

# TALES FROM THE DARK CONTINENT



Episode One:

UMTHAKATHI (THE WITCH)

by

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EXT. VALLEY OF 1000 HILLS - DUSK

ON A CLIFF SUMMIT

Stands the mysterious figure of our Narrator, THE WITCH-DOCTOR. Dressed in full traditional Sangoma regalia, he cuts a nether-worldly silhouette against a bloody African sky. His animal skins whip and wave in berg wind as he gazes out across the vast majestic valley into the setting sun. We slowly creep towards him. His warm, gravelly, sombre VOICE introduces tonight's tale.

NARRATOR/WITCH-DOCTOR (V.O.)

(Subtitled Zulu)

In Zulu occult, there is a difference between witchcraft and sorcery. Witchcraft is performed mostly by witches - women.

(wry smile)

He looks down, and we PAN away from him and tighten to the valley below -- a small gathering comes into view.

EXT. RURAL CHURCHYARD / CEMETARY - DAY

A tiny secluded graveyard alongside a rickety stone church, where a small FUNERAL is taking place. The sparse bundle of MOURNERS, mostly elderly women, are dressed in Zionist-Christian blue and whites. They pray, chant and sway in the timeless ritual of celebrating death.

NARRATOR/WITCH-DOCTOR (V.O.)

The witches are directly connected to evil. Whereas, the sorcerers - mostly men, are healers who sometimes make bad medicine. Both are to kill, that is their priority.

AT THE GRAVE-SIDE - A PHOTOGRAPH

In a gilded frame. The deceased - an elderly Zulu woman with sunken eyes and wispy grey hair. She must have been as old as Moses when she passed, because she looks 100-plus in the photo. We tighten to a BCU of her ancient eyes.

CUT TO:

BCU - THE EYES

Of the Witch-Doctor.

WIDER - CLIFF SUMMIT - THE WITCH-DOCTOR

As he steps away from the edge, out of frame. We hold for a beat or two on the valley and rite below.

WIDE ANGLE, as THE WITCH-DOCTOR strides towards the village. No signs of life. He seems to live alone here.

EXT. WITCH-DOCTOR'S HUT - DUSK

We are moving, at a low submissive angle, towards the Sangoma hut - which hasn't changed in style since the reign of Shaka. The pathway to the entrance is flanked by sculpted IDOLS and MASKS that glare back at us. And chalk-white skulls of Buffalo and other long-horned beasts.

NARRATOR/WITCH-DOCTOR (V.O.)

Some witches choose a specific animal to carry their magic. The most popular animals used to deliver spells are a snake, wild-cat or baboon...

We reach the doorway, enter the hut and find ourselves kneeling before --

INT. HUT - THE WITCH-DOCTOR

Through smoke and haze we see him seated, cross-legged on a mat, mixing up a muthi concoction. Surrounded by mysterious bowls and jars that contain arcane herbalist paraphernalia; plants, roots, bark, bugs, bones, stones, shells, wild ginger, lion fat, devil's claw and an assortment of small animal skulls, pelts and carcasses.

He stokes a low fire, and returns to his alchemy. We hear his VOICE, though his lips don't move.

NARRATOR/WITCH-DOCTOR (V.O.)

(subtitled Zulu)

Another method is to use the services of a bad spirit. That some say is half human and half animal. An evil little dwarf we call...

(finally looks at us)

*iTokoloshe.*

(English hereafter)

He lights mphephu herb. Smoke rises. We tighten to the vapour -- where an image is manifesting. It vaguely resembles the first frame of our next shot, as we --

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RURAL CHURCHYARD / CEMETERY - NIGHT

POV - TOKOLOSHE

Crabs out from behind a tombstone, and surveys the moonlit graveyard. All is quite. The crowd has long since left. The tombstones glow under full moon rays. The fresh grave mound we saw earlier is visible up ahead.

NARRATOR/WITCH-DOCTOR (V.O.)  
(English)  
Sometimes, iTokoloshe will enter  
the body of a person who  
is...deceased.

We moving rapidly through the uncut grass towards it. We hear it's devilish chuckles, it's primal bestial grunting. It rapidly covers the ground to the fresh grave, and plunges into the mound of soil without disturbing it - like a spirit. It sinks through the earth, through the coffin lid and comes upon --

INT. FRESH GRAVE - NIGHT

THE CORPSE. An old woman - the same old woman we saw in the photo. We hover disturbingly close to her face - a grinning mask of death. We HEAR the creature grunt with satisfaction.

INT. WITCH-DOCTOR'S HUT - NIGHT

As he continues mixing muthi, stirring bubbling miniature cauldrons, etc. Performing a ritual that demonstrates his lesson. He transfers milky frothy muthi fluid from one container to another.

NARRATOR/WITCH-DOCTOR (O.S.)  
It does this by driving a nail into  
the skull of the corpse and enters  
through the head.

A mosquito lands on his hand and he smacks it. Leaving a blood smear on his wrist.

INT. FRESH GRAVE - NIGHT

The old woman's corpse leers back at us in a dead grimace. Then, black, furry, talons like the fingers of some hairy demon, reach in and grope the skull. Another hairy claw clutching a rusty nail, places the tip on the crown of the head, and with a primal squeal drives the nail into the skull. Steam wafts from the wound and the corpse suddenly twitches and gasps under the force as if life briefly spiked through it.

NARRATOR/WITCH-DOCTOR (V.O.)  
But first...it must suck out the  
brains from the skull...

Which it does. Still up close in that claustrophobic coffin, THE CREATURE grips the skull of the corpse and places it's fanged, hairy, quivering mouth over the incision, and sucks - hard. Blood and brain jelly oozing from its lips.

INT. WITCH-DOCTOR'S HUT - NIGHT

NARRATOR/WITCH-DOCTOR

Then, it cuts the tongue of the body it now occupies, to prevent it from telling others what it carries inside.

INT. GRAVE - POV TOKOLOSHE/DEMON - NIGHT

Yeesh. Just like the Doc says, we watch in seat-squirming popcorn-choking horror as a furry, black, taloned hand reaches into the mouth of the corpse and roughly distends the blue-black tongue. And, with a long sharp thumbnail, slices it off.

And then...

EXT. CEMETERY - THE GRAVE - NIGHT

Wide. The dirt mound. Still. Then --

FLOOMP. FLOOMP. FLOOMP. Hands plunge out of the earth and -

THE CORPSE pulls itself clear of the grave. The dirt-caked form of the dead old woman stumbles towards us...with a demonic-look in her soiled eye sockets - the look of something we've seen before.

INT. WITCH-DOCTOR'S HUT - NIGHT

Our Narrator, laying THE BONES out on the mat before him.

NARRATOR/WITCH-DOCTOR

In this state, the Dwarf spirit is known as uMkhovu. Or, what you, in the new world, would call...

(looks at us)

*Zombie.*

EXT. GRAVE - NIGHT

The eyes of the dead old woman mist over, white, completing the timeless zombie look. Then, before our disbelieving eyes, her torso begins to shrink...

NARRATOR/WITCH-DOCTOR

One of the characteristics of these zombies is a shorter body and elongated arms so they can run... like gorillas.

Her arms, with disturbing bone-CRACKING sounds, begin to stretch. They elongate a full few inches, and she --

Collapses onto fisted knuckles. And begins to run --

Across the cemetery, and plunges into the moonlit bush.

LOW ANGLE - MOVING - ON THE ZOMBIE

As it hurtles through the cracking bush at high speed, grinning, grunting and cackling like a demon.

NEW ANGLE - KWA MASHU - NIGHT

Across roving moonlit hills, the twinkling lights and paraffin flames of the township can be seen in the distance. SOMETHING charges into frame, grunting and cackling, and gallops off into the distance. THE ZOMBIE, headed for the township.

NARRATOR/WITCH-DOCTOR (V.O.)

And in this new diabolical vehicle, uMkhovu will use its new reluctant host to dispel...uMthakathi. Muthi that bewitches.

INT. WITCH-DOCTOR'S HUT - NIGHT

Our Narrator gathers up THE BONES from the mat and drops them into a calabash.

NARRATOR/WITCH-DOCTOR

Or, as you would call it...

(looks at us)

*Black Magic.*

(ironic smirk)

He sprinkles the bones with some kind of powder.

NARRATOR/WITCH-DOCTOR (CONT'D)

But! iTokoloshe can sometimes also occupy and exploit the bodies of...

(glances sideways at us)

...the living.

(shaking the bones)

As a young man from Zululand, and his entire community are about to discover, when they take the law into their own hands...and find themselves face-to-face with one of the most evil entities on...

(MORE)

NARRATOR/WITCH-DOCTOR (CONT'D)  
 (he looks directly at us)  
*The Dark Continent.*

He throws the bones, and they tumble onto the grass mat. And we --

TRANSITION TO:

# **TALES TITLE SEQUENCE & CREDITS**

STORY TITLE: **UMTHAKATI (THE WITCH)**

A QUOTE OVER BLACK:

*They that burn you for being a witch  
 lose all their coals.*

African Proverb

FADE IN

EXT. KWA MASHU - DAY

Rolling green sugarcane fields peppered by tribal huts, receding into the distance. We PAN to a contrasting image: The TOWNSHIP of Kwa Mashu. Sprawling urban decay. We continue to PAN across a never-ending ocean of mostly shacks and shanties and settle --

ON A ROOFTOP - A YOUNG ZULU MAN

Sits, hunched over. Drawing in a notepad.

NARRATOR/WITCH-DOCTOR (V.O.)  
 This is THEMBA. A young artist  
 from eThekweni. And the only  
 survivor of this tale...so far.

As we creep towards THEMBA, his VOICE fades in.

THEMBA (V.O.)  
 I live in Kwa Mashu, although I  
 sometimes stay with family who live  
 two hours away in the rural area of  
 Bethani in the Drakensberg.

CLOSE ON - THEMBA'S SKETCH PAD

Creepy monster images. The young artist's impression of mythical beings like iTOKOLOSHE and UMKHOVU.

THEMBA (V.O.)  
Kwa Mashu used to be a violent  
township...

FLASH CUTS: The bad old days. Archive footage of KZN in the  
early 90s; Armed faction mobs clash. Police fire teargas at  
protestors. Homes. Cars. People. *Burning.*

CUT TO:

EXT. KWA MASHU TOWNSHIP - ROOFTOP - DAY

CLOSE ON - THEMBA.

Drawing.

THEMBA (V.O.)  
But these days' things are calmer.

CUT TO:

INT. TV STUDIO - THEMBA

On camera now, telling his story.

THEMBA  
My family are happy for me and my  
education. And my passion for  
cartoons.

We track past the silhouettes of CREW in the f/g. Themba in  
the b/g against a greenscreen. We catch a glimpse of the  
composite shot on --

THE TX MONITOR.

The virtual set behind him is black with writhing misty  
shapes like phantoms. If you're watching closely, it vaguely  
resembles claws, groping at him.

THEMBA (CONT'D)  
But, they are disappointed, like  
many elders, with the children of  
today - for losing contact with our  
spiritual roots; what we, the  
youth, now call "superstition."

He sips from a red can of soda. Puts it down. Clasps his  
hands on his lap and hunches forward. He becomes very  
serious, looks directly at the interviewer.

THEMBA (CONT'D)  
It happened about seven years ago,  
it was a cold morning in July...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. KWA MASHU TOWNSHIP - WIDE - DAWN

LEGEND: SEVEN YEARS EARLIER

INT. KWA MASHU - THEMBA'S SHACK - DAY

We TRACK personal items, settle on sleeping THEMBA. His face partially obscured by healthy dreadlocks.

THEMBA (V.O.)  
 ...I was about nineteen then. And  
 at home, sleeping when I heard the  
 noise that woke me up at five o  
 clock in the morning.

From outside, MURMURS of distressed VOICES can be heard.

THEMBA stirs, sits up. Listening.

He gets out of bed, drapes a blanket over his shoulders and goes to the window.

He looks out onto the township street.

POV THEMBA

Crowds of discerned looking TOWNSHIP FOLK. Gathering. All of them moving towards a common point of interest.

THEMBA (V.O.)  
 There were crowds of people on the  
 road outside my house. Some were  
 talking very loudly. Excited.  
 Scared.

THEMBA, drops the blanket and moves out of frame. We HOLD on the window, the commotion outside.

THEMBA (V.O.)  
 I got dressed and went to see what  
 was happening.

EXT. KWA MASHU - THEMBA'S SHACK

THEMBA steps outside, pulls on a sweatshirt, brushing sleep and dreadlocks from his eyes. He joins the human flow that seems to be converging towards a little house on a hill at the end of the road.

EXT. KWA MASHU - CURSED HOUSE - DAY

A CROWD. Amassed. Staring intently at something in the front yard.

THEMBA, elbowing his way through the crowd, to the front.

He stops. His face goes slack with awe.

THEMBA (V.O.)

I pushed through the crowd, which had gathered outside the house of one of my neighbors. What I saw was too amazing to believe, and... it was *frightening*. As a boy growing up I had heard of this, but it was the first time I had seen it with my own eyes.

POV THEMBA

In the house yard, a young boy aged about twelve stands with his back to us, frozen like a statue. A TOWNSHIP MAN, ambles up and round to face him. The man reacts with fear at what he sees.

THE BOY'S FACE, still etched with wide-eyed horror from the mystifying condition that has seized him. We drift down his rigid arms, he is clutching something in each fist. Bloodied clear plastic bags containing...

THEMBA (V.O.)

In each hand, the boy had bags filled with offal. *Muthi*.

The crowd is numbed into silence by the sight of the ghastly pang on the boy's face.

INT. TV STUDIO - THEMBA (ON CAMERA)

THEMBA

The entire community had come to witness the incident. And immediately they deduced what had happened.

(shifts, clears his throat)

There is a belief among us that if you plant muthi, uh...potions...

(awkward)

Black magic...on the property of your enemy...it will place a curse on them.

EXT. KWA MASHU - CURSED HOUSE - DAY

CLOSE ON - THE BOY'S HANDS

Clutching the bags of crimson muthi. Then, we shift focus to b/g, and the front door...slightly ajar.

THEMBA (V.O.)  
 However, if the victim exits their  
 home...interrupts the ritual before  
 it is complete...

INT. TV STUDIO - THEMBA (ON CAMERA)

THEMBA  
 (nodding his head)  
 It will turn the curser to stone.

CUT TO:

EXT. KWA MASHU - CURSED HOUSE - THE CROWD

Realization gradually dawns and TOWNSHIP FOLK begin to react  
 with a mixture of fear, repulsion and anger.

A TOWNSHIP WOMAN steps forward.

TOWNSHIP WOMAN #1  
 (Zulu)  
 Stone the boy.

INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

THEMBA  
 And then...some began to gather up  
 rocks and throw them at him.

EXT. KWA MASHU - CURSED HOUSE - THE BOY

Still spellbound, is suddenly pelted by stones. One hits him  
 full in the face. He barely flinches, but the frozen look of  
 terror in his eyes melts, and he becomes lucid and self-aware  
 again. He looks around at the amassed crowd, bewildered.

THE CROWD, their jaws and arms go slack. Stones are dropped.

THEMBA  
 This must have snapped the boy out  
 of the spell because....he revived  
 and looked around directly at us.  
 Then, someone approached him and  
 asked him...

EXT. KWA MASHU - CURSED HOUSE

A TOWNSHIP MAN is knelt before the boy, probing him for  
 information.

TOWNSHIP MAN #1  
(Subtitled Zulu  
throughout)  
What is your name?

SIPHO  
Sipho.

TOWNSHIP MAN #1  
Who sent you?

SIPHO  
Gogo Nyanga. (The herb granny).

TOWNSHIP MAN #1  
How long has she made you do this?

SIPHO  
Three or four years.

TOWNSHIP WOMAN #1  
Which houses have you cursed?

The boy reluctantly starts explaining.

THEMBA (V.O.)  
The boy told them of the houses his  
Grandmother had sent him to...

The community growl at the mention of each home.

INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

THEMBA  
Every home he mentioned had  
befallen some tragedy.

EXT. KWA MASHU - CURSED HOUSE - DAY

TOWNSHIP WOMAN #2  
We will take you to Gogo Nyanga she  
must explain.

They collar the boy and haul him off.

THEMBA, watches them go, bewildered and fascinated. He  
starts to follow them.

THEMBA (V.O.)  
I followed the elders as they took  
the boy back to his Grandmothers  
house..

EXT. GOGO NYANGA'S HOUSE

A rustic, disheveled tin roofed cottage blackened by soot and seepage.

THEMBA (V.O.)  
Her home had a dark presence.  
An evil aura.

Two little boys step out of the crowd, and frantically point at the dwelling. Excited, they describe an experience they once had there.

THEMBA (V.O.)  
...the boys started telling us that  
the Granny was keeping a big dog in  
her wardrobe.

FLASHBACK

INT. GOGO NYANGA'S HOUSE - DAY

The boys are peering through the window into her bedroom.

THEMBA (V.O.)  
They swore they often saw her  
feeding it.

POV BOYS

GOGO NYANGA, can be seen. Struggling to shut her cupboard door against some BEAST within fighting violently to get out. THE CREATURE does not SOUND like a dog.

AT THE WINDOW - THE BOYS, transfixed and terrified.

PRESENT

EXT. GOGO NYANGA'S HOUSE - DAY

On hearing this, THE CROWD are reeling.

TOWNSHIP WOMAN #1  
Umthakathi. (Witchcraft).

TOWNSHIP WOMAN #2  
Tokoloshe. (The demon dwarf).

THE CROWD, march towards the house.

INT. GOGO NYANGA'S HOUSE - DAY

The floor of the place is cluttered with dusty buckets, bowls and jars. All filled with animal organs, offal and other disturbing muthi paraphernalia. We HEAR the CROWD closing in, as -- the front door is kicked down, and TOWNSHIP FOLK spill into the room. They freeze when they look up and see --

GOGO NYANGA, stands before them. The Zombie. Gaunt. Skraal. Wispy grey hair. Her sunken eye-sockets and milky cataracts ogle the crowd. She doesn't speak.

A TOWNSHIP MAN starts to question her.

THEMBA (V.O.)

Inside, she had buckets full of muti, entrails...all over the house. When asked what all this muti was for she did not speak. Someone asked is it for BP...blood pressure? She nodded. Yes.

INT. TV STUDIO - THEMBA

THEMBA

...but they did not believe her.

INT. GOGO NYANGA'S HOUSE - DAY

A TOWNSHIP WOMAN stabs her finger at the buckets.

TOWNSHIP WOMAN #2

So drink it!

The others nod their heads in support.

The old woman shakes her head in defiance. Her terse mouth tightly pursed. The mob can't see it, but we do. She can't talk, and can't show them why.

THEMBA (V.O.)

Again and again they challenged the old woman to drink her own muthi, but she refused.

A SOUND from the bedroom cupboard alerts them. One of the men forces the old woman aside and enters the room.

INT. GOGO NYANGA'S BEDROOM - DAY

As he steps inside, the SOUNDS coming from her cupboard are unearthly. SOMETHING wild, bestial.

THE TOWNSHIP MAN carefully unlocks the cupboard, braces himself against the door, slowly prying it open to peek inside.

THE BEAST explodes out of the cupboard sending him sprawling.

Shocked TOWNSFOLK find themselves facing a huge, hairy male CHACMA BABOON. The creature bares it's fangs at them and SCREECHES.

EXT. GOGO NYANGA'S HOUSE - DAY

SCREAMING TOWNSFOLK barge out of the house, dive out of windows, two at a time. We HEAR the snarling primate inside.

Last men out of the house slam the door shut barricade it with whatever they can find. They shut windows, and brace against the door - which heaves and slams as the creature bucks against it.

THEMBA (V.O.)  
They were both trapped inside...  
The woman, and her animal.

INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

THEMBA  
She was using the Baboon  
to carry Umthakati...evil  
spells...to her victims.

EXT. GOGO NYANGA'S HOUSE - DAY

A HAND clutching a Molotov cocktail, the rag is lit.

A TOWNSHIP YOUTH tosses the flaming cocktail, it --  
SMASHES through a window into the house.

ANOTHER YOUTH, does the same.

INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

THEMBA, on camera.

THEMBA  
And then, I joined them.

EXT. GOGO NYANGA'S HOUSE - FLASHBACK - DAY

SLO MO - THEMBA, lights a cocktail and hurls it at the house.  
And in seconds --

- the entire house is ablaze with roaring flames.

THROUGH A WINDOW - AND ROARING FLAMES, we catch an eerie glimpse of Gogo Nyanga and her beast. Just standing, looking back at us. Until the fire consumes them.

THEMBA, the mob amassed behind him, watching the place burn.

THEMBA (V.O.)  
I had to destroy it. And her.

INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

THEMBA  
We torched the house with them  
still trapped inside. They burned  
to death.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)  
Why? For what?

THEMBA  
(nods slowly, with  
conviction)  
For being a witch. Pure and  
simple.

EXT. GOGO NYANGA'S HOUSE - WIDE - DAY

Burnt ruins of the house. Dying embers. Smoky haze.

THE MOB, THEMBA among them. Look on at the gutted remains.

THEMBA (V.O.)  
It's something you have to  
experience to understand. She was  
evil. And evil must be destroyed.  
At least, that's what we all  
believed at the time.

INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

THEMBA, incredulous, after all these years.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)  
And then...? What happened?

THEMBA  
And then...  
(shifts in his seat,  
uncomfortable)  
People started dying...

FLASHBACK

INT. THEMBA'S SHACK - NIGHT

THEMBA, asleep. When SCREAMS from outside in the road awake him.

THEMBA, scrambles out of bed and to the window. We see people running past. The SCREAMS are becoming more frantic.

THEMBA pulls on a sweater and barrels out the door. Through the window we watch as he joins the throng of neighbours heading for the source of the screams.

EXT. NEIGHBOUR'S SHACK - NIGHT

TOWNSHIP WOMAN #2 is screaming, blubbing in Zulu and pointing frantically to the shack.

TOWNSHIP MAN #2, storms past her and into the hut. THEMBA follows him in.

INT. NEIGHBOUR'S SHACK - NIGHT

It's a grisly scene. A blood bath. TOWNSHIP MAN AND WOMAN #1 are both dead, and disemboweled. Their baby lies screaming in a rickety make-shift cot.

TOWNSHIP MAN #2 gags at the scene, clutches his mouth, and stumbles backward, pushing past THEMBA, and out of the hut. Outside, we hear him hurl his guts out. We hold on THEMBA - wide-eyed with horror, and nausea. He tears his eyes away from the terrible scene and they fall on --

Footprints in blood -- human and animal.

THEMBA, bug-eyed and locked on these prints. He finally backs out of the shack.

EXT. NEIGHBOUR'S SHACK - THEMBA

Reeling. He slowly paces away, in the direction of his own shack. We hear panicked VOICES in the b/g debating who did this.

A CROWD has gathered. Police vans and an ambulance are pulling up, COLOURED LIGHTS FLASHING.

As Themba watches, the bloodied remains of the victims are being carried away by paramedics.

THEMBA turns to a bystander.

THEMBA  
What happened?

BYSTANDER

They think it was a dog.

(looks at THEMBA)

But they're not sure.

They exchange looks. THEMBA looks around him. All the township folk that were present at the burning are here, and swapping fearful glances. They all turn and look towards --

ON THE HILL - GOGO NYANGA'S HOUSE

Now a burned out shell. Consumed by shadows. Still.

THEMBA (V.O.)

But they were just the first...

FLASH CUTS - LYNCHERS BEING SLAUGHTERED - NIGHT

By some unseen BEAST, while another dark being in the shadows looks on.

INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

THEMBA

Over several weeks, night after night, the residents were stalked. Those who colluded in the burning of Gogo Nyanga were savaged by some wild beast...that nobody ever saw.

FLASH CUTS: People found dismembered or disemboweled in their shacks. Bodies draped in sheets, are being carted away by paramedics.

THEMBA (CONT'D)

One by one. Everyone that was involved in her death...began to die off. In the same terrible way. Until, one day...it just stopped. People in the township said it must've been a mad dog on the loose. But we all knew...

INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

THEMBA, on camera.

THEMBA

Those of us involved...we knew...it was the old woman. Back for her revenge.

Heavy silence in the studio. Then, after a moment.

INTERVIEWER

So...why not you? Why do you think she spared you?

THEMBA

(shrugs)

I don't know.

(sad smile)

Maybe...she just forgot about me.

(nervous laughter)

Awkward beat of silence in the studio.

THEMBA

Stands, takes off his microphone. He looks past the camera at the INTERVIEWER (O/S).

THEMBA

Is that it? Can I go now?

He waits for his answer.

CUT TO:

EXT. KWA MASHU - PRESENT - DUSK

THEMBA, ambling towards his shack.

INT. THEMBA'S SHACK - NIGHT

THEMBA comes in. Closes the door behind him. Lights a paraffin lamp. Dumps his keys. And moves O/S.

LATER

THEMBA. In bed. Drawing. In the b/g, the tv is running an ad for Black Cat peanut butter.

He yawns. Dumps the sketch pad on the floor. Rolls over, and turns the lamp down low, very low, but not out. He snuggles in for the night. We hold on his dozing form. Then, from somewhere the darkness. A low, gargling, hissing voice...

CREEPY VOICE (O.S.)

*Themmbaaaaah...*

THEMBA. Wide awake now. Sits up. Looks around.

THEMBA

(nervous)

Hallo...ubani?

He rubs his eyes and stares into --

Darkest corner of the shack. We slowwwly creep towards it.  
THEMBA, peers into the blackness.

THEMBA (CONT'D)  
Someone there?

POV THEMBA

*Something*, is watching him from the darkness.

CREEPY VOICE(O.S.)  
(Zulu, subtitled)  
*Did you think I forgot yooooou...?*  
*(Ucabangani ngikhohliwe wenaaaa?)*

In the shadows, the silhouette of a stooped form can barely be seen. Two glinting pinhole eyes reflecting milky moonlight leer back at us. We get a grisly hint of the charred flesh and bone -- the quivering disfigured old crone. And, at her side, the dark mass of some shuddering mangled beast - badly burned, glistening with pus and mucus. The woman's scorched, taloned hand, rests on the creature's head. Stroking it.

THEMBA, turns to stone. Eyes wide and white. His mouth contorts, a scream lodged in his throat.

THE OLD WOMAN, snarls.

THE CREATURE, lunges.

THEMBA, screams.

It's a blur of frightening violence. THEMBA's limbs flay wildly as he is savaged by the creature. His arm knocks the low burning lamp flying. It EXPLODES, the shack catches fire.

Through the wavy heat, THE OLD WOMAN, grins in the darkness. As the flames lick higher.

EXT. THEMBA'S SHACK - WIDE - NIGHT

Devoured by the roaring inferno. CRACKING WOOD. EXPLODING GLASS. Drown out THEMBA's muffled dying screams. We drift up to the sky, and the bellowing black clouds of smoke. As a now familiar VOICE fades in.

NARRATOR/WITCH-DOCTOR (V.O.)  
Ancient African wisdom says; "It is the woman whose child has been eaten by a witch who best knows the evils of witchcraft."

From the wafting smoke, we --

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WITCH-DOCTOR'S HUT - DAY

Wispy vapour of burning mphephu is fading away. Revealing, in b/g -- THE BONES, scattered on a grass mat. An ancient black hand scoops them into a calabash, and we hear a now familiar VOICE as we tilt up to --

Our Narrator.

NARRATOR/WITCH-DOCTOR  
(sombre, yet playful)  
Yes. Poor Themba. He too learned  
the hard way. The elders are not  
superstitious for nothing. One  
should be wary of dismissing  
ancient beliefs...  
(he looks at us)  
...on the *Dark Continent*.  
(About to turn away, he  
turns back to us)  
Oh, and to all you westernized  
*muntus* out there...in the "new  
world"? Who may mock our  
"primitive superstitions"...?  
To you I say...happy *Halloween*.  
(grins)

NEW ANGLE

He shakes the calabash containing THE BONES --

NARRATOR/WITCH-DOCTOR (CONT'D)  
But wait...the madness has only  
just begun...

And once again scatters them --

ON THE MAT

The bones tumble and roll to a still, in a formation that vaguely resembles the first frame of our next tale, and we --

DISSOLVE TO:

Our next Tale: THE LUNATICS