Black Rock

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Published by Serpent's Tail

Extract

A complete catalogue record for this book can be
obtained from the British Library on request

First published in 2009 by Serpent's Tail,
an imprint of Profile Books Ltd
3A Exmouth House
Pine Street
London ECIR 0JH
website: www.serpentstail.com

ISBN 978 1 84668 696 2

Designed and typeset by folio at Neuadd Bwll, Llanwrtyd Wells

Printed and bound in Great Britain by Clays, Bungay, Suffolk

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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The printer holds FSC chain of custody SGS-COC-2061

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I knew about my parents from the things I was told. I had never seen a photograph of either of them because there weren't any. But Aunt Tassi said that of course my mother was pretty and when I asked her how pretty she pointed at a pink hibiscus flower sticking out of a bush and said, 'Pretty like that.' How did she wear her hair? She tied her hair in a knot and wrapped a cloth around her head, she told me one cool afternoon while we were walking into Black Rock village to look for cassava. And how tall was she? And what colour *exactly* were her eyes? You say black but were they woody black or black like those African bees that once flew out of the rotten silk cotton tree or black like pitch that comes from the lake in Trinidad? Were they round or slanted, big or small? What did people think of her when they saw her? Would they turn their heads or pass her by?

Mostly when I asked these sorts of questions, my aunt carried on doing whatever she was doing as if I had not said anything at all. But it did not stop me from asking about my mother or thinking about my mother and wondering what she was like. I knew that she had worked in a barber shop called Mona's in Bacolet and she met my father in this same salon. My father was passing through the islands on his way home to England from panning gold in British Guyana. And I knew that she probably didn't cut hair like his too often. How could she, I told Aunt Tassi, if he was a white man.

Whenever I said this was a romantic way to meet, my aunt said I shouldn't get caught in romance; she usually said this when Roman Bartholomew, her husband, was in earshot.

She said my mother died after a long and difficult labour. Did she see me, I asked, when I was five years old. I could not bear the idea of my mother never having seen me. Yes, Aunt Tassi said. Before she died she saw your tiny face and it made her laugh and cry at the same time because for the first time in her life she was happy. Then my aunt shook her head as if thinking about my mother made her sad, and I felt bad for asking. I was lying on my mother's stomach covered in her slimy juices when she took her last breath. And we were in a room without windows and it was very hot, so they moved her to another room with a window and they opened it wide so her soul could fly out into the sky. It was night and someone lit a flambeau in the yard to help her find her way.

Aunt Tassi sent a letter to my father in Southampton, England, but my father did not reply and they buried my mother in St George's graveyard and they put a little cross of wood because they did not have money for a stone. When I asked my aunt if I had killed my mother she said of course not and how could I think so. When one soul flies in another flies out. I was unlucky.

It just so happened that Aunt Tassi had a postcard from Southampton, sent to her by Father Carmichael. It was a photograph of a port and a lot of people waving at passengers I couldn't quite make out. I could see the bow of a large boat but not the passengers. *Southampton* was written in white capital letters along the bottom. Sometimes I took this postcard from behind Aunt Tassi's dresser where it was held in place with a hair clip and I stared at the waving English people and I wondered if my father could be one of them or at least look like one of them.

Everyone said I was lucky to have Aunt Tassi. My cousins, Vera and Violet, were three years younger than me. They looked the same and they spoke the same and they both laughed in the same way.

Aunt Tassi often said how beautiful they were, but I never thought so. Their skin, yes. Their skin was dark and shiny and smooth like a melongen. But their faces were ordinary and identical, and their bodies were straight and thin, like stick men you draw when you don't know how to draw somebody. Like me, they didn't have a father. The moment Vera and Violet were born, their father ran away with a girl from Barbados and no one ever saw or heard from him again. I was very young so I don't remember too much about this. But I remember that Aunt Tassi was often too sad to leave the house.

Then one afternoon, she took a walk into Buccoo, and along the Buccoo Road came Roman Bartholomew, a short, skinny man who the villagers called Allah, because he thought he was God. He said, Hello, Tassi D'Abadie, and took off his hat. My aunt nodded, politely. She knew of Roman Bartholomew but had never spoken to him before. How would you like to go to a dance in Carnbee village tonight? Yes, she said, why not. I have nothing else to do. Next thing, they were an item, and Roman got a job in Campbell's Hardware store, right there in Black Rock.

Every day on her way to Robinson Crusoe Hotel, where she cleaned rooms, Aunt Tassi would pass the blue wooden building and peer into the darkness and look for Roman. Sometimes he waved or he came out front and stepped into the bright white light. It was like that sometimes: a glaring light blasting everything as the sun climbed high above the island. And he might say, Tassi, you have anything? And she'd say, Yes, I brought you juice or a mango, or sugar cake or whatever she carried, or she might say, no, nothing you didn't get already, and then she would turn and be on her way. Sometimes Roman asked her for money. 'Tassi, you have a little change?' And she would dig inside the pocket of her blue and white chequered apron and pull out a coin and give it to him. I didn't like the way Roman looked at me – out of the corner of his slitty eyes – so I always hung back near the old pipe stand. 'Celia so shy!' he'd say. 'Like a little bird,' and he'd reach out his hand and whistle, as if I really was a bird.

People said it was like going from the frying pan into the fire. But Aunt Tassi felt so lucky to have found a man willing to put up with another man's children and her dead sister's child (me) that she latched onto him like a raft in the sea. He didn't have two cents to rub together, and she didn't care. As Aunt Sula once said, you see what you want to see and hear what you want to hear. Later that year, Roman, realising he was on to a good thing, made Aunt Tassi 'an honest woman'.

Mrs Maingot used to say that Roman Bartholomew could crawl under a snake's belly on stilts. Even then, I knew this was true. It was clear from the beginning that he couldn't be trusted. Like that time we came from church and the house was close to burning down because he had fallen asleep with a cigarette. There was an orange line creeping along the floor at the exact moment we walked through the door. Aunt Tassi threw up her hands and shouted his name so loud, RO– MAN! I thought the whole village would hear. I ran for a bucket of water and Vera and Violet both started to scream so I told them to shut up and fetch more water but they were fixed to the ground like two posts. After the fire was gone and there were black streaks on the floor and on the wall, Roman made as if to cry. Suddenly Aunt Tassi was putting her arms around him and telling him not to fret. And then she opened up her purse and gave him a dollar and off he went to Jimmy's bar at the end of the road to quieten down and make himself feel better, because these things happen, Aunt Tassi said. Sometimes it's the devil who's to blame.

But Roman was the devil. Since I was eight years old, he came around me, restless and pacing like a hungry dog. If I was doing my homework, he came into my room. He flicked the ribbons in my hair or he bent down and blew on the top of my head. Once he ran his fingertip down the back of my neck. I sat still as though I was made of stone. More often than not he stood in my doorway and stared and I pretended he wasn't there. It was easier to allow him to do this than not to do this and 'cause trouble', as he put it,

because no one would take any notice. You are nothing, he said one day, when I threatened to tell my aunt. You have nobody but Tassi, and Tassi need me like a plant need water, so who you think she will believe? I already tell her how you lie.

Tears streamed down my face. I said, 'I will go to England and find my father. You can all go to hell!' Then I ran from the house and cut through the back where sunlight could not reach and made my way through the bush to the river. There were large stones there and they were warm and grey, especially on the other side. A big log that was once the trunk of a mahogany tree stretched from one side of the river to the other and I started to cross it. The water was not deep but there was a whirlpool and I slipped and fell. My arms went up and I became stiff and straight like a pencil and the water pulled me down and spun me around and I was sure that I would die. Everything was cloudy and blurred and the bottom of the river must have been stirred up because I could see gritty bits of it. I could feel it in my eyes and up my nose. Two boys fishing saw me fall. They ran to the bank and braced themselves between the rocks and hauled me out by my hair which they said afterwards was like thick seaweed. When Aunt Tassi heard what had happened, she said she would never let me go to the river by myself and what in God's name was I doing there.

Our wooden house stood up on stilts. There were two bedrooms, a small kitchen, a living room and a tiny spare room that you could just about fit a bed in. I shared one room with my cousins. Around my bed was an invisible line, which, when crossed, meant something very bad would happen to them. It was the same invisible line that ran around my books, my clothes, my shampoo and my lavender toilet water. If Vera or Violet took something without first asking permission, I frightened them with stories of jumbies and La Diablesse and the terrible Soucouyant who would come and steal their skin in the night. I told them about the douens, the spirits with no faces and small feet turned backwards, who would learn

their names and call them away into the forest. Any mention of douens and my cousins would shiver with fear.

From our window you could see the yard and the frangipani tree and it was white like bone, like it was dead. Fat caterpillars, thick and black with yellow stripes, crawled on the branches and ate the long leaves and when the flowers came they soon fell away. We had a lime tree, and a rotting plum tree and when I kicked it hard, tiny bees flew out. I liked sitting under the house. Hens ran around and pecked at the ground and the two goats, Antoine and Antoinette, lay under the lime tree or grazed on the thick grass; sometimes they stretched their ropes down to the breadfruit tree at the bottom of our yard. The shiny green leaves were thick and hard like plastic and the breadfruits were sweet and yellow. Aunt Tassi begged Roman to cut away the vine that bunched around the tree like hair, but he never did. He'd sooner cruise up the road to see his friend Ruth Mackenzie, who was pretty like a doll and married to Earl. Ruth walked around Black Rock as if she was somebody and she had her daughter, Clara Mackenzie, walking in the same way. If Aunt Tassi knew about Roman's visits to Ruth's house, she kept it to herself. But Mrs Maingot knew, because she lived opposite.

There were plants in old paint tins growing on the Maingots' steps. One had huge spikes and Mrs Maingot stuck eggs on the ends so that no one got cut. When you passed the house you could hear her singing her old spiritual songs in a high, sweet voice. Like me, her daughter Joan was in seventh grade. I often saw her walking to school with the Johnson boy, rising up on her tiptoes in that typical Joan way and swinging her stylish yellow bag with the Spanish lettering that her father had bought in Puerto Rico. It said *Vida Feliz* on one side, *Happy Life* on the other.

But Joan wasn't always so happy. When she was ten, her father died in a fishing boat accident on the way to Trinidad. They say sharks ate the four-man crew, but I don't know if that was true. When Mrs Maingot heard the news she locked herself up in the

house, and she bawled like an animal made half of cow and half of dog for two days. I never heard a cry like that before or since.

Everyone said how sad it was that Wilfred Maingot was dead; there was no body to bury and nowhere to lay flowers. We all went to St John's church on Sunday as usual and Father Carmichael, who I never liked (he had yellow teeth like fangs), delivered a special service for Wilfred. I looked at Joan standing across the aisle dressed in white with her plaits hanging like two black ropes and I thought she was nearly worse off than me. At least I could hope my father was alive and somewhere in the world.

The beach nearest our house was Courland Bay. There were often fishermen there with nothing better to do than drink and hang around under the trees, especially in the evenings. Now and then they made a fire and cooked a manicou or a goat and if we happened to be walking by, we saw the smoke puffing out into the sky. Roman used to say these men were badjohns and good-for-nothings. It takes one to know one.

The water here was usually calm. A large black rock jutted out of it, like a little island on its own. On the sand – as fine as dust – I found shells and pieces of driftwood thrown up like old bones and I usually came across a sea pussy or two, shaped like half a moon and soft like jellyfish. If I kicked it a purple dye poured out into the sand. There were many along this beach. I never knew why they were there and if they should be in the water. I guessed that they should be in the water because the sun made them shrivel and shrink. When I felt like it, I took up a stick and tossed them back in. I imagined them saying, Thank you, Celia. There were mangrove trees, and they were dark and alive with blue crabs, and further up by the sea grape trees, I came around the island and the water there was rough and frothy. There were usually pelicans crashing into it like they were falling out of the sky. I saw all kinds of things in the sea there – paper, pieces of cloth, bottles. One had rum inside and

when I drank it, it made my head light like a cloud. I also found a falling apart brown shoe and a broken harmonica on the sand, and a map of a place I did not recognise. I found an empty purse, and a biscuit tin lid with a Christmas scene, and bits of broken pottery. Whatever I found I took back home, and wrapped it in a large piece of cloth from an old curtain and hid it underneath the house in a hole where Aunt Tassi kept the Coca Cola crates. This was my beloved treasure; Lord help Vera and Violet if they went within a yard of it.

From age six, I went to St Mary's school. It was a wooden building with windows at the front like two eyes, the door was a mouth and the roof a pointed hat. On the back wall of the classroom, there was a map of the world pinned with tacks to the wall. England was a small pink shape, and it was very far away from Trinidad and Tobago. Trinidad and Tobago were also pink because they were part of the British Commonwealth. I often placed my thumb exactly where I was in Black Rock village and spanned my hand over the Atlantic Ocean. It took three spans to reach a place called Plymouth, and Southampton was a little bit further than that.

Miss McCartney, my teacher, said it was from Southampton that the famous ship *Titanic* set sail on 10 April 1912. More than a thousand people died when the ship hit an iceberg. 'They were on their way to America in the biggest, grandest vessel in the world and then it sank.' I liked Miss McCartney. She was not a pretty woman but neither was she ugly. She swept her red hair into a shape like a wave at the back of her head; I used to wonder what it looked like when she took it down. She wore long skirts and cotton blouses with buttons right up to the top as if she was cold and not living in the tropics at all. Her lace-up shoes came from a shop called Lunns in Piccadilly, London, England. She walked quickly and took little steps, leaning her body forwards as if in a hurry to get somewhere. She had an unusual way of speaking. Roman said she sounded as if someone had his hands tight around her throat. But I could not

imagine anyone wanting to put his hands around Miss McCartney's throat.

Once when class was over and I was packing up my books, I decided to ask her a question that had been niggling me for some time. 'Miss,' I said, 'how come you know so much?'

Miss McCartney smiled and I saw her crooked little teeth.

'I suppose I learned a lot at university.' And then, 'It's a very good place to learn things and meet interesting people. If you pick a subject you like there's a lot of fun to be had. Maybe one day you will go to university.'

'Don't you have to be very clever?'

'Quite,' she said. 'You're a bright girl, Celia. Just because you're pretty doesn't mean you should forget about your studies.' She looked straight at me then, and I knew she was telling me something important. 'You can be anything you want to be. Don't let anyone tell you any different.'

When I got home I told Aunt Tassi. She was sweeping the floor and humming to herself, and Roman was asleep on the chair.

'At least we have some brains in the family. Maybe you'll be a doctor or a lawyer and make plenty money. You can look after your old aunt.' Then she went outside and started on the steps.

Without opening his eyes, Roman said, 'You could never do anything like that. You just like your mother. Dog can't make cat.'

On the other side of the village was a patch called Stony Hill where a family from Trinidad lived and where old Edmond Diaz lived and also Mrs Jeremiah. Children were frightened of Mrs Jeremiah. I had seen her puttering about the village, her white picky hair pulled back from her wrinkled-up face which reminded me of an old fruit. She had little slanted eyes, like a bird. The left was smoky, yellowish, and the right fixed somewhere over your shoulder as if she was watching something or someone away in the distance. She was almost blind, they said. But for all her blindness, Mrs Jeremiah was able to see things about your life that no one else could see or

know. Not your parents or your friends or even the whisperings of your own heart. People came from all over the Caribbean to hear what Mrs Jeremiah had to say. They came from Barbados and Grenada and St Lucia and Venezuela and Trinidad. If you didn't like what she told you, for an extra fee she would offer a spell or a potion to change your situation. There were all kinds of stories. Some said she was a kind of doctor. Mrs Jeremiah gave concoctions of chicken's blood and hot pepper to be drunk at dawn; prayers to be sung into the night, directions for boiling the heart of a goat and wrapping it in banana leaves and putting it under your pillow where it should stay for forty nights.

After a visit to Mrs Jeremiah, lovers were reunited or parted, relatives and enemies died in strange circumstances, a woman who could never have a child was suddenly seen nursing a baby. I would never have had to speak to her if it hadn't been for Roman Bartholomew.

One afternoon, drunk and staggering all over the road on his way home from Jimmy's bar, Roman collided with Mrs Jeremiah as she was coming out of the grocery and sent her toppling like a bag of plums. Mrs Maingot was walking to the post office and saw her fall. Then she saw Roman try to help her up, but then he fell too – on top of Mrs Jeremiah. Mrs Maingot said it was like a comedy but no one was laughing. She rushed to where they were struggling like two animals and she, Mrs Maingot, started to shout at Roman. She helped Mrs Jeremiah to her feet and told Roman that she would never put up with half of what Tassi D'Abadie put up with and she was glad her husband had been a decent man and why did God take away a good man like Wilfred so young and leave him to run about the place like a demon. Roman looked down at the ground as if he had lost something there but couldn't remember what it was.

Mrs Maingot guided Mrs Jeremiah home to her little wooden house and she settled her into a chair in the veranda. She did not go inside the house because Mrs Jeremiah said she would rather sit

in the breeze. For a few moments, Mrs Maingot sat on a stool while the old lady kept her eyes closed. She was about to leave quietly when Mrs Jeremiah spoke in a voice like a sudden rain.

'Wilfred is doing alright; he is at peace.'

Later, Mrs Maingot told us she turned cold and hot at the same time, and her heart began to thud.

'Jesus is with him and our Lord has granted him everlasting life. If you wish him back you keep him between this world and that.'

Mrs Jeremiah smiled but not at Mrs Maingot. She smiled at something or someone hovering above her head. Then she closed her eyes and nodded.

'Watch for butterflies,' she said. 'Just now plenty butterflies will come around you. They are a sign from Wilfred. His body will never be found but that don't matter, the sea is a big place. And don't worry about Joan. She will meet a good man and they will have plenty children.' Then she told Mrs Maingot she would be taken care of in her dying years. The worst was over – joy was on its way.

Mrs Maingot hurried home. She lay on her bed and thought about her dead husband, and wept. Then she tried not to think about him, afraid she might keep him trapped between two worlds. Then she cried some more. In the end, she fell asleep. When she woke it was dark and Joan was standing in the lamplight looking up at the ceiling and there were two huge yellow butterflies hanging upside down there. Mrs Maingot thought she was dreaming but Joan raised the lamp and pointed at them.

That evening Mrs Maingot came over to our house and told Aunt Tassi what had happened. Aunt Tassi was surprised; Roman hadn't mentioned anything about Mrs Jeremiah. He was sleeping in the back room, she said. When he woke she would ask him all about it. Mrs Maingot didn't seem too bothered. She was happy and there was brightness in her eyes as though she had been drinking rum. She kept glancing around the room and I wondered what she was looking for. There weren't any butterflies.

When she left, Aunt Tassi went to the bedroom and saw a bat sucking on Roman's toe. The bat kept moving its big black wings and fanning Roman, who was sleeping soundly. Miss McCartney said the tongue of this bat is shaped like a lancet and when it pierces a vein there is little or no pain so you can sleep right through it while it drinks your blood. My aunt feared the bat was a sign. She threw open the shutters and took up a broom and she drove the creature out into the night. After that, Aunt Tassi did not sleep for worrying.

Next morning Roman was still sleeping and we were sitting at the table eating salt fish and hot bake and the sun was filling up the kitchen. I was thinking about my history class with Miss McCartney that afternoon and about my Christopher Columbus project, the picture I had sketched of him which needed colouring in, when my aunt cleared her throat.

'The tree is full of limes. They ready to drop. After school one of you must fill a bag and carry them up to Mrs Jeremiah.'

Vera set up her face as if in horror.

'I have extra lessons,' Violet said, and I knew at once she was lying.

They all looked at me.

'Celia,' Aunt Tassi said.

I put down my fork and finished chewing my buttery bake. I drank some cocoa, sweet and thick. Then I wiped my mouth on my arm and said, 'I'm not scared.'

The path to Mrs Jeremiah's house was narrow and thick with brown leaves from the big mahogany tree. There was a damp smell and I saw a lot of mosquitoes. They made a dark cloud over a drum of water and I climbed the steps of the house. I thought the water shouldn't be there – before you know it everyone in Black Rock would be coming down with yellow fever. I was surprised by the pots of bougainvillea on either side of the entrance to the shabby

little house. They must have been a gift. Over the doorway was a cross; I couldn't tell if it was made of stone or bone. There were two chairs in the veranda with torn blue cushions and I tried to picture Mrs Maingot sitting on one of them. There was a bowl of water on a small round table. I wondered if it was holy water. Then I heard someone inside.

'Hello,' I said.

'You the orphan girl.'

'I brought you some limes.' I pushed the curtain where a door should be. 'My aunt says sorry about Uncle Roman.'

I put down the brown paper bag. It was dark inside and the shutters were closed except for the kitchen where they were slightly open and a little bit of brassy light was slicing its way in. The old woman had her hand on a large book on the table. In that half-light, after the bright afternoon glare, it looked like a little hoof. There was a candle on the table and its flame was low. One of Mrs Jeremiah's eyes was cast near the door where I was standing.

'She should put him out but he won't last too long anyhow. Three years or less.'

'Who?'

'Roman. Before he does something. He can be dangerous. You mustn't be rude to him or he will hurt you.'

'I am not rude to Roman.'

'Not with your mouth.' She tapped the side of her skull. 'In your head. Marriage is not for you. But you could have it if you want it. Men will want you like they want a glass of rum. Drink you up and pee you out. One man will love you. But you won't love him. You will harm him. You will destroy his life.' Now, she was looking at me as if she didn't like me. My stomach was jumping like there were frogs in it.

'I never hurt anyone.' My voice sounded small.

'You don't believe me. That don't matter. Just now you start to menstruate. Tassi will let you stay home from school, but only

for one day because' – and this part she said in a high voice – 'you have to get accustomed to that pain like all women do in the world.' Then, 'You'll see.'

I don't know why, but I said, 'Aunt Tassi is good to me.'

'They tell you things about your mother and father,' she said, and nodded. Then she seemed to be listening to someone else at the back of the room.

'Forget them. Forget them or make blood spill. You will make blood spill.' She gasped a little and then she nodded again. She kept nodding. 'The one you love will break your heart in two.' Her voice was higher now. 'You don't care what happen to get what you want. It don't matter to you.' She shook her head. 'You won't die in this country. You'll die in a foreign place.' Mrs Jeremiah shuddered as if she was cold. Then she tossed something into the air, and I caught it. It was a piece of black rock, the size of a big tooth.

'Carry this with you always. It come from the rock, right here. It will keep bad luck at bay and save you from the hard life you will make for yourself.'

She got up and put her hand out. My heart was beating fast. 'Now I will exorcise you,' she said. Then, in a calmer voice, 'Come. I will help you.'

Mrs Jeremiah began to speak in a language I could not understand. Father Carmichael had talked about speaking in tongues, but I could not imagine this ugly speech was the language of saints and angels. I turned and ran through the veranda, almost knocking over the bowl of water, and I ran down the steps and onto the path and I kept running, all the way down Stony Hill until I reached the main road, which was lined with other little houses. These had lights glowing inside and I saw shadows moving in the light. I ran past Mrs Maingot's house and Campbell's Hardware store and along the curved road to Jimmy's bar. For some reason I went inside and looked for Roman but he wasn't there. Someone shouted something but I didn't hear what it was. I ran past the church and wondered if I should go inside, but then I saw the door

was locked, so I kept running to where the road separates along the track to the house. The lights were on and I could see Aunt Tassi's big dark shape in the kitchen. Vera and Violet were sitting in the veranda. I flew up the steps. Aunt Tassi was standing over the stove. I arrived panting and sweating and puffing.

'Why you looking so red-faced? You saw Mrs Jeremiah?'

Next morning, I was thinking about Mrs Jeremiah and all that she had said when I overheard Mrs Maingot talking to Aunt Tassi. Apparently, Joan's friend had come. 'Thirteen is early,' I heard her say, 'but when the curse come early, what are you to do.' Looking out where the two women were speaking on the steps, I wondered who this friend was and why she was a curse. At the window I said, 'I wish we could have visitors. This place is always so dead.' The two women turned and looked at me, and then they looked at each other and burst out laughing. 'Oh Lord,' Mrs Maingot said, and threw up her skinny arms. 'Celia really is a strange child! Where she came from, Tassi?' Aunt Tassi looked at her as if to say, yes, yes, I know just what you mean.

It was only later when I heard Angela Hernandez telling someone how the blood poured out of Joan like it came from a bucket that I realised Joan's friend was in fact her period. All that afternoon I wondered, if Mrs Jeremiah is right, when will that happen to me?

So said so done: three days later I woke with pain in my stomach. It was a new hot ache that wrapped itself around my lower back and middle. When Aunt Tassi came in and told me to dress for school, I said I was sick and showed her my bloated stomach and the brown patch on the sheet which looked like I had spilled cocoa. I must have looked unwell because, just as Mrs Jeremiah said she would, Aunt Tassi said I could stay home from school today, but only today because I would have to *'get accustomed to that pain like all women do in the world'*. When she said this a chill rushed through my body; Aunt Tassi didn't seem to notice. Sitting on the edge of my bed, she said that I must now be careful because I would be able to have

children and before I knew it men would be coming around and I must know to push them away.

'Just now you having a baby and you're still a baby yourself.'

'Like my mother.'

'Yes, just like your mother.'

'And like you too.'

'Yes, just like me.'

Aunt Tassi got up and went into her room and came back carrying a piece of white thin cloth. She folded it once, twice, three times, until the cloth was a fat little rectangle. She told me to put this in my panties to catch the blood. When it was full, not too full, because it would start to smell bad like an old piece of iron, I must put it to soak in the outside sink and hang it up on the line under the house.