

Hemelvaart

Ascension

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Dit is weer een van daardie dae op Stellenbosch. Dit reën so 'n mens sou sweer die gode tjank soos sepiesterre. Anna Retief stap vining deur die reën en probeer sover moontlik die enorme modderplasse vermy. Flippit. Sy wens juffrou Bekker wil net *chillax*. Wanneer moet sy kans kry om orrel te oefen as die onderwysers heeltemal *ballistic* gaan as hulle huiswerk uitdeel? En dis nou nie asof die kerk langs die skool is nie. Hallo! Sy moet stap. Ver.

This is one of those days in Stellenbosch again. It rains so one would swear the gods are crying like soap stars. Anna Retief walks through the rain and tries to avoid the enormous mud puddles as far as possible. Goodness. She wishes Miss Bekker just wants to chillax. When must she practice on the organ if the teachers go completely ballistic when they hand out homework? And it's not as if the church is next to the school. Hallo! She must walk. Far.

By die groot houtdeur van die kerk skud sy eers die reën van haar af. Sy druk haar koue hand in haar skoolbaadjie se sak en haal die sleutel uit. Dit gaan 'n lang winter wees. Dis sulke dae wat sy net warm sjokolade wil drink en Amy Winehouse oor en oor op haar iPod luister. In die bed. Onder die duvet.

At the big wooden door of the church she shakes off the rain first. She puts her cold hand in her school blazer and take out the key. It's going to be a long winter. It's such days she just wants to drink hot chocolate and listen to Amy Winehouse over and over on her iPod. In bed. Under the duvet.

Anna steek die sleutel in die slot, maar die slutel wil nie draai nie. Die deur is reeds oop. *Great*. Dit is seker tannie Marie wat vir daardie troue kom orrel oefen het wat die deur laat oopstaan het. Tannie Marie doen dit elke keer en elke keer vra Dominee vir háár hoekom sy nie die deur gesluit het nie. Asof sy kan help. Dominee deel die kerk se sleutels so *left, right and centre* uit. Dis regtig nie haar werk nie. Werk Dominee nie eintlik net een dag per week én ry 'n Merc nie?

Anna put the key in the lock, but the key doesn't want to turn. The door is already open. *Great*. It is probably auntie Marie who came to practice on the organ for the wedding that opened the door. Aunt Marie does this every time and Dominee asks her why she hasn't locked the door every time. As if she can help if Dominee gives the church's keys out left, right and centre. It's not really her job. Doesn't Dominee work just one day a week and drive a Merc?

Sy sug. Miskien moet sy nie so krities op Dominee wees nie. Sleutels en *whatever* is die laaste ding waaraan hy nou dink. *Shame*. Dominee-hulle gaan seker deur 'n moeilike tyd. Francois loop soos 'n lyk by die skool rond. Niemand praat met hom nie en hy sit elke pouse in die bib. Asof dit nie al erg genoeg is dat hy die dominee se seun is nie, moet hy nou koes vir *rumours* dat sy pa met daardie blonde Malan-seun gelol het. Dis so 'n *messy* storie. *Obviously* gaan mense begin skinder as 'n jong ou elke dag kerk toe gaan om met Dominee te praat. Hoe lank kan jy nou regtig gesels oor jou ma-hulle wat skei?

She sighs. Maybe she shouldn't be so critical of the Dominee. Keys and whatever is the last thing he thinks of now. *Shame*. Dominee them - they are probably going through a difficult time. Francois walks around like a corpse at school. Nobody speaks to him and he sits in the library every break. As if it wasn't bad enough that he is the Dominee's son, he has to hide from rumours about his father touching the blond Malan-boy. It's such a messy story. *Obviously*, people will start gossiping

if a young guy goes to church every day to talk to the pastor. How long can you really talk about your parents who is getting a divorce?

Ingedagte blaas Anna op haar yskoue hande. Sy moet sommer nou kyk of sy nie haar handskoene hier iewers laat lê het nie. As haar hande so koud is, oefen sy vrek moeilik. Dan klink dit soos 'n klomp kleuters wat op die orrel speel. Haar ma gaan *uitfreak* as sy hoor sy het nóg 'n paar handskoene verloor en sy gaan beslis nie met haar sakgeld iets dofs soos handskoene koop nie. Elke flippen sent moet sy spaar vir Oppikoppi. Sy bly wraggies nie weer hierdie keer by die huis nie. Anxious Anna blows on her freezing hands. She must look for her gloves somewhere in church, while she is here. If her hands are this cold, she struggles to exercise. Then it sounds like a lot of toddlers is playing on the organ. Her mother is going to freak out when she hears that she has lost another pair of gloves and she is not going to buy something like gloves with her pocket money. She must save every cent for Oppikoppi. She is not going to stay at home this time.

Sy druk die swaar deure oop en stap in. Waar het sy nou weer haar handskoene gelos? 'n Beweging voor by die kansel vang haar oog. Die kerk is donkerig en sy kan nie so lekker sien nie. Eintlik kan sy glad nie meer so lekker sien nie, maar sy weier om 'n bril te dra. *Boys don't make passes at girls who wear glasses*. Dit lyk amper soos iemand wat daar staan.

She opens the heavy doors and walk in. Where did she leave her gloves again? A movement ahead of the pulpit catches her eye. The church is dark, and she can't see that much. She can't see so much anymore, but she refuses to wear glasses. *Boys don't make passes at girls who wear glasses*. It almost looks like someone is standing there.

"Dominee?" roep Anna terwyl sy nader stap.

"Dominee?" Anna calls as she approaches.

Sy kry geen antwoord nie, maar sy kan vaagweg die silhoeët van 'n persoon uitmaak. Dalk is dit tannie Marie.

She gets no answer, but she can vaguely make up the silhouette of a person. Maybe it's auntie Marie.

"Tannie Marie? Gaan Tannie nou oefen?"

"Aunt Marie? Are you going to practice now?"

Die persoon antwoord nie. Daar waai 'n koue wind deur die kerk. Sy ril en knoop haar skoolbaadjie toe. Sy stap in die lang paadjie af na die kansel en kyk onder die banke of sy nie die handskoene sien nie. Die figuur voor in die kerk wieg ritmies heen en weer. Sy trek haar oë op skrefies, maar kan steeds nie uitmaak wat aangaan nie.

The person does not answer. There is a cold wind that blows through the church. She shakes and fastens the button of her school blazer. She walks down the long path to the pulpit and looks under the benches to see the gloves. The figure in front of the church rocks rhythmically back and forth. She shrugs her eyes, but still can't figure out what's going on.

Oor een van die banke lê 'n baadjie. O, natuurlik! Sy herken die baadjie. Sy sal daardie *awesome* baadjie enige plek herken. Sy kon maar geweet het dat sy hom op so 'n dag soos vandag hier sou kry. Nie haar keuse vir 'n uithangplek nie, maar wat verwag jy?

Over one of the benches lies a jacket. Oh, of course! She recognizes the jacket. She'll recognize that awesome jacket anywhere. She could have known that she would find him here on a day like this. Not her choice for a hangout, but what do you expect?

Anna stap vining nader. By die voorste banke vang iets blou haar oog. Die handskoene! Sy gaan op haar knieë en tel die handskoene op. Sy prop dit sommer in haar sak. Sy is bly hier is nou iemand, want die kerk kan flippen *scary* raak as 'n mens alleen hier is. En dit reën. En dis donker. Dit voel asof mens in 'n Stephen King-gedoente vasgevang is.

Anna steps closer. At the front benches, something blue catches her eye. The gloves! She goes on her knees and picks up the gloves. She just put it in her pocket. She is happy here is someone now, because the church can be scary if one is alone here. And it is raining. And it's dark. It feels as if one is trapped in a Stephen King story

"Jislaaik! Dis darem koud en nat vandag. Ek moet eintlik orrel oefen, maar ek is so lus vir iets om te drink. My hande moet in elk geval eers ontdooi voor ek die orrel pak. As ek nou gaan orrel speel, gaan dit klink soos dooies wat praat!" Gesels Anna terwyl sy hande-viervoet onder die bank uitkruip en orient kom.

"Jeepers! It's cold and wet today. I must practice organ, but I would love for something to drink. My hands must first thaw before I start with the organ. If I'm going to play organ now, it'll sound like dead people talking!" Anna says as she crawls out under the bench and stands up.

"Hoe gaan dit met ... O, hemel!"

"How is ... Oh, heaven!"

Sy sak terug op haar knieë. Van die balk skuins bokant die kansel hang 'n tou. Die tou het die verstarde gesig in 'n wurggreep.

She sinks back on her knees. A rope hangs from the beam diagonally above the pulpit. The rope has the stiffened face in a stranglehold.