

the gun by Beverley Naidoo. Esi and his parents are faithful and value employees at the Mackay game farm at the time of the South African Apartheid Regime. When their boss Mackay has to leave one day, he asks his future son-in-law Williams to take charge until Mackay's return. Years older than Esi, there was something in his manner that reminded Esi of the sneering officer in the Mapoteng attack. His bush-green eyes narrowed driver's seat, he was carrying Mackay's gun. Although he could only be a few years older, the following afternoon there was the familiar sound of Mackay's Land Rover entering the camp, Esi saw immediately that it was being driven by the young man Williams – and he was alone. When he jumped down from the car on their target, "What're you staring at? You've seen me before, haven't you? Go get your boss-boy for me. Be quick about it, jong!" Esi could feel his face going hot, but he turned rapidly and sprinted off. Even Mackay never spoke to him like that, always calling him by his name. Esi accompanied his father as he walked forward to greet the white man. He wanted to see how Papa would react. "You remember me?.. Boss Williams Bos Mackay has asked me to come and look after his place, so we better get on, you and me. I don't want any trouble from the other boys either, OK?" He turned to Esi. "You can get my bags out the back and carry them to my room." Papa simply gave a little nod. It was impossible to tell what he was thinking. His lined face remained quite passive as father and son carried the young white man's cases. 20 Before long it was clear that Williams assumed Esi to be his personal servant. Up till now Esi had taken instructions either from his father or Mackay, who had known him since he was little. But this man's manner was different. He didn't seem to care at all who Esi was. It was as if he was just a thing to be used. Much of the time Williams would sit on the veranda outside Mackay's room, his legs stretched out on a stool, a can of beer at his side, while cleaning or playing with Mackay's gun. "Hey, come clean my boots!" "You can wash the truck now!" "Make my bed properly, jong! Don't just pull the sheets up like that!" 30 "Do you call these boots clean? If you were in the army I'd thrash you! Do them again!" "Go call the girl! I want her to do my washing this morning." At the last order, Esi had to fight to control himself. Who did this man think he was? Didn't he know that "the girl" was Esi's own mother, old enough to be the white man's mother? When Esi found her, busy collecting wild spinach, his anger spilled out. She tried to calm him. His temper would get him into trouble. He should be like his father. "Papa just lets them push him around. I don't want to be like that!"