**Mebrac, Lucia’s household caretaker.**

Mebrac: I knew her and came to work for mama two years ago. I am related to Lucia through Mulasho, her father and my father are brothers). Mulasho is your MSDD (Lucia’s eldest sister daughter’s daughter).

We are are *sidra beit,* (related by blood); Letteberhane (daughter of Zenebesh) is my friend, she leaves in Norway.

Lina: How do you remember Lucia?

Mebrac: She loves us and we loved her too. She always liked having us around her. She never got angry with us.

Lina: Was my mother silly/naïve to have assisted her relatives? Why did she help her family who had their own people who could assist them?

Mebrac: The people who were *sega and dem,* they did not like those people coming from Sudan or friends of mama. They only want them to be the only beneficiary.

Lina: Is this an Eritrean quality?

Mebrac: No their own quality. So what they did to Maakle, who is not *dem*and yet Lucia trusted him.

Mebrac: I am with Mulasho, she knew I was here and yet now there is nothing, no familial or social ties, Lucia’s relatives hate me. Because they fought you and yet I am on your side. I was threatened not to work with you but to leave you alone. The colonel threatened me not to work here, because I did not do military service. They tried to frighten me.

The family were also against my working with Lucia even though they recommended me to work here before her death.

Mama’s relatives are different and had an agenda, they did not think that Lina and Andrea would live in Eritrea. They worried that Mama’s house might get taken away from the children.

Mebrac: They kept saying that people are taking advantage of her. Her cloths, bedding etc. They added that she gave away everything. Because I am white, I would have no idea of value.

Mebrac: They also say think that I am in the house. Tesfalem and Goii are the ones that keep gossiping about this., that Mebrac is collecting money and watching the house.

Goii is tough. Melasho’s son wanted to kill. Goii spread the news which was fake, she heard stuff at the court during the case. Now there is no one to tell me what is going on. They befriended Elsa then not now.

Mebrac: The story of how they lost cloths. These was around the time of mama’s death. *Nigtedt* (pilgrimage)

Elsa sued to come during *Nigdet*. She often visits them in Aderada. She came as a family member. Now Elsa asks Million, Simon to help her.

She did the same to Abraham and Ababa in Sudan, *asegiratoum* (begging) bothering them.

Lina: why is Ethiopia insisting that I make peace?

Mebrac: All the time now they are sorry for what they did.

Ethiopia went to Aderada and yet we do not know what she did there. She is insisting that I make peace.

Lina: What kind of *sega* is this? They want to kill me, is this *sega*??

Mebrac*: Tataisome*- they regret maybe but they do not know how to make peace. They forgot maybe,

Mebrac: Simon is good; his sister did not know the whole story. She did not hear much.

Lina: Zaudi from Sudan called me when mom died, at night she had nightmare.

Mebrac: She agreed (with Zaudi) that something was done to mama. Someone did something that affect ted her mentally. She got sick and suffered, often had nightmares.

Lina: One has to believe in this before it affect’s you.

Woyni: She fears Ethiopia, she could not talk much. Only when Maakele came did Woyni started to talk.

Mebrac:Because Ethiopia has something with them. She keeps quiet but listens. She thinks of the *sega* she has with them. Sega fights but not forever. But we do not want outsiders to interfere with the family. *Sega* is with *sega*, outsiders is me and Maakele, we do good things for Lina or Andrea.

Mebrac: I understand that this is for us two. Not all people are good. Time will come for peace. If you like them yes make peace, we can do home, we are not advising Lina not to make peace.

Lina: How come mom did not see all of this, she used to get angry about her sister but tells us that she is old do not mind her.

Hanisu sent us money for a sheep for a feast, and one for Aderada, but Zenebesh did not want the one for the sheep for Lucia’s house instead to send it to Aderada. She wanted the money to go to Aderada. Tesfalem rebuked his mother and brought the sheep to the house. She refused to eat the meat, got angry. She was difficult, had special food needs

I never see the relatives now but Melasho though in Asmara, I never see her. Her son Filmon is married and has a kid. He is in France now. Mokonen is in Sweden. But one of her daughters is in Ethiopia.

Zenebesh’s family frequented the house of Lucia. No help for them nor fight.

The sisters do not trust each other. He slept in the house and so did his mother. But Lucia did not trust him

Lina; Wha does *sidra beit* mean: Family relatives with whom we have sega, no sega fikri (friendship). This relation is better than *sega*.

My *sega* people only want the house, not you.

They say she has a house, money, why now should she have this house?

Tesfalem used to tell mom, that one lady before she died, she gave the house for the orphans. Children of the dead soldiers. He used to test her what she would say. He used to try to get information from her. Zenebesh prefers him the best.

Mama Lucia used to feel bad for her sister because her son was useless.

Mebrac: Goii did bad, during the mourning ceremony Hanisu complained that Mebrac did not come. Lina offered to bring them whatever is needed. The fight was about the tradition of catholic vs the Orthodox. Mebrac remained to help Andrea and me.

Lina: Once they find out that the house will be sold, what would they say?? I would rather give it to the church instead of them.

Lina: They are family but they do not want me. What kind of family is this?? For me family is one I worry about them, like Maakele I call to enquire how they are.

Sega dem, what is this??

Mebrac, said that family is the same always. Tesfalem found a job. He is Kufoo (evil)

Lina: I cannot forget them and like Mebrac sad that Ethiopia does not want you to forget them. I would worry about family like I do with Maakle, Brinda.

Mebrac: If *sega* and *dem* encounters bad deeds you learn to forget, how can I forget?

Lina: Ferdi matter and Elsa was bad, she lost now. It was the work of Hanisu and Mebrat.

Are there many Eritrean women like Lucia?

Mebrac: Not at all, she was unique, I know of her work in Eritrea not Sudan. She brought Sudanese culture. Always welcomes people.

Sudanese *bahri* is what she brought

Aba Simon said that she was more Sudanese in culture.

Tafadwaloo, welcome, Sudanese *bahri* not Eritrean

Samir’s used to bring her mother, brother sister her husband to the house, sister’s husband, they would sleep here, and go to the jail to visit their relative in jail. Come back and they would again come and stay here. Her daughter was pregnant and had her baby here, they all slept here. Goii comes and leaves.

Mama would invite them to come and eat sheep.

Tesfalem, did not like Melasho nor Filmon. He used to get angry when they came.

Tesfalem hated guests to the house. In turn they hated him.

Lina; Yet they are connected to Tesfalem and family, I was left out. They are all his sisters so yes, they will connect with him

Mebrac: At times she would sit alone and think. Lucia was feeling the effect of bad things. Did she like all of them (relatives)? I tell them the story of me leaving the house because I could not take all of the people in the house, I could not work.

She would say that they all came to see me.

This book is about my mother, about her history. Lucia used to say that religion and country was the same for her. For her the country was sacred, what Eritrea meant was ***hamed***, land, earth. Did she speak about Eritrea? Yes, in that it was a good place.

She wanted me to help all, but how much could one do??? I was not fortunate to have known her more. I miss her. I used to come and visit at times before I began the work here. She loved you and loved people. Lucia refused to see the bad in people. Lucia knew the bad from the good. We could not see TV because Tesfalem wanted to be in the living room alone.

Mebrac: With Gezai mama had issues. But her preference to socialize was with her elder sister’s kids.

The children of Alganesh are in Germany