

# LIFE



**Eugene de Kock:  
Assassin for  
the State**

Page 16

# MissDela stands for truth

This proudly African doll is more than a plaything – she teaches respect, writes Nontando Mposo

**H**ER NAME is MissDela and she has soft curly black hair. She is beautifully dressed in a colourful summer frock, but is a doll like no other. At 10 years old, she is wise beyond her years. She has learned the importance of living by a few key principles, the three Rs taught to her by her *makhulu* (grandma) – “Respect for self”, “Respect for oth-

ers” and “Respect for the environment”. MissDela believes that if every young girl and boy learned and lived by the three Rs the world would be a better place. What makes her even more special is that she is named after former president Nelson Mandela and is the only doll in South Africa who sings the traditional lullaby *Thula thul’ thula baba*, a comfort-



LASTING FRIENDSHIP: The MissDela dolls are soft to the touch but tough enough to stand up to treatment from the average two-year-old girl.

PICTURE: BHEKI RADEBE



THE TEAM: Judith Oosthuizen, creator of the dolls, and Sindiwe Magona, who has written a book about MissDela.

PICTURE: BHEKI RADEBE

ing song sung to babies just before bedtime.

MissDela was “born” in 1994, a momentous year for South Africa with the country’s first democratic elections.

“Her birth coincided with the big elections. There was no ethnic black doll in the market at the time and I felt that it was a terrible loss,” says MissDela’s creator Judith Oosthuizen.

Over the years MissDela has gone through quite a transformation. In the beginning she had short ethnic hair with red ribbons. She has since grown her hair so that children can play and style it in different ways, explains Oosthuizen.

“She is robust, soft to the touch and flexible. Two-year-olds can play with her and she won’t come apart.

“I want this doll to be a mascot for children, especially at schools, because that is where the groundwork for good values take place.

“MissDela sings the *Thula thul’* lullaby because it’s a well known traditional song that is loved by many,” says Oosthuizen.

She also comes with a special story told by celebrated South African writer Sindiwe Magona, who has published internationally acclaimed works such as *Beauty’s Gift* and *Living, Loving, and Lying Awake at Night*.

## ‘Back in the days, villagers took their life as a community seriously. Discipline was swift for children’

Sindiwe Magona

Magona and Oosthuizen visited the Cape Argus offices on Africa Day, which, they say, was the perfect day to introduce MissDela to us as she is proud of her African roots.

Magona says MissDela is a “warrior” girl who believes in standing up for what is right, a hard worker who obeys her elders, always tell the truth and loves reading and listening to her *makhulu*’s stories.

“MissDela is here to speak truth to the people. To remind all us Africans who we are, who we have been and also put a little bit of a reminder of who we could become. The steadfast values of honesty, respect and responsibility she is teaching run throughout the continent.

“She is old enough to be able to say the things her grandmother tells her. Things like it’s better to share. Values that one wishes to instil in young minds,” says Magona.

Even though MissDela’s parents work

in the Big City, she is loved and cared for by her *makhulu* – a typical South African scenario – in a small village where everyone shares the responsibility to love and care for each other.

“Back in the days, villagers took their life as a community seriously. Discipline was swift for all children from all grown-ups. We should remind ourselves that we had these traditions and make the education of all children in South Africa a national concern. MissDela is also here to remind us that we have these traditions,” says Magona.

“We are forgetting little things that are essential in building a great nation. This doll is here to teach young girls and boys to love and respect themselves and not to violate the environment – this is the only Earth we have,” she adds.

MissDela costs R650 and is distributed throughout South Africa.

● For more information, e-mail [missdela2@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:missdela2@yahoo.co.uk)

# Experience the incredible lightness of throwing stuff out

AS A PERSONAL organiser, I have over the years watched clients get stuck on clearing out certain items – items that accumulate relentlessly, and usually pointlessly, over the years. Today, I’m here to give them – and you – a little backbone. I’m saying: Throw that stuff out. Here’s why.

● CDs and VHS tapes  
These audio and video recordings seem to cause endless questions about whether they should be kept for sentimental reasons, whether they can be disposed of in an environmentally friendly way, whether they can be donated, and whether they will ever be valuable again. My best advice is that if you have no machine on which to play them, you should get rid of them.

The best option for disposing of them properly is e-cycling them at a private company or, if it’s an option, at your local dump.

Often people think they’ll forget a band, a song or a movie unless they have an actual disc or tape to refer to. You can do that with a digital copy; there is no need to have untouched boxes of CDs and VHS tapes taking up space.

● Electrical cords and components  
Raise your hand if you have a box labelled “Miscellaneous Electronics/Cords”. Okay, maybe your box isn’t labelled, but chances are you have a sizeable collection of cables, plugs and electrical components somewhere in your house. You’re simultaneously scared

to throw them away and annoyed that you’re keeping them.

Here is the rule: If you’ve never located a missing cord or other accessory in your pile, you don’t need any of them. In fact, you may no longer even own some of the devices that were paired with these items, and if you do, would it even be possible to find the proper component in your tangled, unlabelled collection? Nothing bad will happen if you recycle them, I promise. At the very worst, you’ll have to purchase a new cord. And if the cord is no longer available, you’ll replace your device. Everything will be fine.

● Picture frames and flower vases

The big question here is: How many of each do you really need? They’re easy to accumulate. But just because someone gave you flowers for a special occasion or a picture as a gift, you are not required to keep the vase or frame forever. Keep a small handful of vases and frames in a variety of sizes and give the rest to

someone who can use and enjoy them.

● Craft supplies  
Unused craft supplies can cause so much guilt. Maybe you planned to do a special project to mark a big occasion or thought you would teach your child to knit, but years have passed and the supplies serve as a constant reminder of your failure to follow through. I know that craft supplies can be very expensive, which is why you’ve been keeping them, but let it go.

Accept that you no longer have the time for – or interest in – the project. Give the supplies to a school, an assisted-living facility or a neighbour. You’ll feel instantly lighter.

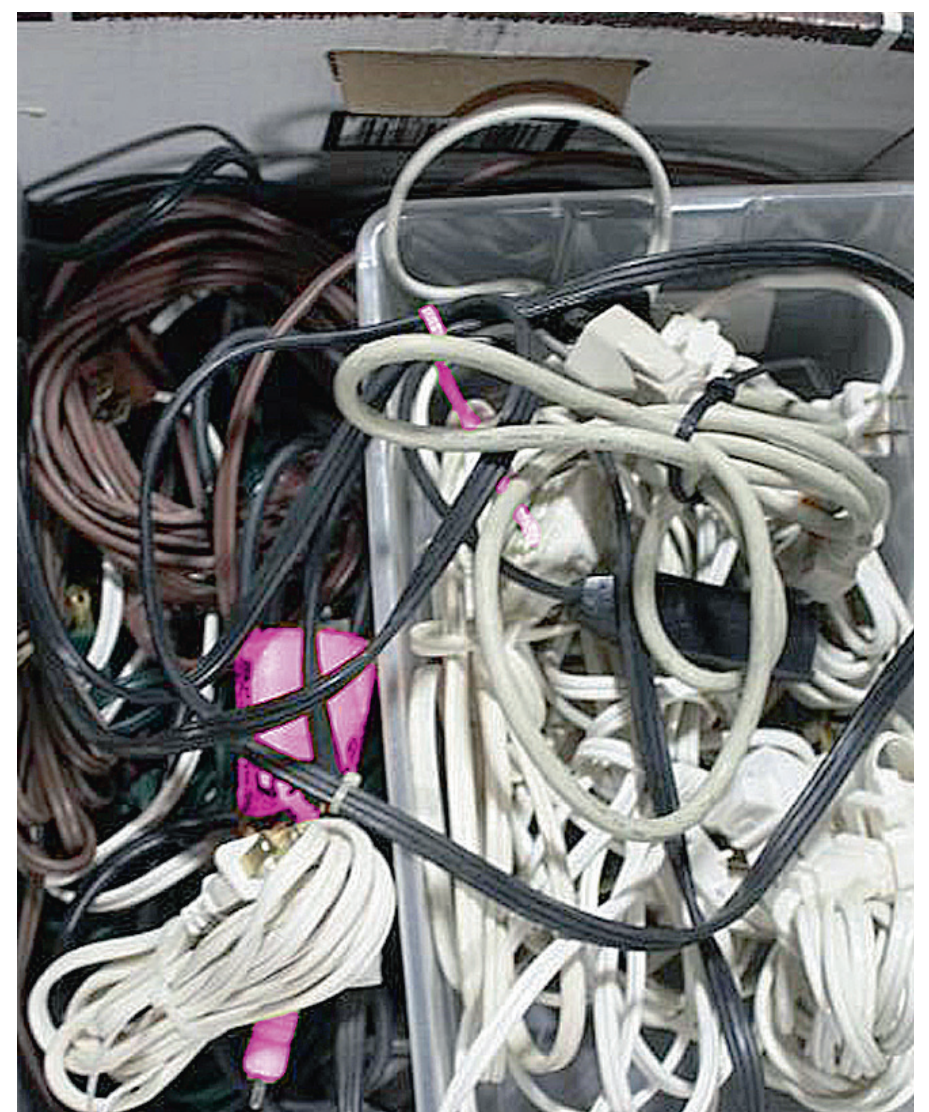
● Product manuals and booklets  
Many people fastidiously file their product information and instruction manuals when they make a large purchase, but have you ever gone looking for one?

When something goes wrong with your TV, toaster or fridge, you usually call someone to repair it or realise that it’s just time to purchase a new one.

Also, almost all product paperwork is now available online, so holding on to the big bulky paper copies of instructions is not necessary. And if you really must keep something on paper, make a list of the make, model and serial number of your major household appliances.

That way, you’ll always be able to find the corresponding manual easily online. – The Washington Post

**IF YOU HAVE NO MACHINE ON WHICH TO PLAY THEM, YOU SHOULD GET RID OF YOUR TAPES AND CDS**



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