father of Pasiwe and stop arguing!

Her husband gulps his coffee and walks to the gate. Hezekiya goes through the formalities and is led to a large rondavel covered with leopard skins. This is the consulting room where Mazani receives patients and dignitaries. Pasiwe sneaks in behind the men with small, ceremonial grass mats and spreads each on top of a leopard skin for the three men to sit on. Apart from the expensive skins on the floor, there is no furniture in the room except for a low stool near a set of drums on a rack by the side of huge black pots covered with grass mats. A small drum starts beating to the accompaniment of male and female voices outside. Mazani walks in, covered with furs and beads and followed by about a dozen young men and women. After the formalities each of the young takes a drum and they form a semi-circle behind Mazani. Her husband opens the proceedings by reciting the praise-poems composed in honour of Mazani's ancestors down the centuries, followed by a short homily by Mazani, addressed to the former inspector.

I am aware, Inspector, that you might not be familiar with the procedures adopted in seeking the wisdom of our ancestors, whom most people refer to as the dead. All is life in the cosmic order and there can be no death where all is life; there can be no beginning and no end, for all things are forever responding to the call of the morrow. Life is spirit; it is consciousness. It exists only to express itself; to create and radiate vibrations and to transform these into thoughts, ideas and phenomena. I am a phenomenon, just as you are, Inspector; just as the stone, the tree, the bird and all living and "dead" creatures are. We differ from each other because of the concentration of the vibrations in each of us. Because the stone, the piece of glass, the plant and the animal are all individualisations of the consciousness, they communicate with each other, through vibrations. We can talk to a dog and be understood, not because the canine is aware of the meaning of words but because we set in motion vibrations to which it responds. We can set up vibrations to which the stone, the piece of glass, the tree and the animal will respond. Do you understand me, Inspector?

I think I do, so far.

Good. If all things vibrate and if all things communicate through vibrations, there can be no secrets of nature or mysteries. Only the ignorant and the superstitious have secrets or believe in mysteries. For, how do you hide vibrations? They are always being emitted and hurled into the air; everything is always speaking through them. Those

trained in the law of vibration decode the messages for the uninitiated. It is my privilege to have been trained in reading the vibrations for the purpose of helping my fellowmen. Do you still follow, Inspector?

So far, so good.

That brings us to health. We say the body is healthy when harmony exists in the vibrations emitted by every organ in the body. Ill health comes in when the harmony is disturbed; it can be disturbed, first, by the person himself harbouring thoughts which produce harmful vibrations or by the strong planting evil vibrations into the weak or the untrained or by dangerous vibrations in the atmosphere or by the "dead" setting up harmful vibrations. Disease is thus caused by wrong vibrations from no less than four different sources.

Am I allowed to ask questions, Daughter of Wisdom?

It is hard for a christian to understand; so ask them.

It can be shown that disease is caused by germs, by viruses and by upsets in the metabolic process

It is as you say, Inspector. But the white people concern themselves with beginnings and ends; they are aware only of the obvious; they do not know the intrinsic truth which inheres in all things. Germs and viruses are coagulations of the living consciousness and vibrate in ways that sometimes do harm to other substances. It might help to neutralise their activities with antidotes; but all these are crutches used because men are still ignorant. One day men will know the truth more fully and they will realise that the vibrations of cosmic and earthly forces are at the heart of all things; that they cause and cure disease. Then, the conflict between the germ and the vibration theories of infection will be resolved; they will be seen then as complements. The doctors of the future shall be trained in the nature, the functioning and the use of vibrations. Ordinary men and women will then be taught that for purposes of life on this earth, all things start and end with vibrations; that vibrations are power and that this power is locked in every person, no matter who he is, where he is or what he is. When people know the power in themselves, they will then no longer hate or fear or steal or kill or rape or envy or even die; they will have discovered that they have in themselves all the power they need to get what they want. What I am now going to do is to take the individualisation of the consciousness that is me out of the world of analysis to the world of perception in order to diagnose the trouble with the vibrations at work in your son, Inspector.

May it be as you say!

The instrumentalists start playing on their drums while Mazani goes through the first slow and graceful movements of the *sina* dance. The tempo of the rhythm becomes faster in response to the vigour and intensity of her movements. All of a sudden she sways round and round and staggers to her knees with the help of her husband. He stretches her on the ground and sits on the stool while the drums continue to