

THE SECOND WORST THING

FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE
CAPS
APPROVED
GRADE 1



Lauri Kubuitsile

OXFORD literature for southern africa

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WORST
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Lauri Kubuitsile

with additional material by Ann Smailes

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Character

What does all this planning tell us about Dikeledi's character?

Theme

Have you ever had a crush on a TV celebrity like Mpho does?

Theme

Do you agree with Dikeledi? Is it important to be in the popular group?

Theme

Do you think outside appearance is a big part of most things?

walk the same way as Segametsi. This could result in her talking to us. The time from school to her turnoff, I've calculated, is 14.7 minutes. We only need to do that three times a week to increase our Segametsi Interaction⁴ Time (SIT) by 42.9%." I smiled up at Mpho. It really wasn't that difficult. We just needed to follow the plan.

Mpho frowned. "But that'll mean getting home almost an hour late. I'll miss *Teen Beat*. You know how much I like Bobo."

"Bobo? You want to talk about Bobo?" I was becoming frustrated. How could Mpho care about some stupid TV presenter she was never going to meet and who would not further her life in any way? I was trying to get us sorted so that next year in high school we would be firmly entrenched⁵ in the popular group. That mattered, a lot, especially in high school. It was all about being in the right group. Why couldn't she see that?

"Is this really that important?" Mpho asked. "We've been okay like this, just me and you, all through primary. Why will high school be any different? And anyway, I don't even like Segametsi, she's mean."

"Yeah, you're right, she is mean. But we don't have to be her friend for very long. Just long enough to get our footing. High school is tough; it's completely different from primary, all new kids and new pressures. We need to start in the right position, that first term. After that we can go our separate ways. I'm just trying to secure our future, that's all. Can't you put in a little bit of effort?"

Mpho finally gave in after some more convincing⁶. She always gave in eventually. She knew I only wanted the best for us. And besides, I had made such a beautiful plan. I think a big part of most things is how they're presented, don't you?



4 **Interaction:** contact (time spent with Segametsi)

5 **entrenched:** accepted

6 **convincing:** persuading

“I’m home!” I shouted because Mama was in the back room where she ran her tailoring business. She made uniforms for the school kids in Lephalale. Since it was only her and her one helper, Boitumelo, she worked long hours.

I heard the sewing machine stop and Mama came to the front of the house. “Are you hungry? I made rusks.”

Since the divorce Mama has treated me like a queen. I think she and Papa are afraid the whole thing will turn me into a psychopathic serial killer⁷. I didn’t tell her how, with a two-year perspective, the worst thing that ever happened to me has actually turned out pretty okay. Besides Mama treating me like a queen, Papa makes special time for just him and me. He comes and collects me after school on Tuesdays and Thursdays and we go out for ice cream or ride out to the edge of town to the Mokolo River, and go fishing. Just him and me. We never had that before. He was always too busy building up his minibus taxi business.

Mama set a plate of warm rusks down on the table in front of me with a cup of sugary tea just how I like it, but then she sat down at the table too. Normally she made my snack and got straight back to work. Something was up.

She fiddled with the two silk roses in their vase in the middle of the table. I carefully dipped a rusk in my tea but kept an eye on her.

“I want to tell you something,” Mama started. I prepared for bad news. That was how she started when she and Papa sat me down to tell me they were getting divorced. “You remember Elias, the man I spoke about, the one from church choir?”

I nodded my head. Where was this going? Why was Elias, a man from church choir, suddenly so important? So important that it meant sitting down and fiddling with silk roses in the middle of a work day?

Setting

Where is this novel set?

Narration

Who is the narrator?
This is an example of first person narration.

Theme

Briefly describe Dikeledi’s family situation.

⁷ psychopathic serial killer: mad murderer