

Beasts We love

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Abstract

My thesis is a novella in flash, written as political crime fiction. It is set in contemporary South Africa and tells the story of Rafau Lekopo, a teacher from a little township called Dikgohlong, whose life is changed forever after he finds his wife and the mayor in bed and shoots them both dead. The information contained within the dead mayor's notebook proves to be explosive, showing that the mayor is far more than he seems, and that he is in fact in the employ of a foreign intelligence service. After his release from prison, the embittered Lekopo sets about his revenge against powerful men who abuse their political power. He takes refuge in Lesotho, masterminds a series of heists, car-hijackings and human trafficking, and expands his syndication back in South Africa. Using the contacts and information from the mayor's notebook, he manipulates the Lesotho government into a diplomatic feud with South Africa which threatens to escalate into a military conflict.

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PART 1

1. As we lay

Rafau could not figure out how he was going to pull through. Even the strongest do not survive such ordeals. Odysseus, Samson, and Hercules would just throw in the towel on this one. He always believed he had the strength to move mountains, but that day he felt soft and meek. The thing was that, he had not even begun to tackle this problem and already felt defeated. He looked at every wall as if for the first time. He remembered the day they painted them. They were young, happy and full of life. He smiled, thinking of the two of them playfully splashing paint on each other. Then a cold tear rolled down his cheek, freezing the smile. He stood there, not moving, as if in a trance. As if he stepped on a landmine, and could not lift his foot, balancing himself so that no excessive weight shifted to the landmine, a technical lesson one mastered or not. He stared at the sheets on the bed.

2. Toiling

Rafau Lekopo was a hardworking man of good standing in his community. He was a patient teacher. Whether his learners were too slow to catch up, or outright playing truant, he would slowly get them back on the right path. He was not a superman. He had his moments of frustration, but he communicated his discontent, in a gentle yet assertive manner. *Why did you have to embarrass me like that in front of the inspector? Since when don't you know what four plus seven, and six plus five is ?* His voice was raised but not hysterical. He always maintained a good authoritative voice. *I knew the answer, Sir. It is eleven.* One of the boys answered. After some well-calculated pause, he calmly asked, *Then why in Jesus name didn't you give out that correct answer?* With a straight face and utmost confidence, a boy responded, *Because, Sir, of the two ones in eleven, I did not know which one comes first.* To this, the class ruptured into a loud laughter. Rafau wanted to speak but a million words flooded his mind. He couldn't choose the right word. He couldn't pick the right face either. He was angry, but again he felt like bursting into laughter himself. He knew very well, that it would devastate this young man. The boy would think he is stupid. Oh, what the heck! He also laughed. Strategically holding back any possible, wild laughter, he forced it into a smile. More of a grin. Nothing worked. He laughed so much that his eyes were full of tears. It was not the boy's stupidity, but this boy's intelligence. *My boy, you are brilliant. You are unique. You just don't absorb things as they are and just answer back. You are a philosopher!* To this, the boy did not know what to say.

3. A man holier

Everybody wanted a piece of Rafau Lekopo. While he gained popularity mostly among the women, he was never a darling to men and children. Wayward men did not like to be reprimanded. *Why can't you all be like Rafau? He is a good man. A man of integrity. A man who cares for his family. Not like some people I know!* That would be a woman rebuking her man, and Rafau always used as a perfect model. Children did not like him. He did not tolerate any nonsense, whether at school, church or anywhere, he would deal with any unbecoming behavior swiftly. In church, he believed that he was planted there by God. He was obliged to serve. He also believed that children from children-headed families, needed to be assisted by the church. For him, education and church were never a laughing matter. Until one day in church, he decided to award one of the boys. That boy volunteered to clean the church's yard, all by himself. His reward was a bit peculiar, but to Rafau it was a perfect gift. *My son, the church is proud of you. You showed that you are a man. You have strong muscles. One day you will grow up and get married, and be blessed with plenty of children. And I have no doubt in my mind that you will teach your children to be just like you.* He brought himself to an abrupt halt, when he realized he was almost in preaching mode. *For your efforts, I want you to choose a scripture and a theme for your brief testimony to the congregation.* To the exciting news, the boy stood up. *God created man with greatness. Therefore, man must speak without fear.* Rafau was not sure where the boy was going with that. The congregation, however, was already feeling the boy. They shouted, *Amen!* Rafau took a seat almost closer to the boy. *Speak, brother, speak!* The congregation was in synchrony. They felt fired up even before the boy could say much. *If it weren't because of Eve, we would be living nicely in Eden.* Silence. Where is he going with this? *It is Eve who led Adam into temptation. God's prayer says, Lead us not into temptation. We are where we are today because of Eve. All because of a woman.* Noise. Mumbling. Shouting from ladies of the church. Men whistled and clapped. Rafau stood up. *Ok, Ok, let us give him a chance to preach. Get to the point, my boy.* The boy was skiing too close to blasphemy. One lady stood up and shouted, *You would not be here today if it weren't because of a woman. Eve was deceived by the snake. It could possibly be that the snake was male.* Rafau stood up again. *Listen, this is not the platform.* But the boy shouted, *But, Sir, that is what you taught us. To stand up and speak with no fear. We are speaking the word of the Lord, inside the house of the Lord!* The priest looked at Rafau with a wry smile. The priest knew that the boy was right. Rafau taught the youth of the church to speak out and be honest with their feelings. Rafau directed the choir to stand. *Sing us hymn 44.* The boy's preaching was over.

4. Her Majesty

Dipolelo was the queen of Rafau's heart. She was the only queen in that castle. She was already waiting for her husband. The day seemed like a year. She was waiting to tell him about how she spent her day. After Rafau had greeted her with a kiss, he threw himself on the couch and loosened his tie. He closed his eyes and yawned. *Daddy, here is water to wash your hands. Please put away the newspaper. Your brain worked too hard, but you are still reading a newspaper. Please. Just relax.* Rafau obliged. He would be nothing without Dipolelo. The magic that Dipolelo worked when washing his feet, was irreplaceable.

Dipolelo's smile warmed his heart. *It is ok, my love. I just wanted to see what has been happening in this world. At work, I hardly get to know much about politics. School is a world of shaping brains. And souls. And hearts. Do you know how many learners come to school hungry? It really breaks my heart.* Dipolelo gave Rafau a soothing kiss on the forehead. *Do not stress about that, daddy. I know you are a caring man. God will provide.* Dipolelo knew how much Rafau loved children. He had loved to have a house full of children. They had tried. And tried. And prayed. And waited. It broke her heart that she could not give him children. Birds made a lot of noise fighting for a spot in the tree behind their bedroom. In the morning, they would be woken up by the sweet sounds of birds singing. The fierce, chipping, noise made by these birds, was too loud, in the afternoon, but Rafau and Dipolelo did not care. Birds were excited about the goings of the day. They were telling each other their day stories. Some sweet. Some tragic. Sometimes Dipolelo was hurt by the excitement of the birds. Their children could have been like those birds. Rafau could have been calling them to order. Dipolelo could have had her hands full. Some could have broken plates. Some could have broken windows with their ball. Some could have run around the house, making so much noise. Others could be coming home crying from being injured from their playing. Dipolelo could be healing their wounds. She could be having time to braid their hair. Birds in the tree. They brought too much pain than joy. Dipolelo loved the birds. Still. The birds were her children. Colourful. Wonderful. Full of life. The birds soothed her heart. She was never going to have children of her own. Rafau touched her belly and started stroking it gently. *Mama, I know we will have our own children. We just need to be patient.* Dipolelo knew the truth. She could never find strength to tell Rafau. A tear rolled down her left cheek. *Do not cry my love. All will be fine. It is not your fault. Only God knows when the time is right.* Rafau did not know. Dipolelo did. It broke her spirit. Dipolelo's mind took a journey, to the farthest corners of the earth. She could still hear the doctor's words ringing in her head. *I am so sorry Mrs Lekopo. You will not bear children. There is permanent damage to your uterus.*

5. Click Bang Cold

Dipolelo and Letjhoba Bolokwe pulled the sheets to cover their shameful nakedness. They did not hear Rafau coming in. As he stood there, he was dead inside. His eyes wide open but could hardly see any more of the shocking scene. More like Moses at the sight of the burning bush. *I am sorry baby, it is not what it looks like... Shut up! Shut you filthy mouth!* Dipolelo kept quite, already sobbing like a child. Rafau's anger that was welling in the past minute, had reached explosive proportions. *Come on, man. We all make mistakes. Let's look at how we can fix this.* Letjhoba Bolokwe, like a corrupt politician, found a way to worm himself out that's situation, by offering Rafau some money. *The only thing to fix here, is your face. I am going to fix it. Your ancestors will never recognize you once I am done with you.* Letjhoba realized that money was not going to make Rafau bite. He changed into the soft man's mode. *Mr Makopo, let us talk about this, like men. I am sorry, my man. I messed up.* That man, the very mayor of his community was in the house! Letjhoba Bolokwe. That was the man of high stature and glamour. He was in the house. Many people would die to roll out the red carpet for the mayor. Other people would have called neighbours to witness the scene, when the mayor stepped into their house. Only that time, Letjhoba Bolokwe, man of the people, was an uninvited guest in Rafau's house. A beautiful Mercedes Benz was parked in his yard. Neighbours could have peeped over their fences to witness the good sight, but they were at work. Not much was happening in that neighborhood at 10: 00 am. He reached for the mayor's gun under his jacket flung over the sofa. A very expensive suit, on his cheap sofa. His favorite sofa. It may have been cheap compared to the mayor's suit, but it held so many sweet memories. It was his favorite lazyboy chair. He would sit there sometimes and watch Dipolelo strut her nakedness in that very bedroom. She would sway around like a swan. Slowly dipping her beautiful, sexy and almost flawless booty. To that, Rafau would feel some tremendous flow of blood rushing to all the relevant departments of his body. A God-abiding man was about to lose his mind. The feel of a heavy metal in his hand, evoked some horrible memories. He thought of the hardships he endured before becoming a teacher. The cold steal of the hoe he would feel in his hands. The hard labour that got him to be a strong man he had become.

6. Last moments

Rafau reached for the mayor's wallet, and put it in his pocket. He took the mayor's phone. *Transfer all your money from all your accounts to that account. Do not leave a cent.* He cocked the gun. With trembling fingers, the mayor did as was instructed. Just as he did that, his phone rang. *Answer it and don't be clever with me, if you know what is good for you.* A man of God barked the instruction. After the mayor assured the bank that he was perfectly aware of the transactions he just made, Rafau took the phone. Rafau believed in prayer. He handed them a bible. *Put your hands on this bible and pray for your souls.* Was the broken covenant between Rafau and his wife Dipolelo forgiven by that gesture? *Please, Rafau. Just take everything. I will give you all the money you need. Everything. Please, just don't kill us, my man. I am deeply sorry for all this. It will never happen again.* Rafau was hardened by each word the fell from Letjhoba's lips. He was disgusted by Letjhoba's pathetic apology, laced with deceit, love for money, and passion for bribery. *You are perfectly right. It will never happen again.* Rafau fired two shots. Letjhoba died instantly. Dipolelo mumbled something that was not clearly audible. Rafau, who was frightened by the reality that his wife could survive the shooting, came closer. The last whisper he heard from his wife, was 'Bed'. He never understood what that meant. He initially thought that she meant she did something bad. He also thought she meant bed. Rafau never got much to crack his skull about bed or bad. Dipolelo then closed her eyes, and her beautiful, innocent looking face became pale. Her gorgeous body was lying there, lifeless. The lamp inside Rafau's heart also went off.

7. Shackled

Rafau made no attempt to flee the scene. He stood there like a lifeless statue. He could not feel his face. The thunderous sound of his gun made him go deaf for a moment. It was in that silence that he found his soul lost. Dikgohlong was a small township. The sound of an ambulance alarm, was almost heard in every corner. The thunderous sound of the gun, was like a canon. Sometimes the journalists just drove behind the ambulance without asking any questions. The smell of a news scoop. Somewhere out there, there must have been an accident. Nobody cared about details. Whether they shall have driven all the way to nothing happening, was never an issue. It was a satisfying feeling to get to the scene before any other journalists could. The next thought for Rafau, was to kill himself too. "Freeze!" An instruction disrupted his wild thoughts. As he shivered with fear, he knew that by any slightest movement, he would be shot by the police. It may not be such a bad idea. It was the best chance to die. He would not feel guilty. He would not have killed himself. He would be a victim. He would not have killed a third human being. His blood would be in the hands of the police. The police would however, not feel guilty. Rafau understood the instruction to freeze. He was already frozen, anyway. He was deafened by the loud voices of policemen, each shouting out his instruction. *Freeze! Hands up! Hands on your head! Don't move! Put your hands where I can see them! On your knees! Drop your weapon!* He obeyed. *I did not do it. I did not kill them.* Rafau found an impossible tune to sing. A policeman laughed. *We caught you red-handed.* It was not clear what red-handed meant, because Rafau did not have a gun in his hand. As he was cuffed, he looked back at the peaceful corpse of his lovely wife. He did not hear the usual jargon of reading him his rights. His ears were still deafened. He looked at the dirty monster, Letjhoba, who possibly led his wife into temptation. At the same time, he saw an adulterous Delilah in the peaceful face of his wife.

8. The rise and rise

You cannot just waltz into prison and start sauntering about as if you owned the place, unless you were a deadly criminal whose reputation preceded you. You must be a hardened criminal, more of a serial killer than just a thief arrested for shoplifting or having defaulted on child maintenance. Rafau knew that very well. He recalled those words from a rehabilitated prisoner who once came to deliver motivational talk at his school. As a teacher, he had read a lot about that life. He had interacted with rehabilitated criminals, and he had been a visitor on many occasions to the prison. He was in that place. He had to face his demon. He had to do time. Even though he was a good man, when provoked, he knew how to stand well behind his apples. He also knew that one did not have to play big in prison upon arrival, because there were gang leaders and rules of survival, that they illegally set for every prisoner that shared the same oxygen. *Do not worry your sorry head about the extent of rehabilitation,* Rafau advised as he jumped at the opportunity of establishing a reading club. This he tied up with the culture of reading and writing, which was in the hymn book of all the Government's departments. That way, he knew he had full support and a possible pledge of solidarity. *Reading, gentlemen, is the only way of sharpening your mind.* Rafau would address the inmates like he was some sort of a messiah to that bunch of sinners. He immediately sent a list of recommended books to the warders to beef up the library. The library was full of useless comics and magazines, and small bibles, and a lot of journals and those propaganda newspapers singing praises for the government. Rafau minced no words by speaking out strongly against the worthless comics. *Guys, believe me, you will get nowhere in life by wasting your brains with Grensvegter, Die Wit Tier, Die Luiperd, Colt and all other useless readings.* He played his cards very well, because he needed to be seen as a shining star, committed to guiding the sinful inmates from committing further offences. The offences would include dissent. *Whatever the warder says, goes.* Rafau, gathered guidance books, and assumed the role of a psychologist, by showing inmates how they could be able to turn their lives around. There would be those who really did not give a damn about his holier-than-thou attitude. *You can go hang, you bloody Jesus!* The disrespectful inmate had to throw the last phrase. It appeared he was heavily stoned. As to how the marijuana got into the cells, nobody knew. Actually nobody cared. The other soft-spoken inmate threw in, *What is the use of being kind when you are sentenced to life imprisonment?* Rafau, stopped to think a little. *Do, what you do. Do right. Keep doing right.* Rafau was just consoling him. He knew deep inside that the case was a hopeless one. But, what the hell, a man has to keep trying. *Keep trying. And die trying, if it comes to that.*

9. Gripping truth

Chief Warder, do you ever think of these guys' good health? Don't you think they deserve healthcare? Maybe, once in a while, invite health workers to advise on sexual health. Chief Warder, looked at Rafau with keen interest. Normally he would have barked him off before he could finish. Warders hated getting advises. Worse, if advises come from inmates. *If you are such an expert on life tips, why the hell are you here? Get back to work, and stop worrying your sorry self about life. You are a prisoner. Keep quiet and serve time. Prisoner!* That would be the first and the last statement that would kill any possible discussion between a warder and a prisoner. Rafau, expected the same. For some strange reason, Chief Warder listened, quietly. *Do you hear me, Sir?* Rafau wanted to check if he still had his audience. - *Yes, yes, go on, I am listening.* - *To reduce the spread of HIV-AIDS transmission, Sir.* - *Are you done?* - *Not quite, Sir, but yeah, you can say that. I am done.* - *Listen here Rafau. This is not a hotel. This is not a brothel either. What will the public say? Do you know why a prisoner is kept in prison? To take away many of their privileges. That way, they will be disciplined. They will work hard like oxen. They will hurry up their lives here, so that they get rehabilitated. They will be in a hurry to see their loved ones. So, NO. We will not waste state resources with such awareness campaigns. They already know it all.* - *But, Sir?* - *Not buts. We will not do such. When these things are sick, we will take them to the clinic and hospitals. If they die, they die. Many of them know that they are going to die in prison, anyway. We will not waste state's money for the health education rubbish. We provide water so they keep clean, we feed them, and we provide oxygen for them to live. What more do you want?* Rafau, frowned. His fists were rolling up. He felt an overwhelming fury. He was about to hit someone.

Assaulting a warder, would mean solitary confinement. He took a deep breath and shrugged his shoulders. *You see, Rafau, this is it. Prison is prison. These criminals must be very afraid when they think of committing crime. Otherwise, we would be creating a paradise where these fools would come here for a holiday. To eat for free. To sleep for free. And to live for free.* Rafau, kept quiet for a moment. He cleared his throat. Collected his thoughts. Softly, he addressed the Chief Warder for the second round. *Sir, do you have children?* - *Of course I have.* - *Do you have a daughter who is at university?* - *How the hell do you know that?* - *I am just asking.* - *Yes, I do. And don't even think of having your sweaty paws on her, or any of your stupid fools outside prison. I will kill you here, now. I will kill your wife, your children and all your relatives. I will kill your dog, your cat, your chicken, and all your concubines.*

10. Checkmate stumble

The Chief Warder, held Rafau by the neck, and pulled him closer to him. He was shaking with anger. His hot breath burnt Rafau's face. *Do not even think about my daughter. I will kill you. And kill you again. -I am sorry, Sir. I did not mean any harm. I was just asking. I did not know that you had a daughter at the university.* The Chief Warder released Rafau, who staggered a little and coughed. The Chief Warder's grip on his neck nearly suffocated him. *Go. Don't you have any work to do? Just bloody go to other prisoners. -Before I go, may I ask you something? -What? -Do you know warder Sibongile? -Why the hell do you ask me that? Yes, I know her. She is my colleague. -I mean, do you know her biblically? -Where the hell are you going with this?* Rafau knew that he got the Chief Warder where he wanted him. *-I was just thinking, it would be unfair for your wife and daughter to know about Sibongile. You see, the same way you care about your family, you should do the same for prisoners.- Ok, Ok, I will see what I can do. I will talk to the management. We will ensure that your suggestions are looked into. But, don't do anything stupid. And don't think you are clever.* Rafau whistled and walked away to other inmates.

11. Softness of this touch

Rafau, in many ways, than one, was a complex man. Inmates saw the side they wanted to see of him. He got in a teacher, a man baptized in labour of love. He became a father figure for the younger men who got arrested, who still had their wayward manners before they got arrested. Rafau was able to switch to another mode. That of an angry monster. That of a robust beast when time came for a direct confrontation. It was difficult to understand or box him. He had to do it. *Life cannot be trusted. Nobody can be trusted. Not when that somebody was an inmate.* His sweet parole came in handy. From prison, he was in another world. That of milk and honey. Of honeys. He touched her hand. She smiled. It was not clear why she was smiling. Rafau was not so much of a looker. He was just an ordinary male animal. There was something about his touch. It was in synchrony with those sweet words that he uttered, and before their echo died, her soft hand was in his. She began to sweat a little. Her sparkling eyes, sold her out. She was already smitten. Could it be because of Rafau's eloquence? Or his expensive cologne? Or was it because of his gentle caressing? *Would you like to go sit and dine with me in one of the restaurants? Any restaurant of your choice.* Rafau never had a problem with money. The problem was how to use it. On several occasions he would even catch a plane from Lesotho, to Bloemfontein and to Durban and back, just to have lunch with 'his' girl. The girl that he picked. It had to be the most gorgeous woman. It had to be a woman with various skills. The woman who could get into the thick of things, and make things happen. Rafau had to engage in those pleasantries because he was a free man. He knew that he would be seeking refuge to the Lesotho mountains, to get his mission started. But, until then, he had to enjoy every moment. *Man, did you see that guy's watch? I swear it can buy you a house. -No, my man, check the lady he is walking with. Just like King David did, I would put him in the frontline to lead the warriors. -Why would you do that? -So that the enemy could strike him first, so that I can come and comfort his widow! -You have such a sick mind.* Men would have that chat, and more, everytime they saw Rafau. Rafau was not afraid to flaunt his wealth. He also knew that any robber who would try his luck, would be signing his own death warrant.

12. Deadly lane

The modus operandi was not that complicated. Rafau, as the mastermind of all the syndicates operating in Lesotho and South Africa, kept it simple. He did not want to raise any suspicion. He knew that the police would not look further than the usual suspects, who could be released criminals. Any change in operation, would give rise to the suspicion that there was a new kingpin in town. He barked the instructions to his men. *In the parking lot, all you need to do is to press your remote device almost simultaneously as the motorist, or half a second after they had pressed theirs, so that you jam theirs. On the road, when you have pounced upon a motorist, you break the window, point the gun at his or head and tell them to jump off the car. You only cock the gun after you had pointed it closer to the head. That sound will be enough to send a clear message.* Targets were clearly marked. When they had to attack motorists, they had a clear list of targets. Lists of corrupt politicians. From the local municipalities, to provincial leaders, to the national ministers, in both countries. The list was made longer by inclusion of many corrupt *tenderpreneurs*. Those *tenderpreneurs* would be ambushed on their way to transport cash in the boots of their cars, to some corrupt politicians, waiting eagerly for their kickbacks. Once tenders were issued, they would fix their pricing in a way that would allow an extra millions of rands, to be cashed in various, large tranches, under the false pretense to buy from suppliers. Invoices would be easily faked. Suppliers understood that it was the risk they had to take, to get that extra money. The matter of morals was out of the window. Whenever the bribe money was awaited by these corrupt politicians, they would bark instructions for a speedy delivery, once a slightest delay was detected. *Joe, you can't keep the Leader waiting. Chief, make it snappy, let's get the stash in an hour's time. If not, you know what will happen.* Whether the *tenderpreneur* had a transport problem, that was not the Leader's business. People needed to move. The Leader could not be left waiting.

13. Corruptees chorus

Other similar corrupt service providers would buy the almost dilapidated government buildings cheaply, and got the government to rent those buildings at hiked monthly rental rates. Attached to that practice, would be to give those service providers, at least a twenty year contracts, so that, should it happen that the contract was terminated, those providers would pocket a hefty amount in millions, for contracts that were paid off. Those buildings would be leaking, flooding at the basements, there would be faulty toilet pipes, and forever dripping electricity main switch. All those, would be a good recipe for the government to terminate the contract. In their defense, the service providers would cry foul at the fact that they were sold those buildings in that state, and that they did all in their power to restore the buildings to a desirable standard. When that was to be done, providers had to ask for more money from government for upgrades. In some instances, they would get that money, and instead of making permanent repairs, they would put in cheap parts. In no time the building would start leaking again, and more money would be claimed. That system of milking the government dry, took place with the corrupt government decision-makers walking into the schemes with their eyes wide open. *Tell the CFO to sign off the deviation. The bid will not go the three quotation route. Tell the Director to approve the tender, this is an emergency spending. With immediate effect, stop the spending, and channel all the money to that legacy project. We need every cent we can save.* Such instructions would be given, and people in charger of supply chain management were expected to execute. *But, Sir this will constitute a fruitless expenditure. We are already in trouble with the Auditor-General with irregular expenditure.* A young energetic employee would try to reason but would be overruled. *Nobody asked for your opinion. Just proceed as you are instructed, unless you want to be charged for insubordination.* Silence. Instruction implemented.

14. Lost in dictate

The Lesotho Government sent an immediate embargo to the South African Government. They were accused of creating a bomb scare and causing panic across Lesotho, because of their bastardized, polluted Sesotho orthography. The impasse followed an incident where a radio newsreader from a South African radio station, with a wider broadcast footprint in Lesotho, read the line, ***“Tonakgolo o those ka bomo mabapi le paleisi ya hae le borokgo bo botjha!”*** That caused a serious scare, with people running around, children released from school, ambulances rushing up and down, and police and the army assembled. The message was understood to mean, *“The Prime Minister found a bomb next to his palace and the new bridge.”* What the message actually said was, ***The Prime Minister is deliberately silent regarding his palace and the new bridge***, when it was expected of him to report on the tender process and adjudication of service providers. The confusion was caused by the erratic way the newsreader read that line, because, he was to lower a tone on the word; *‘thotse’* and raise a tone on *‘bomo’* which he read on a lower tone, because there were no phonetic signs, as shown in Lesotho Sesotho orthography. That could have been a lighter moment, or what was tiredly known as, lost in translation, but, no, it became a fueling chemical for a possible stand-off. Rafau immediately, saw an opportunity. He knew pretty much which buttons to press. In some instances, it was by sheer luck. Sometimes just by coincidence. In that case, he knew that the *Lesotho Academic Giants* held a seminar on Indigenous Languages and the Global Change. Rafau found a way to send the messages to some of the organizers. They obliged to include the item on, *The Real Sesotho Orthography*. That was to lambast the South African Sesotho. The Basotho in Lesotho in general, were already toying with the idea that the South African Sesotho is bastardized. They believed that theirs was pure and not tampered with by the western forces. Delegates from neighbouring African countries and those from international communities, started feeding back the news to their broadcasters and press institutions. Like a wild fire, the propaganda spread. The Sesotho speakers between the two countries started frowning at each other. Parents started warning their kids not to swallow the South African poison. The publishing houses in Lesotho, stopped Sesotho books published by South Africans. The curriculum developers, in both countries, started scrapping off any form of literature that seemed to glorify either of the two countries. Newspapers started carrying damning headlines. In Lesotho, one newspaper would run with the headlines, **BASTARDIZED SESOTHO RAPED BY SOUTH AFRICAN INTELLIGENCIA**, and in South Africa, another newspaper was on, **ROTTEN-EGGED SESOTHO HATCHED BY MISSIONARIES**.

15. Ration decrease

The work permit thing for Lesotho nationals working in South Africa was becoming a nuisance. It had begun to resemble the Apartheid pass system. Besides, how the hell did we get here? South Africa is actually part of Lesotho, which was demarcated by the settlers in reaching a truce between some bloody hell war of two strangers in our Motherland. Rafau delivered those opening phrases. The radio interview was heating up. Gloves were off. Exploited workers were gradually fired up, and wanted to revolt. Beloved, that bloody South Africa, is actually our land. It sits its sorry ass on our land. South Africa does not exist. Take back your land. Employers were tactical. To increase profits, they had to take cheap labour. They paid little and reaped more. That way, they ended up with a lot of manpower, and more work completed, more money flowing in. One project completed on record time. The next job offer would come with beautiful ribbons on good delivery record. That was unfair to employees. They felt that animals were even better. Animals are fed according to production. To get more milk, cows must be fed the best grain and more ration. They on the other hand, worked themselves to the bones, but the money they got, laughed at them. Rafau had a way to keep workers from outside the borders hopeful. Those Lesotho migrants, understood their pain. Cheap labour for meagre salary, was better than starving in their homeland. They knew that they needed to keep faith. For workers who did not go much further with their education, it was a struggle trying to register their grievances. They really never bothered themselves about the limitations in speaking in English, especially when they had to speak to their Chinese bosses. *Boss, I work alone, but Saule has the slao by the muru!* A foreman had to always jump in to become the interpreter. *What this man actually says is that, he works alone but his friend Saule has found a resting place in the forest. He apparently lie there for the better part of the day when this man is slaving alone.* The Chinese people hastened to learn to speak Sesotho. That way, they would know if the foremen were lying. Most importantly, they needed to hear when the workers were gossiping about them. Rafau ensured that the mine shop stewards got the message. The domestic workers, were hush-hush about the details of letters sent. They knew it was a matter of time before the change could come. They did not care much about what that change was, and if it would ever come. They were positive that something was going to be done to better their lives. They knew that better jobs were coming. They knew that better salaries were on their way. It was not their duty to think about how that was to unfold.

16. Same flock

Rafau had his roots deep in Lesotho, and he knew how to get through to his own people. He loved his language the same way they did. He never wrote to them in English. Even his fellow prisoners from Lesotho loved him for that, when he was still in prison. He addressed them with respect and in their own language. He knew the power of music. Sometimes, they would break into *dithoko* and *mangae*, until fellow prisoners came to gather around them with delight. “*He, kgubedu ya ntate, e kgunwana!*” Rafau broke into that song and fellow prisoners joined in. Even at that platform of instigating workers, it was in a song that workers found homage. They knew that their predecessors, during the hard days of apartheid in South Africa, used music to keep them going. The revolutionary songs by people of the world against their evil governments was the strongest weapon. A song filled up the mine shaft and sent thundering echoes to the office doors of the bosses. Warriors broke into a song when they were at battle. Bosses started panicking. *Call the police. Do not go outside the office. Press the alarm. Summon the armed response company!* Workers were disciplined. They were taught well. Rafau told them not to give the employer any excuse. Any excuse to fire them. Any excuse to call the police on them. Any excuse for police to shoot at them. They just kept singing. Even in the case of an illegal strike, singing was always legal.

17.Unison

The song had found synchrony, as they started their traditional dance, with mop sticks as their knobkerries. *Country men, hear me out. They took your land and called it South Africa. They took your land and wealth in Lesotho and gave it to the Chinese companies. The Chinese are now your new slave masters. You are to them, slaves for cheap labour. They give out their profits to appease the bigbelly fat cats, calling themselves politicians. You are now their new monkeys in their cages. Peanuts will be your reward. They take your water outside the country for profit. You will be thirsty, while your water is travelling outside your country, enriching the fat cats.* As Rafau delivered his talk, workers were getting angrier. They wanted to vent out their anger on their tormentors. *Violence is not the only way to deal with this, countrymen. Do not play in their hands. They want you to get angry and burn property. That way, they will have a reason to shoot you like dogs. Do not give them that satisfaction. Be smart.* Workers understood the message clearly. They stayed at home. They boycotted the Chinese shops. They did that without harming those who wanted to go to work and go shopping. Rafau talked vehemently against any form of sit-in to their work places. He knew how the employers were thinking. He knew that as soon as that was declared an unprotected strike, workers would either be arrested or shot at. He knew that other criminal elements would come into place, to loot the shops, and tarnish the image of the workers' revolution. A one day intensive tools-down campaign, was effective. It was not only those in hard physical labour sector who went on strike, but even those in critical information system, who were still underpaid. The already ailing Lesotho economy was severely crippled. Employers started begging workers to return to work. Their initial threat that they would be dismissed, did not work. Rafau, arranged with lawyers to assist the workers on *pro bono* basis. A referendum was thought of, an immediately started going around. Thousands of civil society members were univocal with the working class. Exploitation had to stop. They wanted regulation of shops given to the Chinese. They demanded that the shops and factories pay workers a reasonable amount per month, six thousand maloti. They further demanded that workers must have shares in each company trading on a bigger scale in Lesotho, such as big plants, and manufacturing companies. At that one, there was a resistance. Company owners felt that workers took it too far. Lawyers got into the fray, and pushed for the legislation to enforce that demand. That saw exodus of many Chinese companies out of Lesotho.

18. Power to the people

As the community got jubilant, the government stood in the way. They knew that if the businesses went out, the economy would collapse. People stood up. They felt that the government was simply protecting the pockets of politicians and their investments. It appeared that plenty of politicians had shares in those companies. Many of them were silent shareholders, and ensured that their cut went through to charity trusts. That way, they created a perfect decoy. As the money was cashed, they had to come to those charity organizations and collected. The money would be for paying salaries of the working staff. That was done through the ghost staff lists and identity numbers. *My brothers and sisters, we will not allow your money to be stolen. Millions of your pension funds are diverted to the coffers of the corrupt individuals. They have lent your money to generate interest without your knowledge. They give themselves fat performance bonuses at the end of the year. And who performs heavy duty here? You. All they ever perform, is miracles that continue to get your money disappear.* Rafau realized that he had reached the core of their understanding. On money, every language was the same. Any coded communication would easily be decoded, because workers knew that their primary existence in the books of their bosses, was to make money. *But, man, are you sure that this is no work, no pay?* One worker had to verify facts. They may have declared that they would engage in any strike, legal or not. But, when an individual started thinking about the after effects, he just needed to check if he still wanted to engage.

19. In the belly

The moment the siren sounds for the underground call, all dreams are shattered. You have to note that you may not come back alive. Miners said their last prayers on a daily basis, for the Lord to save their souls to come back safely. If they were not to make it, the Lord should keep their souls and forgive their sins. There were plenty of sins they were committing. Indulging in uncontrollable drinking, and when drunk, they would swear more like Rabshakeh in the Bible. *Thou shall not swear.* Sometimes they would get into a lot of fighting, and in the process, kill each other. *Thou shall not kill.*

In most cases each miner would have a horde of concubines. He would engage hook, line and sinker into adultery. *Thou shall not commit adultery.* That sin was done to perfection and added vigor. *What does a man have to do? You left your wife at home, a thousand kilometres away, somewhere in the rural areas. These women here in Welkom know how to bath, I tell you! A man does not have to ask twice, a woman has already said yes, and sealed the bloody proposals with a kiss. A kiss that will send an immediate message home. It was never any lousy baby kiss. It was a kiss that will get the man go weak on his knees.* Rafau was already whispering to some of those miners, through their *indunas*, that they would die paupers, unless they rose up and fight. That was not to be a revoltution or any form of taking arms against the mine bosses. It was about hitting them where it hurts. In the pockets. Not that it made any difference. Even if those miners would have taken a bag full of diamonds, the value would never come any closer to the billions of rands the owners made. Mobilization was intensified, but as quietly as possible. Miners knew that they had to survive. It was some risky business, but it was a worthy cause. The operation was clear, but seriously difficult to execute. Miners would have to start digging further than the parameters prescribed by their bosses. After digging, they would leave the unrefined material there, and close off the area with blocks of wood as a no-go area. As the one crew dug horizontally as prescribed by the mine bosses, the second crew dug further than limited zone, while the third crew had to dig vertically. That was the most risky part. As they kept digging, they kept installing metal pipes, which they hoped would become the pipe line to pull the rocks from. *It can't hold any more! Everybody, go back, go back, now!!!* It was a stampede trying to retreat to the prescribed zone of digging. The alarm sounded, and the rescue team was sent down. The report was simply that the rocks slipped and nobody was injured. Luckily for the miners. It was a close shave. Inspectors were already on Rafau's payroll. The opening paragraph and the last full stop on the report was not to be questioned further. A second plan was hatched to bring the material up, as an extra cargo.

20. Paradise jammed

One day one of the syndicate leaders, was having a good time with his girlfriend. He started telling her how rich he was and that very soon he would be moving to his new mansion. As more bottles of whiskey and wine were ordered, the tongue ran loose. The man instructed everybody in the nightclub to order anything they wanted. *It is all on me. On the house as they say.* He could hardly stand on his own and his girlfriend suggested that they left. They were pounced on, at the parking area, loaded into some old van that drove off to the outskirts. With the flickering torches in his face, the drunk guy was just confused. *Tell us where the gold is.* As the lady screamed, a drunk man was gradually sobering up. *Fear has a way of changing faces.* It was at that moment that a drunk man was aware that they were going to be killed. He feared what would happen to his girlfriend first, before she could be killed. The kidnappers were pure savages. Rape for them happened on the drop of a hat. Killing came naturally to them. He told them the truth. The following day the guy and his girlfriend were found dead by the river, with bullet wounds at the back of their heads. They were killed the execution style. When the police were running amock dealing with the murder of the two lovers, the other group, went out for a search in the forest. One of the policemen was the man in the night. He then gathered his corrupt friends, took out the police van and drove to the land of milk and honey. Upon arrival, they instructed the two guards to abandon their guns. It was an easy operation because the guards never suspected that anybody, except their bosses, knew about the place. They were caught off guard. The police van was spotted by the inspectors that were sent by Rafau to do random checkup. They drove into the forest, to allow the police to load few stones into the crates, which were loaded into the police van. By the time the inspectors assumed that the police van should have reached the crossroad, they started driving behind them. The police drove with so much joy, already counting the number of gold bricks they were each going to get. About ten kilometres into the main road from the mine shaft, the inspectors' car overtook the police van. Few kilometres ahead, the inspectors car was spotted parked next to the road, but too close into the lane. Few cars which also overtook the police van, started driving a bit slow to overtake the inspectors' car, carefully avoiding to hit the oncoming cars. The police were not planning to stop anywhere, until their private spot, where they would off load the cargo. Then again, they realized that it might look suspicious if the police van was to pass the car that was seemingly having trouble. Especially if the car was prohibiting a free flow of traffic. When the police van reduced the speed, one man started approaching the van as it came to a stop. At that time, the smoke was seen coming from the engine of the inspectors' car.

21. Head on condition

The man who was hurrying to the police van, was shouting, *Do you have a fire extinguisher, please. Fire extinguisher.* He was demonstrating with his hands. The policemen have never laid eyes on the fire extinguishers. The pre-trip inspections was for the beginners. They were taught that in college, but they soon got tired of the routine. *Fire extinguisher. Oh, yes. That thing. You remind me of the guy we were at the college with. He made the speech at the graduation ceremony and said Extinguished guests, instead of Distinguished guests..* To that, the policemen and the inspector burst into laughter. The other policeman, not wanting to be outdone in this comedy fest, interjected. *Wait, wait, hear this one. When I was still new in the force. We went to deal with the students riots at the university. You know, these students think they are clever. One of them asked for a lift back to the township at night. He did not say from the onset that he was a student. After we gave him the lift, I asked if he knew what the students were fighting for. He told me the students did not want the Vice-Chancellor. I asked him, what is the Vice-Chancellor? Apparently, he thought I was not clever enough to understand his explanation. He said, a Vice-Chancellor, is like...how can I put it, so you can understand....He is like the sergeant or a captain in the university. I was so angry, I stopped the van, and left his sorry behind there.* They again burst into laughter, ignoring the cars that were piling up behind them. While they were enjoying their jokes, the inspector pulled out a gun, two bullets to their heads, and policemen died smiling. The inspector took out the red cones and put them into the road, waving at the motorists to be a bit patient. They obliged. The man got back into the inspectors' car and they drove off, leaving the traffic jam behind them. It took some while until one of the motorists went out to check on the police van. He was angry that nothing was happening. Upon discovery that the policemen were shot dead, the motorist called the emergency services from his cellular phone. The gold rocks found in the police van, sealed the case. It was established and concluded that the police men were part of the syndicate working with illegal miners and thieves. Further investigation was not necessary. The embarrassing exhibit was in the van. The last time that evidence exhibit was seen, was when logged into the evidence room. No rock or the remains of soil particles were seen afterwards. *You see, that is what happened to people who want to double-cross me. Nobody betrays me and live to tell the tale.* Rafau barked the warning to the syndicate group. *From now onwards, you must know that you are all under surveillance.*

22. Mark up

All of you have an invisible tracker chip inside you. I know your every move. You cannot take the chip out. It got built-in to your skull bone system. The syndicate men were so frightened that they did not want to ask how that happened. *Could it be through the whiskey that we were once given in boxes? Could it be that it was inserted while I was busy with girls at the club?* To take the men out of their misery, Rafau assisted with an answer. *You will remember all the cellphones I bought for all of you. Do not look this scared, those cellphones are not tapped. Relax. But, seriously, those phones came with tiny tracker chips. As soon as you started using them and put them to your ears, the chips were pushed by the sensors and were inserted into your skulls. But, it was a painless experience. That is why none of you here realized that.* The fact that it was not a painful exercise, did not offer any comfort. They were so scared that they have been walking around with the tiny chip in their skulls. That was scary. *That is why it was easy for me to get hold of that guy who betrayed me and wanted to impress his girlfriend.* Rafau was lying. But it was a bitter-sweet lie. It was just by sheer coincidence that the man and his girlfriend were shot dead. The policeman knew that they would recognize him, and had to silence them. Another big lie was about the tiny chip inserted in those men's skulls. A very important lie to Rafau. He knew that he would be owning the souls of those men until they died.

23.Extracted

The material was to be secretly transported to a hidden refinery, where gold would be extracted and formed into bricks. The rest of the bulk would be for the masters. There would be rations shared among the role players who made things happen. The first was to the men at the helm who would sway some legislative decisions to the favor of their private businesses. The second share was to the big bosses in business, so that every company linked to the mines, get a proper upgrading. Few ounces here and there, would be to the street mafia, to keep those dissenting voices in check. Or in eternal silence. Syndicate leaders learnt the routine very well. They also checked the security measures and operations very well. After the rocks were lifted from the belly of the earth to the refinery, the two trucks were ambushed at the quiet crossroad between the farms leading to the refinery. The two trucks that were used to block the road, were used to load the gold chunks, and disappeared into the deep forests of the farm areas. Few hours later, the police were all over the area, with helicopters, vans, speed cars and all. They found the trucks abandoned next to the road. All two of them. Empty. The search was extended further, with the hope that whoever carried the load would not be too far. It was exhausting just to think about this operation. *Why would the two trucks from the mine shaft, be interjected, but not hijacked?* The hijackers were wise. They knew that the trucks had trackers. If they took them, they would easily be spotted. Offloading the cargo and loading into the other two trucks, was made easy, with the scooping cranes that were attached to the truck. After offloading the cargo, they drove their own trucks back to the crossroad. That way, the police would not look too far away from where the trucks were found. The offloaded cargo was thrown back into the belly that have been carved into a huge cave, going down five hundred meters. They would then surface them in small packages as the place was also a refinery. The gold would leave the hiding place as the ready product for the market. Rafau smiled at the wisdom of his team working in the goldfields, in South Africa. Rafau made sure that miners were not privy to the information about the route where the gold ended up. They were just informed that for their hard work, they would be handsomely rewarded. The promise was fulfilled. They never asked too many questions. Only the core team ensuring that the gold get to be surfaced and stolen, knew the plan. They were hardened men who could be trusted. Any slightest mistake would lead to miners shooting their mouths off about the operations, at the taverns. Rafau could not afford that kind of a risk. While the corrupt leaders were milking the diamonds mines dry in Lesotho, Rafau organized a hit that would last him a lifetime. The same money would come to bribe the same corrupt leaders.

24. Eating

It had become fashionable than critical to see the high speeding cars on blue lights. When that happens, all motorists are expected to stay clear of the road, to allow these sputniks to pass. Today is no different. The convoy of the Lesotho government luxury fleet was on route to South Africa. The first intention of the official trip was to bring the honourable Prime Minister to the gym in South Africa, with a convoy of three luxurious Mercedes Benz sedans. The second reason was that there was to be a shopping spree. The third reason and many others were extremely confidential, because that involved the talks between the political heads. Rafau knew of all those arrangements and instead of having a car following all the movements of the Prime Minister, he was on another level. Working with one of the VIP protection men, a tracker was placed on the main Prime Minister's vehicle. They even connected it to the audio visual feed, which was stretched to a thousand kilometer radius. But, the total radius between Lesotho and South Africa, including all the internal travels, went to a total of 700 kilometres, sparing the additional 300 km. Rafau kept all these records, from day one until he had collected enough evidence. That included the tender contract for water leaving Lesotho to South Africa, with higher rates, to allow certain additional percentage to go into the personal account created for "unforeseen incidental costs".

25. It is going down

Rafau instructed his gang leaders. *Shoot to kill if you have to.* Minutes after his men drove into the basement parking, armed response cars arrived. Alarms deafening. Flashing lights. Just to add to the confusion of criminals and inflicting fear, the response squad started firing warning shots. Shoppers started taking cover. Others were screaming as they ran around and bumping into another. The parking security quickly advised and led the shoppers back into the shopping mall. Others had already jumped into their cars. With rifles pointed at all the windows of the criminals' cars, they slowly stepped out, hands on their heads. One decided to take a chance, and before he could point a pistol, a bullet was drilled through his skull. Brain splashed on the broken windows. Silence. *Guns must be dropped. And, you cannot point a gun if you are not going to pull the trigger.* The police academy lesson number one, made ringing tones in some of the policemen's heads. There was no time to play a hero. *Drop the fucken guns, or I blow his fucken head off!* A hardened criminal was unassuming. The police knew that it was either the man meant it or was just calling a bluff. *Drop your gun, you are surrounded! Hold your fire, hold your fire!* The chorus kept on, high pitched. *Do as I say or I will splash his little brain all over this parking lot!* When the police realized that the criminal had nothing to lose in blowing up the civilian, they obliged and dropped their guns.

26. Bordering bonds

Detective Selala Nteterwane had such an amazing energy and zest to pounce upon criminals at any given time. However, there were limitations. Shortage of vehicles. Low morale within the police force who were not paid for overtime. In most cases he would fly solo. He would go and not bother himself about any back up. A deadly move. He had no choice. It was his call. He knew that somewhere out there, criminals were plotting his downfall. He knew that, somewhere out there, there was a bullet with his name on it. In front of the fleeing, stolen vehicle, was the heavy duty truck. Behind the fleeing car was the van with lights and hazards lights, with neon boards- HEAVY DUTY. Once the truck's metal ramp was lowered, the stolen car simply drove in and was locked in. Police vans and flying squad vehicles with blue lights, overtook the truck up to the border gate. A road block had been assembled. Every car was searched. One motorist with a car not roadworthy, decided to hit a u-turn. In no time, the police car was behind him. Siren. Lights flashing. *What do you think you are doing? Are you running away?* A frightened motorist had to think very fast. *No, Sir. I forgot an important file in my office. Your office? Ok, let's see. What is the physical address to your office? Give me the office telephone number so I can call your secretary.* A motorist realized that he was going nowhere. *I am sorry, Sir. Actually I was not rushing back to my office. -So, you lie to the officer of the law? -No, Sir. We can fix this. Here is my ID book.* A motorist slipped banknotes inside the ID book. The police officer came closer to the window. *Are you trying to bribe me? Do you know that it is a serious criminal offence to bribe an officer of the law? Step out of the car, Sir. A motorist handcuffed.* The stolen car pursued was the black Mercedes Benz. As the vehicle approached the border gate, other flying squad vehicles were closing in from behind. The truck driver was scared. He remembered the golden rule from Rafau. *Whatever you do, do not panic. Remain calm.* That was exactly what the truck driver had to do. But, then, how do you stay calm when heavily armed men are at your window? The sniffing dogs were already at their paces. If it was the stolen car that was been pursued, why the sniffing dogs? Could it be that they knew the smell of the leather seats of the German sedan? That was not the question bothering men and women of law. All they wanted, was to apprehend all sinners. Be it car thieves, or drug traffickers, or those without proper documentation; from identity documents, to passports or work permits. They just wanted to apprehend criminals. *Step outside the truck, please.* The truck driver almost jumped out of his seat. His thoughts were all over the place. He did not see this young, heap of a muscle police man knocking at his window. The driver was about to open the window, stopped, and unlocked the door. That was enough for a sharp mind of a policeman.

27. Ignite

Step out of the truck. If you open the window, instead, and as an afterthought, you open the door, you are displaying a suspicious behavior. *Are you carrying any passengers, Sir?* -No, *Sir, I am from Bloemfontein, delivering goods to Teyateyaneng, and...* -That is not what was asked. *Are you carrying any passengers, Sir?* The truck driver got jumpy and nervous. *Where there is smoke, there is fire.* He knew something. The policeman just had to ask those strategic, psychometric questions, to probe that sparking suspicion. *Do you have a drivers permit, Sir?* Normally the officer would simply ask the driver to produce the driver's license or permit, without asking questions. Questions are such a bore. Some are tormenting. Some of the answers are incriminating. The truck driver simply produced the permit that the officer started checking thoroughly. Few glances at the truck driver to verify the validity of the photograph. He was scared. The guys in the stolen car at the back must calm down. Any noise, would make hell break lose. Just at that moment, the alarm went off. It was that of the Mercedes Benz. Out of being scared to the wits, the truck driver opened the door, as the policeman's hand reached for the gun. That is how they were trained. *The hand does not ask the brain if it is alright to reach for the gun.* It is an instinctive move. The truck driver looked underneath the dashboard. He did not know what the hell he was looking for. It was enough to press the immobilizer button. The alarm stopped. The truck driver's ears closed off. Cold sweat started taking a slow journey down his spine. *Inspector, come see this.* One of the truck's number plates on the horse, did not match those of the trailer. After looking straight into the eyes of this scared truck driver, for a while, the policeman walked away to the other suspicious truck's horse and trailer, releasing the scared truck driver. The truck driver breathed a sigh of relief. His shaking hands struggled to put the key into the ignition hole. After few attempts, followed by a several, *Damn it, man!* The truck started. He drove slowly forward, for the last check up by the border police. He simply produced his driver license foiled inside the driver's permit documents. Inside the fold, new smiling bank notes did the work. After a moment of mock check up of documents, the truck driver was given a go head. Before he could do that. A young border policeman, asked the driver to open the back of the truck. The young energetic border policemen were troublesome. As the truck driver opened the back of the truck, slowly, the young Energy stepped in. Followed immediately by the 'bribee'. Guys in the black German sedan cocked their rifles.

28. Boom swinger

In Ditjhetjheng, Lesotho, shortly after the final results were announced, Tjhutjha, of Direthe Party, lodged a complaint. He cried foulplay. *Votes have been riddled. We cannot and will not accept the results. We know that there has been an underhand on this. We demand the results to be null and void. We want a fresh election.* Mpaputla did not bite. He won. His party, Majakane Party had won fair and square. *Why don't they call for a recount? Why fresh voting? Tjhutjha is just a sore loser.* That was how the battle got out of hands. It was just after eight o'clock in the evening. Maseru was quite, until the first blast that shook the whole city. The echoing sound was heard up to the mountains. Suddenly everything went dark. The power station was blown. The impact of the blow, was clearly the result of some explosive device. Until it was verified by the bomb squad, all the residents could do was to speculate. Suddenly the Majakane Party office was in flame. The Independent Electoral Committee's office was also ablaze. As those buildings were not at the same place, something was fishy. It was already speculated that it was the work of political sabotage. As to why the Direthe Party's offices were not burnt, nobody knew. Tjhutjha did not even care. On the ground the word was out that the Direthe Party was behind the arson. Gunshots were heard. Cars were speeding, and police and ambulance sirens were deafening. While the fire fighters were busy putting out the fire, a civic war was looming. It was reported that two men were killed. Five injured were in hospital. Two dead men were reported to have been the Direthe's main arsonists. They were cornered and shot at. Before they were killed, it was reported that they fired back at the Majakane's supporters, wounding five men. All the witnesses did not come forward when the police investigations were continuing. They all feared for their lives. There was a stand-off between the Direthe Party and Majakane Party members and supporters. All the police departments were on a high alert. An immediate dispatch of public violence squad, a bomb squad and intelligence unit, was authorized. A state of emergency was declared by the Prime Minister in Lesotho. An immediate arrangement was made for the Prime Minister to go live on TV. *Dear citizens, I call for your calm. I urge you to exercise restraint. No amount of hate or political disagreement, is bigger than the love for each other.* The Prime Minister's words were clear. There was no prize. There was no winner. The loser was a human spirit. If political parties continued to fight each other, they were just going to be the losers in that equation. *This Prime Minister must be high on something. How does he speak about love for each other, when the only love he has is for the money? -Shhhh, let us listen.* Other people did not want to be accused of plotting to overthrow the government,. They were very careful not to engage in that gossip. Walls had ears everywhere. Spies were planted everywhere.

29. Come ye sinners

At the corner of the main street, a man with a Bible was continuing his campaign to lure the community to joining his church. *Last days are here. You will see that by false prophets.*

Leaders shall be powerhungry. The poor shall be poorer. Countries that have been the food basket of Africa, shall perish under the greedy leaders. The Bible Man, having realized that he was inclined more to politics, he had to change to the religious mode. *When the last days are nearing, people will deny the Lord. People will be stingy and not pay their titing.* At that very moment, people who gathered to listen to the Bible Man, started dispersing. They were convinced that the Bible Man was the agent of greedy pastors.

30. Squealing

Mpapatla found an opportunity to play victim. *This is an indication that we are up against power-hungry people who just want to win at all costs.* Mpapatla started lamenting. He sent a lot of media releases to newspapers. The more he moaned, the more convincing he got. The country was beginning to rally behind Majakane Party. *Everybody loves a victim. It is good to pledge solidarity with those who are persecuted and hard done.* Everybody started hating the Direthe Party. The media started fuelling the crisis. They started reporting that Direthe Party had a motive. To unseat the party that deserves victory, Majakane Party. *For those who still have doubts that Direthe Party was genuine, see for yourselves. I have been telling you that only one party is loyal. Only one party cares about people. Only one party respects the wishes of the voters. That party is Majakane Party. We will therefore, not retaliate.* Mpapatla had to say no more. The country was behind him. It was an uphill battle for Direthe Party. Tjhutjha tried in vain to quell the fires. The more he tried to explain and declare their innocence, the more guiltier their party became. Denial. Lies. Betrayal. That was how the people started seeing the Direthe Party. They felt more insulted that Tjhutjha would still want to explain the unexplainable. They felt that they were disrespected. They felt that their votes were betrayed. *Down with Direthe Party, Down! Direthe Party must fall!* Those became the most famous lines. Many people felt that they needed to protect Majakane Party. They felt that Mpapatla was a hero, whom enemies tried to deter from a good course. A good course was to develop the communities' lives. *Ten civilians have been shot! Come out, let us go and take the Direthe Party down!* One of the leading voices, convinced people to take arms against the Direthe Party. A civil war was looming. Rafau remained calm. He understood how politics go. He knew how the politicians were thinking. Which was not much, coming to think about it. *Fellow countrymen, politicians are just power-hungry. The same way they apply divide and rule, it should be the same way we deal with them.* Rafau's men would be lying if they could say they heard what he was saying. They just had to agree. They just had to nod. It was a sign of respect. A sign of obedience. Of towing the line. Of abiding by the protocol.

31. And... box!

How they got to that deserted place, they did not know. They both knew that it was the place where many human skulls were found, many years ago. They knew very well that the place was cursed. *Today, we bring an end to this.* The two men could have talked back. They were looking into the barrel of a gun. They did not think Rafau had it in him to kill someone, until he cocked the gun. *Listen here you old wood. I am making rules here, you follow. I tell you when to blink. -But, what is our sin?* Tjhutjha found his voice. He felt that if he was to be killed, at least he should know what he did. *Your sin? Listen here. Your sins are countless. Let's see, you lied to people to vote for you. You rigged the votes. You got away with murder. You stuffed your pockets with the public money, while people were starving to death. Now you want to go back to power when you have lost?* Tjhutjha could have responded. His brain just went blank. *As for you, Mpaputla, your party used ghost voters to increase your numbers. You paid bribes to the electoral committee members. We know all of them who are in your pocket. Both of you are disgusting. What ticks me off the most, is that ordinary people are suffering for your sins. Your greed. Your stupidity. Untie their hands!* Rafau shouted as he put the gun down. He pulled the two chairs where the two men had been tied on. He put them closer together, that they could feel their breathe on each other's face. *Box! Box? Yes, bloody box.* The two men started throwing blows at each other. Each of them understood that the one who won would be left to live. The one defeated would be shot dead. *You stupid old fools, you just proved how worthless you are. Instead of making peace, you fight to survive. You take along innocent people into your senseless bickering.* Mpaputla and Tjhutjha were never seen again.

PART 2

32. Pass begin

Selala took off to Rafau's house. He opened the door that had already gathered dust. The police seclusion tape was still visible around the crime scene. Police vans had to make regular patrols to keep an eye. Selala was happy and convinced that the crime scene was still not contaminated. He counted footsteps from the bedroom door to the headboard. He came to five steps, which he wrote slowly on his black notebook. He opened his briefcase to pull out the ballistic report, and found that the two shots to the bodies were at a close range. The first thought was, that they have been shot at that closer range. Was there no possible attempt by the mayor to try and jump on to the gunman at that range? Could it be that the mayor killed Dipolelo and then himself? If that was the case, why didn't the mayor shoot Rafau as well, before turning the gun on himself? The puzzle's scope was widening. Selala, instead of being worried, became content at the emergence of those flashes. He found a small book, that looked like it was Rafau's notebook. The first pages seemed insignificant, as it was sketches of puzzles. Just on the last page, Selala saw the words, Bed/Bad, scribbled with a question mark. It did not say much, but it was important. The fact that it was written separate from other notes, told Selala that the words could be important. He went back few steps, and took few snapshot from the bedroom door to the bed. Selala, came to the theory that Rafau shot both his wife and the mayor in cold blood. He possibly caught them in the act and killed them out of fury. Selala went back to Rafau's statement. It stated that when Rafau got in the house, the two were already dead. He was as shocked as any man could be. *How do you react when you get into your house and find your wife naked in bed with another man?* The police could not find Rafau's fingerprints on the gun that was found at the crime scene. Only those of the mayor, Letjhoba. Was it that he shot his wife, and then shot Letjhoba? Could it be that Letjhoba shot his wife and shot himself? The impact of both shots as evidenced by the ballistic department were very close. Could it be that Rafau came that close to both victims, and shot them both at the closets range, wiped his own fingerprints and put the gun in the hand of Letjhoba? Could it be that Rafau walked in on them and forced Letjhoba to shoot his wife and himself? That was sounding a bit weird and stupid. If Letjhoba had a gun, he should have shot Rafau first, and probably his wife and himself, if he realized it was the only escape from prison. The gun used was not Rafau's. Could it be that he held them up and went for the mayor's gun, and used it instead? Selala wanted to find out what kind of a hold the mayor could have had on Dipolelo. There was bound to be a reason, for a faithful wife like Dipolelo, to plunge herself into a sinful act with a sinner of note, such as Letjhoba Bolokwe.

33. Stood up mind

All those questions were just making Selala dizzy. What was the fact, was that Rafau was arrested, because the murder was committed in his house. Guilty by association with crime scene. There was no conclusive evidence that he shot both victims. His claim of innocence that, police walked in while he was standing there shocked, made him spend little time in jail. The prosecution argued that the chances were slim that he walked in and found both victims dead. What was making a lot of sense to Selala, was that Rafau may have shot them, and destroyed the evidence. Fingerprints. It was clear to Selala that the prosecution may have fumbled the case.

34. In my bones

It was five years before Dipolelo and Rafau got married. At some farewell party organized for the new interns, Letjhoba was eyeing Dipolelo, who was never interested. After some drinking spree and some spiking of the drinks, Dipolelo was in an awkward position with the boss, who was a married man. It was when the evil Letjhoba found all the time in the world to record the whole scene on his phone. He had been keeping the tape all those years. Letjhoba tried his best to get Dipolelo, who simply shunned him. He had been patient. He vowed not to give up. Even when Dipolelo was married to Rafau, years, after the incident, Letjhoba still nagged her. The final blow was when Letjhoba showed her the tape, which she never knew existed. It broke her. In protection of her marriage, she acceded to Letjhoba's demonic demands. Letjhoba had been getting his way all that time, always threatening to show Rafau the tape. Dipolelo was initially shocked for words. She then begged Letjhoba not to tell Rafau about that. Not for her sake, but for Rafau's. Even at the most painful chapter of her life, she still put the joy of Rafau first. Letjhoba believed that he had Dipolelo where he wanted. It was in the cage of hell from which Dipolelo would not escape. *You see, mmarona, I own you.* Letjhoba would be smiling when he saw how frightened Dipolelo was. *Please, just leave me alone. You got what you wanted, please let me live my life in peace.* All of that fell on deaf ears. Letjhoba had been demanding that they meet at some hotels outside Dikgohlong. She would be back at home before Rafau could knock off from work. She found the strength to black out every experience with Letjhoba from her mind. For her, it was simply a physical transaction which she never enjoyed. Dipolelo found the fighting spirit in her. She knew that Letjhoba would fall into a deep sleep after satisfying himself. She started taking photos, and saved them in her phone. Letjhoba never bothered himself about Dipolelo's phone. She was never on her phone all the time. Besides, they never actually had any quality time, that could lead to Dipolelo staring at her phone, probably smiling at the naughty pictures. It was a serious transaction, which whenever it ended, Letjhoba would leave her to catch a taxi back. He never wanted to be seen with Dipolelo. During the sad day when Rafau walked on them, she probably gained courage to tell Rafau everything. It probably only dawned to her that she was never at fault. It was never her fault that, the pig forced himself on her. It was way before she got married to Rafau. It was during her moment of weakness when she was drunk. She was not even aware that her drinks were spiked. All that never mattered. She suffered enough. She never found an opportunity to tell her husband. Rafau never got to know that painful chapter. She suffered in silence. She was finally silenced through the barrel of a gun.

35. Cracked

Selala started scribbling the words, bed /bad, many times in his investigation notebook. He then went to his computer and typed bed/bad in the google, and spend minutes reading different meanings of bed/bad and its usage in various contexts. He immediately rose and headed again to Rafau's house. That time the house was under a close watch of the hired security. He started in the lounge as he did the first time. There was nothing much he could find or connect the word bad/bed with. When he got into their bedroom, he starred for few minutes at the bed. Then, something unlocked his brain. He lifted the mattress and looked at what was underneath. Under the bed of a bachelor, Selala knew that he would have seen some porn magazines. Not too many, probably just for the bachelor to get by. Under the bed of old people, Selala knew he would probably find some hidden money. Selala could not believe his eyes. He found the cellular phone. It was unclear as to who the phone belonged to. He took it to his office. The IT guys charged it, and bypassed the password. He then took it and privately viewed the contents thereof from his computer. He closed the door, lest he stumbled across some unsavory images. He went to the unnamed folder, and in there, were just few photos. Those were photos of Letjhoba lying naked in bed. The surrounding indicated that the photos were taken inside the hotel room. To make things clearer, the name of the hotel was written on the little notepad. The notepad seemed to have been planted, to appear in the picture. How else would one associate a naked body with the notepad? Could it be that the man was taking notes on how to look stupid when naked and asleep? Selala realized that the phone belonged to Dipolelo. He was getting somewhere. It immediately dawned to him that Dipolelo may have been planning to expose Letjhoba. How could Dipolelo obtain such pictures. It was clear that Dipolelo could have been with Letjhoba. Selala's first theory was that Letjhoba may have killed Dipolelo when she threatened to blackmail him, or probably tell her husband about the affair. Selala did not rule out his hunch, more technically supported hunch that Rafau may have shot the two lovers. Selala then went to the evidence room to obtain Letjhoba's items. The phone and laptop could not be found. Only the wallet with some cards. Selala was not going to waste his time asking himself why the laptop was not among the items in Rafau's bedroom. Selala made few calls but came to the realization that Letjhoba's laptop and a phone could not be found. That was strange. With those two vital items missing, it was difficult to connect the dots.

36.Dodgy doggy

Selala knew at that time that the laptop and a phone may have been taken by Rafau. Either he hid them in the house before the police came. It could be that he sent someone to the house to take those away, so that he could access their contents while in prison or after his sentence.

The first conclusion Selala reached was that Dipolelo was not an adulterous woman. She must have been forced by Letjhoba. It was clear to him that Letjhoba had a hold on Dipolelo. Without Letjhoba's phone, Selala could not do much. Selala asked the IT guys to further scan the contents of Dipolelo's phone. They found another folder with a protected pin. They bypassed it and sent the phone back to Selala. He took the phone and went to his car. He realized that there was only one file, a video clip. It showed Dipolelo underneath the guy, trying to push him, but not succeeding. Selala started sweating. Not because of the excitement from what he was watching. It would be a horrible disrespect to the deceased. He was sweating out of anger. Selala hated any man who would force himself on a woman. Selala did not waste time in trying to figure out who the rapist was. He would deal with him later. The IT guys would work out an identikit later. He looked up the properties of the video clip and realized that it may have been taken a long time before Dipolelo and Rafau got married. After running few matches with the still image of the rapist in the video clip, Selala found a name, and identity number, and address, and further information that located the rapist within the friend cycle of Letjhoba. Selala was proud of himself. He was done closing all gaps proving that Letjhoba was blackmailing Dipolelo.

37. At crossroads

Upon arrival at the scene, Detective Selala Nteterwane jumped like a bomb-sniffing dog, already looking for clues. While he started taking finger prints, on the steering, he saw another set of full ten fingers' prints on the dashboard and the window screen. *What the hell!* He was wondering what kind of a creature was in that car. Could it be that this alien had many pairs of hands? The first pair on the steering wheel, the second pair on the dashboard and the third on the windscreen? Classified as Exhibit A, was the stain on the passenger seat. The stolen car was chased by police, and being late to be in the same synchrony with the rest, the driver, had to abandon it and ran away. The accompanying passenger has also been let out, and immediately disappeared in the bushes, and ran up to the township. The car had been parking suspiciously out there in the veld. It was not unusual for people to park their cars out there. It was a way of relaxing. Coming to closer contact with nature. Feeling the peaceful breeze. Away from the noise and pollution in the township. What was problematic was the timing of parking. It was a bit long. While long is relative, but the police spotted that the car parked there, was actually a Maserati. At a distance, the driver of the stolen Maserati, could spot a roadblock. Flashing blue lights could never be confused for a merry-go-round swings, or Boswell's circus. It was the sign for the real deal. He made a swift u-turn and headed for the road taking a fork to the left, into the gravel road. Seeing that he was already pursued, he jumped out of the car that just came to a screeching halt in the gravel road, and jumped into the field, but taking an opposite direction. *Police are very good when they choose to be.* They knew that the driver of the stolen car was going to meet the cul-de-sac about twenty kilometres into that road. For that, they smiled a bit, at a possible reality that they were going to apprehend the hijacker. Little did they know that they were going the opposite direction of the thief fleeing on foot. By the time they came to the abandoned vehicle, the thief was already on the main road, hitchhiking and got a lift from the car that was going the opposite direction from the roadblock.

38.Bow

At that moment, Selala was trying to figure out how that strange animal could spread its hands while driving. When he spotted the stain on the passenger seat, something unlocked his crazy mind. He really was off the tangent. There he was, thinking of a six-armed creature, when that was really simple to figure out. First, he collected what was still moist of the stain, and packed inside a sealed plastic bag. That was to be the first thing that should get to their laboratory for forensic check-up. He smiled at his second theory. There must have been a passenger here. The Detective in him wanted to sniff at the stain, to figure out what it was. He immediately remembered what he always advised his colleagues. *Do not smell, touch or taste the evidence. You will die!* He went to the passenger side to try and demonstrate his theory. Selala Nteterwane was very good. The passenger was holding on to the dashboard, and on the windscreen, but, obviously not at the same time. The passenger seat took a slight slide back. *What a dirty scoundrel!* Selala Nteterwane cracked the puzzle open. If the passenger had hands on the dashboard, it could be when the car was on a sudden brake, or that the passenger was touching the dash board and the windscreen when something was happening. Behind. Therefore, the driver was having sex with the passenger. After the forensic analysis on the semen sample on the passenger seat, Selala Nteterwane had his man. The man was sure going to sing. There was a rule of law, but Selala Nteterwane was going to bend the rule just a little bit. Just a little bit to suck the truth out of the hitman. It was through that man that Selala Nteterwane would get to Rafau.

39. Boiling streams

Detective Selala Nteterwane, now armed with all the evidence he needed, set out to cross the border to Lesotho. He knew that going there as a detective, would be dangerous. He knew that he would be smelled from far away that he was a cop. He therefore had to go undercover. Unauthorised. After crossing the border, few kilometres heading to Maseru, Selala stopped by the wayside, when he saw a herd man. Whether this was to be a waste of his time or not, but it could be a positive lead. He knew where Rafau should be, but, making small talk with ordinary people may be useful. These are the people who know deep-seated secrets. It could be that by the time he was driving to Maseru, Rafau may have gotten a tipoff. As Mosotho, Nteterwane, did not have a problem. He spoke the language fluently and efficiently. He knew the tastes and demands, norms and values of Basotho, including their culture and rituals. Rafau had a slipup. The evidence Selala Nteterwane collected from his reckless driver, was enough to lock Rafau away, again. This time for far more deeper charges than his murder charge. Nteterwane was willing to prove that Rafau was not a rehabilitated individual. Upon his release from prison, he got involved in cash heists, robberies, arson, murder, inciting violence, inter-government espionage, treason and all. There was no way Rafau was escaping. His documents were appropriate, the address he was visiting and all other conditions were clear and above board. He was so confident and to break the ice, he felt he needed to greet a lot of people at the border gate, made a small talk, and laughed out loud, just for the control. He realized that if he got too serious, the detective in him would rise. He would jump to conclusions of investigating even if someone was to sneeze into his direction. *What, what? Is it because I am cop? You hate men of the law that you have to sneeze into my face?* He would hear a little voice in him almost breaking free. He just needed to drop the detective paranoia nonsense. *'Hela wa moreneng! Kgidi, ke tlala feela ke a bona. Ntja di nyeka malwala'*. He broke into that phrase with a big smile and a thunderous voice. People looked up and marvel at his wonderful accent and the rich language. It was not much of a problem that his accent was not as deep and slow as that of the Lesotho citizens. He actually did not even want to fake it. He had borrowed his friend's car, with the Lesotho registration number. That way, he did not want to leave a room for many questions. More than a questions, it was going to be clear that he was a complete Mosotho stranger from *'ka Kopanong'* as South Africa would be called. *'Hela, weso, wa fudisetsa dikgomo ka tseleng tje, molato?'* Rafau asked, with a lowdown voice and a wry smile. He felt content that he was speaking to the herdman in a language closer to his heart. Normally, the response would be equally warm.

40. Inside

Basotho are known to be peaceful people. In their greetings, peace is the main thing. When they say '*Dumela and Kgotsol!*', it means you must agree and believe (*dumela*) that peace (*kgotsol*) is with us. That was the legacy that Moshoeshe left for them. Rafau, therefore, never doubted that the response would be homely, but he was surprised, '*Jwale o ne o re jwang bo, bo ka thoko ho tsela bo jewe ke mmao?*' The herdman answered without even looking.

There was no telling what the herdman was carrying under that blanket. To Selala Nteterwane, it was clear as day, that the man was fearless. Selala was a Mosotho. But, to the herdman, he was a foreigner, as sold by his accent. It was clear that Selala was not a Lesotho citizen. Being a detective, he knew that further engagement with that man, would blow up his cover. The best move was to drive away.

41. On the house

Upon arrival in Maseru, Selala was to abandon the car at the garage, and walk for about a kilometer, to Rafau's hiding place. It was a good thing that the search at the border gate was just ceremonial. If it was thorough, his weapons would have been detected. He opened the bonnet and in a cloth attached safely under the battery bracket base, he took out two pistols and a box of ammunition. Selala was aware of the ammunition limit at his disposal. He just had to shoot accurately. Any miss would mean waste of bullets. He did not have a backup. He could have taken few marksmen along. He just felt that it was too risky. If something were to happen, it is better if only one man perishes, than the whole army destroyed. Besides, his mission was not authorized. The house on the outskirts was awfully quiet. Selala could not even spot the guards. It could be that the hiding place had been abandoned. Normally when such a syndicate evacuated the hiding place, it had to be destroyed. Mostly it would be burnt down, to destroy any evidence that may connect them to the place. It was a good thing that he got to the place when it was dark. That way, he made his way from behind the building, behind many trees and shrubs. Having to crawl most of the distance, did not bother Selala. He was not worried about the spiders or anything that could harm him. He felt good. Much motivated and adventurous. The experience triggered his days in combat training. He just felt at that moment, that he was going to save the world. For some strange reason, the door was left ajar. From a distance, he could see a man behind the trees, urinating. It seemed he was the only one on guard. His AK47 was hanging bravely on his back. Selala quietly crawled inside and picked a dark spot, where he could not be seen but to see every movement in the house. Moments later, our man got inside the house and shut the door behind him. He stood for a while in the middle of the living room. He had a feeling that there was someone in the house. Selala, could understand that the man's seventh sense is powerful. It was as though he picked the negative or foreign energy. He took few steps slowly to where Selala was hiding. Selala felt like this man could see him. The guard slowly took out his AK47, cocked it, and aimed at the direction of Selala's hiding spot.

42. The leopard spot

Selala wanted to reach for his gun, but stopped. He should not move. He might just make some noise that would be picked up by this blood thirsty guard. Selala stopped breathing. He wanted to close his eyes. He felt as though his eyes were emitting some sort of light that the guard would see. The guard kept coming until he was so close that Selala felt he would feel his breath. Selala was hiding behind the old, almost broken air conditioner. The guard suddenly removed the dirty table cloth that was on top of the air conditioner, but could not see anything because it was too dark in the conditioner. At that moment, Selala swiftly went for his gun. His elbow hit the corner of the air conditioner, and broken pieces of asbestos, were heard sliding down the pipe. Bloody rats. The guard spat on the air conditioner. He leaned over it trying to close the curtains. At that moment Selala rose with power, hitting the guard in the diaphragm, sending him to fall by the head on the next sofa. Before the guard could aim his gun, Selala had drilled three bullets in his potbelly body. One between his eyes, one in the chest and the last one down his groin. The guard's lifeless body hanged on the sofa, his arms overstretched. The car's lights swept across the closed curtains from outside, and came to a halt, just closer to the door, just below the living room's window. Selala, quickly pulled off the heavy body behind the sofa. The body was too heavy to have covered any distance beyond the long sofa at the corner of the living room. He then jumped to hide behind the long curtain almost getting to the kitchen. After two knocks and no answer, the door was unlocked from outside. *Mokoro! He, monna Mokoro, where are you?* Rafau did not want to call his workers more than once. He knew that something was wrong. His rifle was already cocked as he pointed to his men to take their positions.

43. Bloody blanks

His men preceded him. Instead of stepping inside the house, Rafau took hiding in the corner next to the door, and took a good view into the house as his men entered. Just when all of the men were inside, or so thought Selala, he dripped the main switch. None of the men suspected that Selala could be behind the curtain. He fired three bullets in the direction of the door and two men dropped dead. Rafau's men started shooting aimlessly. Selala, took more time to read the positioning and the spatial outlook of the house. Rafau realized that they walked into the trap. He also realized that some of his men were still at the other hideout house from that one. He could not hasten to call for a backup. He first had to find out what they were up against. He found it worthless to bring all his men to perish at one war zone. Selala did not fire any warning shot. The law dictated and demanded that of him. But he ignored that. It was Rafau he was after. All other men would just be casualties of war. The remaining men retreated, under heavy fire. They fired back, but it seemed they were up against the entire army. Rafau suspected that Selala should have a good back up. It could be the Lesotho police force or even the hit squad from South Africa. From Dikgohlong, he could only get two or four men. The rest of men would be sent from the National Commissioner. He knew that the police force would have dispatched a large number of men to accompany Selala. Rafau did not care to justify any of his theories. He suddenly had war in his hands. Waste the house! Rafau shouted, knowing that his foes were not going to escape his wrath. The first hand grenade was thrown, and the deafening sound of the blast swallowed any slightest sound of gunfire. The whole lounge was in a ball of fire, with the walls down and the roof sunk in. The next was to hit the kitchen. Before the instruction was given, two grenades were thrown into the kitchen window. The impact of the blast rattled the window frames and the car parked outside was blown up. Two men died instantly. In that cloud of smoke, Rafau looked to see if there were any movement from the wreck. Everything seemed lifeless. All dead. *Let's go guys. Boss, I saw something moving into the trees. Get him.* Whatever it was that moved, Rafau wanted it found.

44. Dead right

Heavily bleeding, Selala Nteterwane, kept running. Behind him, a trail of blood was an easy lead for his hunters. He ran towards the thick shrubs. Torches kept flickering. Footsteps were heard closing in. Loss of blood was weakening Selala. Quietly, and with such difficulty, he tore his shirt. He tied a cloth tightly around his thigh. He felt lucky that he sustained injuries only on his left thigh, and just above the right hip, not too close to the kidneys. He was fortunate that he wore a bulletproof vest. Most of the bullets went into the vest. The impact thereof, sent him tumbling down. Just as they thought they killed him, he rolled for the better part of the distance. By the time they came to inspect their dead prey, he already rolled few hundred of metres from the spot. The bullet that hit him above the hip, passed through and tore his skin lightly. Should it had been a deep wound, or the bullet went through his body, it would have killed him. He was relieved that there were no dogs in pursuit. Anyway, those are thugs, not the police force. Realizing that they could be chasing him the whole, night, a command was given by Rafau. Fire! Rifles were in chorus. Bullets hails tore tree branches and grazed the shrubs. Selala, found a thick, burnt tree stem through the thick shrubs. Rafau's task force was convinced that Selala was dead. He could not have survived that hail of bullets. There was no need to go check for the body. They wanted the dead body to rot there. Rafau was not to take things that lightly. *Retreat! We will look for the body tomorrow.* The command was clear. They were actually happy that he called the search seizure. Going deep into the forest, they could end up lost or ambushed by the same thugs, who were hiding in the same mountains. Those would be the diamond smugglers and stock thieves, who have made the Maloti mountains and dense forest, their haven.

45.Curtain call

It was not up to Selala. It was not up to his intensive training. It was not up to his intelligence training. It was fate. It was beginning to freeze. His body could not resist any longer. His body started to weaken a minute by minute. Slowly, his eyes were closing. He was dozing off. He saw his life passing slowly in front of him. His body became numb. His fingers stopped moving. He was giving up. The great Selala Nteterwane was giving in to death. His fight was done. It was time.

46. My shepherd

There was nothing suspicious to see a herdboy with cattle and sheep. Whether he was standing there, looking at them graze, or whether he was getting them to the dam or taking them home. It was only unusual to see a herdboy walking in front of the herd. Actually, it appears that it was not unusual. In good time, it is believed that the cattle get used to him. He plays his lesiba and walk in front of them and they follow. No need for any German shepherd dog. In this case, this has to be unusual, because this is not the regular herdboy for these cattle. Something magical has been cooked here. As he slowly opened his eyes, Selala could only see a bleak view, and was still feeling weak. A young man was kneeling down, trying to give him water to drink. Selala saw that he was in the veld. In the compound erected by the herdboys. Selala was not even aware that the detective in him was still not injured. He stopped himself from asking too many or compounded questions. At that moment, Selala remembered the most important thing. The one thing he should have protected with his life. The one thing that should protect his life. What did you find on me? Where are my clothes? Everything is here. I took off your shirt and the coat, so that I could clean up your wound. I washed them, and let them dry by the river bank. *So, where is my gun? -What gun? -My gun, you stupid.* There was silence. Selala felt bad. He should not have called this boy stupid. *I am sorry. But, please tell me, where is my gun, and the little bag I was carrying. -The bag is there, safe, with everything inside. I did not see a gun.* The rattling sound was heard from the nearby forest. Danger was eminent. The herdboy pointed with his head to the direction where the kraal was. Selala did not require too much details. In his pains, he started crawling from the fireplace, up to the mielie bag next to the hut. He was just about to rest behind the bag, when the herdboy gave signal that he must proceed. *I am all alone, Ntate, I am not armed.* The herdboy knew that he had to clarify that. Any further suspicion, the gunmen would just let it rain. As they ambushed their victims, they would keep firing. Ultimately, they knew that their men would appear with hands above their heads, surrendering. The herdboy did not want things to get that far. At that moment, Selala, kept crawling into the kraal. Cattle have a way of being restless. That suspicious movement and sounds they would make, would give the herdboy that something was in the kraal. *What are you doing here alone?* Rafau was there. This time he wanted to finish Selala off. When he finally caught up with the herdboy, his eyes were wandering all over the place. From the fire place, to the hut, to the trees outside the hut and to the kraal. Yes, the kraal. The cattle were still there, and not out into the field. It could only mean one thing. The cattle were stolen. *For every stolen thing there must at least be two owners.*

47. Gridlock

There was no doubt that Selala was going to die. He had to die. He had killed Rafau's men. *Are you sure you are alone?* -Yes, sir, I am alone. I stay alone here. Two tea mugs were next to the fireplace. Rafau hit the herdboy with an iron rod. He staggered towards the fireplace, and his head hit the kraal's mud wall. *Please don't kill me. -I am not going to kill you. I am going to hurt you until you die.* To emphasize the latter statement, Rafau kicked the herdboy in the stomach. The herdboy went tumbling down in agony. I am going to ask you for the last time. *Who are you with?* -I am alone. I swear. For that response, a herdboy got a fist on the jaw and another kick on the ribs. The click sound of a cocked gun was enough for the herdboy to confess. Just before he could utter a word. The stampede of the cattle caught the attention of Rafau and his men. Selala was trying to rise up. He leaned against the mud wall around the kraal. *Leave the boy and take me.* Selala appeared between the cattle that were scattering around. His body was still weak. His voice was soft and meek. It was not the same thunderous voice of the detective the work space corridors knew. *Aha, my man. I knew you would come out of the dead. The honourable detective Selala Nteterwane, Sir. Good morning. How would you like your tea?* -Please do not kill the boy. He has nothing to do with this. It is me you are looking for. *Leave the herdboy. He is the man. A man puts his life on the line to protect.* Selala's poetic words, just made Rafau to burst into laughter. *Bravo! The great man of law has spoken.* He held Selala by the neck. He spit in his face. A herdboy found an opportunity to escape. Like a springbok, he jumped over the kraal, down the donga into the deep forest. Bullets were fired. Rafau's men tried running behind him as they fired shots. Only the herdboy knew the forest like the palm of his hand. Like a rabbit, the herdboy knew that he was not to run in one direction. He ran in zigzag, maintaining his lowered height, lest he ran into the hugging branches. *Let him not escape. Find him.* Those were clear instructions from Rafau. For his men, no instruction was unreasonable. There was nothing unreasonable about shooting the herdboy to death. Finding him was. The instruction was actually unclear. *Finding him was finding him.* Dead or alive. A big splash into the river was heard. *Got him. -No, I got him. -No, it is me who got him. -Stop bickering, you fools. Is he dead? -Yes, he is dead, boss. Very dead. I shot him and he fell into the river.* That was the declaration by the chief hitman. Rafau's men knew not to argue with the chief hitman. The only proof that the herdboy was dead, was the dead body floating, or found at the shore. Rafau decided that he was not going to kill Selala as yet. He was to be his bargaining chip.

48. Terror

The message to the country's highest intelligence section arrived with horrific images of the injured Selala Nteterwane. His wounds were laid bare so that it was clear that it was not faked. For a cherry on top, Rafau pressed on Selala's bleeding thigh wound, which set him on a high scream, like a dying man. That was recorded without Selala noticing. Being a hard detective, he possibly would not have screamed if he saw that he was being filmed. A spontaneous scream and lament is always good. *You have less than twenty four hours to accede to my demands. If you fail, I will be sure to courier his head to your offices.* The intelligence knew the bluff from a distance. They believed that the ransom seeker was not just another chance taker. The next morning a pig's head was found in the office of the Minister of Police. The same package was also discovered in the office of Defense. That was clearly an insult to those big offices. An immediate explanation was sought from the security cluster. Cameras were still there. The data totally wiped off. The armed security personnel working on a night shift the previous night, were abducted. They were released later that day, highly intoxicated from the substance that could not be established. It was not because they received the pig's head, instead of human's. What bothered the offices of the authorities, was the timing. It was not about who was calling a bluff, but it was about the promptness of sending those threats. Selala Nteterwane, was officer of the law. His life was not that of a commoner. He needed to be rescued. They had to start negotiating with terrorists. Ensure that all the money needed is assembled. *A hundred million rand is nothing compared to the life of our officer. Adhere to the hostage demands. Do not dispatch police. However, ensure that the bags carrying the money have a tracker.* Instructions were clear. They may have been difficult instructions, but they were clear. All the police hostage section had to do, was to execute.

49. Coniving convoy

When the truck carrying bags of money reached the location demanded, the unexpected happened. Rafau's men were already waiting, while others were driving behind the truck carrying money. Instead of an expected exchange, things took a nasty turn. Selala was not released. The truck was bombed, and all the money burnt in there. *When I said no police, I meant no police and no police monkey business. The trackers that you put in there have just cost you the life of your beloved police officer.* The telephone message was clear. Police knew where the exchange was going to happen. It also appeared that the tracker was meant to track the movement of the hostage takers after the exchange. The other clear instruction which was not clarified to ordinary officers, was that the hostage takers were to be dealt with. They were to be eliminated, after Selala was rescued. Money was nothing. Principle was everything. *You just proved that you cannot be trusted. All you are interested in, is killing. You have just killed Selala Nteterwane.* The intelligence room was filled with cold fear and silence. They waited to see gruesome graphics of Selala's decapitated body. The combat squad wanted to be given permission to go after the enemy. The only snag was that they did not know where the enemy was operating from. The enemy was clearly targeted, Rafau Lekopo. It did not matter whether there was a conclusive evidence pinning him to the crime. What they knew was that he kidnapped and injured Selala, who set out to go hunt for Rafau in Lesotho. For that, Rafau was considered a rebel and a terrorist and was to be dealt with.

50. Harvest

When they woke up, Selala was gone. The only thing left was a chain to the tree. Shockingly the chain ran in between them with some funny padlocks. All of them, were locked. The men were not worried about Selala's escape, more than they were worried about their own lives. Rafau told them to guard Selala with their lives. They had no excuse to sleep. They slept the whole day. They were to be owls at night. They had to burn the midnight oil, guarding their prey. If they got bored, they had an opportunity to beat up Selala, to pass time. They just had to ensure that he does not bleed. They learnt from Rafau, how a man can be tortured, and not bleed. But, they wavered all their chances of beating up Selala. Instead, they made it worse. They let him go. The herdboys knew the forest like the palm of his shepherding hand. While Rafau's men thought they shot him and he drowned, he was eating rabbits, and herbs. In good days he would steal a lamb, and get by, for few days. He knew many herbs. Both good and bad. It was not difficult to sniff out the movement of Rafau and his men. He carefully watched them from the tree trunk that he carved into a dwelling place. It was warm and safe for him. Away from crawling animals and those dangerous cats of the forest. When Rafau's men were preparing to take their night shift, he approached like a cat, wearing the forest like his blanket. Like a chameleon, he moved from shrubs to branches, until he safely hid next to where the men were camping. The herdboys sprinkled the dried herb that he grinded, into the water bucket the men left unattended. It did not take too long for the herb to kick in and knocked the men flat out. Selala was a bit stronger. He was elated to see the herdboys. It was like seeing a son he long lost. The herdboys gave Selala his gun. *I had to keep it safely for you. I was going to use it to protect you if I had to.* Selala was just happy that the young man came through for him. The detective in him suspected that the boy stole his gun. He even admitted that he did not know where the gun was. He was lying. But, then again, it possibly was a good lie. The gun in the herdboys' hand could be a danger to him, in case someone got hold of it. If Rafau got hold of that gun, he would be pleased to use it to kill Selala. It would be kept as a souvenir. Selala wished he had that gun, then he would have killed all Rafau's men. But, all that was not important. What was of significance, was that he was saved.

51. Trenches of hell

Selala, took all the guns from the men. He wrote a note and pinned it on to the tree stem with a porcupine quill. *Rafau, hand yourself in, serve time, or die like a dog.* Selala took a wet clay, and imprinted all men's fingerprints. *Thank you boys. I will sure remember your prints in this lifetime.* Selala, was pleased with his mission. He did not have to arrest those men. Even if he wanted to, he did not have resources. Besides, those men were to be the bait to get to Rafau, and to send a clear message. *Pass my gratitude to your boss, uncle Rafau. Tell him that his days are numbered.* Down the lake, the herdboys connected with some of his counterparts, who lent the phone to Selala. After unsuccessful attempts, to make a call due to lack of signal in the mountains, he found a way to bypass the phone system, to send a signal to the Intelligence in South Africa. Rafau was fuming like a mad dog. He started beating his men. They could not even make up what was happening. He did not want to waste time with questions. It was clear that they were overcome by Selala. Alone? Rafau was clear in his mind that Selala got a little help from someone. He wanted to leave them chained there, to be eaten up by lions. But then again, he thought that if they get arrested, they would spill beans. For that thought, he cocked his gun, ready to eliminate them. At that moment the police helicopter was hovering over the forest where Rafau and his remaining men were. There was no time for further killings. Rafau had to flee. He vowed that he was never going to be arrested by Selala. Selala should have been killed long time ago. A mistake he would regret. Down the trenches, into the bunkers they built underneath the surface next to the dense forest, Rafau and his men disappeared. The herdboys noticed that the trenches were running up to the river, and that is where he led Selala. That way, Rafau and his men would use that as an emergency exit for water and if cornered from the other end. Selala was happy that finally he would be arresting Rafau. The day has come. The day justice has to be served, has dawned. Rafau, was content as he said that to his men. He was perfectly safe in his new hideout. His worry was the men he left chained at their initial hiding spot. He was not worried if they would die of hunger or eaten by wild animals. He was worried that they could be rescued. If that happened, they could spill the beans. He set out to look for them, armed to the tooth with his remaining men.

52. I shall not want

Two herdboys came running down the valley to meet up with the one helping Selala. South African government was at loggerhead with that of Lesotho. Some information emerged. The herdboy tried to get as much information as possible, but what was reported was in bits and pieces. It appeared, there was a secret agency information that was found in the laptop belonging to the slain mayor of Dikgotlong in South Africa. It contained top secret information on diamond dealings between Lesotho and some tycoons in South Africa. The money that was taken out of Letjhoba's account, was actually hundreds of millions. That money was transferred into an untraceable account. *That mayor was the big man in the mafia circle. It is said that he controlled many drug operations, in Lesotho, South Africa and Cloumbia.* The herdboy narrated all that as if he was the one who wrote the notes. The slain mayor was the central nerve between the druglords, diamond dealers and the big boys in the justice departments of those countries. He controlled the flow of money. It was the money that Rafau used to fund his operations, bribe high ranking officials and diplomats. It also contained information that South Africa protected a team of mercenaries. Those were using Mahlanyeng, bordering Lesotho on Maseru bridge, as their combat base. After Selala managed to make few connections to the Intelligence, he was instructed to evacuate Lesotho. The police helicopter, was given the maximum time of forty five minutes to fly out of Lesotho or be shot down. Selala wanted to defy the instruction. But, he realized that he could have died. Possibly going back to South Africa was not a bad idea. It was for him, not a retreat, but a measure to regain strength, and restrategy. Besides the comfort of having to go regain strength, Lesotho and South Africa were at war. His problems of getting back at Rafau, were nothing compared to the looming diplomatic war. He however, felt he would not rest until Rafau was rearrested. After several attempts, he established the contact with his office in South Africa. *Major General, I can take advantage of this situation. Everybody will be busy trying to stay alive, and that will give me a chance to sniff out Rafau.* As he said that to his superior, he had already convinced himself that it was the only way. *Selala, you know very well that your being there is not even authorize. Do not complicate matters. You still have a case to answer. It could get nasty. Please come back right now.* That was enough. The Major General was expecting Selala to adhere to the instructions.

53. Diplomatic sweet pain

Following a repeated call by South African Government to Lesotho to release the criminals who hid in their mountains, it was clear that there was no cooperation at all. The Lesotho Government made it clear that they did not have resources to go man-hunting in the dangerous maloti mountains. In line with *Resolution 1005 of Kingdom Citizens Protection ACT 7 of 2017*, they made it clear that every Lesotho citizen was protected by the state against any extradition by any foreign country. To that effect, no country had a legal right to enter and search for a criminal in Lesotho. Such a country would have to rely on the mercy and cooperation of Lesotho to arrest such a suspect. He looted both governments, Lesotho and South Africa, of millions of rands. He influenced issuing of a lot of unscrupulous tenders, and in the process, got millions of rands as kickback. When such critical information emerged, fellow politicians did not want to hear a thing. All they wanted was for the suspect to be apprehended and sentenced. They did not care if the person killed was corrupt or an angel. But it was when more information came, that the slain politician was involved in human trafficking, some fellow politicians took a step back. Attempts to hide all that was in vain. The rot could not be concealed. The showdown was happening. Authorities wanted to flex their muscles. The Mountain Kingdom force was equal to the task. It was clear that the breakpoint was reached. It was the crossroad for a variety of viewpoints. Lesotho wanted to protect its citizens. Within Lesotho, there were views to release the murderer, as they did not want to be seen to harbour criminals. South Africa was demanding extradition at all cost. The ties would be severed. Nobody cared anymore. The die was cast. It was the moment to show who was boss.

54. This revolution is cold

The borders were abuzz with Lesotho nationals going back from South Africa. The shuffle and scuffle between the border patrol officers of the two countries became tense. They drew the demarcation line in their work stations. Anything they needed, Lesotho border patrol officers would deliberately avoid using the resources from the South African counterparts. *Mr Tefelo, inspector Lesedi here, at Maseru border. Kindly dispatch the invoice roll paper. We are running short.* That would be the Lesotho officer at the border gate, making it clear that he would not bother the Mahlanyeng officer at the Maseru border. Drivers, heading to Lesotho ran seriously impatient. Overtaking abruptly on solid lines, just became a normal phenomenon. Lesotho border patrol vans were all over the roads, towards the borders, blue lights behind the Lesotho motorists. The messages on social networks were blocking the signals. *“By 10:00 pm, tonight, each Lesotho national must be back in Lesotho. Those who need help to go back, approach the embassy and approach the offices at the following borders; Mahlanyeng-Maseru, Ficksburg-Peka. We will not be responsible for anything that will happen to anybody who does not heed this message.”* That was not to be repeated. Nobody cared much about the authenticity of the message. Bouncing it off few fellow Lesotho nationals, was enough. It was a state of emergency. Whatever business incomplete, was not an urgent matter. People hurried to drive back into their country. Lunch meetings were cancelled. Doctors appointments cancelled. Meetings abandoned. Dishes were left unattended, as nannies, packed their bags. Motorists started getting impatient. At the village, things were disorientated. A mother holding her boy by the hand. Rushed strides. Almost running. *Come on, hurry!* A lollipop fell to the ground. The boy resisted. His heart was on his fallen sweet. *Leave that, let's go.* Mother picked it up, licked the soil off it. Spat. A young man rushing the sheep home. What was coming was disastrous. He did not know what it was, and he did not care to know. One sheep is stuck. Its leg between the fence rows. He tried to untangle the wires. He tried and tried. Other sheep were scattering around. He could not leave that one. He could not leave those others to run around. Something was coming. Something big. Road rage escalated, with five cases of shootout reported. Seven people died. The rampage ensued. Queues of cars to Lesotho borders came to a stand still. Cars with South African registration numbers were taken off the queue. Fisticuffs ensued between motorists. All flights between the two countries were suspended and all planes grounded. Military helicopters were given the maximum of an hour to have cleared VIPs and diplomats from between the two countries.

55. Pebbles

Meanwhile, cars with Lesotho registration number plates passing Mahlanyeng were pelted with stones. Some were petrol-bombed. People in Mahlanyeng blamed the Lesotho government, claiming that they sponsored the murders that were executed from Mahlanyeng into Lesotho. The Lesotho nationals, blamed the South African government for funding all the operations of hit squads in Mahlanyeng, who got free access to Lesotho borders to kill many political leaders opposed to the previous regime. That was the regime that opposed the corrupt practices of diamond and water smuggling from Lesotho. They also opposed policies that sought to relax the security boundaries and lessen sentences to offences related to financial misconduct. With less diamonds smuggled and no free access to channeling water from the Lesotho dams to South Africa and other neighbouring countries, money was not filtering well. Hitmen and many bribees started complaining. They started threatening to hit the very same operatives. They blamed those on top of operations for remaining fat cats, while they claim money was not flowing in. Many started hitting the syndicates in Lesotho and kept diamonds to themselves. Unfortunately, greed overcame them. Many of them were shot dead after the discovery that they took diamonds to themselves. Military trucks and helicopters were all over. It was clear that it was no more public violence squad. It was no more the police flying squad dealing with the protests. It was the army. The South African army. Lesotho called back their army, but stayed on standby across all borders. They avoided premature confrontation. Rioting people in Mahlanyeng understood clearly what the army would do. Within no time, people were cleared off the streets. Ten people were declared dead. It was reported that they carried AK 47 rifles and started shooting at the armored cars. It was never a clever idea to pick a fight or shoot at the army, when you do not have resources. It was like going to the toilet, and realized after relieving yourself that you do not have a tissue paper. It was a bad idea to start a project without checking your resources.

56. Limpets

A truck loaded with school books was passing the border gates to Lesotho. It was carrying the Lesotho registration number. It therefore, did not pose any threat. The border police was heavily supported by the Lesotho army. They strip-searched everything that moved. With the many boxes in there, and the chaotic situation, they searched the first twenty boxes and were satisfied that the cargo was legit. As soon as the truck passed the Lesotho foreign department offices, the driver parked the truck, and took out his red triangle to signal that the truck has a problem. He then opened the truck head so it slanted forward as an indication that something was wrong with the engine. He stood by the roadside, asked for a lift back. About 10 minutes later, the bomb detonated and brought down the whole building of the Lesotho Foreign Affairs. When the news was received by the army on standby along the borders, the troops were ready to attack. *Sir, give out an instruction we are ready. We have been provoked. South Africa has betrayed the agreement. Just one word, we will engage.* The command was still negative. The Minister of Defense in Lesotho was not going to be persuaded to take emotional decision. However, he also understood that the time for war had come. He just found the bombing, an opportunistic, and quiet unfortunate incident. It could just be the works of dissenting voices in the country, not necessarily the work of South African army. But, all that rationalizing was not important. People were ready to go to war. The Lesotho forensic department was hard at work. *Luckily, we have cctv cameras. We will see what happened before the blast.* That little light was dimmed by the reality that everything was blasted to ashes. Eyewitnesses could not offer much. All they saw was a man stepping out of the truck, and got into a taxi. Others found an opportunity to lie. *The truck driver was with a woman. The woman went to the shop to buy water. She was wearing black leather pants and a yellow top, and red boots and blue scarf....* All that followed were just lies and fabrications.

57. Chained souls

Rafau and his men finally reached the spot. The chained men were not there. That sent a cold sweat down Rafau's spine. He was just asking himself what those were up to. *Scatter around. Look out for them. Ask every herdboy what they saw. Squeeze information from them. Kill them if you have to.* Rafau understood that the time of survival of the fittest had arrived. *You either kill or be killed.* Word of reason would have to take a back seat. He smiled at the realization that his plan was taking a good shape. He was, however, slightly worried about his men that escaped. He knew what they could be thinking. He left them to die. They knew it too. They had to do what they could to survive. What bothered Rafau the most, was the information that those men have. Rafau knew the forest very well and he did not need any back up or a bodyguard. Actually he needed one. More than before. But, he told bodyguards to also run around and search for the men that have escaped. It was a grave mistake. The cold metal on the back of his head, got him to a frozen point. There was no sound. He got the message. He was the one who always told his men, that you do not cock your gun if you are not going to shoot. That man better shoot him. A split of a second was enough for a decision to be taken or be overruled. The mighty Rafau. Did you ever think that one day the tables would turn. How the mighty has fallen. The man completely forgot that you cannot go poetic with Rafau. While he was thinking of the next move, Rafau understood that the man had nothing to lose. Shooting him was not going to be a problem. Rafau felt he should have killed all of them. The cold metal on his head, reminded him of the day the police told him to freeze. He remembered that he was powerless, looking at the barrel of the gun. The same feeling came, as the gunman stood behind him. At the time of hold up, the gunman was recording the incident with his mobile phone, and sent the images back to South Africa, to show he had apprehended Rafau. He knew he was going to be a hero. At his satisfaction that he recorded enough and had just sent the short clip, he focused on Rafau. *Shoot the dog. Shoot him. What are you waiting for?* Another man was whispering from a distance. Rafau knew that all five of the men were travelling as a group. *Shoot him. We killed his dogs. He has nobody to protect. Shut up, I know what I am doing.*

58. Scattered pearls

The gunman was impatient with his counterpart. Before the man with the gun could finish responding to his fellow man, Rafau had gone down, held his hand carrying a gun, and swept him down. The whispering man tried to take out his gun, but Rafau shot him with the gun that was still in the other's hands. The sound of the shot got birds scattering around from trees, and the echo that was extended by the mountains, got the men in the forest stand still. The gun was at the gunman's forehead. *You have two seconds to tell me who your handler is.* Rafau knew that the man must be the informer. *The herdboy gave me money and diamonds. He told me that Selala was going to give me another million rand.* A shot was fired. The man was cold.

59. Credits

The Intelligence in South Africa was taken aback to receive a clip. Selala, was happy to see that Rafau was still alive. But, he was also very sad, because he wanted to be the one to go and arrest Rafau. At the very least, he wanted to be the one to pull that trigger. *Selala, this is not about who becomes the hero.* The Mayor General scolded Selala. You should be lucky that we have allowed you as a detective to still pursue this case. You should know that the case had become the property in the jurisdiction of the Intelligence. Another clip was received. Horrific scene of the man's skull blown off. Rafau's face appeared. Selala swayed back, shocked. *You stupid dogs think I am a puppy. Do not start war if you are not going to finish it. You sent these little puppies to get me. Come out Selala. Come get me. I will bomb all of you.* Flashed out. Selala stood there, like he was in a trance. He was angry. And scared. And sad to see the man being shot mercilessly like that. His hope was that the herdboys were still alive. He could not ascertain that. But, until he probably saw the dead body, he would be hoping that the herdboys were still alive. *Chief, dispatch the hit squad. Let me lead the team to get Rafau. Just few armored cars and ammunition.* Selala made up his mind. He was ready to die in the line of duty. He was ready to kill Rafau. But, there was impasse between Lesotho and South Africa. Something much bigger than pursuing Rafau. Selala felt like a bulldog held back. He wanted to charge at his enemy. He felt insulted that he failed to capture Rafau. He was willing to prove that he, Selala Nteterwane, was the best detective. The request for the mission was negative. There was no other way Selala would go to Lesotho to capture Rafau. Nobody went in and out of Lesotho. Lesotho nationals in South Africa, have been grounded. The same with South African nationals in Lesotho. The thundering voice of Major General was clear. There was no way Selala could get to Lesotho. Not through the border as a detective. Not as an undercover cop. Not even through the illegal means, like swimming through the Caledon river, from the unauthorized entries. Selala agreed. The matter was rested. At least so thought Major General. As Selala left the office and made a quick call. The parcel was delivered. From Maseru to Mokhotlong, where Rafau was hiding. Selala knew that it was a gift Rafau was not going to refuse. After a long day of hard work, Rafau needed to lay back and enjoy his expensive drink. A golden box of the most expensive, exported whiskey, was appropriate. Boooooommm!!!! Brain splashed on walls, and the whole house was in ashes.

60. Scoreboard talk

Selala received a call back to the police station. As his car came to a halt, Selala took a few moments inside the car. It was only then that he felt that he was exhausted. He pushed the car seat back and leaned back. He looked up through the sunroof of the car. The blue sky had no stories to tell. The lone, scattered clouds had no business to tell. The cloud had no authority but slowly calling upon each other to form. The swallows that were flying around had news. Rain was coming. The phone rang. It was Major General, and he decided not to answer it. Having closed the car door, he took few steps to the office door, with the phone still ringing. *Selala, it is bad manners not to answer the phone. Not to mention insubordination. I am sorry, Sir. I was already here, so, I decided not to answer the phone. Data is expensive, Sir. Very expensive.* To that statement, both of them laughed. *Sit down. I have news for you. It is about Rafau in Lesotho.* Selala was about to smile, but remembered to keep a straight face. *What about him, Sir?* Selala pulled the chair forward to pay attention. *The parcel bomb detonated at Rafau's hiding place. All his men but one died. It was shortly after Rafau left the house. It was reported that he got an urgent business call, and said that his men could help themselves to the whiskey. The only man who survived to tell the story, was his right-hand man.*

61. Wasted

Selala sank his head between his palms, and screamed, *No! Major General, let us waste this man. There is only one way, let us eliminate him. We can send him a parcel bomb.* Selala paused a little. Realisty struck him that he was beginning to sound like a mercenary. He was beginning to sound like an Apartheid regime's operative. The Major General kept staring at him. The file in his hand fell. He made no attempt to pick it up. The silence in the office was sickening. Slowly, Major General sank into his chair. *I will pretend I did not hear you say that.* Selala looked outside through the window. The blue sky was lovely. Probably more lonely without clouds. The companionship of the blue sky and the cloud would yield rain. The blue sky alone was boring. It was too ordinary. Selala did not like the ordinary. He lived on the edge. He loved adventure. He looked at the sky. The sky had no power. He also felt powerless. *Go home, and clear your head. We will only follow the legal way of apprehending Rafau.* The sharp voice of the Major General abruptly disrupted Selala's thoughts. He slowly walked to the door. He stopped, turned to the Major General, whose eyes were on the documents in front of him. *Major General. -What? -Are you saying we have finally lost? After spending so much resources on this case, Sir?* Major General impatiently raised his hand. *Listen, Nteterwane. This is it. For now, we accept the situation. There is much more at stake than pursuing Rafau. -But, Sir, it is Rafau who started all this. He is the reason why the two countries are at loggerheads. He is the reason why so many people died. He is the reason why we are having this conversation now. Detective, watch your tone.* Major General knew that Selala was right.

62. Over and out

Selala knew the procedure. He knew that he needed to follow instructions. He understood the meaning of jurisdiction. What refused to know all those parameters was his heart. It only wanted justice. Justice would only prevail if Rafau was rearrested and served life sentence. Selala arranged with his contacts in Lesotho on another covert mission. He identified two most important strategies. The first was to trace Rafau's every movement. The second was to know what he was up to. Who he was speaking to and what. The third was to *deal* with him. At that stage, he felt that he would have to put away the badge. That way, he would be a man of ordinary living. His heart shocked him. *If all fail, he knew that elimination was the only way.* At this point of madness thinking, a man of law consoled himself. *In war, there are always casualties.* He was convincing himself that he was right. He immediately took that thought out of his head.

63. All chips down

Rafau had found a devastating weapon. He was sure that, Selala Nteterwane was going down for good. *So, let me understand this well, you say, he took you to his house and not to the witness protection place?* Rafau looked the lady straight in the eyes, expecting just one answer. *Yes, it is so. It was a one bedroom apartment he was renting.* Rafau smiled. *So, it was not a perfectly private space for you? And how long did you stay there?* The lady felt like she was in court. *But, money is money.* She just had to play along. *I stayed there for two days, before I was moved to a witness protection place, and I did not even know what that place was, because they did not tell me where I was. They said it was for my own safety.* Rafau reached for a roll of money notes in his jacket, and handed over to the girl. *Stick around. We still have a long way to go.* The lady just smiled. Rafau handed over a new dress, a weave and shoes. The lady accepted them with a huge smile and said, *You really did not have to.* Rafau, put up his charming smile, *My angel, it has to be done. You never know who is watching. Go ahead, dress up.* The lady undressed, and after a few seconds, she paused, just to make sure that Rafau had seen enough, she put on her new dress. It was funny how Rafau just spoke so decently about the lady's privacy at Selala's house, while in his very own car, the lady had to undress. The girl stepped out of Rafau's car, into a metre taxi just behind them. Rafau, got his contacts to get the ball rolling. He did not want any slipoffs. He knew that his eternal freedom was dependent on that move. *Advocate, are you ready for action?* Rafau laid back on the seat of his luxurious car, holding his cellphone to his ear with the left hand, while pulling few puffs from his cigar, held by the right hand with many gold rings. Everything felt expensive. Even the phone call he made, felt expensive. It was expensive because he was going to pay the advocate a lot of money. Rafau believed in his newly coined motto; *'If you can't beat them, bribe them.'* He easily identified those that are bribeable. He just had to know those that were used to kickbacks and bribes. He knew that there were a plenty of men in justice, who were in the deep pockets of the corrupt politicians and mafia gangs. He just needed to put a cherry on top to entize them. They were used to big money. He needed to always top it up, so that his, was an enticing deal. *I am all set, Chief. I have also obtained the statement from the lady. I have already filed the papers, and the prosecution should kick in, shortly.* The corrupt advocate had his belly filled up with the deposit to get the process in motion. He knew that there was much more from where the first batch came from.

64. Well served

Selala Nteterwane, you are hereby suspended without pay, effective immediately., pending the investigation. You will duly be informed about your hearing and other processes. Selala could not believe what he was hearing. As soon as he stepped into the Mayor General's office, he saw five men in black suits. He could not figure out who they were, until Mayor General introduced them as members from the Special Investigation Task Force (SITF). Selala knew that something was on. He was positive in his spirit that it had to do with Rafau. He wanted so badly to hear that Rafau was arrested or at the most extreme, he had died. *You are charged with sexual harassment and breach of Section 10 of Witness Protection Law 173 of 1973. The charge brought against you are regarding your alleged sexual harassment of a lady who was to testify in the case of Brown Bread Mafia boss Lewisky Leronti, five years ago. -What? I never harassed anyone! I was ... -Detective Nteterwane, please. Save your testimony for the day of hearing.* Selala's mind raced to five years back when he was still a young detective. That was before he got married. He remembered everything, except the part of sexual harassment. He was awakened from his dreamland by the Major General's voice. *Detective Nteterwane, do you understand your charges?* Selala did not answer. He just looked at Major General as if he would understand the silent voice in him that was crying loud to be rescued. He just nodded. The Task team leader whipped out some documents and showed Selala where to sign. Reluctantly, Selala signed. He was signing to accept the charges brought against him. Not to defend himself. He knew that it was going to be pointless to argue that. He was a man of law. He needed to exercise maximum restraint. Selala handed over his badge and a gun. He proceeded to his office to pack up his belongings. He knew that it was just a suspension. A suspension until further notice, pending investigations, may be stretched for a long time. At that time, he would be starving. He would have gone blunt as a detective. On the matter of suspension without pay, he vowed to challenge that. He knew that he had a chance. They could not suspend him perpetually, without pay. If the investigation could stretch over a period of six or twelve months, that meant he would still be penniless. Major General stepped into Selala's office without knocking. *Nteterwane, I am so sorry. There is nothing I can do. As you can see, this matter is out of my hands. It is now in the jurisdiction of the SITF.* Selala, just looked at him. He knew that it was true. But, he also knew that Mayor General could have fought a little harder for him, especially on the matter of suspension without pay. *It is ok, Sir. What is done is done.* Selala felt no strength to engage any further.

65. Lone man sitting

When all the ammunition is taken, a man still remains with a fight heart. Those are the words that Selala believed in. They were his own words that kept him surviving throughout his detective life. He had time in his hands. He was not bound by procedures and protocol anymore. He knew that suspension could lead to explusion. He did not understand how quickly his life had come to that crossroad. Selala decided that he was going to do things his way. All he needed to do was to get Rafau. To him, getting Rafau dead or alive was not the issue. All he wanted was, to do the right thing. To get Rafau to pay. Selala looked at his black book. He scribbled down few names and some technical notes, from coordinates to some electronic circuit system diagrams. He went to meet an IT guy at the restaurant. *My man, you know how it rolls. There needs to be no record of this meeting. -I got you. I got you, man.* Without wasting time, the IT guy flipped open the laptop, and started his work. After few minutes, he pushed the laptop closer to Selala. *There we go. Your inside man is on standby. Here is the test.* Selala was excited. He saw the movement of the vehicle from the mountains in Lesotho. Coordinates and map were clear. Location, Dithotaneng, Lesotho. *Thank you, man. Did you communicate this to our man? -All is set. I emailed him the cloned tracker programme. All he needs to do is to copy it into the external device, and he is ready to plug and plant it wherever he wishes. Then, we will have clear sound and graph movement visuals. Such a pity, we cannot have complete visuals, where we can see your target man.*

66. Plan Be

On the way to Sekgutlong, in Lesotho, Rafau and his men were driving in high speed. Their car needed to be ready to be a getaway car, in case they were to be pursued. They passed an old Datsun bakkie. *That is certainly is not roadworthy!* Rafau's man remarked as the rest burst into a big laughter. *You say roadworthiness, I put it to you that it does not have an engine!* To that, they laughed until tears started rolling down their cheeks. Rafau's men knew that he could be funny, but at that time they felt he was completely crazy. *Bloody bleksem!* The driver slowed down, as the laughter came to an abrupt stoppage. *What happened?* Rafau asked as he cocked his gun. Nothing serious boss, just a flat tyre. A flat tyre was a serious matter to Rafau. *Get out. Be on the alert. Surround the vehicle.* Rafau's men felt he was paranoid. But, they could not tell him that. Whoever was to bell the cat, would not finish his statement, if he ever dared to tell Rafau that he was overreacting. Rafau never wanted to be ambushed. He wanted to see his enemy approaching him head on. *Ehh, boss, we have a problem. -What ?? The sparewheel is also flat.* Rafau wanted to scream, but took a deep breath. Softly he said, *How the hell did that happen?* The driver just looked at him. He knew that they messed up. Somebody did not do his job. An offence had been committed. Somebody must be punished. Rafau suddenly felt powerless. He simply kept quiet. Was that a quiet diplomacy? His men did not know what was going to happen. They knew that somebody should have been clapped. It was unusual that Rafau was that quiet.

67. The blue moon

The ancient artifact was nearing. A slow moving Toyota van they passed before. Before Rafau could be excited about the eminent help approaching, he realized that it was the useless, rundown van. *Damn! Here comes the dinosaur.* His men put their hands on their foreheads to look. Indeed, the dinosaur was coming, amazingly at an increased speed. *What engine does he have in there? Porche Cayenne?* Men burst into a wild laughter. The van gained momentum due to the downslope. It came flying down. It was as if it did not have brakes. The driver did not seem to worry about stepping on the brakes. Rafau and his men started preparing to stay clear off the road. They did not worry much about their car, but their lives. The beast in Rafau thought the worst. He aimed at the approaching car. All his men did the same. The van driver put his hands up. The van swerved wildly to the side of the road. Dust started bellowing. The red dust cloud swallowed the van. The van driver went for the steering wheel. The van danced to the opposite direction, and landed again into the tarred road. When the dust cloud settled, the yellow ancient artefact took shape. The ignition was turned on. Simultaneously stepping on the brakes. The van did not stop immediately. This monster did not know anything like EBS or ABS. The driver started pumping on the brake pedals. After almost twenty pumps, a stop pressure of one second would yield. The last resort was the handbrake. An abrupt pull broke the cable. The van stopped. The driver was sweating like a pig. As he stepped out of the car, his hands were above his head. *Hey, you fool, do you want to kills us? -No, Sir. No, Sir. The car did not... -Why the hell did you switch the engine off down the slope?* Rafau knew that the driver was not going to tell the truth. He already knew why. *Sir, the car did not want to stop. -Stop lying, I know you were saving petrol.* Rafau may not have heard the ignition turned on. But he knew what drivers do when they want to save gas. *Damn it! Just put your hands down.* The van driver obliged. Before he could breathe, he was already approaching Rafau's car. One of Rafau's men stepped forward. *Hey, where do you think you are going? -I just want to help. I see that you have a flat tyre.* Rafau nodded for his approval, but accompanied that gesture with his sarcastic remark. *So, are you going to borrow us your sparewheel? Dinosaur to Mercedes!* Laughter. The van driver went for a jack, took out the flat tyre and put it on the back of his van. *The next town is just few kilometres away. I will be quick.* Rafau and his men broke into a loud laughter. *He will be quick!* Rafau ordered one of his men to accompany the van driver. He was not too trusting. The sparewheel could disappear. Better send one man. Better one man dies than two.

68. Connectedness

Selala got the signal connected. He was able to see the exact location of Rafau's car. The thirty minutes that the van driver talked about, was going to be enough for Selala's contacts to strike. The chip that the van driver put underneath the fender of Rafau's car, transmitted a clear signal. Selala was able to even connect to the phones of Rafau and his men. He was on cloud nine, looking how technology could hack into those men's phones without them noticing. The bluetooth connection was embedded into the hidden malware pseudowaves, that did not show any suspicious devices, even if Rafau and his men could have switched their bluetooth on. Selala knew that his cellphone could be tapped. He used unregistered simcard on another phone to call his IT man. *Is all well? Is the connection still not contaminated?* He wanted to be sure that that all is set. Just a slip up, his operation would blow up in his face. Selala knew that the operation was illegal. All he wanted was Rafau. By any means necessary.

69. Dying dunes

Rafau pulled out his phone. Before he could dial, he noticed something peculiar. The location had been switched on. He never switched the location on. He made sure that all his men did the same. *Give me your phones, now!* All men obliged. They wanted to ask, but they couldn't. They thought Rafau might be suspecting one of them. Maybe one of them had been an inside man for the enemy. They did not care. They knew they were clean. Just when the men handed their phones, they heard the sound of a helicopter. From a distance, they saw a convoy of police vehicles. Rafau knew they were set up. He thought about his man who had gone with the van driver. *Better one man dies than two.* He knew that the man was not going to spill beans. He also knew that under extreme pressure and pain, any tough man could squeal. The man could turn a state witness for a better deal. Rafau did not care much about that. He would still get to his man should he decide to sell him up. He would kill him even under a tough witness protection. He had men in the police force and correctional services. An accident of electrocution in his shower, or some little food poisoning could always be arranged. *Run. Scatter around. Whatever you do, do not get caught. Shoot to kill. Let us meet down by the river on the north of Mmalesiba village. You, go the opposite direction. Run for 50 metres, and run back the other way.* Rafau's other men did not have to wait for instructions, or wait for him to finish. They took orders and execute as they were running. Rafau took out all the batteries from the phones and threw them to the opposite side. It was for him a good decoy. Police would be running to that direction, thinking Rafau and his men took. He knew that it was not going to be long before the police realize that there were no tracks going further. The only tracks they would find would be those of his decoy man. The helicopter was lowered, and Rafau shouted, *Trees!* His men zigzagged around the path, into the dense trees. Police arrived at the abandoned vehicle. They searched through it with the hope to get incriminating evidence. Some documents. Flashdrives, or anything that could link Rafau to the scene. They went for the tracker inserted underneath the fender. One police officer inserted it to the computer. There was a clear sound, but it did not yield any importance. It was just brief discussion about nothing, and laughter. But as they listened, they heard the leading piece that could help them pursue Rafau, but up to, *Give me your phones, now!* From thereon, there was just a sound distortion. The sound became poorer as Rafau and his men had started running further from the tracker planted on the car, before he threw away the batteries.. *Come this way. They threw away the batteries. They went this way!* The police team turned back and took the opposite direction. That bought Rafau and his men some time to reach the river.

70. Halted, salted

The van driver stopped on the side of the road, next to some trees. *And now, why are we stopping?* Rafau's man asked but still not suspecting anything out of the ordinary. *No, don't worry, Sir. I just want to weewee. -Fair enough. When nature calls, a man has to obey. Let me also relieve myself. Damn, I almost exploded!* Rafau's man did not wait for the driver's approval. The driver was more happier that he also stepped out of the car. The bluegum trees were dense and dark. The guineafowl loudly flapped its wings as it ran out of the shrubs when the men approached. *What the...?* Rafau's man got frightened and held on to the next tree. *Relax, man. It is just a guinea fowl, man.* From behind the tree, came a man and held Rafau's man from behind. He speedily put a moist cloth on the nose of Rafau's man, who resisted just for few seconds and passed out. Rafau's man was handcuffed. *Simon, detective Tjoto here. Undercover operative for detective Selala. We have arrested Rafau's man. He will sing. It seems, sooner that we think, we will get Rafau. Please send me the vehicle to take him, and arrange a clean hideout.* Selala felt good that his contacts were doing a smart job. He did not need to work by the book. Especially, at the time when justice had been gagged, and suffocating under the operations of the mafia gangs.

71. Elevated hopelessness

The helicopter pilot prompted the police group to go to the opposite direction. *Go the other way. You have been played. Rafau and his men are heading north.* By that time, Rafau and his men got into the river. They swam alongside the river bank. They were not to swim across the width of the river. The helicopter would easily spot them. About five hundred metres from the mouth of the river, they got into the opening dug on the side. Rafau removed the siflid tthat had been attached to the opening on the riverbank. He never wanted to have any foreign things to be waiting for them in that watery hiding place. The channel travelled to a good fifty metres into the dry land. A bushy, weaved forest that even the brave police would be afraid to go through. Rafau's men waited by the forest while he went away. Few minutes later, he appeared with four herdboys with well-fed horses. Rafau and his men disappeared into the mountains. Selala's plan failed again.

72. Bombed out

Meanwhile, two bombs detonated at the border gate between Mahlanyeng and Lesotho at around three o'clock in the morning. Five casualties reported. All five were members of the border police. Luckily, at that hour, not much was happening at the border gate. It was not clear whether the criminals were from Lesotho or South Africa. Both countries had the personnel at that border gate. South Africa had to see to its residents coming out of Lesotho safely, and advised against South Africans crossing into Lesotho. Selala read the situation and was confused that it was the doing of either an amateurish gang, or somebody just calling the bluff. Selala knew that a hardened criminal or a mercenary, would ensure that the bomb blast happened where there were multitudes of civilians or targets. *"Commander, we are undersiege. It is clear that South Africa is waging war. Let us attack."* The army in Lesotho was getting impatient. They blamed it all on South African government. *We just need to wait for forensic and ballistic reports. We cannot rush blindly into this. We need to stay calm.* The Commander knew better not to impulsively take deadly decisions. *Commander, while we are remaining calm, people are dying out there, and ... Officer, it's enough. I said we wait, and wait, we will.* Reports came in about other five bombs that went off at the ATMs on the same night. Rafau marveled at the confusion of the two states. He looked at his plan coming nicely together. Selala on the other hand, was more confused, whether it was the doing of a gang or a man who did not want to kill innocent civilians. *Commander, I really do not think you will still say we should wait.* The young officer's patience was running out. His militant heart was pumping up and his right hand was itching to fire a weapon. *There are criminal elements who could be taking advantage of the situation. It could just be some criminals trying their luck at the ATMs. We need to wait until we have established a link between all these bombings.* A defeated, young officer stormed out of Commander's office. Selala knew that Rafaus' men could be involved in that. He suspected that Rafau was just using the ATM bombings to divert the attention from the bigger picture. The intention was to plunge the two countries into bloodshed. Selala could only observe, and took note of the occurrences. He had no authority to do anything. He was a suspended officer of the law. He was helpless. His detective opinions would not count.

73. Try next door

Selala's appeal was declined. The gravity of the offence was stated as the reason, especially because it was seen to be a contravention of the sensitive Witness Protection Law. After reading the letter from the National Police and Defence Department, Selala was devastated. *Dear Mr Selala Nteterwane. This serves to regrettably inform you that your application to appeal a suspension without pay, has been declined. You can still take your matter forward to the Magistrate court, at your own costs, if you so wish.* Selala was very angry than disappointed. He felt that the force did not do much to protect him. He felt that his employer had already persecuted him without a fair trial. *This writ seeks to inform you that I will be taking my appeal to the High Court, at own cost. Hope you find this in order. Yours faithfully, Selala Nteterwane.* After handing over the letter to the registrar of police complaints directorate, Selala felt that a new war with his employer had started. He felt that he wasted his sweat and blood for the ungrateful employer. He suspected that there were other external forces. Negative forces to take him down. Evil forces digging on his past. Satanic forces out to demonise his good name.

74. Running with beasts

Few days later, Selala received a notification of the hearing set within three days. He went to the registrar's office. *What is the meaning of this? Do you people hate me so much that you cannot wait to see me gone? -I have no idea what you are talking about, Sir.* The registrar was calm. She had never seen Selala that angry. She always heard Selala talking against anger, whenever he had to address the newly appointed police officers. *Anger is not a virtue. It is an animal's instinct. Use your head, not your heart.* The new officers were getting used to his jargon of the combination between the head, heart, and hand. *Why am I getting this notification for a hearing within three days? This is illegal. I need to be given ample time to prepare for my defence.* Selala felt that he was not going to lodge an appeal after another. He decided he would go ahead with the hearing. He also decided that he did not require a representation. He wanted to take the case upon his shoulders. *But, Sir, do you realize the seriousness of the principal charge?* Selala knew he was already put on trial and sentenced. The timing for the allegation was perfect. It came at the time when many people were celebrating the Anti-women abuse campaign. Everywhere he went, he would be greeted with a nasty stare. He knew that people had already judged him. All he was to wait for, was his sentencing. He vowed to fight. *Mr Selala, tell the house, why did you take the witness to your place of residence? -By the time the paperwork would be done, it would be too late to have the witness kept at the police offices. It was not safe there. It was the first place the mafia would hit. -So, you felt that your house was safer than the police premises? Tell me, Mr Nteterwane, do you keep more weapons and ammunition than those at the police premises? -As I said, my intention was to ensure that the witness was safe, while I was still waiting for the signatures from my superiors, who were not in office.* Selala felt that the line of questioning was offensive, but he kept calm. *Did you sexually harassed the witness while at your place? -No. Never. -Then, Mr Nteterwane, why would the witness say you did that? Your guess is as good as mine.* At that stage the chairperson of the hearing intervened. *Mr Nteterwane, please respond to questions directly. -I do not know why the witness say I harassed her. -Was it raining on that day, Mr Nteterwane?* Selala kept quiet a moment, trying to remember. *How is the weather part of this? -Mr Nteterwane, please answer the question.* Selala cleared his throat and reluctantly confirmed. *So, you asked the witness to undress in front of you, as you held the dry towel. -That's absolute madness! I did not do such a thing. Mr Nteterwane, watch your tone.* Selala was fuming. He felt that he had been too calm. He felt that the cruel world was throwing missiles at him, and he needed to be equal to the task. *Please answer the question.*

75.Cold

Selala took a deep breath, loosened his tie. *I went into the bedroom and brought the towel and my gown. I told the witness that she could change her wet clothes and I went back into the bedroom to give her the privacy she needed. -I put to you, Mr Nteterwane, that you came back from the bedroom, while the witness was still undressing. You approached her in an inappropriate manner from behind and.... -That's bull! This is ridiculous. -Order, Order! Mr Nteterwane, please refrain from using that kind of language! Wait for your turn and respond to the questions, directly.* The chairperson felt that something was not adding up and asked the prosecution. *Let me get this straight. You said Mr Nteterwane asked the witness to undress in front of him, is that right? -Yes, Sir. -Mr Nteterwane said when the witness undressed he was in the bedroom to give her that privacy. Is that correct? -Yes, Sir, it is what he said. -You also said that Mr Nteterwane appeared from the bedroom and approached the witness inappropriately from behind. Am I right? -You can say so, Sir. -Am I right, Prosecutor? -Yes, Sir, you are right.* The chairperson took few moments to write down his notes. It was at that moment that Rafau found a breathing space. His heart was beginning to smile. He thought the chairperson may also have detected the discrepancy that he sensed. Selala learnt not to celebrate prematurely. He knew that the case was not a simple one. The charges were serious. The witnesses were evil and the society already judged him. All odds were against him. The chairperson lifted his head, cleared the throat and addressed the house. *I have listened carefully to the evidence brought forward and the responses from the defendant. I have come to the conclusion that the charges seem to have been trumped up, given the contradictions in the statements by the prosecution. It is my view therefore that, the evidence brought forward is not wholly reliable. There are elements of untrue declaration, which I will engage the prosecution on.* Selala felt that things were going his way. He almost felt that he would be given his gun and badge back. He so wanted to get back there, and arrest criminals. He hated the fact that he was standing trial in a hearing that did not favour him at all. The chairperson continued. *My final decision on the matter is that the case be taken for trial in the magistrate court, within fourteen days. Until such time, suspension still stands. Adjourned.*

76. Mad temple

Selala went deaf. The last words by the chairperson kept echoing in his ears, as he went out of the door. He did not even hear the secretary of the hearing session asking him to sign the trial sheet. When he stepped outside the office door, he walked straight into the pedestrian traffic that started jamming immediately in front of that office, at the robots. He did not see whether the robot was red or green. He simply followed the flow of pedestrians walking about. Selala kept walking. He hardly heard the hooting cars. His eyes were fixated to the blue sky. It was like he was begging for justice from above. At the end of the street, Selala felt some strange silence. It seemed he had left the multitudes of pedestrians behind. He just kept walking. He stopped in front of a man in tattered clothes. He sported the look of a street beggar. Around him were few people listening attentively to this man. The man had gathered a lot of scrap into his trolley at the corner of the office buildings. There were dirty blankets and plastics and cardboards, on what seemed like his sleeping place. One of the people passing by, did not pay attention. *Argh, it is Mad Joe again.* Selala came closer to listen to dirty Mad Joe. *The temple is my home, but the devil gives me hugs. I am the fountain of life, you just do not know. Justice and baptism. Ntshebo, bring me coffee. Stop the train. I am swimming with sharks. Amen. Off-side referee! Come here, Sophie, give me some sugar.* He said that, pulling one of the ladies standing there, by the dress. *Hai, soka!* The lady pushed him away, to the delight of the laughing crowd. *Maybe they bewitched Mad Joe, because he loved women.* One old man remarked as they laughed together with his friend. They were convinced that Mad Joe was bewitched. They just could not prove that. Selala was extremely confused. This mad man said all of those things, that did not make sense, yet profound. It was clear to him, that the man was really mad. He was a really smart mad man, though. Selala came closer. Mad Joe, started singing. *My heart cries out to you Lord. Nthoto give me some meat. Free me, Free my soul.* Mad Joe kept repeating those lines. The song made a little melody sense, but it was not going anywhere. Selala had never heard that song. He thought Mad Joe made it up. It could be true that he made it up. What amazed Selala was that the crowd started singing together with him. Where they could catch up with Mad Joe's tempo, they started clapping. Mad Joe started dancing as he was singing. The song was gaining momentum. The crowd took it up. The crowd was madly in love with a mad man. They loved Mad Joe. He sang with a huge smile on his face.

77.As I leave this world

Mad Joe started crying as he sang. Selala listened the calm of Mad Joe's voice when he came to the lyrics, *Free me, Free my soul*. Selala knew that something deeply serious about that song touched Mad Joe. He started clapping hands . Mad Joe kept singing. Tears were flooding down his dirty, greased face. Salty tears started moisturizing Mad Joe's cracked, dry lips. It seemed Mad Joe had not eaten a thing for days. Some of the people in the crowd singing with Mad Joe, started crying. Selala was also closer to tears. He did not know why he would be crying. Would it be because others were doing that, or that he was touched by Mad Joe's rendition? Selala did not know why he was pulled into that web of emotions. He just kept hearing *Free me, Free my soul*. Selala took out a facial tissue and wiped out a tear. He knew that he was like Mad Joe. He felt that he was chained. He was chained to man-made trees. He was chained to false accusations. He was deliberately derailed from his noble course. Selala wanted to be free. He wanted to free his soul. The taxi he just stopped, was not free, though.

58. Ingredients

Selala's hope was fading out. He felt that he tried all he could. He decided that he was not going to be chained. He knew that there was a possibility of losing the case. Somebody could bribe the legal arm to make justice go blind, against him. He decided that his fate was not going to be decided by the ailing justice. He had one option left. He needed to go the basic way. Selala needed to feed the soul. Selala connected with his operatives in Lesotho. Rafau would eat. Rafau would die. His stake was rare. He loved it that way. It was served hot. The serving lady was very hot. Room service. Rafau ate.