

REYKA

EPISODE THREE

"MAGHRIB"

Reyka Lombard (35)

Yule Nkabinde (29)

PRETORIA - PRESENT DAY

Marlene Lombard

Khadija

Abdullah

Brett; Cindy Bowman

Superintendent Tutu

Roderick L. Bartholomew

Mr. Qadir

"JUKEBOX JEOPARDY" - 1981

Angus Speelman

FADE IN:

INT. STUDY - LOMBARD HOUSE - PRETORIA EAST - DAY

MARLENE LOMBARD (54) sits in a leather chair and, referring to hand written notes, narrates her new novel into a Dictaphone:

MARLENE

"...the manager's voice slips, betraying a calm facade, 'Ladies and gentlemen, do we have a doctor in the house?' Beads of sweat form above his lip as he scans the hotel foyer. At a lit table, below an oil painting of a horse, Joss van Hopper blushes at her benefactor's romantic suggestion. Fortunately for her, the guests in the Mombasa Hilton are so preoccupied with evacuation that his brutish overture is lost amongst the alarm. Unruffled, but careful not to offend, Joss van Hopper raises her hand and summons the manager, 'Sir, I am a doctor'..."

Suddenly, Marlene stops dictating as she hears a low-pitched, gruff BARK.

She switches off the Dictaphone and listens.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LOMBARD HOUSE - DAY

Marlene moves quickly through the luxurious and tastefully decorated open plan house...

...and passes a wall, on which hangs a framed family photograph. We may recognise a young Reyka (9) standing apart from a closely knit family.

INT. KITCHEN - LOMBARD HOUSE - DAY

Marlene is drawn to movement outside her kitchen window.

She opens the curtains and peers out.

The sooty black face of a vervet monkey appears at the glass. Marlene holds her heart in fright.

INT. GARAGE - LOMBARD HOUSE - DAY

Marlene rounds two high performance cars and approaches steel shelves packed with gardening tools and potting soil. She rummages around and finds a hidden stash of cigarette butts in a flower pot.

MARLENE
 (-- mumbling to
 herself)
 How many times do I need to tell
 those god-damn people not to smoke
 in my garden?

INT. KITCHEN - LOMBARD HOUSE - DAY

Marlene pulls sanitary gloves onto her hands.

She picks up a kitchen knife, takes a banana out a fruit bowl and slices the skin open.

Marlene laces the banana with a small granular substance resembling poppy seeds.

EXT. GARDEN - LOMBARD HOUSE - DUSK

Marlene slowly opens her living room door. She steps out and moves furtively to a garden table.

In the trees above her, Marlene hears the monkey CHUTTER -- a low-pitched, mono-tonal and staccato call that expresses aggression.

Marlene places the banana on the table and walks quickly back to the safety of her living room.

She locks the door behind her and looks out through the glass at her trap.

CUT TO BLACK:

MAIN TITLES

FADE IN:

EXT. NONDESCRIPT GARDEN - APARTMENT BLOCK - DAWN

NKABINDE waits on a bench. A dishevelled REYKA joins him, having quickly pulled on dressing gown.

REYKA
 Hey.

NKABINDE
 Hey.

REYKA
 So?

NKABINDE
 Lombard, listen...I'm sorry.

REYKA
 Just forget it.

NKABINDE
 I didn't see much.

REYKA

I don't care.

NKABINDE

Really?

REYKA

Sure. No stress.

NKABINDE

Thank you.

(-- quick to explain)

Not that I should thank you. I didn't see what you think I saw.

REYKA

What do I think you saw?

NKABINDE

Nothing.

REYKA

So we're good?

NKABINDE

We're great.

REYKA

OK then.

NKABINDE

I should've called first.

REYKA

Next time you will.

NKABINDE

Guaranteed.

Reyka nods. A silence. Then:

REYKA

What we got?

Nkabinde refers to his iPad:

NKABINDE

Abubaker Basim -- sixty-four, Muslim, worked as a garden services supervisor. His family are seeking legal action because he's on life support at Pretoria State Hospital after consuming a banana laced with poison.

REYKA

Why did he eat the banana?

NKABINDE

He didn't know it was poisoned.

Reyka looks intently at Nkabinde; "is this a joke?".

REYKA

It's early. It's Saturday. I'm in my pyjamas.

NKABINDE

The director wants us on this.

REYKA

What's poisoned fruit got to do with us?

NKABINDE

(-- clears his throat)

The person who laced the banana is Marlene Lombard.

Nkabinde lets this sink in.

REYKA

Is he going to die?

NKABINDE

Two heart attacks and his condition's not improving.

REYKA

I have a conflict of interest.

NKABINDE

The director is fully aware. But, considering her high profile, he wants us to provide the police with a recommendation on how to move forward with the case.

REYKA

High profile? She writes trash.

NKABINDE

Her novels are a global phenomenon. "Tusk" was top of the best-seller list...

REYKA

(-- overlapping)

The director wants me on this precisely because she's family, right?

(-- off his "yes" look)

I'm going back to bed.

Reyka is leaving, on:

NKABINDE

If Basim dies, the family will go for culpable homicide and they could win.

(MORE)

NKABINDE (CONT'D)

(-- beat)

Your aunt could go to jail.

This gives Reyka pause.

REYKA

Intent?

NKABINDE

She says she was trying to poison monkeys.

Reyka smiles -- that sounds like her.

REYKA

How appropriate...the writer gives her readers a "poisoned banana." She'd love that.

Reyka walks toward her flat.

REYKA (CONT'D)

Give me five.

NKABINDE

Take ten.

Nkabinde waits on the bench.

INT. UNMARKED POLICE CAR - MOVING

Nkabinde drives. In the front passenger seat, Reyka ruffles up her hair in the rearview mirror.

NKABINDE

Joss van Hopper made me want to become a cop.

REYKA

Get real.

NKABINDE

I've pre-ordered the new book. Saving it for Christmas.

REYKA

You're a fan.

NKABINDE

Aren't you?

REYKA

I'm family.

NKABINDE

I grew up fantasizing about being her.

(MORE)

NKABINDE (CONT'D)

Super-cool doctor, funded by rich benefactor, sets up mobile HIV clinics in Sub Saharan Africa ...corrupt bad guys, daring escapes and loads of sex. What more could a kid from KZN want?

REYKA

You could start with self respect. Her books are an insult to African people, especially those suffering from HIV.

NKABINDE

They're just adventure stories.

REYKA

You don't know her. Everything means something.

NKABINDE

Rumour at my book club is that she's going crazy. That she lives on her own and never leaves the house.

REYKA

Book club?

NKABINDE

Every second Tuesday.

REYKA

You don't read.

NKABINDE

You don't know much about book clubs.

REYKA

Agoraphobia.

(-- beat)

She fears the real world and writes as a defence against it. She's unwilling to confront reality so she lives through Joss van Hopper. You can park.

Nkabinde pulls over and parks the car in a leafy suburban street.

EXT. LOMBARD HOUSE - DAY

NINA, the domestic worker, greets Reyka politely at the gate and lets her and Nkabinde in. She invites them to follow a footpath to the front of the house.

EXT. GARDEN - LOMBARD HOUSE - DAY

Nkabinde's eyes fall on the vast, pristine garden and sparkling blue swimming pool.

NKABINDE

Mistake number one: not applying myself in Miss Khumalo's creative writing class.

REYKA

All this is wasted on her. She creates Joss van Hopper's world to afford this one, but in both cases, she can only observe. She doesn't know how to experience them.

Nkabinde notices Marlene standing at her kitchen window watching them.

NKABINDE

I think you're being observed right now.

REYKA

It's not me she's looking at.

Reyka smiles, and walks toward the house.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LOMBARD HOUSE - DAY

Marlene sits across a coffee table from Reyka and Nkabinde.

NKABINDE

You have a beautiful garden, Mrs. Lombard.

MARLENE

Thank you, but I can't take any credit for it. As you know, the man you should be praising is in hospital.

(-- to Reyka)

How are you dear?

REYKA

I'm good.

MARLENE

I missed your birthday.

REYKA

That's okay.

MARLENE

I wrote you a card but forgot to mail it. It's in my study.

Marlene stands.

REYKA

Marlene. We can do that later.

Marlene sits, smiles awkwardly at Nkabinde.

MARLENE

The new book is taking longer than I expected and I tend to forget about everything else when I'm on the home stretch.

REYKA

It's fine.

Nkabinde notices a scratching post at the end of the couch.

NKABINDE

You have a cat?

REYKA

Prince Caspian. Siamese. The most beautiful cat in the world. Where is he? It's not like him to be shy.

MARLENE

(-- bravely)

I lost him.

REYKA

Lost him?

NKABINDE

Cats wander off sometimes.

REYKA

Did you search for him?

MARLENE

He was taken from me.

REYKA

Taken by whom?

Marlene doesn't respond.

NKABINDE

Mrs. Lombard, can we talk about the incident?

MARLENE

By all means.

NKABINDE

We've been asked to conduct interviews and assess the case on behalf of the police. The victim's family...

MARLENE

Victim? That family are trying to hustle me. I can spot a con a mile away. I didn't intend to harm the man. He ate the banana.

NKABINDE

Why did you lace it with poison?

MARLENE

To kill the monkeys.

NKABINDE

You knew the poison was toxic enough to kill the monkeys?

MARLENE

I didn't have a clue, but I certainly hoped it would kill them.

REYKA

(-- softly)

Tannie, nee.

MARLENE

I had no intention of harming the man so why are you looking at me like that, girl?

REYKA

Don't you think it's cruel that you intended to harm monkeys?

MARLENE

They invade my house and contaminate my garden. What was I supposed to do? Befriend them and listen to their side of the story.

Marlene laughs at her own "joke". Nkabinde shifts awkwardly, checks his watch.

NKABINDE

I need to get to the hospital. Will you please excuse me?

MARLENE

Of course. Nina will show you out.

REYKA

(-- to Nkabinde)

I'll get a taxi back.

Nkabinde nods "OK" and exits glass doors that lead out into the garden. Marlene watches him leave.

MARLENE

Is he your boss?

REYKA

We're partners.

MARLENE
 (-- mischievous)
 In which sense?

REYKA
 (-- ignoring that)
 You love animals. What's got into
 you?

MARLENE
 I adored Prince Caspian, but really
 dear, he was only a cat.

Reyka looks at her closely.

MARLENE (CONT'D)
 Don't presume to know who I am.
 Those monkeys are ghastly vermin
 who need to be taught a lesson.
 When I eventually succeed in killing
 one of them, the rest will get the
 picture. They're just like us in
 that way.

INT. CORRIDOR - PRETORIA STATE HOSPITAL - DAY

Nkabinde is escorted by a NURSE. She stops and indicates
 at Abubaker Basim's wife, KHADIJA (57), and their son,
 ABDULLAH (33).

Nkabinde thanks the nurse, as she peels off and attends to
 a PATIENT.

Nkabinde approaches Khadija.

NKABINDE
 Mrs. Basim, I'm Detective Nkabinde
 with the provincial police
 department.

KHADIJA
 My son, Abdullah.

Nkabinde greets Abdullah.

NKABINDE
 How is your father doing?

ABDULLAH
 He had another seizure this morning.

NKABINDE
 I'm sorry to hear that.

KHADIJA
 How can humans do what that woman
 did? It's such a selfish act,
 lacking in any grace or humility.

ABDULLAH
 Mother.

KHADIJA

Is there no kindness left in this world?

ABDULLAH

(-- to Nkabinde)

This is a difficult time for us.

NKABINDE

(-- to Khadija)

Anger is OK. I understand your need to express it.

ABDULLAH

Anger is not OK. My father needs us to be calm for him. Only prayer will give him the strength to fight off this poison.

Nkabinde nods "yes" out of respect.

KHADIJA

My son is right. I must contain my ill-feeling toward that woman, but I expect this from a writer. She lives in a world where irresponsible people don't operate under God's laws. The problem for that woman is that my AB is not a character in one of her books. He is flesh and bone and now his blood is contaminated by the ink from her pen.

INT. KITCHEN - LOMBARD HOUSE - DAY

Reyka watches as Marlene fills a jug with water and tops up Prince Caspian's water bowl.

Marlene is oblivious to Reyka's concern as she continues with her story:

MARLENE

...it must've been around four in the morning. ER wanted to know the type of poison I'd put in the banana. I checked the container and told him it was temic.

REYKA

Where did you get it?

MARLENE

It was in the garage from when Andre was alive. He probably used it as a pesticide for the rose bushes.

REYKA

Oom Andre's been gone for twelve years. Most chemicals that old aren't even legal now.

MARLENE

There was a monkey at my window. I didn't think about the expiry date.

REYKA

Don't admit that. The Basim family lawyer will try and prove that your negligence led directly to Mr. Basim's current condition.

MARLENE

Negligence is not a crime.

REYKA

It's a complex issue that the courts will not dismiss until they've assessed the consequences.

MARLENE

I did not force-feed him the banana. He took it off my garden table. If anything I should charge the man with theft.

REYKA

The man has a name, Marlene.

MARLENE

Don't patronize me. I know AB. He came to me three times a week. We had an understanding and he broke our trust when he ate that banana.

REYKA

Did you ever speak with him? Get to know him.

MARLENE

Of course I did. He told me all about his grandchildren and said that he was not a big reader otherwise he would've enjoyed my books. We had a relationship and he betrayed me. God-damn thief!

INT. WAITING ROOM - PRETORIA STATE HOSPITAL - DAY

Nkabinde makes notes on his iPad as he interviews Khadija.

KHADIJA

AB tried to do charitable deeds every day. He was a founding member of the Pretoria North Muslim Association and served as treasurer and secretary for twenty-five years.

(MORE)

KHADIJA (CONT'D)

He's a beloved husband, father and grandfather...

(-- voice cracks)

...he doesn't deserve this. We all don't need the shame this will bring.

NKABINDE

Shame?

KHADIJA

AB is a proud man and this will harm his reputation. They'll find out that he was infected by toxins and it'll be spoken about in our community. If only we didn't have to disclose his condition.

NKABINDE

I don't understand. He's the victim.

KHADIJA

Eating a poisoned banana makes him seem like he couldn't keep his appetite in check. He ate his usual oats breakfast that very morning. It's not like him to eat again at work. Why was he hungry?

The DOCTOR arrives at the door.

DOCTOR

Mrs. Basim.

Khadija stands and hurries out.

EXT. BOWMAN HOUSE - PRETORIA EAST - DAY

Reyka is on a wooden deck, sipping homemade lemonade, as she interviews BRETT and CINDY Bowman.

CINDY

Mrs. Lombard's garden is the gold medal-winner in the suburb, isn't it, Brett? Spectacular. Really.

BRETT

We had to let AB go.

CINDY

...you know it takes a whole team of men hours and hours to keep it in shape.

REYKA

You dismissed Mr. Basim?

BRETT

Cindy caught him red handed.

CINDY
Outrageous. Really.

BRETT
I'll say one thing for him -- always
punctual.

CINDY
Always well dressed.

BRETT
But one day...

CINDY
AB didn't know I was there. I
overheard him threaten his worker --
he said he would not pay him because
he'd just spend it on beer.

BRETT
We felt that was totally unnecessary
so we fired him.

CINDY
"Let him go", Brett.

BRETT
He was always polite though...and
one hell of a gardener.

REYKA
Do you get monkeys on your property?

CINDY
Do we ever. Tell her, Bretty.
(-- to Reyka)
He's the expert.

BRETT
I read on the net that they invade
residential areas because their
natural habitats are shrinking so
rapidly. Our neighbours have
completely covered their back yards
and windows with chicken wire to
stop them from raiding their
kitchens. Clever little
skelms...they chow anything, hey.
Mostly fruit though. Mostly fruit.

CINDY
I completely get that Mrs. Lombard's
at the end of her tether, but I'm
sorry, you can't just kill an animal
in such a cold way. Especially a
monkey. I mean they're like us,
hey...sort of.

BRETT

What's quite strange is that killing a monkey won't get rid of the problem because the rest of them will return to the place of the death to mourn their lost mate.

CINDY

Shame, man.

BRETT

I read that on the net.

Brett and Cindy smile at Reyka as she sips her lemonade.

INT. WAITING ROOM - PRETORIA STATE HOSPITAL - DAY

Nkabinde sits with Khadija as she flips through a celebrity tabloid magazine.

KHADIJA

Don't these kids in Hollywood have parents? Detective, do you approve of this?

Nkabinde looks up from his iPad.

Khadija points at a photograph of a male celebrity with an ON/OFF strip below insert-photographs of six beautiful young women.

KHADIJA (CONT'D)

Jumping from one lover's bed to another...ravenous, like a virus. Is this what our children aspire to be?

NKABINDE

(-- clears his throat)

That was me ten years ago. I never thought about the consequences. My sexual appetite was gluttonous, I couldn't get enough. It shows other people that you take what you want and don't care if you get full, you just keep taking.

KHADIJA

AB's the only man I've ever been with. What will my grandchildren think of us? Is our fidelity too much pressure for them to live up to. Will they react against us and end up like this Hollywood star?

The doctor enters with a solemn Abdullah.

DOCTOR

Your husband's condition is stable, Mrs. Basim, but there's nothing more we can do for him. I'm sorry.

Abdullah kneels before his mother and holds her shoulders as she sobs into his arms.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

Reyka approaches her flat. She unlocks and pushes the door open.

Reyka steps into her flat and closes the door.

INT. CELLAR - FLASHBACK (1981)

Reyka (9) lies on the worn mattress with her hands pressed over her ears. Angus Speelman is having a coughing fit as he watches "Jukebox Jeopardy".

Reyka can't take it anymore. She rolls off the mattress and goes to a dresser where she finds a bottle of "Chestbuster" cough medicine.

Reyka approaches Speelman, dressed in his blue maid's uniform. She spoon-feeds him the last drops of "Chestbuster" from the bottle. He opens his mouth dutifully and accepts the syrup.

Reyka holds it upside down.

REYKA

Empty.

ANGUS SPEELMAN

I don't care.

REYKA

If the infection spreads to your chest you could die.

Speelman looks at her. Hating her. Like a child.

Reyka places the bottle on the dresser and returns to her mattress.

INT. PRIVATE WARD - PRETORIA STATE HOSPITAL - DAY

Reyka stands at the door and observes Abdullah at his father's bedside.

NKABINDE (V.O.)

At seven-thirty this morning,
Abubaker Basim passed away.

Abdullah gently closes his father's eyes.

INT. NONDESCRIPT BOARDROOM - PROVINCIAL HQ - DAY

Nkabinde chairs a meeting with Reyka, Superintendent TUTU, Roderick L. BARTHOLOMEW, and a PA, in attendance.

NKABINDE

(-- to PA)

For the minutes, I'd like it recorded that Doctor Reyka Lombard and myself are in attendance with Superintendent Tutu from the Pretoria East South African Police Service, and an expert in toxicology from the University of Pretoria, Mr. Roderick L. Bartholomew. Thank you for joining us gentlemen.

Nkabinde gives Tutu his cue.

TUTU

The Basim family lawyers will try to prove that Mrs. Lombard's actions were motivated by malice and led directly to Mr. Basim's death. If they fail to persuade us to press criminal charges, we anticipate they'll embark on civil action.

REYKA

Mrs. Lombard has already confessed her intention was to poison and kill the monkeys.

NKABINDE

This contravenes the Animal Protection Act and could get her into hot water with anti-cruelty groups. -- Mr. Bartholomew.

BARTHOLOMEW

The chemical substance that brought on Mr. Basim's heart failure is called temic, used to manufacture household pesticide. Local crime syndicates planning to attack family homes will kill the guard dogs with temic. There has been widespread calls countrywide to have the toxin banned because there are many other safer alternatives for weed control and the criminal fraternity is succeeding in using it as a weapon.

TUTU

Mrs. Lombard should've known that the substance could've ended up in human hands. In terms of the Environmental Conservation Act, she can expect the minimum penalty of a fine.

FLASH CUT TO:

INT. LEGAL CHAMBERS - CONTINUOUS

A lavish open plan with round oak table as its centrepiece.

The same people are in attendance, with the inclusion of Basim family lawyer, Advocate QADIR SC, Marlene, Khadija, Abdullah and a legal CLERK.

QADIR

My client will not be satisfied with that result considering Mrs. Lombard's private fortune is worth millions.

TUTU

The link between the fruit and Mr. Basim's death is tenuous. As a result the state will not be pressing criminal charges.

QADIR

I'm insulted that my client will receive no compensation for being infected by Mrs. Lombard's poison and losing his life?

Qadir looks around the room. There is no reaction.

QADIR (CONT'D)

My team will prepare a civil case to sue for damages. Thank you, everyone.

The meeting breaks up. Reyka stands, and approaches Khadija.

REYKA

Mrs. Basim, my deepest sympathy for your loss.

KHADIJA

Thank you.

REYKA

I hope we can come to a mutually beneficial settlement. I know that Mrs. Lombard feels deep remorse for her actions.

KHADIJA

Remorse won't bring AB back.

(-- beat)

I'm sorry, who did you say you were?

Nkabinde overhears this, and comes in to "save" Reyka.

NKABINDE

Doctor Lombard and I are consulting with the police.

KHADIJA

Lombard?

REYKA

Mrs. Lombard is my mother's sister.

Khadija goes cold.

NKABINDE

Mrs. Basim, in cases of unnatural death, the state needs to conduct an autopsy.

KHADIJA

My husband is to be buried as soon as possible.

REYKA

(-- sincere)

We can offer your family the complimentary services of a government funeral home. They will take care of all your arrangements.

Khadija reaches out for Abdullah, and tugs on his sleeve to say that she wants to leave.

Khadija exits. Abdullah hangs back to explain:

ABDULLAH

Muslims don't use coffins or funeral parlours.

Reyka is mortified.

ABDULLAH (CONT'D)

(-- gently)

It's OK. You didn't know.

Abdullah smiles warmly at Reyka, and follows Khadija from the room...

INT. LIVING ROOM - BASIM HOUSE - DAY

With male RELATIVES in attendance, Abdullah washes his father's body and wraps it in a shroud.

EXT. GARDEN - LOMBARD HOUSE - DAY

Reyka walks around. She notices that the garden is showing signs of neglect.

She looks at the blue surface of the swimming pool.

Reyka goes to the pool pump and turns the timer off --

-- the motor ceases.

INT. KITCHEN - LOMBARD HOUSE - DAY

Reyka watches Marlene at the sink. She washes out the cat bowl and refills it with water.

Marlene places the bowl at its usual place.

REYKA

Tannie?

MARLENE

Yes, my angel.

REYKA

This is real. You can't escape this.

MARLENE

I don't know. Escape feels like a good option sometimes.

REYKA

Is Prince Caspian alive?

Marlene looks sharply at her.

MARLENE

No.

REYKA

Why do you fill his bowl?

Marlene looks at the bowl, genuinely surprised that it's filled with water.

MARLENE

It must be habit. I've had him for twelve years.

REYKA

You're bound to the Basim family by choices you made...why are you running from them?

Marlene slowly takes a seat at the kitchen table.

MARLENE

Have you asked yourself that question?

REYKA

What?

MARLENE

You made a decision to get in the car with that man...and you've been running from that choice ever since.

REYKA

Do you really think that's the same?

MARLENE

Why not? You made a choice.

REYKA

I was nine.

MARLENE

So what?

REYKA

I trusted him. My motives were pure. It's precisely because you've lost faith in people that you could kill a monkey.

MARLENE

Your legitimacy is not under question. At least not by me.

REYKA

What's that supposed to mean?

MARLENE

You're the one who fears being revealed as a phoney. As a woman, a lover, a mother...and even as an innocent nine year old girl. Sometimes we make the wrong choices...that's life. But when do we stop paying?

INT. GARAGE - LOMBARD HOUSE - DAY

Reyka rounds the high performance cars and approaches the steel shelves. On the floor, she sees a few cigarette butts.

Reyka bends down and picks up a butt, sniffs it and rubs the texture of the filter.

TIME CUT TO:

INT. GARAGE - LOMBARD HOUSE - FLASHBACK

Marlene holds a palm full of cigarette butts. But what we didn't pick up at first, is that Marlene is genuinely frightened and --

-- is having a panic attack.

Marlene takes deep breaths to control her anxiety.

She drops the cigarette butts on the floor and thoughtlessly picks up a container with "pesticide" written on the side.

TIME CUT TO:

INT. GARAGE - LOMBARD HOUSE - PRESENT

Reyka comes out of her reverie. She carefully places the cigarette butt on the steel shelf and exits the garage...

INT. KITCHEN - LOMBARD HOUSE - DAY

Reyka enters on Marlene, who is standing by the kitchen window.

REYKA

When the monkeys came...why were you frightened?

MARLENE

They have such large eyes. Frontally positioned. It was saying, "I'm here, I'm coming in, and you can't stop me." It was like I was looking at the face of death.

Suddenly, Marlene's eyes are drawn to activity outside the kitchen window --

-- a group of men are congregating in her garden.

MARLENE (CONT'D)

Call the police.

Reyka sees Abdullah is amongst the men.

REYKA

Let's see what they want.

EXT. GARDEN - LOMBARD HOUSE - MAGHRIB

As the sun sets, the Basim male relatives roll out their prayer mats and start bowing down toward Mecca.

In the distance, Marlene and Reyka can be seen watching them, from behind the kitchen window.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LOMBARD HOUSE - NIGHT

Abdullah sits with Reyka. The rest of the Basim relatives explore the garden outside.

ABDULLAH

The Maghrib is the fourth of five formal daily prayers for Muslims to remember God as the day comes to a close.

Marlene enters and places an envelope in front of Abdullah.

MARLENE

AB's services in my garden supported your family for many years.

ABDULLAH

He was very proud of being the breadwinner.

MARLENE

As a token of my sympathy for your loss, I'd like you to give that to your mother.

ABDULLAH

What is it?

MARLENE

A check for fifty-thousand rand.

ABDULLAH

That's not necessary.

MARLENE

I insist. Please. Take it.

Abdullah is not comfortable. He looks at Reyka, who is filled with empathy for him.

ABDULLAH

Forgive me for asking, Mrs. Lombard. Do you have a husband?

MARLENE

I was widowed twelve years ago.

ABDULLAH

My condolences.

MARLENE

Thank you.

ABDULLAH

Perhaps you understand.

MARLENE

Understand?

ABDULLAH

What my mother needs.

MARLENE

Of course. Which is why I have offered her a substantial amount of money.

ABDULLAH

With all due respect, your financial gesture is not what she needs.

MARLENE

I know women. Let her decide. Under the circumstances, money can be the perfect remedy.

ABDULLAH

I'm sorry, but there's no easy cure for this.

Abdullah stands and leaves through the living room door. He rounds up his relatives and they move away...

MARLENE

What justice do they expect I can provide? They need to find their own closure. I didn't make everyone feel guilty when Andre dropped dead on that tennis court.

REYKA

Justice for them is the belief that you've lost something too.

MARLENE

You talk to me about loss. I've been diagnosed with level three Agoraphobia. The panic attacks can last up to twenty minutes and the medication I'm on makes working for longer than two hours per day impossible. I'm losing my mind, Reyka. What greater loss can there be?

INT. BATHROOM - MARLENE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Reyka brushes her teeth with her finger. She wears a vest and shorts.

She opens the medicine cabinet and sees a bottle of "Chestbuster" cough syrup.

INT. STUDY - MARLENE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Marlene sits in her leather chair, and narrates into the Dictaphone:

MARLENE

"The Kenyan Minister of Health was undoubtedly handsome, and Joss van Hopper suspected she wasn't the first doctor to be seduced by his plans to roll out mobile HIV clinics in the delta."

Marlene stops as she sees Reyka standing at the doorway.

REYKA

Thanks for making up the spare bedroom. I asked Nina to set up the croquet set. I thought we could have a game tomorrow.

MARLENE

I'm glad the clothes fit.

REYKA

Good-night.

Reyka is about to leave, when:

REYKA (CONT'D)

Oh, also...the pool's green.

MARLENE

Is it?

REYKA

I'll call someone.

MARLENE

Don't bother. I've decided to sub-
divide the property and sell the
land.

REYKA

Why?

Marlene puts down her Dictaphone. Takes a moment to compose herself:

MARLENE

Last winter I was pruning rose
bushes and I spotted a black eagle
catching thermals. It was so
beautiful I couldn't take my eye
off it. Savouring currents, then,
folded like an arrow, plummeting
downwards. I remember thinking
it's not going to be able to stop
before it hits the ground, but
then he swooped in and landed his
talons into the flesh of Prince
Caspian. Before I could save him,
that thieving bird took off and
flew away with my cat. It took
weeks to get his yowling out of my
head.

INT. CELLAR - FLASHBACK (1981)

Reyka (9) sits on the worn mattress. Angus Speelman stands
before her. He wears regular men's clothes with a gelled
side-parting hairstyle.

ANGUS SPEELMAN

We'll watch "Jukebox Jeopardy"
when I get back.

Reyka nods "OK".

Speelman crosses the cellar and exits through a door at
the top of a staircase.

Reyka waits until he's gone; then:

She stands and pulls back clothes racks filled with woman's fashion. They conceal a large wooden dresser.

Reyka uses a mannequin to lift herself on top of the dresser.

She clears hat boxes off the top of the dresser and finds a dirty window facing onto street level.

Using her T-shirt, she cleans dust off the window.

Reyka knocks against the window. Her banging becomes more frantic as she tries to get the attention of someone... anyone.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

City life moves by at a noisy pace. At a small window, set above a gutter, we can make out Reyka's face as --

-- she releases a silent scream.

INT. CELLAR - CONTINUOUS

Reyka is on top of the dresser, scrambling away from Speelman as he tries to pull her legs down.

Reyka growls like a trapped animal and kicks him in the face.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

An OLD WOMAN, pushing her shopping cart, stops as something catches her eye --

-- Reyka's face: pressed up against the window, eyes wide in fear.

The old woman can't quite believe what she's seeing. She tries to stop a PASSER-BY, but he ignores her, thinking she is senile.

The old woman approaches the window, but Reyka is suddenly pulled away.

The old woman walks on, chuckling to herself.

INT. BEDROOM - LOMBARD HOUSE - NIGHT

Reyka wakes in fright -- tormented. She cries out.

Marlene rushes to her bedside and comforts her.

MARLENE

(-- in Afrikaans)

Let it come, my angel. It's OK.

You're safe with me. Hush.

Reyka sobs into Marlene's arms.

INT. LEGAL CHAMBERS - DAY

Qadir greets Reyka and Marlene at his door.

QADIR

Thank you for coming in.

Khadija and Abdullah -- both distraught -- sit at the round wooden table.

REYKA

Is everything OK?

QADIR

Please have a seat.

Reyka and Marlene sit. Qadir prepares himself:

QADIR (CONT'D)

So. The results of a blood test taken before Mr. Basim's passing have come back, and the news is that Mr. Basim was HIV positive.

Abdullah places his hand over Khadija's. Her face is drawn and desolate.

Qadir looks to Reyka for a reaction:

REYKA

What does this have to do with Mrs. Lombard?

QADIR

My client would like to settle this dispute out of court.

MARLENE

I offered you money, Mrs. Basim, and your son threw it back in my face.

REYKA

Marlene.

Reyka looks at Abdullah -- his dignity in tact.

QADIR

My client has reconsidered your offer and would like the opportunity to accept it.

REYKA

Mr. Qadir, unless your client intends to bring a civil claim against Mrs. Lombard, this dispute is over.

QADIR

In an attempt to settle this informally, we would appeal to your sense of fairness and discretion.

MARLENE

Don't cloak your agenda in fancy jargon, sir. This is extortion. A civil trial would draw public attention to the fact that your husband was infected through a sexual act.

KHADIJA

AB was a loyal husband. He did not have illicit sex. It was you who contaminated him. It was you who tempted him with a poisoned banana. His only failing was that he accepted it.

MARLENE

Are you suggesting I had a sexual relationship with your husband?

KHADIJA

The poisoned banana infected my husband just like Joss van Hopper's HIV needle infects the poor communities in your books. You, Mrs. Lombard, are a virus who has contaminated my family and my people.

Khadija pulls a dagger out of her handbag, and tries to plunge it into Marlene's chest.

Reyka grabs Khadija's attacking hand, and with Abdullah's help, immobilizes Khadija.

EXT. GARDEN - LOMBARD HOUSE - DAY

Marlene opens her living room door and looks at the overgrown garden. She steps out and walks toward the pool.

Marlene sees that the water is green. She goes to the pool pump, and switches on the timer --

-- the motor starts up.

Marlene turns to return to her house, and stops dead in her tracks:

Her lawn is covered by a troop of vervet monkeys. They whine softly as though in mourning for a lost mate.

Marlene doesn't move. She watches them, as tears fill her eyes, and we --

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END