

# **Ruth and Seretse**

Treatment by John Collee

## **Worlds Apart**

Serowe 1925: Seretse's father has died unexpectedly. Standing rigidly to attention in a Scottish kilt the 4-year-old Seretse watches his uncle Tshekedi being sworn in as Regent.

RAF Friston. 1943. An emergency landing base on the South Coast of England. A stricken bomber crash lands. The WAAF driver is Ruth aged 17.

She returns to the hanger to learn that her family home has been hit by a bomb. No-one was hurt.

## 1. First Meeting

London 1947: Post-war Britain is an austere place of ration cards and queues. Black faces are a rare sight on the streets of London.

Seretse arrives from Oxford to study Law at London's Inner Temple.

A few blocks away, Ruth is working on the North American desk of Lloyds insurance. Travelling home by train each evening to her parents house in the suburbs she watches the passing ranks of red brick houses and misses the drama of the war years.

Her sister Muriel invites her to a church social to help entertain some foreign students. It doesn't sound like a great night out but she goes along to support Muriel.

She meets Seretse. He is quiet, dignified, amusing. They discover a mutual liking of jazz. He suggests the Inkspots concert.

## 2. Falling in Love

The concert at the Casino theatre in Soho is a wild success, Afterwards Seretse escorts the girls back home on the train to Blackheath.

Subsequently, he sometimes comes to see Ruth ice-skating in the Queensway Ice Rink on Bayswater Road.

Over drinks he tells her about his great-grandfathers meeting with Queen Victoria to negotiate the protected status of Bechuanaland

Autumn turns to winter then spring. Ruth's mother Dorothy realises Ruth is getting involved with someone and asks to meet him.

Seretse invites Ruth and her mother to afternoon tea at the hostel where he stays. Dorothy overcomes her initial shock that her daughter is dating a black man. She is charmed by Seretse's wit and old-world courtesy.

However, on the way home she tells her daughter it won't work out, and when Ruth's father George enquires about the young man, Dorothy avoids telling him he's an African.

So Seretse's identity remains an uneasy secret shared between the women of the family. Ruth feels a coward for not telling the truth but can't yet bring herself to face her fathers wrath.

At least not until she absolutely has to.

### 3. The Marriage Proposal

Summer of 1948. Seretse proposes marriage but tells Ruth that he doesn't want an answer. She must first consider the implications of accepting: He is a chief of the Bamangwato tribe and must go back to serve them.

Bechuanaland is a poor, desert country. There are few whites living there and no modern amenities. The locals may be unhappy about her marriage. So might Ruth's parents

Unhappy is an understatement. George, Ruth's father, is a successful coffee and tea importer who fancies he knows a bit about the average black fellow. To his mind a mixed marriage is a disaster for all concerned. Ruth will be excluded from black and white communities alike.

He refuses to meet Seretse and will not allow him in the house. If Ruth is set on this ridiculous match she must leave home on the morning of her wedding day and never return.

At work, Ruth's head of department, Mr Priestley abruptly announces he wants to transfer her to the New York office. Ruth says its impossible - she's getting married. Priestley says he knows, and he's offering her a choice: accept or be sacked

Ruth goes straight to Seretse and agrees to marry him.

## 4. Seretse informs his people

Seretse finds a bed-sitter in Notting Hill Gate where he and Ruth can live. He speaks to the local vicar, Rev Leonard Patterson who agrees to provide a marriage licence for two pounds and ten shillings.

He writes to his uncle

*"....I realise that this matter will not please you and the tribe may not like it. In spite of what they might do or say I shall return home to serve you in any capacity. I know it was my duty to have asked your consent beforehand but I knew you would refuse and it would have been difficult for me to disregard your wishes. Please forgive me and please don't try and stop me as I am resolved to go through with this."*

Far away, in the dusty little hamlet of Serowe, Tshekedi's reaction is grim. The elders of the tribe all take the same line: This white woman doesn't know their customs or our language. The tribe will never accept a white woman as their ruler. Moreover they will never agree to be ruled by her offspring, who would be half-white. The union must be stopped.

Tshekedi alerts his lawyer in Capetown, who visits the office of Sir Evelyn Baring, the British High Commissioner in charge of South Africa. The message from Tshekedi is that Seretse's marriage, if it goes ahead, will cause massive tribal unrest and a possible backlash against the British.

Baring's office send a telegram to the foreign office in London: *.... urge you to take every possible step to prevent Seretse 10 Campden hill Garden Notice Hill Gate marrying English girl on October 2. Caution Parson. Contact Archbishop. Inform girls parents. Consider extradition.*

## 5. Attempts to stop the wedding.

Unaware of the scale of the gathering storm, Ruth goes shopping for her wedding dress.

There's a knock on the door of Seretse's apartment. He's hoping to see Ruth but it's a delegation from Seretse's church: Orchard, Haile and Pilkington. For four hours they try and talk Seretse out of the marriage. Seretse is resolute. The matter is already decided and it's none of their business.

Next day, Ruth packs to leave home, enduring her mother's pained expression and her father's frosty silence. She loads her suitcases into a friend, John Zimmerman's car. Then she and Muriel set off to Seretse's place.

They arrive at the church in Notting Hill Gate, where a bookish pastor, the Rev Patterson had previously agreed to marry them. Now he says he can't. Ruth protests but Patterson won't budge. He says he needs to refer the matter to the Bishop of London.

The Bishop happens to be ordaining a priest nearby at St Mary Abbot's Kensington. Ruth, Seretse and their witnesses go there and wait through the solemn, pompous ceremony to speak to him.

Bishop Wand is cold and aloof. He knows of their case and can't give his permission to marry them till he's consulted with Africa. "Now run along" he tells them, he has much business to attend to.

Ruth bursts into tears, accusing the Bishop of hypocrisy. Seretse steers her away, telling her within earshot of the bishop that maybe they need to rethink.

## 6. The Wedding goes ahead

Next day he takes her on the train to Brighton.

Ruth is sullen. She thinks Seretse has got cold feet and is giving in to the establishment. Actually Seretse has got everything planned.

At a Brighton registry office their witnesses are waiting for a discrete informal ceremony.

Afterwards back in London all Seretse's friends from the colonial students hostel cram into their flat for a surprise party.

Ruth and Seretse spend their first night together, unaware that their story is set to ignite the public imagination. Headlines break the next day: *Ruler weds office girl.*

## 7. Hostility in South Africa

Tshekedi writes to Seretse: *You may be married in England but you're not married here. As far as we are concerned no marriage exists*

Newspapers leap on the story. *White bride causes Tribal crisis.*

News of the marriage has already reached South Africa, where Johannes Styrdom, leader of the national party receives an angry deputation from his right-wing constituents in the united reform church. Mixed marriage strikes at the very heart of their apartheid policy. They want Styrdom to ban Seretse from South Africa then pressure the British to have the marriage licence revoked

Styrdom promises action and does nothing, reckoning that Seretse's marriage is just what he needs. Even the moderates in South Africa will be so enraged by it that it will sweep Styrdom to power and strengthen opinion in favour of leaving the British Commonwealth. Once free of Great Britain they can annex Bechuanaland, depose Seretse and expand Afrikaner territory. A mixed race marriage across the border will unleash the whirlwind

Seretse is meanwhile flying home, into the eye of the gathering storm.

**II**

## 8. Seretse comes home to face the music

October is the hottest month in Bechuanaland. It's the end of the dry season and tribesfolk are scattered far and wide over the scrubland, clustered with their cattle herds around springs and boreholes.

News has gone out summoning them to attend a public debate - a "Kgotla" - which Seretse and Tshekedi will attend.

Meanwhile, the South African Airways DC4 Skymaster, arrives at Jo'burg. Seretse experiences the casual racism of a customs search and finally emerges to be met by his friend Goareng.

As they travel to Mafeking in the soot-filled "blacks only" front carriage, Goareng explains the mood of the tribe. Most seem to be against the marriage. A few of the younger men will support Seretse but his worry is that a split within the tribe will give the white colonialists an excuse to impose their own wishes.

They are met off the train at Palawe by a car sent by Tshekedi which delivers Seretse to Tshekedi's house. From the start, Tshekedi is unable to disguise his displeasure.

Rather than suffer a week of this Seretse declines his uncle's hospitality and moves out to stay with Goareng. The feared rift in the tribe is starting already.

## 9. The Kgotla

The Kgotla ground is an oval space, bordered by white painted stones. At the head of the oval there is a speaking platform and beside it, two huge makala trees which provide some shade, but not enough for all the 3000 men who are present.

The Brits have drafted in extra police to keep order. A few British pressmen stand sweating in the heat, struggling to make out what's going on as the tribe debate history and precedent, mixing old, unrelated grievances with the new issues of Seretse's marriage and chieftainship

At one point Goareng, sitting next to Seretse, looks round at the assembled press men, scribbling away. This is a domestic matter and he feels their presence is an intrusion.

Seretse tells him the press circus is much worse back in London.

## 10. Ruth under Siege

In London, Ruth lives in Seretse's rented apartment, besieged by reporters who are camped around the house

To escape she sends out her sister in dark glasses and headscarf as a decoy, then jumps the back garden fence and gets on a bus.

Even that fails to shake them. A reporter takes the seat beside her and proceeds to ask a lot of rude and intrusive questions.

Ruth travels to her parents house and is surprised to find her father at home. She has not spoken to him since the marriage and now, when he greets her in stony silence, she breaks down in tears. On top of the press harassment her father's hostility is too much for her.

Realising the pressure she's under her father finally relents and accepts her back into the house.

Later he goes to her apartment, gives the pressmen a piece of his mind and collects her things.

## 11. Seretse appeals to the tribe

At the Kgotla in Serowe, things are going badly for Seretse Tshekedi and his followers have been driving around during breaks from the Kgotla, rallying opinion against Seretse, which seems to be hardening.

However, their strategy ultimately backfires, because Seretse's friend Goaletsa finally loses his temper and takes a stand. He gets up and publicly accuses Tshekedi of following a separate agenda, using Seretse's marriage as an excuse to wrest the chieftainship from its rightful heir.

Tshekedi angrily denies this but the moderates among the elders, who resent Tshekedi's politicking as much as Goaletsa, begin to swing behind Seretse.

Now Seretse makes his speech: a declaration of his love for Ruth and an impassioned plea to the tribe to accept her as their queen. He finally asks for a vote.

In ones and twos then a great mass, 3,000 men rise to their feet. At the same time the heavens open and the long-awaited rains arrive.

Seretse on the platform sits back on his chair and laughs.

The District Commissioner speaks last: "I have registered your decision and I shall report it to the resident commissioner who shall pass it on to the high commissioner and the secretary of state in London.

Until the government signifies its approval the administration will continue as it has until now."

Believing this to be no more than a formality, Seretse cables Ruth to come and join him

## 12. Baring addresses the cabinet

In a film of the period, "She" from the Rider Haggard novel, a beautiful white woman commands a vast African tribe.

Accordingly, Seretse's victory makes front page news in Britain. "*White English secretary to be queen of 100,000 tribesmen.*" "*Seretse's tribe accept Ruth at queen*"

In response Sir Evelyn Baring, the high commissioner in South Africa flies back to address the cabinet in London. To press who meet him at Heathrow airport he says he's here on his routine annual leave.

To the Cabinet he says recognising Seretse as chief would be a political disaster with massive repercussions for stability to SA. The relatively moderate Prime minister Malan would be deposed by Johannes Styrdom and the Commonwealth of nations would be split before the ink had dried on the agreement.

Thereafter, invasion of Bechuanaland would be a definite possibility and Britain, 8000 miles away would be hard pressed to provide any defence

On the subject of defence theres one other factor to consider. South Africa is rich in Uranium. Britain is currently using this to barter with the USA for a share of nuclear technology. If South Africa goes independent, she can do her own deal with America leaving Britain as a second rate, non-nuclear power.

For these reasons, whatever the Kgotla may have decided its imperative that Seretse does not become chief. If possible Ruth should be prevented from joining Seretse in Bechuanaland.

Legally this would be difficult to justify. But while the home office investigate their options its agreed to try and stall her

## **13. Ruth skips the country**

Ruth is trying to book a flight. She finds everything mysteriously booked for several weeks in advance.

Finally suspecting she's been black-listed she phones in the name of Mrs Jones and gets a standby booking for the next day.

She and her father slip out of the house at midnight and drive to Southampton.

A car follows but they manage to shake it off. Pressmen are waiting at the airport and for a dreadful moment it seems that her cover has been blown.

Not so. the press are waiting to interview a young South African ballet star who is boarding the same light.

"Mrs Jones" says goodbye to her father, boards the aircraft and flies off to meet her husband.

## 14. Ruth arrives in Africa

Tshekedi packs his house. Seretse pleads with him to stay and lend his experience to governing the tribe but Tshekedi is adamant, he wont share Serowe with Ruth.

Three red lorries containing his possessions leave the Bamangwato reserve as Tshekedi goes into exile

Meanwhile Ruth travels by flying boat via Sicily, Luxor and Entebbe to the Zambesi river, where it finally lands in clouds of spray thrown up by the Victoria falls.

Her fame has preceded her. Tourists turn their back on the falls to stare at the white queen.

A local pilot has been hired to fly her to Francistown in Bechuanaland. He has to take a longer route than usual round the edge of the Kalahari so as not to offend the Rhodesians (who strongly oppose the marriage) by flying her over their territory.

At the airstrip in Bechuanaland a car is waiting to meet her. Its not Seretse but Noel Monks, an especially tenacious and resourceful British journalist. Ruth is feeling abandoned and defenceless when a big turquoise Chevrolet comes bouncing over the scrub and whisks her away.

Inside the car, Seretse embraces her. His friend Goareng drives like a maniac, finally losing Monks pursuing vehicle in a cloud of dust.

## 15. Ruth is welcomed by the tribe

Seretse's car is well known. As he drives through fields and villages, it seems like the whole tribe has come out to cheer. Children chase after the car. Women chant and ululate whenever they appear.

In Serowe, a huge banner of greeting is strung across the track.

Seretse's house isn't ready yet so a white settler, Ma Shaw, gives them accommodation

Her son, Tommy Shaw is in bed when that night when someone tries to break in through the bedroom window. Tommy pulls a gun from under the pillow and Noel monks beats a hasty retreat.

## **16.       The Honeymoon**

It is springtime in Botswana and the Mopane trees are in leaf. Seretse takes Ruth on an idyllic trip through his beautiful kingdom. The wide plains where giraffe and elephant roam, the lush Okavango swamps where hippo bathe among the floating reed-beds

## 17. South Africa ups the ante.

Meanwhile In South Africa, an outraged Johannes Styrdom addresses parliament: *"will you be surprised if Seretse's subjects or any black man here in South Africa says: If Seretse Khama can have a white woman why can't I?"*

Fighting for political survival, President Malan publicly denounces the marriage of Ruth and Seretse and formally requests the transfer of all high commission protectorates to SA.

For the British High Commissioner, Sir Evelyn Baring it is now a matter of urgency that Seretse's claim to the chieftainship be squashed. He suggests a legal inquiry to prove that Seretse is not a fit and proper person to lead the tribe.

## 18. The Inquiry

Ruth and Seretse return from their safari to find a marquee set up in Serowe market place and a group of British civil servants inviting depositions from disaffected members of the tribe.

Tshekedi arrives to give evidence. The commissioners want him to denounce Seretse as an individual. Tshekedi argues that he has no problem with Seretse. Its the mixed-race marriage he objects to. This is awkward for the judicial enquiry who can't appear to be following the South African line and have been briefed to find grounds other than the marriage on which to disqualify Seretse

Others summoned to give evidence speak in glowing terms of Seretse and a man and a statesman.

Ruth busies herself around the township and refuses to acknowledge the presence of the inquiry

When Seretse himself is called to justify his claim he says:

*"I claim the chieftainship because it is due to me and the tribe wants me My morals are as good as any chief or regent in the protectorate and my education is probably better."*

In its confidential report to the British government the inquiry concludes: *"We have no hesitation in finding that but for his unfortunate marriage, his prospects of success as a chief are as bright as any native in Africa."*

High Commissioner Baring ensures that no-one except the British foreign secretary Gordon Walker ever gets to read this.

## 19. The debate in parliament

In Britain, the delay in confirming Seretse as chief leads to questions in parliament.

While continuing to withhold the results of the inquiry, the foreign secretary Gordon-Walker tries to give the impression that the inquiry found Seretse unsuited to leading the tribe

The opposition guess accurately that there's nothing wrong with Seretse as a leader and the government is merely bowing to pressure from South Africa.

The leader of the opposition, Winston Churchill raises this in the Commons

*Churchill: Can you give the solemn assurance that the attitude of the government is in no way prejudiced by the fact that Seretse Khama married a white woman.*

*Gordon Walker: Of course it's not. I don't think there's any need to give that assurance*

*Churchill: Will you convey that attitude to the government of South Africa*

*Gordon Walker: The government of South Africa doesn't come into this matter at all*

Meanwhile Baring alerts cabinet by telegram to the rumour that Ruth is pregnant. "Given the serious misgivings within the tribe about a half-white heir to the chieftainship" he writes "we cannot allow Ruth and Seretse to remain in Serowe without risking serious violence and disturbance".

## 20. Seretse is summoned to London

The reality is that Serowe is in limbo. The pervasive sense of frustration stems from the fact that Seretse remains unable to govern because the British administration have still not yet acknowledged him as chief.

The irascible district commissioner is trying to administer the place himself. He has tried to form an interim government but no-one will volunteer and things are greeting increasingly disorganised

Finally a telegram arrives inviting Ruth and Seretse to London for talks.

They discuss this with Goareng. Seretse sees it as an opportunity get the whole business sorted out at the highest level. Obviously Baring is pushing South African interests but Seretse reckons that the foreign secretary, Gordon Walker, is a man of principle who will do the right thing and respect the wishes of the tribe.

Ruth is not so sure. She wonders why she herself has been invited to these talks, having never been involved in previous negotiations.

Goareng takes Seretse's view and urges Ruth to go. The delivery of Ruth's baby would be safer in a London hospital than here in the middle of the African scrub

They visit the district commissioner who assures them they will be allowed to return to Bechuanaland, but can't give them a written guarantee because he's not authorised to do so. Seats have already been booked for them on the flying boat plus accommodation in London.

Ruth holds out for written assurance. Seretse insists the District commissioner's word is his bond. Finally Ruth seems to accept this and packs her bags to leave but at the final moment of departure she changes her mind. She's not going.

Seretse says goodbye and goes on his own

## 21. The double-cross

Seretse is met off the flying boat by a foreign office functionary who is surprised and annoyed that Ruth did not come as well

Seretse's visit to the UK has coincided with a general election. On the radio, Clement Atlee's labour government are defending a record of radical social reform, establishment of the welfare state, free health care for all, etc.

Seretse is taken to a rented apartment. Next day he is summoned to meet the foreign secretary.

The Government Humber sweeps him across Westminster bridge, past the house of commons, into whitehall.

Gordon Walker introduces Viscount Addison the lord privy seal. Sir Percivale Leisching, Sir Sydney Abrahams. They want him to send for Ruth. Seretse asks for written assurance she can return. They wont give one. He asks for a copy of the judicial enquiry into his suitability as chief. They wont release it. He asks what they invited him here to discuss. They say they want him to step down as chief. He says he can't make that decision: he takes his instructions from the tribe.

That evening, Seretse confides his growing fears to Ruth's sister Muriel and friends. Its obvious that the government didn't invite him to negotiate, but to present him with an ultimatum.

When the Government summon him for a further meeting, Seretse insists that a lawyer accompanies him as an independent witness

At the meeting Gordon Walker tells Seretse that if he won't voluntarily cede power, they have no alternative but to ban him from returning from his homeland and to disqualify him from the chieftainship for a period of several years till they "see how things turn out"

*Seretse: Can I ask why you're doing this?*

GW: Its our information that theres serious danger of  
dissension if we don't.

Seretse. Dissension by whom?.

GW: We're offering a generous allowance for you and your  
wife to stay in London. We can possibly help in securing  
employment

S: You're asking me to sell my birthright

GW: Just until the present difficulties disappear

S: "Present difficulties." You mean my marriage?

GW: We've offered to fly Mrs Khama back here so you can be  
together. Obviously you'll need to tell her something about  
what we've discussed but I'd be grateful if you'd show me  
first what you propose to tell her. It goes without saying  
that you must say nothing to the press till we've had time  
to present this decision to parliament.

## 22. Seretse goes public

Furious, Seretse goes back to the rented apartment in King Charles II Street and immediately calls a press conference

Within an hour the tiny front room is bursting with reporters.

He tells them how he's been betrayed: invited to London for discussions, then banned from returning *"we have trusted the British since the days of my great-grandfather. This will destroy the faith of my people and of all colonial countries in the integrity of the British."*

Confronted by the press outside his house , the foreign secretary Gordon Walker maintains he is following the wishes of the majority in Bechuanaland.

But even as he speaks police reinforcements are being moved into the Banmangwato reserve to deal with the expected angry reaction of the people.

## 23. UK government weathers the storm.

In Serowe, Sir Evelyn Baring himself arrives to explain the governments position at a special Kgotla. No-one turns up to hear him speak. Printed government hand-outs on the subject are used for writing shopping lists and making paper aeroplanes

In London, during parliamentary question time the opposition challenge the government:

*"Why have the results of the inquiry not been published?"*

*"Is the minister aware that this matter is having grave repercussions in many part of the commonwealth?"*

*"How can the government keep up the pretence that this had nothing to do with South Africa?"*

*Winston Churchill says: We invited this man to come over and have talks. He has had those talks and we are refusing to let him go home to his pregnant wife. Will the minister give his full consideration to the point of honour involved here.*

Behind closed doors Gordon Walker dismisses this as mere rhetoric. The opposition may claim the moral high ground but the government have Seretse and can detain him as long as they like. If Seretse defies them and somehow travels to Bechuanaland they will simply have him arrested and deported back to Britain

In Serowe, Ruth is being checked up by her African doctor Don Moikangoa. She asks him if she's being irresponsible staying in Africa for the delivery. Don says the baby will be born no matter where she stays, the only factor she needs to consider is where she feels most at home.

Seretse's friends and supporters have formed the Seretse Khama Fighting Committee. 1000 people cram into a hall in Victoria to hear Seretse make a short speech: *"For every white man placated in South Africa, hundreds of Africans Indians Jamaicans and Pakistani subjects have been affronted."*

Newspapers across the world condemn great Britains actions. Even the Times comes out in support of Seretse: *"If the Bamangwato do not object to a white consort and the prospect of a half-breed succession it would not seem to be for the imperial government, pledged to respect the equal*

*rights of all races, to over-rule them in their own domestic concerns"*

Even this does not sway the government. Of much more importance to Gordon-Walker is the opinion of Sir Evelyn Baring in South Africa that: *"A major disaster has been avoided and relations with South Africa are greatly improved"*

Privately Seretse acknowledges that the government hold all the cards. He's beginning to think that the only sensible solution is for Ruth to come and join him in Britain while she is still able to travel.

## 24. Ruth Digs in/ Seretse makes a Deal.

In Serowe, Ruth says she's not going to budge. The longer the stalemate continues the more determined she is to stay put. The reporter Noel Monks, who always assumed she was a rather naive pawn in all this, is forced to review his opinion of her

To tempt her home, the government offers Seretse a diplomatic post in Jamaica. Ruth is sent glossy photos of palm-fringed beaches and deep blue seas. She prefers the barren scrub of Seretse's homeland - the singing of the village children on the way to school past her house, the calling of pied crows and the clang of cowbells. Serowe has become her home.

Its Seretse home too of course. In London he is a caged lion but as Ruth's pregnancy advances he knows the British Government are simply playing a waiting game, expecting that Seretse will capitulate or Ruth will weaken and fly home.

Public opinion remains firmly behind Seretse but Gordon Walker persists in his refusal to be swayed. Finally in desperation, Seretse proposes a deal.

The British government's part of the agreement is that they will allow Seretse to join Ruth in Bechuanaland for the birth of their child.

What Seretse has offered them in return is something he won't divulge to anyone right now but we know from his dark mood that he has been forced to relinquish something incredibly precious to him.

**III**

## 25.       **The reunion.**

Ruth receives the news that Seretse has been given permission to join her. The fact that there are strings attached is not mentioned. His journey to be with her in Serowe will take four days.

On the third day she goes into labour.

Seretse gets off the plane to hear that Ruth has been rushed to hospital. He has no idea whether or not all is well and it is nine hours by road to Serowe.

Seretse and Goareng drive through the night over dreadful unsurfaced roads. In the hospital, Ruth's labour pains intensify.

When Seretse and Goareng finally reach Serowe hundreds of tribespeople are keeping a candle-light vigil round the hospital. There has been no news from inside.

Seretse rushes in, the hospital is silent and he is terrified that things have gone badly. He bursts into Ruth's room to find Don at his wife's side. Alls well. She has had a baby girl.

## 26.       **The revelation.**

Celebrations in the village are cut short by the arrival of a British government jeep.

Ruth now learns the price Seretse paid for being allowed to join her. He has signed an agreement promising to either go with his wife into voluntary exile back in Britain, or to relinquish all future rights to the chieftainship.

Ruth is horrified that he has traded in his birthright in order to be with her. She hates the idea of returning to Britain but she refuses to let Seretse give up his title. If its what is needed they will return to Britain together and fight for justice, however long it takes.

The British official comes to say that he's heard Aug 11th would be the most suitable date for departure. Seretse tells him that no date is suitable for departure but if they're being deported then so be it.

## 27. Farewell to the Tribe

Tshekedi arrives and asks if he can visit the baby.

When he does so, the enmity between him and Ruth is forgotten.

Later, Tshekedi and Seretse walk and talk together, discussing the future governance of the tribe. Tshekedi is convinced that somehow things will work out and that Seretse will one day lead the country. He has dreamed it so it must be so

The eleventh of August finally arrives. The tribe turn out in force to try and stop Ruth and Seretse leaving but Seretse asks them to be peaceful and patient. Then he and Ruth board the small plane that will carry them on the first leg of their journey back to Britain.

## 28.       **The Republic**

In South Africa, High Commissioner Baring had hoped and expected that Styrdom would now call off his threat to call a referendum on South African membership of the commonwealth.

In fact Styrdom goes right ahead with the referendum, which succeeds in voting South Africa out of the commonwealth. The republic of South Africa is born.

Speaking in Capetown on an official visit, the new Prime Minister Harold MacMillan says: *"A wind of change is blowing through this continent and whether we like it or not the growth of African National consciousness is a political fact"*

Goareng visits Seretse in Britain and suggests that if South Africa can become a republic then maybe Bechuanaland can do the same.

Seretse visits Whitehall and announces that he is formally renouncing the chieftainship. He and his family are returning to Bechuanaland as private individuals.

When the officials ask what kind of work he's planning to do he says "local government"

## **29. The Victory.**

Next thing we see, Seretse, Goareng Ruth and Tshekedi are canvassing together for the formation of a Democratic Party

When the votes are counted, the population are almost unanimously in favour of the formation of a republic with Seretse Khama as its President

## 30. Post Script

Seretse won three subsequent elections and was ultimately knighted by the queen.

While South Africa descended into racist isolationism, The Republic of Botswana became one of the most stable and prosperous democracies in Africa.

Seretse lived to see the restoration of the cheiftainship with his son, Ian, being inaugurated as tribal chief.