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J.R.S. Masiangoako

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W i t c h e r a f t .

Actual Case: When Rantsobe got up one morning, he found that the hair of his child Ntsobe had been cut. He did not know who had done it. He went to call his doctor. He came and cast his divining bones and stated that the child's hair had been cut by a Mokgalagadi woman who was a neighbour of Rantsobe. Rantsobe knew this woman whose tribal totem was a porcupine. He asked the doctor to give the child medicine to cure it. The doctor said that if the child was not doctored immediately, it would die. The doctor promised Rantsobe that in his doctoring, he would cause that woman to come to Rantsobe. Rantsobe told the doctor that that was what he wanted. He offered a beast and said, "If you are a doctor, here is a beast." The doctor just said, "I want a black sheep so that I may smear the boy with its fat when I cut it". Rantsobe gave the doctor a black sheep. The doctor slaughtered the sheep and took some fat from it and mixed it with medicines, and he then cut the remaining hair from the boy's head. He mixed this with medicines and he then buried it. The doctor went to his home with the sheep. He instructed Rantsobe to watch what was going to happen. After two days the woman who had cut off part of the boy's hair got sick. Her husband got a doctor to throw divining bones. The doctor threw the bones and found that she had tried to bewitch Rantsobe's son and Rantsobe's doctor had send the sickness back to her. The doctor told her husband that his wife had bewitched the son of Rantsobe and that her sickness was very serious and it was not possible to doctor it. The only thing that could be done was that Rantsobe's doctor should undo what he had done and it was only then that the woman could get cured. Rampeo then went to Rantsobe to speak to him about the illness of his wife. When Rantsobe heard Rampeo say that it was his wife who had cut off his child's hair, he went to report the matter to the Chief in order

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to get an explanation as to what she wanted to do with it. When he got to the chief, the chief was pleased and he ordered Rampee to come to the 'kgotla' so that he could be asked if his wife practised witchcraft. When Rampee came to the Kgotla, there were no people, it was only the chief and Rantsobe. He said that he knew nothing about it. The Chief sent two men to go and ask Rampee's wife if it was she who cut off the hair of Rantsobe's child. Lolo and Letwabe went and when they came to her, they questioned her. She was very sick but she admitted that she had cut off the hair. She said that she wanted to kill the child. The men went back to the Chief and reported what the woman had told them. When they finished their report, the Chief called the council of doctors and when they had come together, he told them to throw their divining bones and tell what this mekgalagadi woman was suffering from. When they cast their diving bones, they explained that it was she who provoked trouble. The doctor who doctoring the boy caused that she should die. When the Chief had heard what the doctors said, he ordered that the woman should be killed by the age-group of her husband. The men took the woman to the veld and put her to death. Rampee, her husband was also driven away from the Melorane village together with his children.

Actual Case 1 A long time ago, two women Makorang and Meitshedi were once caught in the yard of Dibue when they had gone there to practise witchcraft. This man Dibue had had a lot of trouble from witches at night and he did not know what to do. Every morning when he got up, he found blood spilt in the yard. He did not know who had spilt it. For this reason he left his village at Melorane and went to look for a doctor at a distant place. When a doctor who appeared to be a Bushman came and cast his divining bones, he told him that the people who gave him trouble were his neighbours and secondly, they would kill him. The Bushman doctor then began to doctor the yard of Dibue as best he

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knew and even told him to watch and see what would happen. In the night whilst they were sleeping, they heard people talking but they did not go outside. The next morning when they got up, they found two women sleeping at the corner of the yard, they had blood in a piece of broken pot. Dibue went to the Chief to report these women. When he had finished telling the Chief, the Chief sent three men to go and fetch those women. On their arrival, they found the women naked. They spoke to the Bushman doctor of Dibue and asked him to cause them to walk. The doctor treated them with medicine and they began to walk. The men took them to the Chief, naked as they were with the blood they still had in the piece of broken pot. When they arrived at the Chief's place, the Chief sent other men to take these women round the village so that everybody could see that these women are witches. After they had been taken round the village, the Chief ordered the 'Majanko' regiment to go and kill them at a distant place and to throw them in the pool in the bed of the Mabore river. After they have been killed, the Chief ordered that the husbands of these women together with their children should depart from the Melorane village. These men, on the order issued by the Chief, left the village. The Chief told the people that we shall continue to kill all the wizards and witches who will be caught in the village. He told them that we do not want wizards and witches. The people should keep themselves off witchcraft, the person who will be caught will suffer the consequences alone.

Actual Case: Ramantsi was once caught by Morwai, the son of Kotsetse, cutting off the tail of Kotsetse's bull. While Morwai was herding his father's cattle, he saw Ramantsi coming to them. When he got to them, he caught the bull by the tail and cut off its hair and then went away. The herdboys happened to see him. When Morwai arrived at the cattle-post, he told his father what Ramantsi had done. When Kotsetse heard this, he was very much enraged. He went to report Ramantsi's action to the Chief.

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When the Chief had listened to what Kotsetse said, he said to him, "Do you know what Ramantsi is going to do with the bull's tail?" Kotsetse said that Ramantsi was bewitching his cattle with it. The Chief called Ramantsi and asked him if it was true that he had cut off the tail of Kotsetse's bull. Ramantsi admitted that he had done so. When the Chief asked him what he intended to do with it, he stated that he was going to doctor with it. The Chief asked from whom he had got permission. Ramantsi could not say. Later the chief told Ramantsi that it was against law and native custom for any man to go into the cattle kraal of another man without his consent. If you want anything (a beast for example) in someone's kraal, you must first go to him, tell him what you want, and let him tell you to enter it and take what you want. The Chief got a doctor and asked him to cast his divining bones to explain what Ramantsi was going to do with the bull's tail. The doctor threw down a beast's hoof and said the way it fell indicated that Ramantsi was going to kill the cattle together with Kotsetse their owner. The Chief then ordered that Ramantsi should take out all his medicines and their skin bags. When he had brought them to the kgotla the Chief gave instructions that the men should untie them and cause him to eat them. He ate some of them and said that the others were not to be eaten. The Chief forced him and he ate them all, this one and that one. During the night, Ramantsi died. He was killed by the medicines he had eaten. The Chief told the people that Ramantsi was a wizard, he was killed by his medicines, medicines with which he was bewitching.

Seduction.

Actual Case : Matlhare once seduced a girl whose name was Mapula. When Matlhare was asked, he admitted responsibility and said that he intended marrying her. The girl's parents demanded three head of cattle from the boy's parents for seduction. When Matlhare heard this, he said, "If these three head of cattle are not 'lobola' he would no longer marry Mapula." When the girl's parents heard the boy saying that he no longer intended to marry the girl, they

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took the case to the 'kgotla'. When they got to the kgotla of their section, they stated that their child had been seduced by the boy Matlhare. We asked Matlhare they said, and he told us that he would marry the girl. When we pointed out to Matlhare that although he intended marrying the girl, we still wanted cattle for his having seduced the girl. We demanded three head of cattle not that they are for lobola, Matlhare says if that is the case, he was not prepared to marry the girl. The men said, "That is alright, we shall meet Matlhare's father". The next day the case was heard, the men asked Matlhare if it was true that he had seduced the girl. He said it was true he had seduced her. The men went on and asked him what he now had to say. Matlhare said that he had agreed to marry the girl. Now their parents demanded three head of cattle apart from the 'lobola'. If that is so, I am not prepared to pay these as well as the 'lobola' cattle. When Matlhare had finished speaking, they asked the girl's father what he had to say. He stated that if the boy marries the girl, I want three head of cattle, if he does not marry her, I want five. The men referred the matters to the boy's father. The boy's father said, "I do understand but the girl's father is asking too much". When the men had heard what the girl's father said, they told the boy's father that seeing that the boy says he is not marrying the girl, we demand five head of cattle from the boy, the fifth one is to go to the 'kgotla'. The boy's father tried to plead with them but that was of no avail. Later he paid them and the fifth one went to the 'kgotla'. The four head of cattle were given to the girl's father and the case ended. Afterwards, when the girl's child had grown up to the stage of being a herdboys, the boy's parents tried to take him away in order that he should come and herd cattle for them. They spoke to the girl's parents but the girl's parents refused to listen to this. They said, "You refused to marry his mother, how can you like the child if you don't want its mother. If you take the child, you take it together with its mother. If you don't take its mother,

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you cannot get the child. The boy's parents failed to take the child. After pondering over the matter, they decided to take the child's mother so that they could get the child to come and be a herdboy. All at home agreed that they should marry the girl. The Matlhare's paternal uncle and also his grandmother set out to ask for marriage. The first to go was Matlhare's uncle, to go and speak to the girl's people. When they had come to an agreement with the men of the girl's family, Matlhare's grandmother and also his aunt went to bring matters to a finality with the womenfolk. After discussion, they announced that they were offering as lobola three head of cattle. The girl's people did not accept them and said they wanted six. They added one, making four. They again went to report that they were now four. Afterwards they accepted them under protest, asking why the other two were left behind. After the cattle were accepted, Matlhare's paternal uncle together with his grandmother were sent to go and ask for marriage from the girl's people. They then married, for the sake of having no herdboy. Were it not for that reason, they would not have married her because the young man had no more love for her. Moreover, the girl's father was a harsh man, he did not want to hear anything about their wanting to take the child only and not its mother as well. The girl's father said, "He has been dazzled by the child, imagine their wanting to take it not together with its mother". Matlhare's wife was married in that manner, had the girl's father not protested, Matlhare would not have married this girl. But after their marriage, they had no trouble whatsoever, they lived in peace. The wife however, did not live for a long time. She lived only three years with Matlhare and she died. After her death, the girl's people gave away Matlhare's wife's younger sister to go and take care of her eldest sister's children, she went to be her brother-in-law's wife (a ya seantlu). That is to say she was married to Matlhare, without any 'lobola' paid by Matlhare, and without having been courted by Matlhare, having been offered by his mother-in-law, to go and

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look after the children of her elder sister. When Mathare's wife died, she had two children, they are the children which her younger sister went to take care of.

Actual Case: A young man by the name of Ntswane once seduced a girl. When the girl's people came to report that Ntswane had seduced their child and at the same time stating that a child had been born, the young man's parents denied and asked the girl's people why they had not reported before the child was born. The young man's parents told the parents of the girl that a case is always reported immediately, it is not the custom to wait until the case reaches its worst stage before a report is made. They denied and said that they were not responsible. The girl's people went to their court and explained what the young man's statement was. The next day when the case was heard, the young man's parents stated that they saw the girl's parents coming to tell them about a child that was born without having reported the case at the beginning, it is only now that they feel they can bring a case to us of which we know nothing. The men asked the girl's father whether the facts were such as they have been explained by. The girl's father admitted that it was so, he had not reported the case from the commencement. The men left the matter there and went on to ask the young man if it was true that he had seduced the girl. The young man did not deny, he said that what the girl had said was true. The men referred the matter to the young man's father and told him how the young man confessed. The young man's father said, "I have heard the young man's confession but the point according to the law is that a case is always reported at the initial stage. Now, as far as I am concerned, they have never told me, and that fact proves my innocence". The men asked the young man's father if he was guilty. He replied that he was not guilty. The men told him that they found him guilty because the young man did not deny. Their judgment was two head of cattle to be paid by the young man's father, because of the fact that the girl's father had not told him right from the start/.....

start. Their judgment against the girl's father was a beast and a goat for falling to inform the young man's father in the early stage. The beast and goat were consumed at the 'kgotla' and the two head of cattle paid by the young man's father were given to the girl's father. He was told that in future he should never do such a thing, to hold over a case until it become worse only to report it later. They told him that if he did that again, he would be the guilty party, and one that would be liable to pay.

Adultery.

Actual Case : Ramorwal once married a woman and he lived with her for some time, until they had three children. After the birth of the third child, Ramorwal went away to the cattle-post. He remained there for some time. Whilst he was there, a certain man came to the village and fell in love with Ramorwal's wife. This man impregnated the wife of Ramorwal. She told this man that they had got into trouble as her husband was away at the cattle-post. This man whose name was Ranko, said nothing. Later, Ramorwal came home. On his arrival, his wife told him that she and Ranko had fallen into sin. Ramorwal waited for Ranko to come and report to him what he had done. He, two weeks passed, nothing happened. Later Ramorwal told Ranko what his wife had said to him. When Ranko heard this, he denied and said that he was not the responsible party. When the woman heard that Ranko was denying, she told her husband that the best thing was to bring Ranko to meet her face to face. When Ranko came Ramorwal told him what his wife had said to him. Ranko denied vehemently, he denied the woman's statement, saying that it was the first time that day for him to come to her house. Ramorwal then took the matter to the court and even there Ranko denied strenuously. The kgotla afterwards decided to wait until the child was born. On the day the child was born, Ramorwal went to report its birth at the 'kgotla'. The men said that he should wait until the child was a month old. When the child was a month old Ramorwal brought the case to the 'kgotla' again. The child was taken to the kgotla

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and the men took it from its mother and examined it. They found that he resembled Ranke in every respect. After they had examined it, they asked its mother when she had had intercourse with Ranke. The woman told them the time and the men found that it fitted precisely with the birth of the child. They told Ranke that they judged by the similarity of the child with him. They fined him five head of cattle, two being for his vigorous denial, causing them to wait until the child was born. When he had paid the cattle, they gave Ramorwai four and ate the fifth at their 'kgotla'. They told Ranke that if he was brought before the 'kgotla' again and denied in this manner, he would be fined cattle plus a beating so that he should not teach other people to deny. The men told Ramorwai to warn his wife not to allow men in his house in future when her husband was away. But they found no fault with her.

Actual Case: Rantsowa once married a woman but this woman before she was married to Rantsowa, was in love with another man. While she was with Rantsowa, the other man came to Rantsowa's house when Rantsowa was about the village away from his house. On his arrival, Rantsowa's wife killed a fowl for him. On Rantsowa's return home about midday, he found his wife having killed a fowl for this man. Rantsowa just watched and said nothing. Rantsowa and this man ate the fowl together. On another occasion when he returned home from the village, he again found the man Mokwane in his house. Rantsowa said nothing but he began to keep a careful watch on his wife. Rantsowa told his wife that after three days, he would go to the cattle-post for a month. His wife informed Mokwane that on the third day Rantsowa would leave for the cattle-post. On that day Rantsowa left home for the cattle post, but actually he had not intended going there, it was just a plan to see what his wife was about to do. On the way Rantsowa turned back, but he decided to come in the evening before people retired for the night to see if he could not find the man there. When he entered, he did not find Mokwane,

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he told his wife that he was ill and that illness forced him back home from the veld. They spent a short while chatting and then they went to bed. The next morning when Rantsowa woke up, he said he felt better and thought that he could manage to reach the cattle post. He bid his wife good-bye and set out on his journey and remained away for days, the length of which he had not mentioned. He returned quickly and came home in the night time. When he arrived home other people were still chatting. On his arrival, he found this man Nokwane sitting and chatting with his wife. He greeted and his wife gave him food. When he had finished his meals, he said he was tired and was going to bed. Nokwane then went away. When he had gone, Rantsowa asked his wife what this man whom he always found at his house wanted. His wife said he always just come to spend the evening chatting. Rantsowa persisted in questioning his wife, why he always saw this man at his house whereas he never saw other men. Why this man in particular, what did he want. The woman only said that he just came to spend the evening in conversation with her, he did not want anything else. Rantsowa got angry and beat his wife to get the truth out of her. The woman never came out with the truth. The next morning Rantsowa went to the cattle post. He remained there a long time without coming home. His wife got a child eventually by Nokwane. When Rantsowa returned from the cattle post, he found a newly-born child. When he asked his wife who the father of the child was, she said it was Nokwane. He then asked his wife why she had said that the man did not want anything when he questioned her. Rantsowa reported the matter to his people and when they heard what he said, they took Nokwane to the 'kgotla'. When he got to the 'kgotla', Nokwane admitted his guilt, but said that he was enticed by the woman. When the woman was questioned, she admitted that that was true. The 'kgotla' fined Nokwane three head of cattle and the judgment against the woman was five cuts with a switch. The woman

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received five cuts and Nokwane paid the three head of cattle. He was told to respect and never again to interfere with the wife of another man.

Abductions

Actual Case : After the 'kgotla' had awarded the cattle to Rantsowa, he took them to the cattle post. He remained a long time there to get them used to the post. While he was there, Nokwane abducted his wife and went away with her to the country of the Bakwena people. She left the child she had by Rantsowa with Rantsowa's mother. When she bid her mother-in-law good-bye, she said she was going to the cattle post and would come back. Later, her mother-in-law learned that the woman had gone to the country of the Bakwena tribe with Nokwane. When Rantsowa returned from the cattle-post, he found that his wife had gone away. His mother blamed him for staying a long time at the cattle post. Rantsowa just got open-mouthed with astonishment and did not know what to say. Since the woman went away, she never returned, she lived there where they had gone with Nokwane. Later Rantsowa courted another woman and married her because he felt he could not follow his wife to where she had gone. But Rantsowa did not forsake her, he just lived with her.

Actual Case: Rangwedi once married a woman with whom he lived for a year. She had a child, a son by him. Rangwedi then went to Johannesburg to look for work. He remained there for a very long time. His wife waited for him but Rangwedi stayed away. Afterwards, his wife had a child by another man. This child grew up. Whilst Rangwedi was being waited upon, his wife was taken away by the man by whom she got the child. He went away with her to 'Kgalagadi' (the late German South West). When they had spent a year there, Rangwedi came home. On his arrival, he found that his wife had gone to 'Kgalagadi' with Ratsese. When he told his fathers about it, they said that is was through his own fault, as it was he who stayed away a long time in the European towns. Later, whilst Rangwedi was still at home and

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even contemplating to marry another woman, Ratsitse came home from Kgalagadi. When Rangwedi saw him, he immediately took the matter to the 'kgotla'. But Ratsitse had left the woman and children at Kgalagadi. When the case was before the court, the men asked Rangwedi how long he had been away in the European towns. Rangwedi stated that he had been away for six years. They asked him if he did not think that by staying away for such a long time, his wife would give up any hope of his return. Rangwedi said, "It does not matter, she is my wife, I did not marry her jointly with anybody else". The men asked Ratsitse why he had abducted the wife of Rangwedi. Ratsitse had no reasonable reply, he just said that he found the woman without a husband. They asked him, "In whose house did you find her". Ratsitse offered no reply. The men asked, "Where is the woman now?" He stated that he had left her at Kgalagadi and that she would return after the winter season. The men said, "We fine you six head of cattle and we want the woman back here". Rangwedi said that he did not want his wife back and that Ratsitse could only pay the cattle. But he wanted his child back, the child who was born to him before he left. Thereafter the men fined Rangwedi three goats for staying away a long time where he had gone to work. They said that Rangwedi had tempted his wife, for no woman could be left alone for such a long time, and he expected to avoid falling into temptation with other men. Ratsitse paid the cattle and retained the woman. Rangwedi courted another woman and got married, the child whom he wanted back was fetched and brought to him by Ratsitse from Kgalagadi.