

Luci's Dilemma

A 1982 play by Muthal Naidoo

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CHARACTERS

ANGELS

LUCIFER

DOMINEE

MAYOR

COUNCILLORS

CHRIS SOBUKWE

JA-MY-BAAS SPOOGOOPPOO

GOD

ADAM

EVE

SCENE ONE

(God's Communication Centre in Heaven. It is not huge like NASA Control Centre. There is only a small console and a huge monitor as in Star Trek's Enterprise. Two Angels are in the room working on a new programme to facilitate capturing prayers and pleas from Earth. Suddenly the monitor lights up. The Angels are shocked. They rush to the keyboard to locate the source of the signal.)

ANGEL 1: Look at that! Nothing is supposed to come through from there today!

ANGEL 2: I know! I shut that sector down myself!

ANGEL 1: Somebody has hacked into the system.

ANGEL 2: That's impossible! Nobody in that place has that much know-how. They don't have satellites and there's no Internet there yet. How would they even be aware of our installations and monitoring systems?

ANGEL 1: I don't know, but it's happened.

(The image that appears on the screen is of people at a church service.)

ANGEL 2: Oh no! – the very occasion that we blocked out.

(The Angels watch the screen and listen)

DOMINEE: O God, we have gathered here today, on this the 16th day of December 1981, to commemorate the Day of the Covenant with Thee. And today, the day of our New Deal, we give thanks to Thee for helping us put one over on everybody. We thank Thee that Thou has kept Thy end of the bargain and we joyously fulfill ours now and shall continue to do so every year on this day. In vindicating our cause, Thou hast shown Thyself truly Our loving God. Thou hast confirmed that we are the Chosen People and it is our duty to rule this land in Thy name.

(During this prayer, the Angels, frenetically trying to find ways of shutting the transmitter down, are reacting in panic to a groan filling the room from beyond the Communications Centre.)

ANGEL 2: We're going to catch it. *(A red light starts blinking)* Oh, oh. This is it. There's the signal.

ANGEL 1: You go. I'll try to find the invader.

ANGEL 2: But how am I going to explain this. You had better shut the whole works down. *(Dashes out)*

ANGEL 1 *(shouting after Angel 2)* Can't do that. It's against regulations!

(Angel 1 continues to fiddle with switches while Dominee on the screen, drones on)

DOMINEE: We dedicate ourselves, as did our forefathers, to Thy faithful service, to the creation of unity in diversity ...

ANGEL 1: Forget the rules. This has to stop. I'll turn off the master control. *(Does so)*

DOMINEE: We see this as our sacred duty and we have done our best...

ANGEL 1: What's going on? How can it still be coming through? *(Switches on again and examines programmes on monitor.)* Hey, what's this? A new programme that bypasses the master? Who installed this? *(Keeps working at keyboard)*

DOMINEE: ...We have instituted the Homelands Policy that we agreed on with Thee. We have provided suitable housing and education in segregated areas, put up prices of bread, milk and sugar only when necessary every month...

ANGEL 1 *(Struggling with keyboard):* This is driving me crazy. How did they get access to our system?

DOMINEE: ...In the Homelands men may control their own destinies and preserve their separate identities and cultural traditions ...

ANGEL 1: Got it! Now delete. (*Shuts down the programme*) Thank goodness it's gone. (*Continues to work on console*)

ANGEL 2: (*returning*): Glad you fixed the problem. The Boss was a wild mass of swirling mists, like after the Big Bang. Fortunately, JC was there working with the Boss on the same old problem

ANGEL 1: You mean the free will thing?

ANGEL 2: Yes. And the sneak transmission simply highlighted the problem.

ANGEL 1: A kind of challenge to the Boss's omniscience, eh? I don't think giving humans free will was such a good idea. They make so many mistakes down there that we have to sit here the whole time monitoring pleas from Earth. Better to wipe the slate clean and start over.

ANGEL 2: Now you sound like Luci, that's his style. But there's no challenge in that. If you keep wiping them out, it's taking the line of least resistance.

ANGEL 1: Well, I don't see the point of letting them hang on. (*Pointing at screen*) You can see how the rot sets in. I don't understand why JC wants to keep them hanging on. Sending him down to live among them changed him. Now his policy is: give them a chance to redeem themselves.

ANGEL 2: He changed after he went down and became one of them.

(The Church service suddenly appears on screen again)

ANGEL 1: Oh for goodness sake!

DOMINEE *(on screen)*: ...Once more we pledge unto Thee our loyalty, if Thou wilt help us preserve what is rightfully ours – this land. We dedicate ourselves in Thy Holy Name...

ANGEL 1: *(checking switches)*: I don't believe this!

ANGEL 2 *(checking to see if the red light is blinking)*: Do something quick! The Boss! The Boss!

DOMINEE *(on screen)*: ...O thank Thee, Lord for the inspiration of the New Deal, for blessing us with military might, for new accords

(A deep laugh is heard. The Angels throw their hands up in frustration and look for the source of the laughter)

ANGEL 1 *(staring at one spot)*: You're not invisible to us, you know. So who are you trying to kid? *(Luci manifests himself)* Now shut that thing off! How did you gain access this time?

LUCI *(grinning, waves a little device)*: See this – it'll get me into any system. Watch. *(He switches off)*

programme on screen. Laughs) You can't compete with me. My place is loaded with computer wizards. All you get up here are old nuns. *(Switches screen on again and there is a loud burst of church music.)*

ANGEL 1: Turn that thing off, will you?

LUCI: *(laughing, switches screen off):* Scared of your Boss, eh? Where is the Boss? In the sound proof room?

ANGEL2: Yes. Today is one of those days of thanksgiving and prayers from South Africa that jam up all the circuits.

LUCI: But your Boss can still hear. I know that. That's why I made sure you got a special broadcast today.

ANGEL 2: Why? What's your game?

LUCI: Game? You make me laugh. I thought you'd all be grateful. Doesn't your Boss dig being worshipped?

ANGEL 1: Come on. What's going on? What do you want?

LUCI: Why should I tell you? A couple of lackeys? I want to see the Boss.

ANGEL 2: You know you can't.

LUCI: Look just tell the Boss, I want an interview now or I'll switch on that programme and leave it on for the rest of eternity.

ANGEL 1 (*laughs*): Delusions of grandeur again!

ANGEL 2: Or maybe you'll bring down a deluge like you did on Earth the time you were on a recruitment drive!

LUCI: That wasn't me. That was God. Haven't you read the Bible?

ANGEL 1 (*laughs*): You mean the Old Testament, *your* biography. You as the Angry, Vengeful, Punitive God wiping out earthlings at a whim to fill up your place and prove you are more popular. What do they call this condition? Projection? Munchausen by Proxy? You play God so often, you can't keep track of who you are.

ANGEL 2: Do you get a kick out of fooling those ignorant creatures down there?

LUCI: Hey, I didn't come up here for a dose of amateur psychology. Tell your Boss, I'm here.

ANGEL 2: The Boss knows.

LUCI: Yeah, your Boss knows everything. Don't give me that omniscience crap. Go and tell your Boss I'm here.

ANGEL 1: The Boss knows.

LUCI: Stop wasting my time and inform the Boss or I'll give you a double dose of prayers and hymns.

ANGEL 2: Go right ahead. Doesn't bother us and maybe the Boss will deal with it at last.

LUCI: I'm the one who should be sitting in the sound proof room. All those church services! Your Boss is getting credit for all my hard work. I'm the one who gave them the New Deal, but do I get credit? No sir, it's 'Thank God', 'Thank God', 'Thank God!'

ANGEL 1: Why don't you let them know it was you, not God who inspired the New Deal?

LUCI: You know they don't accept me, not after all the adverse publicity generated from up here. So I let them think the Homelands Policy comes from up here. I came up with it as part of a scheme to solve the problem of overcrowding in my place.

ANGEL 1: Oh? What scheme?

LUCI: Not for your ears. Minions! As landlord of my place, I speak only to the landlord of this place. You're just a servant. I'm Governor of my place.

ANGEL 1: O come off it! You know you're just running a penal institution.

ANGEL 2: Your little Homeland.

ANGEL 1: Boss knows all about your scheme; doesn't have to see you.

LUCI (*calling out*): Yeah, yeah, your Boss knows everything; your Boss is omniscient. Okay, don't inform. I know how to work your Boss. (*Falls on his knees*) Lord, where is thy compassion? Wilt thou deny a petitioner? (*The Angels fall about laughing*)

ANGEL 2: He's been listening to that Dominee too long.

LUCI: Your Boss'll come out; just see if I don't make it happen. (*Angels grin*) There's one thing your Boss can't resist. A repentant sinner! (*The Angels laugh incredulously as Luci goes down on his knees*) Oh Lord, EVER-LOVING God, in Thy mercy grant that this, my prayer, be answered. Be Thou as Thou hast been since the New Testament, a LOVING GENTLE GOD, to whom the most humble of Thy creations may turn. I repent me of my sins. I beg forgiveness! (*There is a burst of laughter like thunder; then an Angel enters, God's secretary*)

SECRETARY: The Boss (*intermittent bursts of thunder*) is still laughing and being in a good mood, wants me to deal with your request.

LUCI: I won't deal with a secretary.

SECRETARY: Fine. Anyway your request is known and has been denied. (*Preparing to leave*)

LUCI: Wait! Stop telling me your boss knows, you know, they (*indicating Angels*) know. I don't care who knows. I demand the right to state my own case. The Boss may know what I think but doesn't have a clue as to how I feel. (*Secretary sits down and begins to take notes*) I must be given a chance to argue my case.

SECRETARY: Go right ahead.

LUCI : Not to you. To the Boss!

SECRETARY: I'm authorized to deal on behalf of the Boss.

LUCI: No, no, no! You are not my equal!

SECRETARY: Either you deal with me or you don't deal at all. Take it or leave it. Besides, I already know what you want.

LUCI: Arggg! Do you know how frustrating it is talking to one who knows it all? Like talking to your mother-in-law! (*Angels fall about laughing*) And it gets damn confusing. Sometimes I don't know whether I am thinking, or whether thoughts are being put into my head.

SECRETARY: You know you have free will. Don't try to shirk responsibility for your schemes. Now, can

we get on with it? Since I already know what you want, this is boring.

LUCI: Okay, I'll give it to you straight. I want the Boss to declare Earth for me.

SECRETARY: Not possible.

LUCI: Will you please let me state my case!

SECRETARY (*yawning*): All right. Go ahead.

LUCI: The problem is one of overcrowding. There is a serious shortage of accommodation in my place. It's full to over flowing; it's becoming a squatter camp. I must be given an immediate lease on new properties. If your Boss knows everything how come none of you know that the majority opt for my place, not yours? Look at this place. Practically deserted! Nobody comes up here and St Peter's always asleep at the gates.

SECRETARY (*yawning*): Go on. Go on. Get on with it.

LUCI: As I see it, most of the inhabitants of Earth are coming to me. With the housing shortage extreme as it is, I don't know where I am going to put them. Surely you understand that. So what I suggest is that your Boss declare Earth an extension of Hell. De facto, it is anyway. Think of the convenience and saving in transport costs.

SECRETARY: Have you finished?

LUCI: No! I shall also have to establish headquarters down there immediately and having looked carefully into the matter, I know South Africa would be the perfect spot.

SECRETARY: Why?

LUCI: The rulers of that country switched their allegiance to me a long time ago. I mean your Boss is certainly not their idea of God. *(Laughs uncontrollably)*

SECRETARY: You seem very sure of yourself.

LUCI: Look, I fight over souls all the time and I know that as far as South Africa is concerned, there's no contest.

SECRETARY: Hmm! Just like you to consider only the ruling minority. What about the majority? The Boss is most concerned about the problem and has decided that conditions there need investigating.

LUCI: Look there's no need for further investigation. I have written a comprehensive report on conditions down there.

SECRETARY: The Boss knows what's in your report. *(Luci snarls)* but the matter needs personal attention...

LUCI: What! The Boss is going to send JC down again! When will you people learn? Look at what happened when he went down before! You want him to go through all that a second time? What nonsense! It's an open and shut case; those people belong to me. They can't be saved.

SECRETARY: Look, the question of winning souls is your particular hang up; it gives meaning to your existence. It's not relevant to the Boss. What the Boss is interested in is identifying the problem with creation. How can creatures made by God, in God's image, repudiate everything God stands for?

LUCI: Did it ever occur to God, that I deserve credit for that?

SECRETARY: No, you are a convenient excuse. They have free will.

LUCI: An *excuse*! Is that all you think I am! An *excuse*! (*Luci rushes about emitting red flashes*)

ANGEL 1: Calm down. Luci, calm down! No deluges now, or holocausts.

LUCI: You people are full of crap! You can't give credit where credit is due. Your Boss is afraid of my power. Your Boss has lost the battle and doesn't even know it! If God doesn't know that, God doesn't know everything after all!

SECRETARY: Admittedly, the Boss is mystified by a long line of failures: Adam and Eve, the Deluge, war, carnage, the Holocaust and now apartheid. Not an impressive track record. The Boss wants to find out why free will doesn't work.

LUCI: Tell your Boss to stay in the laboratory to figure it out. With that uncontrollable temper, your Boss'll probably blow the whole place to kingdom come. And the influx into my place!!! I don't have the space. Better to send JC; he won't lose his cool.

SECRETARY: Actually, JC's down there already.

LUCI: What! How did I miss that? Where is he?

SECRETARY: On Robben Island. He's been imprisoned there for many years.

LUCI: This is a betrayal. I've got to get down there quick before he upsets the New Deal. Must protect my interests. *(He leaves)*

(The Angels laugh)

ANGEL 1: Is the Boss really going down there too?

SECRETARY: Yes. You will have to make the announcement, you know. Come with me. We have to get you fitted out for the trip.

(Secretary and Angel 1 leave together. Angel 2 switches on the screen. People singing the Christmas carol, "On the first Day of Christmas")

ANGEL 2: It's Christmas. I wonder who's top of the charts? Rudolph, the Red Nose Reindeer or Bing Crosby? No, it's always Santa Claus. Wonder what JC thinks of Christmas? They never do anything for love down there. There's always got to be a pay-off.

(Angel 1 returns carrying an angel outfit)

ANGEL 2 *(bursts out laughing)*: That corny Angel gear that they think we wear up here! *(Picks up wings and runs about flapping them)* Where's the runway? Where's the runway? How do I launch myself with this?

ANGEL 1: Stop clowning and bring that stuff here. I gotta get ready for my announcement. Come on, give me a hand.

ANGEL 2: They really need this stuff to convince them you're a celestial being? They certainly have a weird idea of things up here.

(Angel 2 helps Angel 1 into Angel costume, then laughs)

ANGEL 1: How would you like to get in this thing and make the announcement?

ANGEL 2: My names not Gabriel. You're stuck with the job. Hey, how about a trumpet? Would you like me to organize a fanfare?

ANGEL 1: Cut it out, will you? I'm going down now. When I get back, I don't want any wisecracks from you.

ANGEL 2: You should be happy. It's Christmas down there – a good time for announcements from heaven.

ANGEL 1: It's a good thing you're immortal, else I'd make short work of you.

ANGEL 2: You sound quite human.

ANGEL 1: I'm off. Better get this over with.

ANGEL 2: All set for takeoff: 10, 9, 8, 7, 6...

ANGEL 1: Oh, shut up.

ANGEL 2:5, 4,3,2,1. Blast off!

(All the lights go out. Then a bright light illuminates Gabriel and a fanfare is heard)

ANGEL 1 (looking up): I'll get you for that!

(Lights fade)

SCENE 2

(The scene is now on Earth, in Johannesburg, South Africa. A blinding light fills the sky and people fall to the ground.)

VOICES: What's happening? The Communists have launched an attack! A nuclear plant has exploded! No, it's a UFO! We're going to die! It's the end of the world! I don't want to die now; I've just paid off my car! I just bought a new house with a swimming pool!

(The light grows clearer and reveals the Angel Gabriel hovering above)

VOICES: I don't believe it! Must be an advertising stunt! For what! A new movie? A new soap powder! What's he saying? Buy Angel Soap Powder and your clothes will sparkle with Celestial Brightness! *(laughter)* This product has the approval of the Highest Authority! *(laughter)*

GABRIEL *(annoyed):* Wise guys! I bring tidings. Yesterday, that is 2000 years ago, I could say tidings of comfort and joy. Now that's rather dubious.

VOICES: Quiet, man. I want to hear what he is saying. Something about tidings of comfort and joy. Okay! this is a Christmas stunt!

GABRIEL: I have an announcement. The Creator is coming down to Earth.

(People fall about laughing)

VOICES: Ha, ha, ha. So it's HIS turn! Ha, ha, ha. Hey man, what's the gimmick?

(Gabriel shoots a bolt of light at the people and they freeze)

GABRIEL: Can't stand wise guys. That'll keep them quiet for a few minutes!

(Enter a TV crew)

REPORTER: Guys, it's true. I don't believe it, the Angel Gabriel! Hang on a minute; gotta get a ladder for this interview. *(A ladder is brought in; Reporter climbs up. Holding mike up to Gabriel.)* Could you give us your name – for our TV viewers?

GABRIEL *(sullenly)*: Gabriel

REPORTER: As in the Angel Gabriel? Messenger of the Lord?

GABRIEL: Yes

REPORTER: I believe you are here to make an announcement. *(Gabriel nods.)* From the Lord, is that right?

GABRIEL: Look here, will you stop interrogating me. I'd like to get this done with so I can get out of here. This is no picnic for me you know.

REPORTER: Okay, make your announcement.

GABRIEL: The Creator is coming down to Earth.

REPORTER: Would you repeat that in Afrikaans, if you don't mind?

GABRIEL: Would you kindly let me finish my announcement?

REPORTER: Go right ahead. But do you mind turning this way? For the cameras.

(Gabriel ignores request and cameramen go scuttling about):

GABRIEL: It is God's intention to come down here to conduct a commission of inquiry into conditions in South Africa.

VOICES: Another commission of inquiry! What's the use of that?

GABRIEL: All those who wish to give evidence are invited to meet with God.

VOICES: That's funny, I thought He would do things differently. Ja, just wave a magic wand or something and get rid of all our problems.

GABRIEL: Would you kindly let me finish? God will appear at eleven hundred hours exactly a week from today, in Orlando Stadium in Soweto.

VOICES: Soweto! Why Soweto? I don't even know how to get there.

REPORTER: Is there any reason why He has chosen Soweto? Why not Sandton, among his own people? *(Gabriel disappears)* Hey, André, did you get that? Did you get Gabe fading out?

CAMERAMAN: Got it!

REPORTER: *(walking around with mike)* Let's find out what the ordinary man in the street thinks about this event. *(Goes to a spectator)* What do you think about God coming to South Africa?

SPECTATOR 1: I think it's a good thing. But I don't understand why He wants to go to Soweto.

REPORTER: *(to another person)* Why do you think God has chosen to make His appearance in Soweto?

SPECTATOR 2: Maybe he's after all the Communists there.

REPORTER: Well viewers. This has been a momentous occasion. We cannot even begin to speculate about its significance. The fact that the Lord has chosen to visit South Africa, shows that the attitudes of the critics of our country and our policy of apartheid, are not justified. The Lord Himself is about to demonstrate that we have done what is best for all; that we are the only ones who have understood his divine purpose. *(Pause)* However, one thing remains a puzzle; why Soweto?

(Lights Fade)

SCENE THREE

(A Johannesburg City Council Meeting)

MAYOR: Why Soweto? Ladies and Gentlemen, that is the question we must ask ourselves. Why Soweto?

COUNCILLOR 1: Now that they have water and lights and ninety-nine year leasehold rights, maybe He *(points upwards)* bought the idea that Soweto is just as good as one of our areas.

COUNCILLOR 2: Yes our PRO has really done excellent work.

MAYOR: Can't be that. You can't fool God.

COUNCILLOR 1: But Mayor, development may be separate but it is also equal.

(All the Councillors burst out laughing)

MAYOR: Don't be ridiculous! Would you want to live in Soweto?

COUNCILLOR 1: No, of course not.

MAYOR: Then don't talk crap! Now what are we going to do?

COUNCILLOR 1: We can't allow God to go to Soweto.

MAYOR: How do we stop Him?

COUNCILLOR 1: Tell Him we've arranged accommodation at the Sandton Sun.

MAYOR: What do you propose? Send Him a telegram? *(Councillors laugh)*

COUNCILLOR 1 *(embarrassed)*: Well. I mean

COUNCILLOR 2: My colleague has a point. We've always had an open channel to the Lord.

MAYOR: On TV 1, 2, or 3? *(Councillors laugh)*

COUNCILLOR 2: I'm talking about Church. We could send up a prayer.

COUNCILLOR 1: Yes, that's it! But we don't have to go to church. We can pray right here.

COUNCILLOR 2: But if the Blacks find out that we've asked for a change of venue, they'll probably get the Russians to register protest at the UN or propose more sanctions against us.

MAYOR: Crap! We have nothing to fear from the Russians. They don't believe in God, remember. Okay, the sooner we put in our petition the better.

(All Councillors get on their knees)

MAYOR: *(getting up)* No, this is a bunch of crap!

COUNCILLOR 1: But why?

MAYOR: Okay we put in an application, how do we get an answer?

COUNCILLOR 3 *(brightly)*: Maybe Gabriel will come down again!

MAYOR: Listen, have you ever had a direct answer to your prayers?

COUNCILLOR 3: No

COUNCILLOR 2: But this is an exceptional case. I mean Gabriel actually came down; the Lord has taken the initiative in this matter. I mean we are in a situation of negotiation.

COUNCILLORS (*Nodding vigorously*): Yes, let's do it. God has always been on our side.

MAYOR (*kneels again*): Okay. (*Awkwardly*) O Lord, unaccustomed as I am...(*The Councillors cough. The Mayor stops, looks uncomfortable, and starts again.*) O Lord, look down upon Thy children and give us Thy blessing.

COUNCILLOR 2: That's good.

MAYOR: We come before Thee today to thank Thee for honouring us with Thy visit. We humbly beg, however, that Thou consider alternative accommodation. Thy Son was housed in a stable but times have changed and we can do a lot better.

COUNCILLOR 1: Great Mayor! Great stuff! I would never have thought of that...

OTHER COUNCILLORS: Shhh!

MAYOR: We can do a lot better for Thee. We can offer Five Star Accommodation that compares favourably with the best in the world. No such thing as no room at the inn. All the hotels will be clamouring for the business. We want Thee to know that the best we have

is at Thy disposal. No expense will be spared; it'll all come out of our contingency funds. Please let us know right away if we may make arrangements for alternative accommodation.

*(A board is lowered from above with the words: **NO DEAL**)*

MAYOR: (Jumping up) O crikey! What went wrong?

COUNCILLOR 1: Nothing. You were great Boss.

COUNCILLOR 2: The Lord must have a reason for wanting to go to Soweto.

MAYOR: I can't understand it. He must know that Soweto is not on the official tours route.

COUNCILLOR 1: Well, I guess that's that. We tried but there's nothing we can do about it.

COUNCILLOR 3: I bet this is the work of that Commie Bishop. He must have gone to the Cathedral and sabotaged us there.

MAYOR: You mean Bishop Desmond Four?

COUNCILLOR 3: Yes, that Black Bishop is a rabble rouser.

MAYOR: We gotta do something. Sit down Councillors. No one leaves till we figure out a plan. Any bright ideas?

COUNCILLOR 1: I can't think of anything. This calls for a miracle.

COUNCILLOR 2: Yes, like swopping Soweto for one of our suburbs. Hey, maybe we can change names!

MAYOR: What!

COUNCILLOR 2: Sorry Mayor. Stupid suggestion!

MAYOR: No, say that again.

COUNCILLOR 2: I just said we could swop

MAYOR: That's it! I've got it. Get Community Development on the line.

COUNCILLORS: What's the plan? What are we going to do?

MAYOR: You'll see. Now get Community Development for me.

COUNCILLOR 2: (*calls switchboard*) Get Community Development for the Mayor.

MAYOR: This is the most ambitious scheme I have ever come up with. The Lord is going to get the surprise of His life!

COUNCILLOR 1: What are you going to do? Rename Houghton? Call it Soweto?

MAYOR: God will never fall for a cheap trick like that. But you're getting warm.

COUNCILLOR 2: Community Development on the line for you Mayor.

MAYOR: Thank you....Hello ... Koos, you old son of a gun ... what have you been up to? Yes, I'm surprised to find you in. Isn't this your golf afternoon? ... Ha,ha,ha Anyway, I'm glad I caught you. I have an emergency. You know that God's coming to Soweto next week, don't you? ... Exactly! We can't understand it either. Soweto! That's a huge problem and only you can help me solve it ... Look, this is what I want you to do. I want you to declare Soweto a white area.

COUNCILLORS: What! A white area! But no whites want to live there!

MAYOR: (*motioning them to be quiet*): Ja, Koos, it's the only way ... Ja, I know all that but I'll get it done. You'll do it right away? ... Good show. I owe you one... (*Puts phone down*) Right. Now we have a helluva lot to do... Why are you all staring like that?

COUNCILLORS (*shouting individually*): You can't declare Soweto a white area! Look at the conditions, the roads! No electricity, water, sanitation! Shacks for houses! No recreational facilities! Inadequate, ill-equipped, poorly constructed schools! No decent shopping centres and parking areas. No Hotels and theatres!

COUNCILLOR 2: How can you possibly make it a white area? No whites will move there.

MAYOR: So it's not good enough for white occupation?

COUNCILLORS : NO!

MAYOR: Well answer me this! If it's not good enough for you and me, is it good enough for GOD!

COUNCILLORS : NO!

MAYOR: Then it's up to us to make it good enough, isn't it?

COUNCILLORS (*Puzzled*): Ye...e...s

MAYOR: And that's what we're going to do and the easiest way to do it....

COUNCILLORS: is to declare it a white area, like we did Sophiatown. Boss, you're brilliant!

MAYOR: We have one week to make the change.

COUNCILLORS: Then we're sunk. We'll never get it done in a week.

MAYOR: The Creation took seven days. All we're tackling is Soweto. Now get a move on. Get me all Departments on line. *(Councillor 2 calls switchboard and Mayor speaks to all Departments at once)* This is Operation Soweto. Development, send in the bulldozers right away. Clear all existing buildings. Yes man, the lot ... What? What about the people living there? ... Minor problem. I have bigger things to worry about. We gotta make the place fit for the Lord. You've got two hours to clear the whole area. I don't care how you do it – just get it done! Send every bulldozer in the city into the area ... Look, if you don't want the contract, I'll find someone else ... That's better, now get on with it. City engineers listen up. Get all the building contractors ready to go in by two o' clock. They have two days to get the whole area rebuilt for white occupation. Now Highways and Roads ... hold on City Engineers, hold on Sanitation. Now listen all of you. You go in there and give the place the deluxe treatment. Don't tell me you can't do it. This is priority number one. Shut up Engineers ... Shut up all of you. *(Yelling)* Shut the hell up! Don't you mothers realize Who is coming down here? ... Then get the hell on it right away! *(Slams phone down.)*

COUNCILLOR 3: But who's going to live in Soweto?

MAYOR: Get a bulletin out to TV and Radio news about new homes available for white occupation in Soweto. Get Immigration on the line. *(To Councillor 2)* See if you can get hold of Snel Bouman.

COUNCILLOR 2: Immigration on the line.

MAYOR: Listen Immigration, we have a whole new housing development. Any new immigrants coming in? ... You got the Poles settled in already? ... You're expecting a new batch of whites from Zimbabwe? ... Right. Their homes are ready and waiting for them in Soweto ... yes, Soweto. It's now a white area ... Don't you listen to the news?

COUNCILLOR 2: Snel Bouman on the line.

MAYOR *(to Immigration):* Just get on with it. *(Switches to Snel Boman)* Hullo Snel, have you heard the news? ... Yes, isn't it wonderful? Now do you know why I called? ... Man, you're a mind reader...What! You've already picked out a site! ... That's what I like about you, on the ball! ... So what are you going to call this new Sunny Suns Hotel? You know who you're building it for? ... You gonna call it The Milky Way. Why not something like The Paradise? ... That's kitsch, huh? ... Well, I'll leave it to you. When do you think it will be ready? ... Tomorrow afternoon! You're a man after my own heart. Keep up the good work. *(Puts phone down)* You gotta hand it to him. He knows how

to get things done. By tomorrow, we'll have five star accommodation ready for the Lord. Thanks to Snel!

COUNCILLOR 3: Is he gonna put in casinos?

MAYOR: Don't be ridiculous man, not in South Africa.
(Sounds of a riot outside) What's that?

COUNCILLOR 1 *(looking out the window)*: There are hundreds of blacks out there.

(Councillor 3 goes out to investigate)

MAYOR: What the hell do they want? These people are never satisfied. They're better off than the blacks up North, but they still complain.

COUNCILLOR 1: It's a protest.

MAYOR: When isn't it? What are they protesting about now?

COUNCILLOR 3 *(running in)*: The blacks outside are demanding to see you.

MAYOR: Well, I ask you! Didn't you tell them I'm busy; that I'm doing the Lord's work?

COUNCILLOR 3: They're in a violent mood. You have to see them.

MAYOR: These people still have one foot in the bush. That's the first thing they resort to – violence! Call the police!

COUNCILLOR 3: Why don't you talk to the leader?

MAYOR: Who is it? That Commie Bishop Desmond Four?

COUNCILLOR 3: I don't know who the fellow is.

MAYOR: All right. But get the police on standby. *(exit Councillor 3)* Dammit! Just when we have so much to do!

(Councillor 3 returns with the leader, Chris Sobukwe)

COUNCILLOR 3: Your Worship, the leader of the protesters.

MAYOR: Now what is this all about?

SOBUKWE: Our homes have been bulldozed. We have been expelled from our area. When are you going to realize that we are human beings, not be hounded like animals?

MAYOR: Look, we had no choice. We had to do it.

SOBUKWE: Rubbish. You had no right to do it!

MAYOR: Look, as soon as we have completed our preparations, we will find you alternative accommodation

SOBUKWE: I haven't come here to bargain with you. I have simply come to tell you that we regard this as a declaration of war.

MAYOR: War! What utter nonsense. Don't you know why we are rebuilding Soweto?

SOBUKWE: I've heard.

MAYOR: Well? Isn't that justification enough?

SOBUKWE: There is no justification for what you have done.

MAYOR: Yes there is. According to the law, each population group lives in its own area. So obviously, if the Lord is coming to Soweto, He won't be able to live there unless it is a white area. Don't you see? We had to take Soweto away from you people. I mean, would you be happy away from your own kind? How would you feel if you had to live in a white area? Would you be happy? We're all happier among our own kind. That's why we had to declare Soweto a white area. You understand that don't you?

SOBUKWE: I've heard this kind of crap before. I just want you to know that we are in a situation of war.

(Councillor whispers in Mayor's ear.)

MAYOR: Look, we need to discuss this rationally. Please take a seat. *(Sobukwe remains standing.)* I realize it is very hard on you, having to give up your homes at such short notice. But I have something to offer as an alternative. There is a nice home in Kliptown that I'd like you to look at. See if you like it. It's got a nice bit of land.

SOBUKWE: Will it accommodate all the people of Soweto?

MAYOR: I am talking of a home for you. You and your family.

SOBUKWE: And what about the others?

MAYOR *(with forced joviality):* The others? We'll make provision for them in time.

SOBUKWE: Meanwhile they become squatters somewhere.

MAYOR: Well, we can't solve all the problems at once. We need time.

SOBUKWE *(leaning over Mayor's desk):* You know what you can do with your little home in Kliptown? Shove it up your arse. *(He walks out)*

MAYOR: He's a damn Communist. Get the SB's to pick him up!

COUNCILLOR 1: No, no, Mayor! We'll have a riot on our hands and we'll never finish our reorganization of Soweto.

COUNCILLOR 2: But we have *our* black leaders Yesman Impimpi and Ja-my-baas Spoogoopoo.

MAYOR: Okay. See if they are available, brief them and arrange nationwide TV and radio coverage. Get it done right away.

(Councillors rush off)

Lights fade.

SCENE 4

(TV broadcast. Ja-My-Baas Spoogoopoo seated at Mayor's desk. Mayor hands him the speech he is to read and moves off)

SPOOGOOPOO *(reading)*: My dear brothers and sisters, I want to explain what has happened in Soweto.

Many of you believe that it is a vicious and cruel act of the State. I want to assure you that it is not a vicious and cruel act. You have to look at it from the right perspective. What you have to see is that you have not been asked to give up your homes; you have not been thrown out to roam the countryside, as some misguided people have led you to believe. No, my dear brothers and sisters, you have been called upon to perform very high service. You have been called upon to make a sacrifice to God Almighty. You should be proud to be of service to the Creator. No other service could be more blessed. Be glad my brothers and sisters that you have been chosen to make this great sacrifice. No people, are more blessed than we are. We can truly serve the Lord. I am sure that there is not one of you who would be happy to deny the Lord, God. Therefore, rejoice and do not blame the State for what has happened to you.

(Broadcast ends and the Mayor steps forward to Spoogoopoo)

MAYOR: Thank you that was splendid! A very moving address. I'm sure it will have the desired effect.

SPOOGOOPOO: Ja, my Baas. My people are truly devout. There will be no further trouble.

MAYOR: You have averted a terrible riot and saved thousands of lives. *(Spoogoopoo waits expectantly. Councillor 2 whispers in Mayor's ear.)* Oh, yes of course. I almost forgot. As a token of our gratitude, *(Spoogoopoo looks up smiling)* we'd like you to accept a

little house in Kliptown, now that your house in Soweto has been bulldozed. (*Hands over keys*)

SPOOGOOPOO: Kliptown! That's very good. Now I can be a Coloured and I won't have to carry a pass. Anytime you need me again, I shall be happy to oblige. Good day gentlemen. (*Exit whistling "Daar Kom die Alabama"*)

MAYOR: Problem solved. Now let's check on the progress being made in Soweto. (*Looks through reports on desk*) Roads and Highways have almost completed their contract – half a day ahead of schedule! Great! It's super the way everyone is rallying around. Boy! The Lord's going to get the welcome of a lifetime. Have you organised the decorations?

COUNCILLOR 1: Ja, all the Christmas lights are up. I thought they would be appropriate.

COUNCILLOR 2: We added more stars, angels and a choir of cherubim

MAYOR: Those are good at night. But the Lord is arriving at 11:00 hours.

COUNCILLOR 1: Sure, the light show is for the evening, when we take Him out on the town. For the morning, we have lots of flowers, trees, streamers, balloons.

MAYOR: And what have you planned for His arrival?

COUNCILLOR 2: We Start with a grand parade, then luncheon at the Milky Way Sunny Sun, Snel Bouman's new hotel complex.

MAYOR: What about security?

COUNCILLOR 2: Thank God we don't have to worry about that.

MAYOR: Why not?

COUNCILLOR 2: Who can harm God?

MAYOR: I'm not thinking about God. What about the State dignitaries and Officials?

COUNCILLOR 2: You think anyone would dare? In the presence of God?

MAYOR: Terrorists are atheists. Even if they see God, they won't believe in Him. It's against their ideology. No, you have slipped up here gentlemen. Get in touch with the military and see if they'll handle it. Right, let's go see what's happening in Soweto. Soweto! We'll have to do something about that name afterwards!

(Lights fade as they leave)

SCENE 5

(The day of God's arrival. Everyone is running around in great excitement. A throne for God, chairs etc. have been set up for dignitaries. A choir can be heard singing the hymn, "God the all Terrible.")

MAYOR *(signaling to Councillor 2):* Stop them! Stop that Commie hymn!. Tell them to sing "The Lord's my Shepherd." *(Councillor 2 rushes out. There is a sudden halt to the hymn. Mayor pulls out a large handkerchief and mops his brow. Then he stares incredulously and signals to Councillor 1.)* What's happened to the red carpet?

COUNCILLOR 1: We don't need it. God will descend from heaven straight into the throne.

MAYOR: Can you be certain of that?

COUNCILLOR 1: I went to church yesterday to inform Him of all the arrangements.

MAYOR: But we still need that red carpet, man. What about the PM, the President and the other dignitaries? Where is the PM by the way?

COUNCILLOR 1: He's with Snel Bouman at the Milky Way. Snel's giving him a taste of his new cocktail "Manna from Heaven".

COUNCILLOR 3: I had a sip while I was there. Boy, does it have a kick! We're gonna have one helluva jol tonight!

MAYOR: Yes, but we still have to get that carpet in here. Get it organized will you?

(Councillor 1 goes off to get the carpet. There is a shout from the people. They are looking up into sky.)

COUNCILLOR 2 *(running in)*: I think He's coming!

MAYOR: What! Where?

COUNCILLOR 2: There! There! See that big white cloud. There, right above.

INDIVIDUAL VOICES: Yay! The Lord is coming! ... Look at that cloud! ... I have never seen such a large cloud! ... And so bright!

COUNCILLOR 2: Now I know what the shepherds felt like on Christmas Eve!

(Strains of "The Lord's my Shepherd" begin to be heard)

MAYOR: I still don't see anything

COUNCILLOR 2: Look! Up there!

MAYOR (*pulling out binoculars*): I can't see anything. Just cloud.

COUNCILLOR 2: But that's it! You can't see Him. But He's probably on that cloud.

MAYOR: Rubbish! God said eleven. It's not quite eleven yet. Don't let your imagination run away with you.

COUNCILLOR 2: Hey, I think you're right. That cloud's blowing right over. False alarm.

VOICES: Hey ... what's happening! I thought the Lord had arrived! ... No, man, that was just a cloud. ... The suspense is killing me.

COUNCILLOR 2: You're right. We shouldn't get carried away. There has to be a sign.

MAYOR: What do you mean?

COUNCILLOR 2: He won't come unannounced. We should be looking out for Gabriel and an advance party of seraphim to make sure that everything's okay. Remember the last time. There was the star and the heavenly host. I'll go see (*Exits*)

MAYOR: Where's that damn red carpet?

(*A terrific noise in the air*)

VOICES: This must be it! ... Down everyone. ... On your knees. ... Is the choir ready? ... Start the music!
(They begin: The Lord's My Shepherd)

MAYOR: Get them to stop! Our production crew isn't ready. Tell them to wait for the signal. *(Councillor 2 goes off. Mayor shouts to crew.)* Get a move on there. You're gonna miss the whole event if you don't hurry. Then we'll have to get it from the BBC. Overseas networks will beat us to the draw. They've had their cameras rolling for an hour already.

COUNCILLOR 1 *(leading a crew carrying red carpet):*
Thank God, I'm not too late.

MAYOR: Hurry! Hurry! The big event is about to begin. *(The men set out the carpet hurriedly)* Okay! Okay! That'll do it. Right, get into your places. Where the hell is ... *(Councillor 2 comes running in)* ... there you are. Get in position. Ah, the PM, the President, and the Guests of Honour are taking their places.

COUNCILLOR 2: Sorry Mayor. Couldn't hear with all the noise. Sounds like the Lord's coming down in a Concorde.

(The choir begins The Lord's my Shepherd. After a few minutes, the Mayor looks up, the Councillors look up, the people look up. The Mayor and Councillors look at one another. They begin to get uncomfortable. But they keep looking up at the sky.)

MAYOR: Do you see anything?

COUNCILLOR 2: Maybe He's stuck!

MAYOR: Don't be ridiculous. (*Jumps up and looks through binoculars.*) Dammit, another false alarm. That's some kind of plane up there.

COUNCILLOR 1: Maybe the Air force has arranged an honour guard.

MAYOR: Don't be ridiculous. They'd just pollute the whole atmosphere. No, it's not one of our ships.

COUNCILLOR 2: Not ours?

MAYOR (*looking through binoculars*): Why the cunning bastards! That's the new SUPER XYZ SAMOVAR III. The Russians are here! For the past few days, they've been telling the whole world that this is the biggest hoax ever pulled, that we are a bunch of superstitious, capitalistic exploiters, that this is more opiate for the masses.

COUNCILLOR 1: Yes, they accuse us of organizing this stunt to give our country credibility in the eyes of the rest of the world!

MAYOR: It's gotta go. Get hold of air traffic control and tell them to get a message to the Russian ship. If they won't go, tell them we'll expose them to the world.

We'll say they couldn't keep away because they are closet believers.

(Exit Councillor 1)

COUNCILLOR 2: We should get the air force to blast them out of the sky.

MAYOR *(looking through binoculars):* Not if God's arriving. He can't be dodging bombs and bullets as He comes down. Ah, they're moving off. I bet they'll hang around somewhere and keep an eye on things. The hypocritical bastards!

COUNCILLOR 2: Look at the time!

COUNCILLOR 1*(running in):* Boy, I thought I was going to miss the landing. Those Russians took some time to understand that they had to get out.

(Suddenly there are melodious sounds in the air – African instruments. A million rainbows fill the sky and a special light radiates from the throne on which God is to sit)

MAYOR: It's eleven on the dot. This is it! This is it!

(Everyone is hushed and silent, waiting in awe and wonder. The light from the throne moves, lights up the path to the throne and forms an aura around a moving figure, a domestic worker, coming along the red carpet. The crowd is horrified.)

MAYOR (*jumping up*): What is she doing there?

COUNCILLOR 1: How did she get in? This is a whites only event.

COUNCILLOR 2: Hey you, move off. Get out of there! Get out! Get out!

(The woman keeps moving towards the throne)

COUNCILLOR 1: She probably doesn't understand English. Try funagalo!

COUNCILLOR 2: Hey wena, mova off! Hamba! Voertsek! (*Goes to woman and speaks in Sotho*) You, get out of here! You are interrupting a very important occasion. Move off!

(The woman continues towards the throne)

MAYOR: Hey you! (*Gets in front of her*) Man, these people are slow! You can't come here. Go home, to your khaya. Wena can't hamba lo side. (*Pointing*) Hamba lo other side.

(The woman sidesteps the Mayor and goes to sit on the throne. There are loud gasps of horror from the people.)

COUNCILLOR 2: She's sitting on God's throne. (*Councillor faints*)

COUNCILLOR 1 *(Falling on knees)*: Lord, if thou seest this, we beg Thy pardon. We did not anticipate this unfortunate intrusion. We can't make this woman understand. If Thou canst, we would be most grateful!

(The police arrive and try to remove the woman. Each time they try to touch her, they fall over.)

MAYOR: Get her off the throne. For god's sake, get her out. *(Goes up to the woman)* She must be a terrorist sent by that Commie Bishop Four. Arrest her! *(The police can't touch her)* Who sent you here? Okay, you won't talk. Well, we're taking you to John Vorster square. They know how to make people talk there.

POLICE CHIEF: We can't touch her. She's wearing some kind of shield. I've sent for a bucket of water. We'll douse her with that. Here comes my man.

(Policeman hurrying in with bucket, rushes up to the woman and throws it over her but there is no water.)

POLICE CHIEF *(yelling at officer)*: What the hell's wrong with you? Why'd you bring an empty bucket?

POLICEMAN *(amazed, examines bucket)*: What happened to the water? I swear it was full. What happened? *(He wanders off in a daze)* What happened? I filled the bucket. What happened? *(exits)*

MAYOR *(enraged)* : I don't care how you do it; get her out of here! Get her out!

(The woman stands up suddenly and walks away as people scowl, swear and mock her)

MAYOR: Thank God! I thought we'd never get rid of her! Look at the PM scowling. Man, this could be the end of my political career. *(To Councillor)* Jeess, look at the time, eleven thirty! It's a good thing God didn't make it on time. Quick check the throne; make sure it's okay.

(Councillors check and spray the throne)

COUNCILLOR 1: Okay Boss, everything's in order!

MAYOR: Right. Let's settle down. Can't be long now.

(Lights fade)

SCENE SIX

(Two Hours later)

MAYOR: Something's gone wrong. Why hasn't the Lord pitched? He's two hours late! You somehow expect Him to be punctual.

COUNCILLOR 1: You have to do something. The people are getting restless. They're saying the Russians

were right – this is a hoax.

MAYOR: A hoax! Rubbish! Didn't they see Gabriel on TV?

COUNCILLOR 2: They're saying the angel looked like Charlton Heston. They say you rigged the whole thing. People are beginning to walk out. Look at the PM and his entourage!

COUNCILLOR 1: You must admit it. The whole idea is kinda ridiculous. I mean, God coming down to Earth! In this day and age! It's crazy!

MAYOR: Good God, of course! That's it! The Russians hijacked God to make us believe that there is no God!

COUNCILLOR 2: What puzzles me is that Black domestic who appeared on the dot of eleven. Where the hell did she come from? How did she get in? We had the whole area cordoned off.

MAYOR: Man, I see it now. She was sent to create a diversion while they snatched God. That's it! We gotta get that woman! Get the cops after her. We gotta find out what she knows. Go get her while I calm the crowd. *(The Councillors leave. Mayor speaks to crowd.)* Mr President, Mr Prime Minister, Honourable Guests, Dames en Here, Ladies and Gentlemen, may I have your attention please ...

VOICES: Boo! Boo! ... This is a hoax. ... What kind of stupid game is this? ... You should be lynched! ... What are you trying to pull?

MAYOR: Dames en Here, Ladies and Gentlemen, please. Let me explain. *(Boos and hisses)* Please, I understand how you feel. *(Boos and hisses)* I've been fooled too. Don't you understand? I've been fooled too! *(Boos)* For God's sake, give me a chance, will you? I will explain what's happened here. You know perfectly well that God was supposed to be here. Some of you saw the Angel Gabriel yourselves. It cannot be that God changed His mind. God wouldn't do that. Did you not see the Soviet plane that was circling overhead? The XYZ SAMOVAR III was here in the sky before eleven o' clock. Have you asked yourselves what it was doing here?

VOICES: Don't lie to us, man! What are you saying? Are you calling this a Communist plot?

MAYOR: We have good reason to believe that God was hijacked on his way down here.

(Derisive laughter, whistles, shouts)

VOICES: God kidnapped? ... Who are you kidding? ... How could God be kidnapped? ... Why would God allow Himself to be kidnapped?

MAYOR: Well. The Communists need Him more than we do. But we have a lead in the case that we are

following up.

(Councillors come back followed by Police bringing in the Black woman who caused the fuss earlier)

MAYOR: This woman was in cahoots with the Communists. She created a diversion while they kidnapped the Lord.

VOICES: That's the girl who came in here before! ... Ja, she sat on God's throne. ... Sies! No wonder God didn't want to come down. ... Hang her! ... Kill her! Let me at her! ... I'll scratch her eyes out!

MAYOR: *(to woman)* What's your name?

WOMAN: You wouldn't believe me if I told you!

VOICES: Winnie Mandela! That's Winnie Mandela!

MAYOR: *(to policemen)* Where did you find her?

POLICEMEN: In the new squatter camp. It was very strange all the people were bowing down to her.

VOICES: That's because she is Winnie Mandela! They worship her!

MAYOR: So she was hiding out in a squatter camp. Was she with that communist Bishop Desmond Four?

POLICEMEN: No, Mayor. But it was weird. The people in the squatter camp didn't want us to touch her.

They wanted to kill me, but she just waved her hand and they all fell on their knees...

MAYOR: Bloody ungrateful lot! They worship anyone who defies us! *(To Woman)* Where's your pass?

WOMAN: I don't need one.

MAYOR: She must be working underground! *(Woman laughs)* Take her to John Vorster Square. They'll get the truth out of her!

(The policemen try to take hold of her but fall over laughing)

POLICEMEN: Stop it, ha, ha, ha! Stop tickling, ha,ha,ha.

MAYOR: Who the hell's tickling you?

POLICEMEN: Ha, ha, ha, how do you ... ha,ha,ha ... how do you know ... ha,ha,ha that... ha,ha,ha ... I'm ticklish there? ... ha.ha.ha,ha,ha....

MAYOR *(to policemen):* Get out! Get out, you fools! *(They leave still laughing. Mayor turns to Woman.)* Now look here, confess what you have done and things will go easier for you. What was the plan about God?

WOMAN: Simply that I was to come here.

MAYOR: Yes, that is what we thought. You came here to create a diversion. And what did you have to do?

WOMAN: See for myself.

MAYOR: Ah ha! A spy! Where have you taken the Lord?

WOMAN: Nowhere.

MAYOR: What the devil are you talking about? God was supposed to be here this morning but He never showed. Now don't tell me He wasn't abducted.

WOMAN: God has come down among you.

MAYOR: Don't talk rot. All these people were here and they didn't see Him. They can't all be blind!

WOMAN: They obviously are. So are you. God is right here.

MAYOR (whirling round): Where? Where? I don't see Him.

WOMAN: Do you see me?

MAYOR: Of course I see you. Do you think I'm blind? What I want to know is, where is God?

WOMAN: You see me, but you do not see God?

MAYOR *(laughs)*: You think if I look in your face I will see God?

WOMAN: Yes.

MAYOR: Are you telling me you're God?

WOMAN: Yes.

(Mayor has a laughing fit)

MAYOR: *(trying to control laughter)*: She *(he points)* says ...ha,ha,ha,ha,ha...says....ha,ha,ha...she says she's ha,ha,ha...God! She's God ha,ha,ha

(The whole crowd becomes hysterical with laughter)

VOICES *(filled with laughter)*: Oh God! She's God? ... Send her back to Weskoppies Mental Institution! ... Imagine, God, a woman! ... And Black! ... I say God, how about a few miracles? I'm going bald. Give me a new head of hair!.... Just shower me with gold!.....End the sanctions and sports boycotts! ... Give our Springboks a fair deal!

MAYOR: So you are God, eh? *(laughs. Nods to Councillor I who brings sign I AM GOD and fastens it on her)* Now if you wear that, at least we'll know who you are. *(Suddenly very stern)* You don't fool me. You think if you pretend to be God, we will think you are mad and let you go. No! You have committed blasphemy and you will be punished right here and now. Your

actions call for an immediate public execution. Call in the riflemen. Now “God” we will grant you a last wish. Take your place on the throne. *(The riflemen come in)* Before we execute this blasphemer, let us pray. Our Father, which art in Heaven, we humbly beg pardon for the mockery of Thy Holy Name. We do not ask Thee to forgive this woman though she knows not what she does. Unbelievers have programmed her mind. We ask Thy blessing on this execution and hope that Thou wilt not postpone Thy visit on account of this unfortunate incident.

(There is a sudden blast of lightning, flashing red lights and smoke. The Mayor and riflemen fall to their knees. People scream and Lucifer steps forward out of the smoke)

LUCI: Stop, you fools! You blocks, you stones, you worse than senseless things!

MAYOR: My God, it’s God!

LUCI: Your stupidity will destroy the world.

MAYOR: Forgive us Lord!

(The choir starts to sing the Lord’s my Shepherd)

LUCI: Stop it! Stop that confounded caterwauling! It goes against the grain to say this, but for once in your lives, can’t you be good? *(He directs some sort of ray over all the people. They freeze and he walks up to*

Woman) I told you what would happen if you came down here. They were about to execute you publicly as they did JC.

WOMAN: That was quite a spectacular entrance Luci. And quoting Shakespeare!

LUCI: This business is not fair to me. It's turning me into a schizo. How do you think I feel, making these fools behave like decent human beings?

WOMAN: Then why are you doing it?

LUCI: You know perfectly well. If they go on like this, you'll bring down the fire this time and destroy the lot.

WOMAN: That's not exactly my style. You're confusing me with yourself again.

LUCI: (*shaking head*): Always making me your scapegoat! I'm here because this is the only way I can confront you face to face. Now listen to my problem. Overcrowding in my place! I have more than I can accommodate and if you destroy the world, where will I put all these people?

WOMAN: You shouldn't have worked so hard to turn them into sinners in the first place.

LUCI: That's just it. I didn't!

WOMAN: Being modest, I see. Perhaps you *are* changing.

LUCI: You're the one gave them free will. Can I help it if they choose me? Look, you've seen how worthless these people are. They'll never qualify for your place. So why not let them remain here? Let me take over. You can always start again somewhere else.

WOMAN: Yes, but I still have to find out why free will doesn't work.

LUCI: You'll never figure that out. The longer you take to realize that, the more my problems grow. Don't you realize I have an accommodation crisis! Give me the Earth and let me establish my headquarters in South Africa.

WOMAN: I can't turn it over to you. As my Secretary pointed out to you, your understanding is skewed; it is based on the actions of a small minority. I am afraid this is not a black and white issue.

LUCI: Of course it is! Why can't you see that? Speaking of black and white, why did you come as a Black and a woman?

WOMAN: I thought it would be a form of subtle persuasion.

LUCI (*laughs derisively*): Very subtle! Look, just promise me one thing; that you won't destroy the world

while you're here. You almost did just now with the lightning flashes and smoke. I almost went berserk. I thought the whole world was going to explode.

WOMAN: That wasn't me; that was you.

LUCI: Me? You're crazy! That's the last thing I want. I came here to stop you.

WOMAN: So, you stepped in to save the world? We seem to have reversed roles here. You fancy being the Second Coming, I see.

LUCI: Look, stop joking about it. You've seen what these people are like. Just give me a chance.

WOMAN: For what?

LUCI: Let me try to change them. I'll get them to repent. Then they can come to your place. It's shameful, the waste of space up there.

WOMAN: So you are going to save them? *(Laughs)*
Are you sure you know who you are? *(She leaves)*

LUCI: *(calling after her)* I'm desperate! I'll do anything to stop the influx into my place. The end justifies the means, you know.

(With more flashes, Luci awakens the people. They open their eyes, see Luci and spontaneously begin singing Joy to the world. They rush around with streamers and balloons shouting and whooping wildly. They lift Luci

up onto their shoulders, and bring him to the throne. They settle Luci in the throne, and kneel before him.)

LUCI (*Shaking his head*): You are a silly lot.

MAYOR: Lord, we humbly ask pardon if we have offended Thee.

COUNCILLOR 2: Thou took us by surprise!

COUNCILLOR 1: If Thou had been on time, things would have been different.

MAYOR: (*aside to Councillors*): Shut up you two! (*To Luci*) Don't pay any attention to them Lord, just a couple of dimwits; they help me run the city. Now Lord, if Thou will allow me, I'd like to show Thee the programme we've worked out for Thy visit.

LUCI (*annoyed*): What makes you think I am the Lord?

MAYOR: Well, handsome like a movie star; and the lightning, the red flashes and smoke; Your air of command; the masterful way in which You took control.

LUCI: There's no doubt in my mind. You lot have to be saved. I certainly don't want you in Hell.

MAYOR: Thanks Lord. We knew we were the chosen people, but it's nice to hear You confirm it.

COUNCILLOR 2: Oh Lord, we are Thy humble sheep.

COUNCILLOR 1: We will serve Thee more faithfully, Lord.

LUCI (*enraged*): Stop it! Stop calling me Lord. Don't you know me?

MAYOR: Thou art the Lord, our God, forever and ever, Amen. Hosanna in the highest to the King. Forgive us now and in our ending.

COUNCILLORS: Lord have mercy on our souls.

MAYOR: Forgive us now and...

LUCI (*stamping about in rage*): I am not God. Do you understand? I am not God. Stop groveling like a bunch of idiots. Now listen to me. Unless you do what I say, you'll end up with sentences of eternal damnation.

MAYOR: But Lord, if you are not God, who are you?

LUCI: I am Lucifer.

MAYOR: Lucifer! That's impossible!

COUNCILLOR 1: I refuse to believe it!

COUNCILLOR 2: You can't be Lucifer. You don't look a bit like him.

LUCI: What do you expect me to look like? One of those dumb caricatures with horns, tail and cloven hooves? I too was made in God's image – just like you, you damn fools!

MAYOR: I am getting totally confused. I give up. I don't know what's happening anymore.

COUNCILLOR 1: Is this real? Or is this hallucination?

COUNCILLOR 2: You mean mass hysteria?

MAYOR: I think I'll go home and sleep it off. *(He tries to leave; his legs move but he remains in place)* Hey, what's happening? I'm not moving. Help! Help!

LUCI: You will stay and listen to what I have to say.

MAYOR: *(Falling to his knees)* Yes, Lord.

LUCI *(angry):* Will you stop that! I told you, I am Lucifer!

MAYOR *(beginning to cry):* It's not possible.

COUNCILLOR 1 *(crying too):* Ja, I can't take any more of this either.

COUNCILLOR 2 *(to Mayor):* Don't cry, Boss. It'll be all right. I'm sure it will.

MAYOR: But look at him. Doesn't he look like God?
So clean-cut and handsome. Like Roc Hudson.

COUNCILLOR 1 (*still crying*): The spitting image!

COUNCILLOR 2 (*to Mayor*): There, there, Boss.

MAYOR (*still crying*): He acts with such authority.

COUNCILLOR 1 (*still crying*): So Masterful.

COUNCILLOR 2 (*To Mayor*): Here, use my hanky,
boss.

MAYOR (*still crying*): Such a commanding air!

COUNCILLOR 1 (*still crying*): So noble!

COUNCILLOR 2 (*To Mayor*): Don't upset yourself,
Boss!

MAYOR (*still crying*): Why does he insist on calling
himself Lucifer?

COUNCILLOR 1 (*still crying*): He can't be!

COUNCILLOR 2 (*To Mayor*): If you go on like this,
you'll make yourself ill.

MAYOR (*still crying*): Look at him. Doesn't he look
like God.

COUNCILLOR 1 (*still crying*): The spitting image.

LUCI: (*Mad as hell*): Cut! That's where you started.
Now stop!

COUNCILLOR 2 (*holding handkerchief for Mayor to blow his nose*): Blow, your Worship.

LUCI (*roaring*): You don't seem to understand the danger you're in. You have only one chance to save yourselves.

MAYOR: Danger!

LUCI: God's getting ready to destroy the world.

MAYOR: But why?

LUCI: Because you don't know her.

MAYOR: But we know our God!

LUCI: No you don't. When She came down this morning, you didn't recognize Her!

MAYOR: She? Who?

LUCI: You even tried to execute her as a terrorist.

MAYOR and COUNCILLORS (*totally confused*):
WHO?

LUCI: God!

MAYOR and COUNCILLORS (*totally confused*):
But we showered you with flowers and set you up on a throne.

LUCI: I'm not talking about myself! I am talking about GOD! Think man didn't you try to have someone executed this morning?

MAYOR (*totally confused*): We did?

COUNCILLOR 1 (*whispering*): You remember your Worship? That Black woman?

MAYOR: Yes? What about her?

COUNCILLOR 1: That's whom the Lord means.

MAYOR: Are you saying that black woman ... (*Luci nods*) That black woman was... (*Stares for a moment, then bursts out laughing*) That's a good one! Thou had us going there! I didn't picture Thee with a sense of humour, but that's great!

LUCI: Look, you have to believe it if you wish to be saved.

MAYOR: (*laughing*) Knock it off, Lord.

LUCI: I'm giving it to you straight. If you don't accept Her, you may as well kiss all this goodbye. Then you'll

be transported to my place. And don't bring anything more than yourself when you come. That's all I have room for.

MAYOR: You're serious! (*Stares in horror*) And we went to so much trouble changing Soweto for Him... I mean...her?

COUNCILLOR 1: But weren't we created in God's image?

COUNCILLOR 2: That's what I thought.

COUNCILLOR 1: But there's no resemblance!

COUNCILLOR 2: Something's not right here. I can't put my finger on it!

MAYOR: But if you're not God, why are you trying to save us? You have to be!

LUCI: Stop that will you? I am Lucifer, also known as the Devil, Satan, the Prince of Darkness. Do you get it? Now stop confusing me with God. And get it into your heads that She is God.

MAYOR: A black and a woman!

LUCI: You'll just have to get over your hang-ups about colour and gender.

MAYOR: But she made the Covenant with us, December 16, remember? How could she? She's black? And now you're trying to save us. This is very confusing. You're not supposed to unless you are ...

LUCI: Don't say it! Don't say it! You're driving me mad! I'll destroy the world myself, if you don't look out! O, what am I saying. That's the last thing I want. Now promise me!

MAYOR: This is just like the Covenant again! Only this time the Lord is initiating it. It's all very confusing.

COUNCILLOR 1: It certainly is!

COUNCILLOR 2: There's something weird about this whole business; something that just escapes me.

LUCI: Do you understand what you have to do? Well, if you're sure you are quite ready, I am going to summon her.

MAYOR: You'll be with us, won't you? You'll see us through this?

COUNCILLOR 2: Something doesn't quite add up.

LUCI: What's the matter? Are you still in doubt? God will see right through you. You have to believe. You have to have faith. What must I do to convince you that She IS God?

MAYOR: No, no. It's all right. We believe.

LUCI: Pull yourselves together. Otherwise it's the fire
THIS TIME. (*Goes to get God*)

MAYOR (*almost in tears again*): This is a nightmare. I
don't know how we are going to get through this.

COUNCILLOR 1: The humiliation! The embarrassment!

COUNCILLOR 2: I still say something doesn't quite
add up.

MAYOR: Shut up! If you exhibit the least sign of
doubt, its klaarpraat for the lot of us, for the whole
world! Now get on your knees and let's wait.

COUNCILLOR 1: On our knees?

MAYOR: Yes! And that's an order! (*Mayor and
Councillors sink to their knees*)

COUNCILLOR 2: (*Jumps up suddenly*) I've got it
Boss. Boss, I've got it! You don't have to kneel to the
kaffir!

MAYOR: I don't? (*Jumps up gladly*) Well, what is it?

COUNCILLOR 2 (*excited*): Don't you see? God said
we didn't recognize Him and now He's putting us
through this test. We have to know Him right? (*Mayor
and Councillor 1 nod*) Don't you see? He's been selling

us this Black woman, right? (*Mayor and Councillor 1 nod*) If God were black, why would He make a deal with US?

MAYOR AND COUNCILLOR 1 (*getting to their feet*): He'd go to that Commie Bishop Desmond Four!

COUNCILLOR 2: Why do we look like this, if we were made in her image? (*Mayor and Councillor 1 nod*) Haven't we always associated black with evil? (*Mayor and Councillor 1 nod*) If we accept black now, isn't that accepting evil? (*Mayor and Councillor 1 nod*)

MAYOR AND COUNCILLOR 1: Yes, so?

COUNCILLOR 2: This was a TEST to see if we would truly be able to recognize God, no matter how we were persuaded into believing He was NOT God.

MAYOR AND COUNCILLOR 1: Yes, so?

COUNCILLOR 2: We must confirm what we know in our hearts to be true. We must accept the ONE whom we, in our innermost beings, believe to be GOD.

MAYOR: Yes, you are right!

COUNCILLOR 2: Who is trying to save us now?

MAYOR AND COUNCILLOR 1: (*Pointing in the direction of Luci*) HE is!

COUNCILLOR 2: We must embrace our true God!

MAYOR: You are right!

COUNCILLOR 1: Are you sure? What if we are wrong?

MAYOR: Okay we'll put him to a test. I know exactly how!

(Luci returns alone)

COUNCILLOR 2: You didn't find "God"? *(grins knowingly at Mayor and councilor 1)*

LUCI: I think she's gone back up.

COUNCILLOR 1 *(exaggerated nodding)*: Oh yes, yes. Gone back up! That's right, gone back up!

MAYOR: Before we pay our proper respects to God, I would appreciate an answer to one question.

LUCI: Oh man, you still have doubts?

MAYOR *(smiling broadly)*: Oh, no! No doubts! Just something we want to know.

LUCI *(sighing)*: Oh, okay.

MAYOR: Didst Thou make the covenant with us at Blood River?

LUCI: Of course I did. *(Catches himself)* Wait a minute, wait a minute, I didn't mean....

(The Mayor and Councillors are dancing around Luci singing Exultate Jubilate. They pick Luci up on their shoulders and place him on the throne. Then they kneel before him.)

MAYOR: O Lord. We acknowledge Thee as our one true God. Thou art trying to save us and we are full of gratitude. Only God would try to save us.

LUCI *(With a manic laugh):* Ha, ha, ha, yes I AM GOD, Ruler of the Universe. I can do whatever I please. *(He begins to cry.)* I have suffered for these people. I tried to save them. But they have sinned. I must destroy the world!

(Mayor and Councillors are alarmed. Luci clutches his head and runs about wildly.)

MAYOR: Lord forgive us our sins.

COUNCILLOR 1: Lord have Mercy! Lord have Mercy! Lord have Mercy!

COUNCILLOR 2: Our Father which art now on Earth
...

LUCI *(laughing like a maniac):* Which I will now destroy!

(He raises his hands and Woman appears)

WOMAN: Stop Luci! You don't want to do this!

LUCI: *(Facing her)* Get thee behind me Satan!

WOMAN: *(stops short)* Good gracious, he's flipped.
Stop -- Luci YOU ARE LUCIFER! I don't want to
destroy the world. That's always been YOUR obsession.

LUCI: *(Keeping Woman at arms' length)* You are
banished to the nether regions.

WOMAN: You've impersonated me so often you don't
know who you are.

LUCI: *(Keeping Woman at arms' length)* Heretic!
Unbeliever! *(To Mayor and Councillors cowering on the
ground)* You are all unbelievers. You will all perish!

MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS: No, no, Lord! We
believe!

WOMAN: Luci! Calm down now!

LUCI: I am the Lord of all Creation! What I do, I can
undo!

*(He dances around wildly and everything goes up in
flames. He tears off with the Mayor and Councillors in
his wake. The sound of a tremendous explosion.)*

WOMAN: Well, I never! He's destroyed the World; blown up the planet!

(Lights fade)

SCENE SEVEN

(Back in Heaven's Communications Centre. Angels 1 and 2 are glued to the screen that shows flames engulfing the globe and then the planet blown to smithereens.)

ANGEL 1: Luci's never gone that far before. The Deluge and other attempts simply wiped out those element that were destined for Hell. At that time he needed tenants.

ANGEL 2: He's psychotic, badly needs a shrink; always had a God-complex. It's been getting worse. He confused those people in South Africa. And because they could identify with him, they worshipped him.

ANGEL 1: Yes God is ineffable. Who can identify with that?

ANGEL 2: Well, that's that! And the Boss still hasn't found the answer to the problem of freewill.

ANGEL 1: The way I see it, if you grant free will that means choice and the choice is between good and evil.

That makes everything ambiguous. That's the problem. Creation is inherently flawed. I hope the Boss is tired of playing games.

(Suddenly the screen is filled with the garden of Eden)

ANGEL 2: Oh no! The Garden of Eden. Here we go again.

ANGEL 1: I hope we're not messing with free will again.

ANGEL 2: But without free will, they would just be puppets and I don't think God fancies the task of puppet master.

ANGEL 1: Look, here come the new Adam and Eve. Wow! Look at that!

(Adam and Eve appear on the screen carrying baskets of apples. Each is munching on an apple. Adam and Eve are a Coloured couple.)

ANGEL 2: A mixed race couple and eating apples! Boy, this going to be worse than before.

ANGEL 1: Not a bad idea actually. They can't fight over race anymore.

ANGEL 2: But they're eating apples. Defying God at the outset!

ANGEL 1: No, this is something new. Being given knowledge right from the start is a good idea. It's ignorance that causes problems.

ANGEL 2: I don't know. They'll still find reasons to fight and kill one another. Look there! See! Adam and Eve are fighting!

(They watch)

EVE: What do you mean? Cook you a meal! I'm not your slave.

ADAM: But I've been out hunting all day!

EVE: And I've been bent over all day – gathering. It's your turn to cook.

ADAM: You call that work – your few lousy chores! You don't work as hard as I do. And you're around the house, you could prepare something while you're about.

EVE: Male chauvinist pig! Why should I be stuck around the house while you're having fun hunting? Cook your own damn meals!

ANGEL 2: *(Shrugs)* Back to square one – again!

ANGEL 1: I wonder how long this creation is going to last?

(Lights fade)

THE END

GLOSSARY

p.4 Dominee - Pastor

p.5 16 December: The day of the Vow traces its origin as an annual religious holiday to The Battle of Blood River on 16 December 1838. The besieged Voortrekkers (descendants of the Dutch in South Africa, also known as Afrikaners) took a public vow (or covenant) before the battle, led by Sarel Cilliers. In return for God's help in obtaining victory, they promised to build a church and forever honour this day as a holy day of God. They vowed that they and their descendants would keep the day as a holy Sabbath. During the battle a group of about 470 Voortrekkers defeated a force of about 20,000 Zulu. Three Voortrekkers were wounded, and some 3,000 Zulu warriors died in the battle.

Two of the earlier names given to the day stem from this prayer. Officially known as the Day of the Vow, the commemoration was renamed from the Day of the Covenant in 1982. Afrikaners colloquially referred to it as *Dingaansdag* (Dingaan's Day) a reference to the Zulu ruler of the defeated attackers. (Wikipedia)

p. 10 New Deal: The Homelands Policy which attempted to banish African people from cities.

p. 16 Robben Island – Penal Colony especially for

political activists

- p. 29** Ja (pronounced Ya) Yes
- p. 32** Snel Bouman (Speedy Builder)
- p. 37** SBs - Special Branch undercover police
Impimpi - Traitor
Ja-my-baas - Yes Boss
Spoogoopoo - Idiot
- p. 39** *Daar kom die Alabama*, a song: “There comes the Alabama” (a ship). The song is associated with the Coloured People of South Africa.
Ja (Ya) - Yes
- p. 47** khaya -- house, home
Wena – you
hamba lo side – go that side
- p. 68** klaarpraat – the end
kaffir – derogatory term for an African

