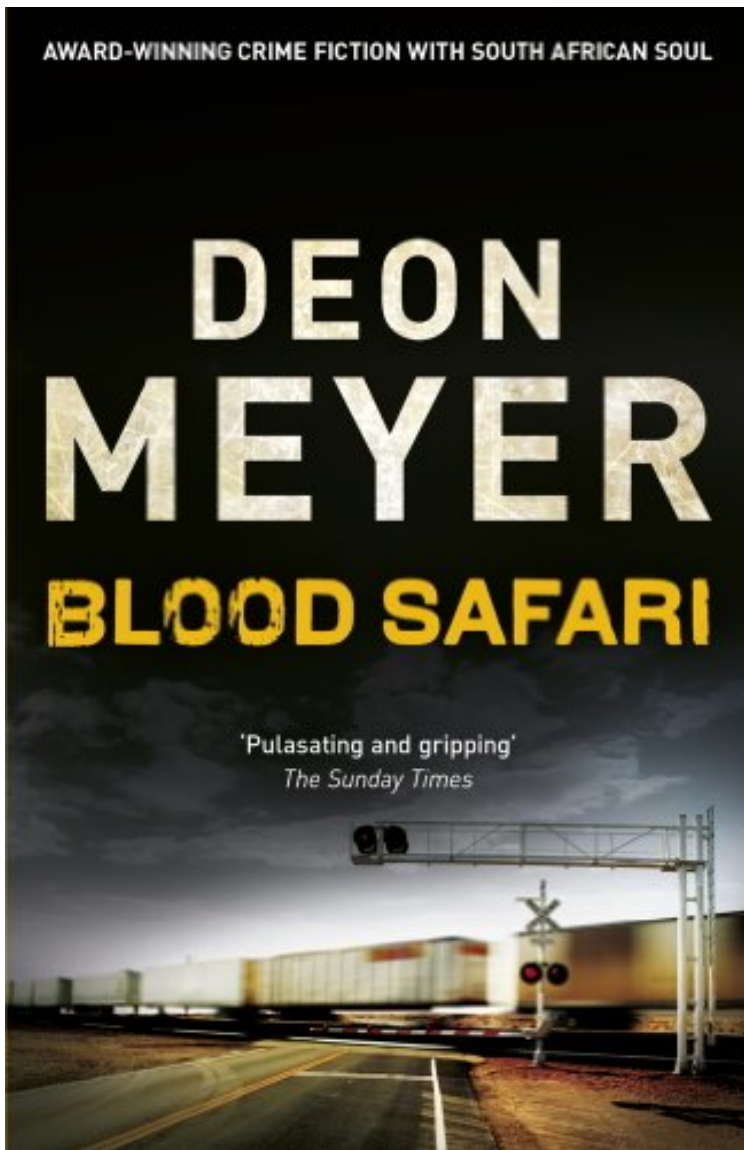


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Blood Safari (English Edition)



Par Deon Meyer
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurLemmer is a freelance bodyguard for Body Armor, a personal security company in South Africa. Lean, angry, violent, he is way down on the price list where the bargains are to be found.Emma le Roux wants to find her missing brother, who supposedly died twenty years ago, but whom she is convinced she's seen on the news as a suspect in the recent killing of a witch doctor and four poachers. She hires Lemmer to watch her back when she goes looking for answers.As le Roux and Lemmer look for clues in the Lowveld, it becomes clear someone wants to keep them in the dark. Someone who will go to any lengths to stop them asking questions. When they are attacked and almost killed, Lemmer decides to go after whoever is hunting them against all odds.ExtraitChapter 1I swung the sledgehammer in a lazy rhythm. It

was Tuesday, 25 December, just past noon. The wall was thick and stubbornly hard. After each dull thump, shards of brick and cement broke off and shot across the plank floor like shrapnel. I felt sweat tracking through the dust on my face and torso. It was an oven in there, despite the open windows. Between hammer blows I heard the phone ring. I was reluctant to break the rhythm. In this heat it would be hard to get the machine going again. Slowly, I put the long handle down and went through to the sitting room, feeling the shards under my bare feet. The phone's little screen displayed Jeanette. I wiped a grimy hand on my shorts and picked it up. 'Jis.' 'Merry Christmas.' Jeanette Louw's gravelly voice was loaded with inexplicable irony. As ever. 'Thanks. Same to you.' 'Must be good and hot out there.' 'Thirty-eight outside.' In winter she would say, 'Must be nice and cold out there,' with undisguised regret about my choice of residence. 'Loxton,' she said now, as if it were a faux pas. 'You'll just have to sweat it out, then. What do you do for Christmas in those parts?' 'Demolish the wall between the kitchen and the bathroom.' 'You did say the kitchen and the bathroom?' 'That's how they built them in the old days.' And that's how you celebrate Christmas. Old rural tradition, huh?' and she barked out a single, loud 'Ha!' I knew she hadn't phoned to wish me Happy Christmas. 'You've got a job for me.' 'Uh-huh.' 'Tourist?' 'No. Woman from the Cape, actually. She says she was attacked yesterday. She wants you for a week or so, paid the deposit already.' I thought about the money, which I needed. 'Oh?' 'She's in Hermanus. I'll SMS the address and cell phone number. I'll tell her you're on your way. Call me if you have any problems.' I met Emma le Roux for the first time in a beach house overlooking the Old Harbour of Hermanus. The house was impressive, three new Tuscan storeys of rich man's playground with a hand-carved wooden front door and a door knocker in the shape of a lion's head. At a quarter to seven on Christmas night a young man with long curly hair and steel-rimmed spectacles opened the door. He introduced himself as Henk and said they were expecting me. I could see he was curious, though he hid it well. He invited me in and asked me to wait in the sitting room while he called 'Miss le Roux'. A formal man. There were noises from deep in the house classical music, conversation. The smell of cooking. He disappeared. I didn't sit down. After six hours' drive through the Karoo in my Isuzu, I preferred to stand. There was a Christmas tree in the room, a big artificial one with plastic pine needles and mock snow. Multicoloured lights blinked. At the top of the tree was an angel with long, blonde hair, wings spread wide like a bird of prey. Behind her the curtains of the big windows were open. The bay was lovely in the late afternoon, the sea calm and still. I stared out at it. 'Mr Lemmer?' I turned. She was tiny and slim. Her black hair was cut very short, almost like a man's. Her eyes were large and dark, the tips of her ears slightly pointed. She looked like a nymph from a children's story. She stood for a moment to take me in, the involuntary up-and-down look to measure me against her expectations. She hid her disappointment well. They usually expect someone bigger, more imposing not this general average of height and appearance. She came up to me and put out her hand. 'I'm Emma le Roux.' Her hand was warm. 'Hello.' 'Please sit down.' She gestured at the suite in the sitting room. 'Can I get you something to drink?' Her voice had an unexpected timbre, as if it belonged to a larger woman. 'No thanks.' I sat down. The movement of her petite body was fluid, as though she were completely comfortable inside it. She sat down opposite me. Tucked up her legs, at home here. I wondered whether it was her place, where the money came from. 'I, ah.' She waved a hand. 'This is a first for me, having a bodyguard.' I wasn't sure how to respond. The lights of the Christmas tree flicked their colours over her with monotonous regularity. 'Maybe you could explain how it works,' Emma said without embarrassment. 'In practice, I mean.' I wanted to say that if you order this service, you ought know how it works. There is no reference manual. 'It's simple really. To protect you I need to know what your movements are every day.' 'Of course.' And the nature of the threat. 'She nodded. 'Well I'm not exactly sure what the threat is. Some odd things have happened. Carel convinced me. You'll meet him in a moment; he's used your service before. I there was an attack, yesterday morning.' 'On you?' 'Yes. Well, sort of. They broke down the door of my house and came in.' 'They?' 'Three men.' 'Were they armed?' 'No. Yes. They, um. It happened so fast I hardly saw them.' I suppressed the urge to raise my eyebrows. 'I know it sounds peculiar,' she said. I said nothing. 'It was strange, Mr Lemmer. Sort of surreal.' I nodded, encouraging her. She looked at me intently for a moment and then leaned over to switch on a table lamp beside her. 'I have a house in Oranjezicht,' she said. 'So this is not your permanent home?' 'No this is Carel's place. I'm just visiting. For Christmas.' 'I see.' 'Yesterday morning I wanted to finish my work before packing for the weekend. My office I work from home, you see. About half past nine I took a shower.' Her story did not flow at first. She seemed reluctant to relive it. Her sentences were incomplete, hands quiet, her voice a polite, indifferent monotone. She gave more detail than the situation warranted. Perhaps she felt it lent credibility. After her shower, she said she was dressing in her bedroom, one leg in her jeans, precariously balanced. She heard the garden gate

open and through the lace curtain she saw three men move quickly and purposefully through the front garden. Before they disappeared from her field of vision on the way to the front door, she had registered that they were wearing balaclavas. They had blunt objects in their hands. She was a modern single woman.

Aware. She had often considered the possibility of being the victim of a crime and what her emergency response could be if the worst happened. Therefore, she stepped into the other leg of her jeans and hastily pulled them up over her hips. She was half dressed in only underwear and jeans, but the priority was to get to the panic button and be ready to sound the alarm. But not to press it yet, there was still the security gate and the burglar bars. She didn't want the embarrassment of crying wolf. Her bare feet moved swiftly across the carpet to the panic button on her bedroom wall. She lifted her finger and waited. Her heart thumped in her throat, but still she was in control. She heard the squeal of metal stubbornly bending and breaking. The security door was no longer secure. She pressed the alarm. It wailed out from the ceiling above and with the sound came a wave of panic. Her narration seemed to draw her in and her hands began to communicate. Her voice developed a musical tone, the pitch rising. Emma le Roux ran down the passage to the kitchen. She was fleetingly aware that burglars and thieves did not use this method. It fuelled her terror. In her haste she collided with the wooden back door with a dull thud. Her hands shook as she pulled back both bolts and turned the key in the lock. The second she jerked open the door she heard splintering in the hall, glass shattering. The front door was breached. They were in her house. She took one step outside and stopped. Then turned back into the kitchen to grab a drying cloth from the sink. She wanted it to cover herself. Later she would scold herself for such an irrational act, but it was instinctive. Another fraction of a second she hesitated. Should she grab a weapon, a carving knife? She suppressed that impulse. She ran into the bright sunlight with the drying cloth pressed to her breast. The neatly paved backyard was very small. She looked at the high concrete wall that was meant to protect her, keep the world out. It was now keeping her in. For the first time she screamed 'Help me!' A distress call to neighbours she did not know this was urban Cape Town, where you kept your distance, pulled up the drawbridge every night, kept yourself to yourself. She could hear them in the house behind her. One shouted something. Her eye caught the black rubbish bin against the concrete wall a step to safety. 'Help!' she called between the undulating wails of the alarm. Emma didn't remember how she made it over the wall. But she did, in one or two adrenalin-fuelled movements. The drying cloth stayed behind in the process, so that she landed in her neighbour's yard without it. Her left knee scraped against something. She felt no pain; only later would she notice the little rip in the denim. 'Help me.' Her voice was shrill and desperate. She crossed her arms across her bosom to preserve her decency and ran to the neighbour's back door. 'Help me!' She heard the dustbin overturn and knew they were close behind. The door opened in front of her and a grizzled man in a red dressing gown with white dots came out. He had a rifle in his hand. Above his eyes the silver eyebrows grew long and dense, making wings across his forehead. 'Help me,' she said with relief in her voice. The neighbour rested his eyes on her for a second, a grown woman with a boyish figure. Then he raised his eyebrows and his gaze ...

Revue de presse Praise for Deon Meyer: Meyers extraordinary talents as a writer come from two points: he is masterful on plot and he draws each character, whether pivotal or almost incidental, with the true craft of a powerful novelist. . . . Blood Safari will take you to unexpected places, make you ponder interesting questions and stand in awe at the cruelty that human beings inflict upon each other. . . . A read that should not be missed under any circumstances. Cape Times (South Africa) Un-put-downable. Cape Argus (South Africa) This translation of the novel Onsigbaar is tense, intelligent and convincing. The main character, Lemmer, is a charismatic freelance bodyguard and his chequered past puts a thrilling spin on the fast-paced drama. . . . [Meyer] knows how to tell a gripping story and his thorough research and believable characters make for a local crime thriller with a difference. YOU (South Africa) Deons books have been translated into English, French, German, Dutch, Italian, Spanish, Danish, Norwegian, Swedish, Russian, Finnish, Czech, Romanian, Slovakian and Bulgarian. Whew! Cape Times (South Africa) Our best thriller writer. . . . We can all relate to Meyers characters. Outstanding. The Star (South Africa) Meyers secondary actors can be gems of characterisation, sometimes stimulating the reader to give a delighted snort of recognition. . . . Meyer intrigues while he thrills. Him confident, sure touch just gets better. Highly recommended: If this is your first Meyer, you'll find yourself rushing out to buy the earlier ones. The Star (South Africa) Meyer is simply excellent. . . . Lemmer is too good a character to be a one-novel phenomenon. The Weekender (South Africa) A competently executed thriller. . . . Meyer cleverly brings in a major unsolved South African mystery and the problems of poaching and there are plenty of twists in the plotting to keep the reader hooked. . . . It all adds up to a pacy, well-plotted thriller. The Witness (South Africa) One of the sharpest and

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