

Original Concept By: Mpho Nkoana

Working Title: Rising Vengeance

Genre: Drama/Horror

Duration: 90-minutes

Sub-Genre: Supernatural Horror/Suspense/Sci-Fi

Language: Sesotho & English (Subtitles in English)

Tagline: Some sins refuse to stay buried.

Logline:

In Thabong, 17-year-old Palesa's ordinary day turns nightmarish when she's kidnapped by Tladi, a sinister garden worker. As her father Ratau seeks vengeance, a cycle of violence ensues. Palesa must confront her fears and battle both Tladi's vengeful spirit and her family's turmoil to protect her loved ones.

Synopsis:

Act One:

In the township of Thabong, the serenity of a day masks a dark history. Seventeen-year-old Palesa sits in class, her attention fleeting as she catches the unsettling gaze of Tladi, a garden worker. Her discomfort grows, and when the bell rings, her best friend Boitumelo encourages her to join a party despite her parents' disapproval. As they walk home, Palesa notices Tladi tailing her. In a terrifying turn, he corners her in an alley, threatening her with a butcher knife and dragging her to his shack. Meanwhile, Palesa's parents, Joyce and Ratau, worry as she fails to return home. When Ratau arrives, he becomes anxious as Joyce fails to reach Palesa on the phone. Inside Tladi's shack, Palesa is bound and bleeding, confronted by the lifeless bodies of other girls. In a desperate bid for survival, she manages to escape, injuring Tladi in the process. She runs to Mam'Beatrice's house, where she reveals the horror she endured. Mam'Beatrice blows a whistle, summoning the community for justice against Tladi.

Act Two:

The community descends upon Tladi, who is caught and brutally attacked. As Ratau arrives, he witnesses the chaos and sees his daughter covered in blood. In a moment of rage and despair, he shoots Tladi, igniting a wave of violence as the community burns his body. Three months pass, but the trauma lingers. Palesa struggles with PTSD, haunted by nightmares of Tladi. During a therapy session, she reveals her fear of her father's guilt over his actions leading to her trauma. While Palesa tries to navigate her life, Ratau faces consequences at work, suspended for his actions. Tensions in their home rise as Palesa feels her father's guilt weighs heavily on him. One night, Palesa is frantic when she senses danger. Despite her fears, she and Ratau visit a traditional healer, who reveals that Tladi's spirit is restless and seeks vengeance. As Palesa attempts to cope, her friend Boitumelo is brutally murdered by Tladi, who

seems to be resurrected from death. The community is engulfed in fear, and Palesa believes her family is in danger. In a frantic effort to protect her loved ones, Ratau gathers Palesa, Tshepo, and Malefu to escape to safety.

Act Three:

Their escape leads them to a cemetery where they confront the reality of their situation. Tladi's presence looms, and in a heart-stopping moment, Ratau attempts to drive over him, only to crash and inadvertently cause Malefu's death. Grief overwhelms Ratau as he realizes the extent of their tragedy. As they regroup, Tladi reappears, ready to claim more lives. Ratau attempts to use the muthi to confront Tladi, but in a gut-wrenching turn, he is brutally killed before Palesa and Tshepo's eyes. In the chaotic aftermath, Palesa and Tshepo flee, determined to stop Tladi and avenge their losses. In a crescendo of suspense, Palesa returns to the cemetery, armed with the knowledge and strength she has gained. The struggle against Tladi culminates in a harrowing battle, where the line between life and death blurs. The township of Thabong, encapsulated in its haunting past, becomes the backdrop for Palesa's fight for survival and freedom from the shadows that threaten to consume her. As dawn breaks, the scars of trauma remain, but hope flickers as Palesa vows to reclaim her life and honor the memories of those lost. Shadows of Thabong linger, but she rises, ready to confront her future.

What If Premise:

What if a man who was murdered for his crimes rises from the dead to seek revenge on those who wronged him, forcing his victim to confront her trauma and her family's past in order to survive?

Controlling Idea:

The pursuit of revenge can lead to a cycle of violence that ultimately requires confronting one's own demons for true healing and justice.

Character Bios:

1. Palesa Mokoena

- **Age:** 17
- **Gender:** Female
- **Language:** Sesotho, English
- **Emotional Needs:** Healing from trauma, empowerment
- **Emotional Wants:** A normal life, freedom from fear
- **Traits:** Intelligent, resilient
- **Flaws:** Overly trusting, struggles with self-worth
- **Redeeming Qualities:** Compassionate, determined
- **Summary of Character Arc:** Palesa begins as a scared victim but evolves into a strong figure who confronts her past and takes control of her narrative.

2. Ratau Mokoena

- **Age:** 45
- **Gender:** Male
- **Language:** Sesotho, English
- **Emotional Needs:** Forgiveness for perceived failures as a father

- **Emotional Wants:** To protect his family
- **Traits:** Stoic, hardworking
- **Flaws:** Emotionally distant, struggles with vulnerability
- **Redeeming Qualities:** Loyal, courageous
- **Summary of Character Arc:** Ratau transitions from a man overwhelmed by guilt and grief to a protective father who confronts his fears and takes decisive action.

3. Joyce Mokoena

- **Age:** 40
- **Gender:** Female
- **Language:** Sesotho, English
- **Emotional Needs:** Stability for her family
- **Emotional Wants:** Peace of mind
- **Traits:** Nurturing, pragmatic
- **Flaws:** Tends to be overly protective, fearful
- **Redeeming Qualities:** Strong intuition, empathetic
- **Summary of Character Arc:** Joyce evolves from a passive observer to an active participant in her family's healing process.

4. Tladi Molelekoa

- **Age:** 35 (at death)
- **Gender:** Male
- **Language:** Sesotho, English
- **Emotional Needs:** Power and control
- **Emotional Wants:** Revenge and recognition of his pain
- **Traits:** Charismatic, manipulative
- **Flaws:** Violent, selfish
- **Redeeming Qualities:** Charismatic in life, able to inspire fear
- **Summary of Character Arc:** Tladi's arc transitions from a living embodiment of violence to a vengeful spirit, ultimately revealing the destructive nature of his unresolved anger.

Writer's Statement of Intent for Rising Vengeance

Rising Vengeance emerges from a deep-seated desire to explore the intricate dynamics of trauma, vengeance, and the quest for healing within the context of a supernatural horror narrative. Set against the vivid backdrop of Thabong, my intention is to create a visceral experience that transcends mere entertainment, inviting audiences to engage with uncomfortable truths about violence and its repercussions on family and community.

At its core, this film centers on Palesa, a young woman grappling with the aftermath of her abduction and the violent cycle that follows. Through her journey, I aim to challenge the notion of revenge as a solution to suffering, illuminating the devastating consequences it can have on both the avenger and the victim. Palesa's evolution from a frightened girl to a resilient warrior embodies the struggle for empowerment amidst chaos, offering a reflection on the power of confronting one's demons.

The duality of horror in *Rising Vengeance*, the tangible threat of Tladi and the psychological horrors of trauma, serves to heighten the suspense while grounding the narrative in emotional truth. By intertwining elements of supernatural horror with the everyday realities of life in a township, I seek to create a film that resonates on multiple levels, fostering empathy and understanding.

This film is not just about survival; it's about reclaiming agency and confronting the obscurities of the past. Through its rich cultural tapestry and complex characters, *Rising Vengeance* aspires to spark conversations about healing, community accountability, and the indomitable spirit of those who rise from the ashes of despair. As Palesa fights against both her captor and her own fears, I hope to inspire audiences to reflect on their own journeys towards redemption and resilience.