

Scheepers gave an order. Why should I tell you more? They were of my kin, of my flesh and bone—was it a disgrace to share with them, to suffer what they suffered? After all, as Snyders said, relationship is stronger than the Government, and I went with them. I no longer saw Hanni's face, I no longer heard Martins' voice. The fire died down inside the room while we were standing talking outside and arguing. They fetched a horse for me, a fine chestnut, one of their spare ones. It had a saddle and bridle, a military bridle and a constable's saddle, and they said it was to be mine. Then they put a gun in my hands, a Lee-Metford which 'Noldus said they had got at Swartpan in the fight with Gorrings's men. That was to be mine, too.

I turned and went back into the room, and as I did so I heard Scheepers say to Oompie, "Let him be. He has chosen our road." I was grateful to him for it, for I wanted to be alone, to linger a moment in the room where Hanni had died and where the children slept. The ayah was sitting at the door, sewing by the light of a guttering candle, that flickered into sudden brightness as the gust of wind struck it when I opened the door. She knew what I had come for. She was a good old soul, ayah Kaatjie, and I knew that she would take care of the children.

"Little master"—she called me that, for she had carried me pick-a-back round the farm when I was a child—"baasie, is baasie really going?"

"Yes, I cannot help it," I said. "I must. You will look after them?"

"As I did after you, baasie. Have no fear. But you, baasie? What if they should catch you, baasie?"

"They will not catch me so soon, ayah," I said lightly; "and if they should—well, one cannot die more than once."

I went towards the bed where they lay, Mock and Annie. Mock was snoring, for he had fallen asleep an hour ago, but the girl was breathing quietly, and I kissed her very softly, for I feared to wake her. As I turned away the ayah came