

WIP Theatre Plays



Muthal Naidoo

WIP Theatre Plays

Muthal Naidoo

I have called my collection, WIP (Work-in-Progress) Theatre Plays, the name of the company under which many of them were produced.

THE WORK – IN – PROGRESS (W. I. P.) THEATRE COMPANY

MEMBERS

MUTHAL NAIDOO, BABS PILLAY, MAHOMED ALLI, ESSOP KHAN, ETIENNE ESSERY,
NEVILLE JOSIE, NASREEN MOOSA, FAIZAL HUSSAIN, AJAY HURBANS, OLIVER RAMAN,
SUBASHINI NAIDOO & IKBAL MOOSA.

W. I. P. THEATRE COMPANY WAS FOUNDED IN 1981 BY MUTHAL NAIDOO TO PRODUCE HER FIRST FULL-LENGTH PLAY OF NO ACCOUNT. THE CAST OF THE PLAY FORMED THE COMPANY FOR THAT PRODUCTION.

IN AUGUST 1982, W. I. P. PRODUCED MUTHAL NAIDOO'S THIRD PLAY, COMING HOME. IN SEPTEMBER 1982, THE CAST OF HER SECOND PLAY, WE 3 KINGS, JOINED W. I. P. TO TAKE THE PLAY ON TOUR. THIS GROUP REMAINS INTACT AND AFTER IT'S PRODUCTION OF OUTSIDE – IN, PLANS TO STAGE SEVERAL MORE PLAYS THIS YEAR.

W. I. P. THEATRE COMPANY CREDO

W. I. P. THEATRE COMPANY IS AN ASSOCIATION OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN AND DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF THEATRE.

OUR AIM IS TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR TALENTED PEOPLE WHO SEEK A CAREER IN THEATRE.

WE BELIEVE THAT LIVING IN SOUTH AFRICA, WE HAVE DEVELOPED A COMPLETELY NEW CULTURE MADE UP OF WESTERN, AFRICAN AND INDIAN ELEMENTS. IN OUR WORK WE SEEK TO GIVE EXPRESSION TO THIS CULTURE. IN SO DOING WE HOPE TO FOSTER IN OURSELVES AND IN OUR AUDIENCES, THE UNDERSTANDING THAT WE ARE ONE PEOPLE, NOT SEPARATE POPULATION GROUPS. THOUGH WE LIVE ARTIFICIALLY SEPARATED IN GROUP AREAS, WE ARE ONE PEOPLE WITH A COMMON CULTURE AND WE MUST WORK FOR THE GOOD OF ALL.



BABS PILLAY, MUTHAL NAIDOO, NASREEN MOOSA, MOHAMED ALLI, ESSOP KHAN.

Several WIP Theatre plays were performed at the Hermit, a Theatre and Restaurant in Hermitage Street, off Smith Street, near the Durban Bay. The loft above the restaurant had been turned into a small theatre with a seating capacity of about 200. It was a non-racial theatre that offered opportunities to black and white theatre workers in the 1980s. John Dennen, the owner-manager of The Hermit, who ignored apartheid regulations, provided an affordable venue that made it possible for a number of actors, directors and playwrights on the fringe to present new and indigenous work. Mbongeni Ngema's *Asinamali* was staged there and Garth Anderson produced plays upstairs and revues downstairs in the restaurant.

The Hermit Theatre was the home of The WIP (Work-in-Progress) Theatre Company in 1982 and 1983. *Coming Home, Outside-In* and a new production of *Three for Tea* opened there. *Of No Account, We 3 Kings* and *Masks* opened at other venues.

In 1983, WIP Theatre Company, became involved in the campaign against the President's Council's Proposals for a new constitution and a Tri-Cameral Parliament. *The Masterplan*, a satirical revue about the new proposals, written at the request of the Natal Indian Congress, was performed at mass meetings. When *The Masterplan* was banned in September 1983, two new revues, *Chicken Licken* and *Allan's Coon Carnival*, replaced it.

Nobody's Hero was written in 1987 in the era of mass detentions, especially of children and was performed in a double bill with ***Ikhaya lethu*** (*Coming Home*) at the Laager at the Market.

Luci's Dilemma (1982) and ***Flight from the Mahabharath***, (early 1990's) have never been performed.

Muthal Naidoo
March 2008

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe so much to all the people who performed in my plays. Without thought for remuneration, of which there was next to nothing, they enthusiastically engaged in giving life to the plays. Most had regular day jobs and came to rehearsals after work. None thought to question the quality of the plays; they were all blithely indifferent to the risks they were taking. It was exhilarating; we were caught up in the excitement of making theatre.

There is no way in which I can adequately express the indebtedness I feel to the people whose cheerful and dynamic commitment to theatre provided me with solid support and the inspiration to write. I refer in particular to:

- Babs Pillay, Essop Khan, Mohammed Ali, Etienne Essery and Nasreen Moosa who formed the backbone of the WIP Theatre Company and made it a significant factor in theatre in Durban during its short existence.
- All the actors who took part in the UDF Revues without a thought for the consequences, including Ajay Hurbans, Oliver Raman, Subashni Naidoo
- Iqbal Moosa and Faizal Hussain, WIP Theatre technicians

My sincerest thanks to all those who performed in the plays.

Mike Narsey
Lincoln Nthunya
Rex Dunlop
Victoria Francis
Faizel Bayat
Madoda Hamilton Ncayiyana
Pippa Dyer
Fana Goodwill Mokoena
David Mokgathle

Charles Pillay
Neville Josie
Kogi Govender
Shirley Sunichur
Manu Padayachee
Solly Pillay
Vishvani Naidu
Tom Swart
Marthy Watson

The Department of Speech and Drama, UDW, for staging *Masks* in 1983
Suria Naidoo, Director of *Masks* at UDW

1983 Students of the Department of Speech and Drama, UDW: Prebashni Pather, Ansurie Singh, Yeshodra Maharaj, Satchu Annamalai, Rasheeda Moosa, Arthi Brijlall, Sobhna Poona, Michelle Lazarus, Sithaar Harkhu, Koobeshan Naidoo, Nareen Moodley, Janessa Jagganath, Shantie Kamakia, Ramola Naidu, Venisha Naidoo, Shamala Naidoo, Clara Raman

SATO for taking *Outside-In* to the Grahamstown Festival in 1984.

Inside The Hermit Theatre



WIP Theatre Company rehearsing 'Three for Tea'

/ EATING OUT☆☆☆☆

DAWN'S

ALTERNATIVE!

By Ismail Suder

Meat gets the boot at

HERMIT Restaurant has gone exclusively vegetarian — thanks to Dawn Glenny who feels there's an alternative to eating meat.

Dawn, a devout Hindu, felt a need for a vegetarian restaurant and took over the Hermit which was formerly man-

aged by John Dennen.

Now vegetarians, particularly Hindus, can dine in style and enjoy sumptuous vegetarian dishes which have a Middle-Eastern flavour.

In accordance with Hindu practice, the absence of eggs in the menus is strictly

adhered to.

The restaurant in Hermitage Lane — tucked away from the busy central traffic — exudes a homely warmth. An added attraction every evening is the popular cafe revue for the diners' entertainment.

The cafe revue, Dawn explained, is a variety of sketches performed by experienced artists in the restaurant.

And the food is simply delicious. The menu is comprehensive. I settled for vegetable breyani with dhal (R4.80).

the Hermit Restaurant



John Dennen.

Tam Alaxander, another director, insisted I try their spe-

ciality called "vegetable thali" (R4.80).

Dawn and her "assistant chef" Heather Boyd, both followers of the Hindu Faith, art of oriental cooking when they joined the Rama Krishna Movement many years ago.

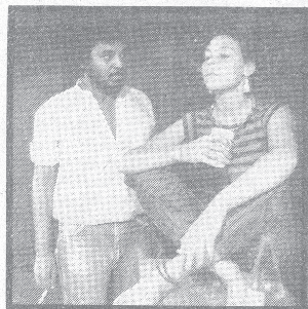
"My dream was to open an exclusively vegetarian restaurant. When the Hermit was being sold, we grabbed it.

"We don't want to convert anyone. All we are doing is introducing an alternative to meat," said Dawn.

PEOPLE



□ **LEFT:** Garth Anderson and Mara Matic try to patch up their torn relationship over dinner in *Still-Love*. **RIGHT:** Essop Khan and Pippa Dyer run through a whole gamut of emotions in *Outside-In*.



Behind the scenes at the Hermit

WHEN you go along to the theatre to take in a show, do you ever give a thought to what has gone on behind the scenes? To put it, as that well-known saying goes, on the road?

Durban's Hermit Restaurant, which has become well-known for its supper revues, and the Hermit Theatre upstairs, were abuzz with activity on Tuesday this week — the one night out of seven that the two venues are closed to the public.

In both, rehearsals for two-person productions were underway.

Downstairs among the tables and chairs, Garth Anderson and Mara Matic were busy "discussing dialogue" in preparation for the 45 minute play *Still-Love* by popular off-Broadway playwright Robert Patrick, which opened last night. It is the first time this venue has served up a play, rather than a revue, for dessert.

For Mara it's her first production in Durban in a year. A Natal University drama graduate,

she's been away travelling through Europe, the States and Britain. In *Still-Love* she plays, according to actor/director Garth, "a mild young girl from out of town trying to get into the New York crowd."

"She's living with a rather spineless writer (Garth) and wants to help him create, but can't. The play is a love story — in reverse."

Two flights up in the theatre section, among packs of foil-wrapped sandwiches and cream soda to sustain them during the long and hot evening

rehearsal, Essop Khan and Pippa Dyer ran through their words for the umpteenth time for the production *Outside-In* which opens this Wednesday.

This play, the fourth full-length production to come from Durban playwright Muthal Naidoo (on hand supervising the set building), is about a marriage across the colour line and the problems the couple encounter trying to make it work.

To book for either production, phone 031-315035 or 69444. — WANDA HENNIG

PLAYS

1. ***Of No Account*** (1981, race, sexism and office politics)
2. ***We 3 Kings*** (1982, a farce, a send-up of racial elections)
3. ***Luci's Dilemma*** (1982, a farce about Group Areas)
4. ***Ikhaya lethu*** (1982, a one-act play about dispossession)
5. ***Masks*** (1983, a crisis of identity)
6. ***Outside-In*** (1983, relationship across the colour line)
7. ***Three for Tea:***
Have Tea and Go, (1977, a one-act comedy about a shy suitor)
The Divorcee, (1977, a one-act comedy about lustful fantasies)
It's Mine (1983, a one-act comedy about maternity)
8. ***Nobody's Hero*** (1987, a one-act play dealing with detention)
9. ***Flight from the Mahabharath*** (Early 1990's, a feminist view of the Epic)
10. ***UDF Revues 1983*** (satirising Section 10 regulations and the Tri-Cameral elections)
The Masterplan (banned in September 1983)
Chicken Licken
Alan's coon Carnival

STANGER & DISTRICT CRICKET UNION

PRESENTS

MUTHAL NAIDOO'S

OF NO ACCOUNT

DATE : FRIDAY, 20 NOVEMBER 1981

TIME : 20h00

VENUE : STANGER TOWN HALL



Goofing Off!

FAIZAL BHAYAT caught goofing off by colleague Victoria Francis in a scene from the play *Of No Account*, directed and written by Dr Muthal Naidoo.

The play begins on Monday August 24 at Kommunikon and will run for two weeks.

Office clown is a natural

By KAIZER NGWENYA

AS a black office clown who puts things in to a certain perspective in the play *Of No Account*, Lincoln Nthunya reveals a natural talent for acting.

Nthunya, who is from Clermont, became interested in acting in 1976. He attended workshops in methods of acting, but the following year the man who was teaching them disappeared.

"I was very sad when our drama teacher left us unceremoniously. For two years I was inactive but wished to meet other people who were interested in acting. In Durban I knew few actors and I once entertained the thought of coming to Johannesburg where there are many artists. But I decided that if I wanted to be an actor I would start my career in Durban," Nthunya said.

The actor who made his professional debut in *Of No Account*, said acting was not much of a problem when he started.

Director Muthal Naidoo who had been listening chirped in: "It wasn't hard because this guy is a very talented actor."

Lincoln said he wished to be a full-time actor provided he teamed up with people who were also full-time artists.

"I am in a hurry to be one of the leading actors. And I still have enough time to groom my talent. I am still single and at

present not interested in marriage. I want to carve a niche for myself," he said.

The actor said he liked his role and could relate to it. "It is a well written

part and that is why I try by all means to play it consummately," he said.

Of No Account will run for two weeks at the Market Theatre before returning to Durban.



BUDDING ACTOR: Lincoln Nthunya.



DURBANARTS
81

Across the colour line



REX DUNLOP, a 21-year-old who appeared as Crusoe in *Man Friday*, in *Bar and Ger* and in a poetry programme that went to Grahamstown, was at first hesitant about playing the white accountant Gary Roberts. "He is in many ways a typical 'accountant type' — chauvinistic, confident and ambitious and quite limited. I didn't like the character."



MUTHAL NAIDOO, the playwright, is backed by extensive theatre experience, having spent 10 years in America studying for her doctoral thesis and teaching at various universities. "I had to come back so that I could write plays like *Of No Account*," she says. "In the States, I felt barren and couldn't work effectively in a vacuum. For me, theatre is the great humanising art and where better than in South Africa to teach this message? I don't believe this play — or any other for that matter — will bring about revolutionary change. But it brings us one step closer to understanding ourselves and others."

A NEW indigenous play, *Of No Account*, is opening in the Communikon on Monday for a two week run as part of Durban Arts 81.

Written and directed by Muthal Naidoo, it highlights relationships across the colour line in a building construction company.

Here is how it is seen by some of the cast members.



LINCOLN NTUNYA, a 29-year-old instructor at a textile factory and reflections of himself in the role of the wage clerk Stanley. "He is a deep thinker and the perceptive observer in the play. He is almost like the clown in Shakespeare plays — one who under a veneer of humour makes the most biting and sensitive comments. But basically he is a nice fellow who is very co-operative."



VICTORIA FRANCIS, a 24-year-old lecturer in linguistics and communications at the University of Natal, plays Sue Brown, whom she describes as "a typical white South African woman. Her values are thoroughly middle class, revolving round stability, catching a good husband and a strange sense of responsibility and respectability." During her drama degree course at Natal University, Victoria had a range of acting experience from *Electra* in a Greek play to *Sunya* in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. "But," she says, "this is the first time I have been involved so creatively as an actress."



MIKE NURSEY, a shopping manager of a guni and ammunition firm, is making a comeback to the stage after 10 years. "The character I play, Sadna Naidoo, is one I see in my work situation constantly — a faithful and loyal employee who gets pushed around, but to accommodate someone else's ambition."



Abadlali bomdlalo othi "Of No Account" uLincoln Ntunya kwesobonxele noMike Nursey babonakala bencokola kwesinye seziqubu zalomdlalo ozoqala ukudlala ngomSombuluko wona lona eCommunikon Theatre e-Apsara Centre kuVictoria Street. Lomdlalo ungaphansi kahlelo lDurban Arts 81.

SHOWWITZ

Show your

By KAIZER NGWENYA

POET/PLAYWRIGHT LeRoi Jones once said black writers shouldn't worry much about the aesthetic but to reflect their plight and hope in an uncompromising manner.

It is in this light that I liked Muthal Naidoo's play, *Of No Account*, currently running at The Laager, Market Theatre. As a black man I related to the theme of the piece and lines like: "We are trapped in the system and the only time we get free is on month end when we are paid", gives one self-understanding.

The play is set in a construction office where different races work together and highlights relationships across the colour line. Above all, the play's message is that the invisible worker (a black man) that most whites don't see in the office have feelings just like them. There are good moments in the play like when the dismissed white secretary tells a black wage clerk to stop making fun of her because she also have feelings. "Do you also have feelings?" the black worker asks her jokingly but

truly.

The play has a lot of humour and realism. The story unfolds when an arrogant white accountant (Rex Dunlop) hires a new bookkeeper (Faizel Bhayat) because he thinks the present bookkeeper is inefficient. The truth is that the unfortunate man knows his work but the white man wants to kick him out of the office because he is not docile enough to him.

The black worker tells the bookkeeper that he is not wanted in the company because he doesn't shrivel down to boy-size when talking to the white like the new bookkeeper who is prepared to do everything to please boss.

It is not sensational nor biased, but merely showing the racial world we live in and how conceited people help to perpetuate the status quo.

Playwright/director Muthal Naidoo manages to preserve the theme of the play throughout, although the pace lags at times, and some of the lines are repetitive.

true

feelings



CONFRONTATION: Faizel Bhayat and Lincoln Nthunya in *Of No Account*.

OF NO ACCOUNT

OF NO ACCOUNT, inspired by my brother, Seeni Naidoo, was written in 1980/1. It was the first production of The WIP (Work-in Progress) Theatre Company, which consisted of the cast members and playwright/director. The play was staged at Communikon in Durban in April 1981. In January 1982, it went to the Laager, at the Market, in Johannesburg.

It was revised in September 2000 and edited in 2008.

CHARACTERS

SADHA RAMSAMY, a bookkeeper about 45
STANLEY THWALA, a wage-clerk, about 27
SUE BROWN, secretary, about 30
GARY ROBERTS, chief accountant, about 30
RONNIE CHETTY, bookkeeper about 30

CAST

MIKE NARSEY
LINCOLN NTHUNYA
VICTORIA FRANCIS
REX DUNLOP
FAIZAL BAYAT

Setting

The Secretary's office of the Accounting Department of Allen, Manning and Parker, a large construction company in Durban. Two other offices, which we do not see, lead off this office. One of them is the office of Gary Roberts, chief accountant; the other is the reception area.

SCENE ONE

(Monday, late afternoon, Sadha is looking through files in the filing cabinet. Phone rings in the outer office.)

STANLEY (Popping head through door) Hey, Mr. Ramsamy, 'phone. More hard times. Another creditor wants to kill you, or me, or somebody.

SADHA That's number seventeen so far today. Just tell them to hold on. I'll get my file from my office.

STANLEY What's seventeen's partner? That's my fahfee number today. (He leaves.)

ROBERTS (Bumping into Sadha as they try to pass each other in the doorway. To Sue as Sadha disappears into office.) This is very awkward. I don't know why he has to share my office?

(Sadha comes out with a file and goes to outer office)

SUE That was the way Mr. Parker wanted it. They worked together very closely.

ROBERTS Well, Parker doesn't run the show anymore. In fact, he has nothing to do with the business. I'm glad he stopped hanging around. Why does Ramsamy get so many calls?

SUE Our clients are used to dealing with him.

ROBERTS You sure they're not personal calls?

SUE No. Mr. Ramsamy wouldn't do that.

ROBERTS You sticking up for him? That fellow's too quiet. I don't trust him.

SUE But he's just like you. Devoted to his work. Efficient too. You're two of a kind.

ROBERTS Are you comparing him with me?

SUE Why not? You spend all your time taking care of the firm. You've been here six months. I bet you haven't made any friends. Don't tell me you people from Joey's don't know how to relax and have fun.

ROBERTS Fun! We invented it. You Durbanites know nothing about it.

SUE How do you know? All you see are these four walls?

ROBERTS There's more!

SUE (Laughing) I bet you haven't even been to the beach!

ROBERTS What do you suggest I do about it?

SUE Get out and meet people.

(Sadha comes back)

ROBERTS (To Sadha) Do we have a statement of our finances for the week yet?

SADHA It's on your desk.

ROBERTS What about the Purchases Journal?

SADHA I'm about to start on that.

ROBERTS You're certainly taking your time. And we have a backlog – a huge backlog. Your staying away a fortnight didn't help matters much.

SADHA I couldn't help it. I explained ...

ROBERTS Yes. Yes. You fractured your collarbone, so you say.

SADHA I brought you the medical certificate.

ROBERTS Yes. Yes. But we have work to do. So let's get on with it. I want a bank reconciliation statement before you leave.

SADHA For this month?

ROBERTS Yes. For this month.

SADHA But we don't have all our statements in from the bank.

ROBERTS I may be new here but I'm the one who runs this office. Perhaps if you didn't question my orders, we wouldn't have such a backlog.

SADHA But if we work up a bank reconciliation now, we'll just have to do it again ...

ROBERTS You have your instructions. Get on with it. (Sadha leaves. Roberts turns to Sue.) Now what were you saying about showing me the town?

SUE I didn't say anything about that. But how about coming to dinner? Billy and I ...

ROBERTS Billy?

SUE My husband. I'd like you to meet him. And I have a friend. She's very nice.

ROBERTS Pretty as you.

SUE Why, thank you, sir. But will you come? I'm sure you'll like Anne. She's just the girl to put a little fun in your life.

ROBERTS What do you mean by fun?

SUE (Laughs, embarrassed) Will you come?

ROBERTS As long as its clear that I am not looking for a relationship. I'm a free man again. I've been free for over a year now.

SUE Aren't you lonely?

ROBERTS Not really. There are lots of women ready to help a man in distress.

SUE And where do you meet them? You never leave this office.

ROBERTS I find them when I need them.

(Sadha comes back to look through files for invoices and statements)

SUE So, can I expect you tonight?

ROBERTS Let's go into my office. We can check my diary.

SUE You're kidding. Your diary? Why do you need one?

ROBERTS Come on. You'll see. (They go into his office.)

STANLEY (Entering as they leave)

Sadha, I need a cheque. We're paying off a couple of chaps. Here are the details. (Pause) I don't know. We pay off guys every week. I wonder how they manage? (They hear Sue and Roberts laughing). Hey, what's going on in there?

SADHA (Goes to Sue's desk to make out a cheque) Nothing.

STANLEY Nothing! Man, you blind. From those nothings, come somethings. When I get married, my wife work for nobody, and she do all her nothings with me.

SADHA And with you, it'll probably be nothing. That's why you're not married yet.

STANLEY There's time for that. Talking about fillies, (Pulling out a race card), what about these? We catch

the jackpot, I get me a string of fillies. Don't know about you. You stuck with your old nag.

SADHA Yeah, because she's tried and true.

STANLEY Hey, man! Tried and True in the second race. (Shows race card.)

SADHA (Laughing) Let's see.

STANLEY Sorry, man. It's True Blue. Same difference, eh?

SADHA Look I've worked out our jackpot and accumulator perms. (Pulls forms out of pocket and hands them to Stanley.) If you're going to cash this cheque, you can make a quick trip to the tote office on the way. We gotta make it big this week. Just one bumper jackpot and I don't have to put up with any more crap.

STANLEY Yeah. We make everybody dance to our tune, eh? (Pause) You know, man, I wanna tell you something ... you don't know what's going on. When you were away, the boss-man interviewed a lotta guys – bookkeepers. Looks like he's thinking of replacing you.

SADHA No, he wouldn't do that. Parker wouldn't let that happen.

STANLEY Your Mr. Parker's company was a small operation that got swallowed up in this. So Parker's got no say. And Roberts doesn't like you.

SADHA Yeah. I can't figure that out. I've done nothing wrong.

STANLEY But you don't put on a show. You know, sometimes I think you're smart. Other times, I think you're dumb. You know you're a darky and darkies gotta put on a show for the Baas. You must smile and look happy, like you know you can't do without him. That he is the sunshine of your life. But you, you walk around like you always at a funeral. Unless a guy gets to know you, he can't tell whether you got any teeth or not. You too proud, man. Pride is a luxury a black man can't afford. Now I'm gonna show you what to do. When the boss comes in, you jump up and say, "Look Baas, see I got all my graaf done." And smile. Show all your teeth. "And I'm sitting here, Baas, all sad and lonely thinking 'if only I had some small thing I could do for the Baas'"

SADHA (Laughs) You're nuts.

STANLEY If you don't like that, do what all the other Char-ous do. Bring samoosas and biryani.

SADHA That'll be the day.

STANLEY You plain stingy, that's what. Jokes aside. That guy wants you out. I know you think your work's too good, they can't fire you. But you making a big mistake. They want the work but without the show – aikona! It's no good.

(They hear Sue and Roberts laughing)

SADHA You better get out of here before they come back and fire us both on the spot.

STANLEY I'm going in there. I'll break up that little party. (Waving cheque) They gotta sign. (He goes into inner office. Sadha puts tote forms in an envelope and goes back to file. Stanley comes back) Right. I'm off. Give me the stuff for the tote office. (Sadha points to envelope on desk) Now make things easy for yourself. Remember, there's no business like show business. Smile. (Gives big toothy grin and exits.)

(Roberts and Sue come back)

ROBERTS I don't know whether I like this, you know.

SUE What?

ROBERTS All this matchmaking.

SUE Matchmaking? I'm not matchmaking. I wouldn't dream of it.

ROBERTS No, it's unnecessary. After all, you are my secretary.

SUE What's that supposed to mean?

ROBERTS Bosses and secretaries have a special relationship.

SUE Only in women's magazine stories. Didn't know you read those.

ROBERTS Oh no. I get my information first-hand. From secretaries.

SUE Oh, your wife was a secretary.

ROBERTS No.

SUE (Confused) Well ... neither is Anne. But I am sure you are going to like her. Billy, my husband, is a very warm person. I'm sure you two will get on fine as well.

STANLEY (Popping his head round the door) 'Phone for you again, Mr. Ramsamy. Another creditor on the line. (Pops out again)

SADHA Thank you. (Closing file cabinet and going out.)

ROBERTS That fellow irritates me. Why do I have to share my office with him? Whose crappy idea was that?

SUE He's always ...

ROBERTS Well, it won't be for long. I've hired another bookkeeper.

SUE You have?

ROBERTS He starts today.

SUE Today! Does Mr. Ramsamy know?

ROBERTS I didn't consult him. Why are you so concerned about Ramsamy? What's he to you? (Looks up questioningly) He's a bit old for you, isn't he?

SUE Is that supposed to be a joke?

ROBERTS What if I put him in here and the new chap as well? That would be nice and cosy for you, wouldn't it?

SUE What are you trying to say?

ROBERTS You know what I mean. Women are all alike.

SUE (Coldly) I beg your pardon. Excuse me. I have work to do.

ROBERTS Don't get sore. I'm only joking. (Sadha returns. To Sadha) Who was that?

SADHA That was ACME construction again. They say they haven't received payment. I'm sure I made out a cheque last week. I don't know what's gone wrong.

ROBERTS I held that cheque back. I'm not satisfied with their prices. I'll take care of it. (Sadha, on the point of protesting, changes his mind and starts to move off into office) Oh by the way, I want you to move your desk out today. It's too crowded in my office. Get Stanley to help you.

SADHA (Stares at him, then turns to Sue) I hope you won't mind sharing your office, Mrs. Brown?

SUE No. Not at all.

(Sadha exits into inner office.)

ROBERTS Well, it will soon be nice and cosy in here. (Sue continues working silently.) I'm sorry. I'm behaving like a swine, aren't I? You're right. I've been on my own too long. I don't know how to be sociable any more. Please forgive me. (Sue remains silent.) Does this mean dinner is off?

SUE No, of course not.

ROBERTS Really, I am sorry.

SUE As you say, they were stupid jokes.

ROBERTS Well, if there are no hard feelings, come and have a drink with me after work.

SUE (Surprised) Can't do that. Have to prepare for tonight. Billy will be picking me up. Would you like to meet him?

ROBERTS (Evasively) If I'm not busy. At any rate, I'll see him later tonight. (Sadha passes through to outer office. Roberts watching him, laughs) My dear Sue that was a ridiculous notion of mine, wasn't it? You and Ramsamy? You don't find it funny? (Goes off laughing. Sue puzzled, shakes her head and goes on working.)

(Lights fade)

SCENE TWO

(Later that afternoon. Sadha and Stanley are moving Sadha's desk out of Roberts' office into Sue's office.)

STANLEY I'm glad none of my people can see me doing this.

SADHA Why?

STANLEY Hey, no man! They'd say you got me unders.

SADHA (Laughs) Let's see. Where can we put this? Maybe here. No, this is right in the traffic ... Maybe (Looking around) ...

STANLEY You think we can put this thing down while you make up your mind?

SADHA (Putting desk down) Good idea. Want a cigarette? (Stanley takes a cigarette. They light up. Sadha continues to survey room.)

STANLEY Thanks. If you make it a beer as well, I'll consider myself paid.

SADHA All I can offer is tea.

STANLEY (In mock disgust) Tea! Typical Char-ou. (Knocking on Sadha's forehead.) Knock. Knock.

SADHA Who's there?

STANLEY Charlie.

SADHA Charlie who?

STANLEY Charlie How.

SADHA (Puzzled) Charlie How?

STANLEY Char li hau. You don't get it? That's Indian for bring the tea. What kind of char-ou are you? Don't even know your own language.

SADHA All chars don't speak the same language. Anyway, that's a real corny joke. Let's put this there. (They move the desk.)

STANLEY (As they move the desk) You gonna make me a slave. I know it. My mother always told me – never trust a guy who doesn't drink. Well, if you ever need another job, you can always think about the furniture moving business. But of course, you're not worried about your job, are you?

SADHA I'm not.

STANLEY Don't be a fool. Why do you think you're being thrown out here? You think he wants to share the secretary with you? No man, he's just getting you closer to the door.

(Enter Ronnie)

RONNIE Excuse me. I'm looking for Mr. Gary Roberts.

STANLEY Didn't I see you here last week?

RONNIE (Ignoring Stanley and address- ing Sadha) I came for an interview last week. This Mr. Roberts was very impressed with me. I am going to work for him. I start today. Is he here?

STANLEY Straight through there.

RONNIE Thanks. (Goes into inner office.)

STANLEY You begin to worry yet?

SADHA (Straightening out his desk) I've been working here for twenty years. Parker won't let them fire me.

STANLEY Tell me, man. You ever look in the mirror? What you see?

SADHA What do you mean? I see myself.

STANLEY That's a lying mirror you got, pal. You don't see yourself. You see nothing. (Goes off into outer office)

(Sue passes Stanley on the way in)

SUE I see you've moved. Have you settled in?

SADHA Just a few more odds and ends to fetch.

SUE As soon as you're done, if you have nothing to do for Mr. Roberts, I'd like some help with the Bantu Tax Statements. Can I count on you?

SADHA Sure. I'm just going to take a short lunch break. After that, okay?

SUE That'll be fine.

(Enter Roberts with Ronnie)

ROBERTS We'll get a desk in here for you. In the meantime, you can work out of my office. This is Mrs. Brown, my secretary. Mrs. Brown, this is Ronnie, our new bookkeeper.

SUE Hello.

ROBERTS Now I want you to get right down to work. I want you to check this bank reconciliation.

SADHA The one I worked on this morning?

ROBERTS Yes. You did it so fast – I'm not sure it's reliable. Ronnie get all the stuff from Ramsamy and bring it to my office. You can work in there until we get a desk for you out here. Ramsamy, if you're doing nothing, see if you can get a desk organized for Ronnie. (Goes back into inner office)

RONNIE Ramsamy, I'm going to be in charge here. You're a bookkeeper too, eh?

SADHA Yes.

RONNIE You leaving this firm?

SADHA No.

RONNIE (Looking around) Company must be doing well. Get me the stuff that Roberts wants me to work on.

(Stanley pops in.)

STANLEY Sadha, you coming? You owe me a beer, remember?

SUE Stanley, please bring me the Bantu Tax Statements when you come back.

STANLEY Right.

RONNIE (To Stanley, holding out some money) Go buy me some cigarettes.

STANLEY Can you see me?

RONNIE What you mean?

STANLEY I thought so. You can't see me. If you can't see me, I'm not here. So buy your own cigarettes. (To Sadha) You coming?

SADHA I've just lost my appetite.

STANLEY You reneging on the beer? I knew I couldn't trust you. Can't trust a char-ou. (Sadha grins. Stanley goes back into outer office)

RONNIE (To Sadha) You let him talk to you like that? (Sadha does not answer.) Where's the stuff I need?

SADHA Everything's in Roberts' office. Just look on his desk.

RONNIE Look, Ramsamy. Just show me where everything is.

STANLEY (Re-entering with Bantu Tax Statements. To Ronnie) Hey, you just standing around here. Man, this is a business. You better get busy.

RONNIE (Startled at first, then indignant) This is my first day. Besides, this man (Indicating Sadha) is keeping me waiting. Anyway, who do you think you are? What's your job here?

STANLEY Wages. You better be nice to me or you may not get paid.

RONNIE (Laughing derisively) Where they'll give you a job like that. You pay me! That's a laugh.

STANLEY Only for now. (Goes back to outer office.)

RONNIE (To Sadha) Look here, man. You keeping me waiting. You want me to make a bad impression, my first day?

SADHA Come on. (They go into the inner office.)

(Phone rings. Sue answers.)

SUE Allen, Manning and Parker, good morning. Oh Anne. Glad you rang. Can you make it tonight? ... Great! ... (Laughs) Don't worry. You won't be disappointed. He's rather a quiet, serious type but he's very good-looking ... No, not Robert Redford ... more like Bobby Ewing ... Thanks, but don't worry. Billy's taking care of everything ... Yes, a braai. ...Right. See you tonight. 'Bye. (Puts phone down. Sadha comes back.) You still busy?

SADHA Afraid so.

SUE I'll take my tea break now. Perhaps Stanley can give me a hand when I come back.

(Ronnie comes in from inner office.)

RONNIE Ramsamy, can you give me a hand with this. Mr. Roberts is busy. He can't help me.

SADHA Why do you need help? You're just checking.

RONNIE I see you ticked some cheques but they haven't been presented at the bank yet.

SADHA (Continuing with his own task) The thing balanced perfectly. There's nothing wrong with it.

(Stanley enters. He comes in with his tea and a sandwich, sits down and listens to the conversation between Sadha and Ronnie.)

RONNIE (Holding statement out for Sadha to look at) I think you hit a miss here. I can't find these cheques anywhere.

SADHA (A little annoyed) Look for them. They're there.

RONNIE (Scratching his head and searching the statement) This thing is crazy.

SADHA Take my word for it. You don't have to check. It's all correct.

RONNIE I can't take a chance like that!

STANLEY (Munching away) You won't be taking a chance. If Sadha worked on it, there's nothing to check. (To Sadha) Shall I get you some tea?

SADHA I'll go with you.

RONNIE Aren't you going to help me?

SADHA After tea.

RONNIE But this is more important, man. Mr. Roberts wants this done.

SADHA It is done.

RONNIE No. I haven't checked it. I want to get it done early. It'll make Roberts happy.

STANLEY (Laughs) See, Sadha. This guy may not know anything about bookkeeping but he understands show biz.

RONNIE Come on, Ramsamy. You can have tea here and work at the same time.

STANLEY (Laughing) I hope you're taking notes. This man can teach you things.

RONNIE Ya. I may be younger than you, but you can still learn a lot from me. I was in charge of our department in my last place. I had everything organized. Certain people in charge of certain things. It worked smoothly.

STANLEY And what did you do?

RONNIE (Pompously) I was in charge. I was the organizer.

STANLEY I see. You have experience as an organizer, but no experience as a bookkeeper.

RONNIE No you don't understand. Hey, bring me a chair. (Stanley ignores him) I know everything, but I'm a little rusty in some things. But I'll catch up in no time. Hey, I asked you to bring me a chair.

STANLEY (To Sadha) Do you know what this guy sees when he looks in the mirror? (Sadha shakes his head.) He sees a white man. (Sadha and Stanley step out into the outer office.)

RONNIE Bloody shit. He rather have tea with a kaffir than help me. I'm his own bloody nation too. (Flings down statement) Damn this thing.

(Roberts comes in from inner office)

ROBERTS How's it coming Ronnie? Have you finished?

RONNIE (Smiling broadly) No, not yet.

ROBERTS Why not? All you had to do was check.

RONNIE Well, it's not balancing. Ramsamy didn't have time to go over it with me. He had to go to tea.

ROBERTS Well, why don't you take a tea break too?
(Picks up reconciliation) I'm sure this is okay.

RONNIE Yes, sir. Thank you, sir. Can I bring you anything, sir? (Roberts looks puzzled) A sandwich or something?

ROBERTS (Grins) No thanks.

RONNIE Right you are, sir.

(Sue comes in as Ronnie leaves)

ROBERTS Sue, have you started on the Bantu Tax Returns yet?

SUE I'm waiting for ... (Looks on her desk) oh Stanley brought them in. I'll make a start right away.

ROBERTS Sue ... about this dinner tonight ... I don't think I'm going to be able to make it.

SUE Oh? Anne is going to be disappointed. As for Billy ... he's doing the cooking. He's very proud of his culinary skills, at the braai-pit that is.

ROBERTS So it's to be a braai?

SUE Oh, didn't I tell you? Very informal. So we can all relax. Anne is just dying to meet you.

ROBERTS Anne? ... Oh yes, my blind date. But I thought we agreed I didn't need one.

SUE No, we did not. Why are you trying to back out of this?

ROBERTS I'm not. Really.

(Ronnie enters with a chocolate for Roberts)

RONNIE (Holding out chocolate) I brought you this chocolate, sir.

ROBERTS (Taking chocolate and handing it to Sue) I said I didn't want anything. Where's Ramsamy?

RONNIE He said he'll come soon as he finished his tea.

ROBERTS Ronnie have you checked that reconciliation, yet?

RONNIE (Startled, looks around nervously) Yes sir, I gave it to you before I went to tea. It's all correct. Ramsamy has done quite a good job.

ROBERTS I asked Ramsamy to find a desk for you. I suppose he didn't bother. There's a table in the next office. Go and get it.

RONNIE Yes sir. (Exits quickly)

SUE (Handing a page to Roberts) I've made a map for you, to our place. I'm not too good at maps. Do you think you can read it?

ROBERTS It's perfectly clear. (Laughs) I see you direct me from here.

SUE You live here don't you?

ROBERTS When you get to know me better, you'll find I'm not as dull as you seem to think. You're in for a shock tonight.

SUE I'm looking forward to it. Could I have the rest of the afternoon off? I have these Bantu Tax statements but Mr. Ramsamy could do them for me.

ROBERTS Want to make yourself beautiful for me?

SUE For myself. But that's the idea.

ROBERTS I suppose I'll have to manage without you.

SUE Thanks, I'm glad I have such an understanding boss.

(Roberts goes back into his office. Ronnie and Sadha enter carrying a table and chair.)

RONNIE (Carrying table) I'm a bookkeeper, not a bloody handyman. (Sees Sue) Oh Mrs. Brown, I didn't see you there. Ramsamy fetch my stuff from Mr. Roberts' office will you.

SADHA I'm a bookkeeper too. (Sadha sits down. Ronnie goes to fetch his things.)

SUE Mr. Ramsamy, do you mind if I leave all this to you? You've done it before many times. Mr. Roberts wants it before the end of the week.

SADHA I'm still busy with this ...
(Ronnie comes back agitated and interrupts.)

RONNIE Hey, Ramsamy, I hope that reconciliation is correct. Roberts is checking it himself now. This is my first day. If there's a mistake in it ... I'll look bad. (Sadha ignores him) I hope there's nothing wrong. You sure it's okay? ... I should have checked it properly.

SADHA Don't you people have any work to do, messing around with something that we don't need now?

RONNIE Hey, don't take it out on me.

SADHA Then stop wasting my time.

RONNIE You don't have to get so mad. (Goes back into Roberts' office.)

SUE Mr. Ramsamy, I'm leaving now. All the stuff you need is right here. Thanks a million. (She leaves.)

SADHA But I won't be able ...

RONNIE (Arrogantly) Hey Ramsamy, Mr Roberts says I must take over the P-J.

SADHA What?

RONNIE The Purchases-Journal. That's what he said, man.

SADHA Why didn't he tell me himself? What game is this?

RONNIE Look, you started the job. It's better if you finish it. I'll say I did it. He won't know the difference.

SADHA I'm not doing anything until I've seen him.

RONNIE Hey man, you can't go in there. You gonna make me look bad. He sent the message with me. Now if you act stubborn, he might blame it on me.

(Sadha moves towards Roberts' office. Ronnie bars his way.)

SADHA Get out of my way.

RONNIE You can't go in there, man.
(Roberts comes out)

ROBERTS What's going on in here? Ronnie I thought I told you to get on with that P-J.

RONNIE Well ... er ... Ramsamy doesn't want to give it to me.

ROBERTS Are you defying my orders?

SADHA I started on this. It doesn't make sense to ask someone else to complete it, especially as I'm nearly done.

ROBERTS Let Ronnie have it. You're too slow.

SADHA First you say I'm too fast. Now I'm too slow. Can't you make up your mind?

ROBERTS Don't talk to me like that. Just hand that job

over to Ronnie and get on with the stuff Mrs. Brown left for you.

(Sadha sits down at his desk quite angry. Ronnie collects the Purchases Journal from Sadha's desk and takes it over to his table.)

ROBERTS Well Ronnie, think you can get it ready before we knock off?

RONNIE I'll try. But I don't think so.

ROBERTS In that case, just stay until you get it done. You don't mind do you?

RONNIE (Smiling broadly) No sir. (Roberts goes back to his office.) Bloody shit! You hear that. On my first day! He wants me to work late. On my first day! I can't stay late man. I am supposed to take my wife to the doctor. Now what am I going to do? (Sadha is silent) I better 'phone my wife and tell her to make some other arrangement. (Goes to use Sue's 'phone.) Hey, can I use this 'phone? Hey, Ramsamy, I'm asking you, can I use this 'phone. (Sadha nods.) Why you don't use this 'phone? Why you always go outside to use the 'phone? (Sadha doesn't answer) They don't trust you what?

SADHA I get too many calls. I can't tie up this line.

RONNIE (On the 'phone) Hello. Who's speaking? ... Aw, Ronnie here ... eh? ... Ronnie ... Ya. Where's Saras? She's gone to the doctor already? ... She's next door. All right. Tell her I can't take her to the doctor. I'm working late ... Ya, man. What you think of that? On the first day ... Ya. You'll tell her, okay? ... Right, 'Bye.

(Sadha is packing up and getting ready to leave.)

RONNIE Where you going?

SADHA Home.

RONNIE You mean you not working late.

SADHA I don't have to.

RONNIE
You finish all that graaf Mrs. Brown gave you?

SADHA No.

RONNIE Then how can you go?

SADHA I have a wife and two children waiting for me.

RONNIE I got a family too.

SADHA That's nice. Well, goodnight.

RONNIE You can't go. I don't know what to do with this Purchases Journal.

SADHA Too bad. (Leaves.)

RONNIE Damn! He could have stayed to help me out. Selfish dog. I wonder if I'll get this thing done. These bloody people don't know how to keep books. Everything is upside down and I can't make head or tail of it.

(Ronnie struggles for a while. Roberts comes in)

ROBERTS Well, Ronnie have you enjoyed your first day with us?

RONNIE (Smiling) Oh yes, sir. It's a very pleasant firm to work for. Yes, I think I can be very happy here.

ROBERTS I have plans for you. You seem to be very different from Sadha.

RONNIE Yes, we quite different. I think he's from a low caste.

ROBERTS Low caste? I didn't think you people still believed in all that.

RONNIE Oh yes. We believe it very much. Imagine if you are going to get married, you don't know if you are marrying low caste or high caste. That would be terrible.

ROBERTS Why?

RONNIE It makes a very big difference.

ROBERTS Such as?

RONNIE I can't explain it. See you not Indian. Wait. Wait. See it's like this. If you, a white man, married a Indian girl, it would be a disgrace. It's like that.

ROBERTS (Smiling) I see. So you think Sadha is of a low caste? I don't think so. He's too proud.

RONNIE That's got nothing to do with it. The proudest people are the lowest caste. See, they don't want anybody to know they low caste, so they gotta act proud.

(Roberts laughs. The phone rings and he answers)

ROBERTS Hello ... Sue! Good Heavens! What time is it? ... No, it can't be! ... I completely forgot ... No! No! I

wasn't trying to avoid it. I did forget ... I'm very sorry. Really ... I'm leaving right away. I'll be there in fifteen minutes. Bye. (Puts phone down.) Ronnie I have to go. You'd better go too. Take that with you and finish it at home. Go on now. I'll lock up. Goodnight. (Goes into his office.)

RONNIE Not enough I stayed overtime, I still got to carry this home. (Collects his stuff and prepares to leave) That bloody Ramsamy. He can do as he bloody well pleases. Walk in and walk out whenever he wants. I'll fix him. I'll make sure he walks out of here for good.

(Lights fade as Ronnie leaves.)

SCENE THREE

(Three weeks later. Ronnie is looking at the calendar on the wall. Sadha is seated at his desk looking through want ads in the newspaper.)

RONNIE When I came here, three weeks ago, I didn't think things would work out for me. But now, you should see how happy the boss is with my work. He says he hasn't seen work like that for a long time. Hey, I had a problem with this cashbook too. Not my fault. I don't know what kind of bookkeepingy'all do here, but me, I never give up. I carry on till I solve the problem. And the way it worked out. The Boss was even surprised – didn't expect us to have such a large balance.

SADHA (Surprised) A large balance? Sure you're not putting your own money into the business?

RONNIE (Laughs) The Boss said I'm bringing good luck to the firm. Looks like I'm gonna get a big raise.

SADHA Raise? But you just started working here?

RONNIE Yeah, but they raising everybody's wages end of the month.

SADHA That's good news.

RONNIE You see. You can't put your problems first. See, now I'm in with the Boss. If I took off that first day to take my wife to the doctor, I woulda lost out. See Ramsamy, that's what I was telling you.

SADHA How's your wife?

RONNIE Not too good. She couldn't find anybody to take her to the doctor. If I get this Saturday off, I'll take her.

SADHA She still hasn't seen a doctor?

RONNIE I couldn't help it. I've been working overtime ever since I came here.

SADHA I wouldn't do that to my wife.

RONNIE That's your trouble. You take too much advantage.

SADHA I don't ignore my family.

RONNIE But they don't care about our family problems.

SADHA Does that mean we mustn't care either?

RONNIE Don't be stupid man. You put your family first, see where it gets you. I mean look at you. I wouldn't like to be in your shoes.

SADHA Why? What's going on? You know something?

RONNIE Nothing. Forget it.

SADHA Come on, out with it.

RONNIE Nothing man. I said forget it. I'm just going by what you said. You say you put your family first. I'm just saying that's stupid. You must put your work first.

SADHA You mean you must. I'm only human.

RONNIE Thank God, I'm not. (Exits into Roberts' office)

(Sadha goes to 'phone at Sue's desk. Dials)

SADHA Can you put me through to Mr. Parker please? ... When will he be back? ... Oh, Ramsamy. I was the bookkeeper with Parker Plumbing. ... No, I don't think so. I'll call again when he's back.

(Enter Sue)

SUE Morning, Sadha.

SADHA Morning. Just trying to reach Mr. Parker.

SUE Mr. Parker? He won't be back for a while. He's off to some tropical island or other.

SADHA (Returning to his desk) That's what they tell me.

SUE Why did you want to see him?

SADHA I'm getting all kinds of indications that my job here is on the line. But nobody has said anything. I thought if something were in the air, perhaps Mr. Parker would intervene on my behalf. He knows my work and I am sure he would speak up for me.

SUE Yes, I'm sure he would.

SADHA I don't know what I'll do. I have two small children. They came late in our marriage.

SUE Aren't you jumping to conclusions?

SADHA If I were thrown out, would you think that fair?

SUE No, of course not. I would consider it grossly unfair.

SADHA Would you say as much? (Sue looks at him in embarrassment) Would you try to stop it?

SUE Well ... I ... Why anticipate trouble? You don't know that you're going to be fired.

SADHA But would you speak up for me?

SUE What can I do? I'm just a secretary, another employee like you.

SADHA Not like me. You have a different relationship. Surely you can find some way of helping.

SUE Of course, I want to help. But I don't see what I could do. I don't know what you expect ...

SADHA I don't expect anything really. Stanley pays off one or two labourers everyday – it never occurred to me to ask what happens to them. But now because I'm in the same position ...

(Phone rings. Sue relieved, answers.)

SUE Allen, Manning and Parker, good morning. ... Oh Anne, hello. How lovely to hear from you. ... How was your date? ... Why? What happened? ... No, really? ... But he's so quiet and reserved. ... Just put it down to awkwardness. Hasn't been out since his divorce, you know. ... Another date? ... Oh, go on. You're worrying about nothing. Go out and have a good time. ... Of course I'm right. Where is he taking you? ... The Follies, I wouldn't miss that. I wish Billy would take me, but he doesn't like that sort of thing. ... Don't be ridiculous, he's your date. Besides what would Billy think? ... Don't chicken out. You're going to have a fabulous time. ... I want to hear all about it afterwards. ... (Laughs) Bye.

SADHA Mrs. Brown ...

SUE (Apprehensive) I just want to run upstairs for a ...

SADHA I just want to say, I'm sorry if I embarrassed you just now.

SUE Oh not at all. If you'll excuse me ...

ROBERTS (Coming in from his office) Sue ...

SUE Hello Gary, I'm just ...

ROBERTS Listen. It's about time I returned your hospitality. I had such a good time at your place.

SUE I'm glad you enjoyed yourself, even if it was at Billy's expense.

ROBERTS At his expense? What did I do?

SUE Oh nothing really. It's just that Billy thinks he's king of the braai and you managed to dethrone him. Le roi est mort; vive le roi. (She raises an imaginary glass.)

ROBERTS (Laughs) Goodness, I didn't mean to do that. Well, let me make it up to you both. There's a good show on at the new hotel on the beachfront. I've asked Anne. We could make it a foursome. What about it?

SUE You're inviting us to the Grand Follies! I've been dying to see that show. But I'm afraid we won't be able to. Billy's out of town. Besides he doesn't care for that kind of show.

ROBERTS Well, then he won't mind if you join us.

SUE I couldn't do that. I don't want to be a third wheel.

ROBERTS Nonsense. Anne won't mind. Besides, I hate to think of you knocking around in that big house all by yourself when you could be out having fun.

SUE (Laughs) You're just as bad as Billy. He thinks I have no resources.

ROBERTS I'm sure you have plenty. In fact, I'm counting on it. I won't take no for an answer.

SUE I'll talk it over with Anne. If she doesn't mind ...

ROBERTS She'd be delighted. She was very pleased when I told her I was going to ask you and Billy.

SUE Yes, Billy and me.

ROBERTS I'll call her. (Picks up phone and dials) Hello ... Anne Walker please ... (To Sue) You'll see ... (Into phone) ... Hello Anne, Gary here ... (Laughing) No, no, quite the reverse ... we're very much on for tonight ... and I've asked Sue to join us. Billy's out of town, but she's playing hard to get ... She thinks she'll be in the way ... You talk to her. (Hands phone to Sue)

SUE Hi Anne ... But I would feel so awkward ... But really ... Oh, all right. If you insist ... No, I won't change my mind ... Okay, okay, I'll come. I'll come. See you tonight. 'Bye. (Puts phone down)

ROBERTS What did I tell you? I ... We ... really want you to come. (Turns to go back into his office.) What're you doing Ramsamy? The crossword puzzle? I don't have the patience for such things.

SADHA Mr. Roberts, I need to talk to you.

ROBERTS Oh really, what about?

SADHA Could we go into your office?

ROBERTS I don't see the need. What do you want to see me about?

SADHA I don't know what's going on. I've been sitting around here doing nothing for days now.

ROBERTS Well find something to do.

SADHA You've taken all my duties away from me.

ROBERTS Look, I'm busy breaking in the new man. I don't have time for your whining.

SADHA I simply need to know what your intentions are?

ROBERTS Really. I don't discuss such things with employees.

SADHA Are you dissatisfied with my work?

ROBERTS Well, if you must know. Yes, I am very dissatisfied. Now instead of standing here, cross-questioning me, run upstairs and see if Parker's group has anything for you. (Goes back into his office.)

(Sadha flings himself down in his chair and lights a cigarette.)

SADHA You're all the same.

SUE What do you mean?

SADHA Look at me. Tell me what you see.

SUE What? Look, I don't know what's troubling you ...

SADHA Don't you? Well, that's another story. But look at me ... you won't, will you? You won't, because you're afraid you'll see me. You've never had to see me before. I have never stepped out of line before ... oh damn. Why do I bother? (Grabs newspaper again.)

SUE Well, I hope we won't have any unpleasantness ... especially if you continue to share this office.

SADHA You won't have to worry about that for long. But you know that.

SUE I'm going upstairs. If any one needs me, I'll be with Parker Plumbing.

SADHA While you're there just ask the plumbers if they have a job for a bookkeeper. (Sue walks out in a huff. Sadha goes to door to call Stanley.) Hey, Stanley, you busy?

STANLEY (From the outer office) No. What can I do for you?

SADHA Come in here, will you?

STANLEY (Entering) What's up?

SADHA Nothing's up. Everything's down.

STANLEY You've been fired?

SADHA No. I don't know why he doesn't come out with it. This is nerve wracking.

STANLEY Maybe he's still hoping that you'll turn over a new leaf. You know, take your cue from Ronnie. Man, you can still save the day.

SADHA How?

STANLEY I've told you and told you. Join the samoosas and biryani brigade.

SADHA (Gives a wry smile) I just made a real fool of myself. I actually tried to appeal to Mrs. Brown for sympathy.

STANLEY I bet you went about it the wrong way. I bet you said to her, "Mrs. Brown, I am a human being. I demand my rights as a human being." What you should have done man, was to go into the act. You should have said, "Au, Missis, you are my only hope. You know the baas smaaks you. Speak to him for me. Au Missis, please.

God will bless you and I will pray for you everyday. You will see samoosas and biryani on your desk tomorrow."

SADHA (Laughs) You know, I'm going to miss you.

STANLEY I'm going to miss my samoosas and biryani. Have you given up on Parker?

SADHA I can't get hold of him. He doesn't come in much.

STANLEY Yeah. They can't find anything for him to do.

SADHA I guess we're in the same boat.

STANLEY Not exactly. He's been retired with a nice fat pension.

SADHA I've been looking through the want ads.

STANLEY Find anything?

SADHA Not for a forty-five year old man.

(Enter Roberts somewhat excited)

ROBERTS Look at this. Just look at this, will you. (Throws down cashbook in front of Sadha.) God, if I hadn't noticed this. Do you see what's he's done?

SADHA (Examining book) He's entered this deposit twice and reflected an excess of two hundred thousand.

STANLEY Two hundred thousand!

ROBERTS Imagine if we'd budgeted on this amount. I knew there was something wrong the minute I saw that big balance.

STANLEY He's a real fool. Mr. Ramsamy would never have made a mistake like that.

ROBERTS No, I suppose not. Ramsamy is infallible. (Turns on his heel and goes back into his office.)

STANLEY Sorry man. That backfired.

SADHA Thanks for trying. (With a wry smile) You know why it didn't work, don't you?

STANLEY
Jees. I forgot about the act.

(Ronnie comes rushing in.)

RONNIE

Hey, what did the boss want in here? Did he say anything about me, eh?

STANLEY

He said you're a very good boy. He likes boys like you who take such an interest in the business they're willing to help out with two hundred thousand from their own pockets.

RONNIE (Laughing in embarrassment) Aw, he showed you that small slip of mine, eh? That's small matters man, small matters. I fixed that up already.

STANLEY Then why you walk in here like you so worried?

RONNIE Worried? Me? (Laughs.) Naw, man. The boss didn't mind. He's okay with me. He understands a man can make a mistake.

SADHA Even a mistake that can cost the firm two hundred thousand.

RONNIE Ag, what's a coupla hundred thousand to a big firm like this? Anyway everything's fixed up. So nothing to worry about.

STANLEY Until the next time. Boy, you're one helluva bookkeeper.

RONNIE What you mean?

STANLEY I think I saw some samoosas on Roberts' desk.

RONNIE Listen, my wife decided to make samoosas last night and I brought some for lunch. The boss saw them, so I offered him some. Anything wrong in that?

Stanley

Nothing wrong with that. Nothing in the world. But tell me, why did you gift-wrap them?

(Sadha laughs)

RONNIE Gift-wrap! I didn't gift-wrap them. You bloody trying to make a fool out of me. Go to hell. Get out of my chair.

STANLEY (Jumping up and dusting the seat of his pants) Your chair! Man, I hope I didn't pick up anything. (Goes back to his office.)

RONNIE Look here, Ramsamy, what are you still doing here? Go upstairs and see if they got anything for you to do.

(Sadha does not move.)

RONNIE Well? What are you waiting for? You supposed to go upstairs ... What the hell you looking at me like that for?

(Ronnie glares at Sadha a moment, then walks out.)

SCENE FOUR

(After lunch, the same day. Stanley and Sue enter in a hurry. Ronnie is seated at Sadha's desk behind a newspaper.)

SUE You'll have to get Mr. Ramsamy to help you with the wage book. I just have to dash out for a while. ('Phone rings) Allen, Manning and Parker, good afternoon. ... Oh hello Anne ... No, I haven't changed my mind. In fact, I'm looking forward to it. ... What are you so nervous about? ... It's all in your mind. ... Listen, I have to dash. I'm off to town to buy a new outfit. See you later. 'Bye. (She looks for her handbag.) Give Stanley a hand with the wage book, will you? I have to get to town.

RONNIE (Advancing on her) Sure, Mrs. Brown. Anything for you. It'll be a pleasure.

SUE Oh sorry. I thought you were Sadha. Where is he?

RONNIE I don't know. He doesn't have much to do so he just ...

STANLEY He said he was going upstairs to look for Mr. Parker.

SUE Stanley, do you think you can manage on your own? I really have to go now.

RONNIE (Cutting in before Stanley) Don't worry, Mrs. Brown. We'll take care of everything. Just leave it to me. I'll help Twala. You got no worries.

SUE (Uncertainly) Have you worked on a wage book before?

RONNIE (Boastfully) I'm a bookkeeper. And this is bookkeeping. So, no problem. Please. You'll be late for your appointment. Come along, Twala. Let's get busy. Don't worry, Mrs. Brown, everything's under control.

SUE (Hesitantly) Well ... if you're sure. Thanks Ronnie.

(As soon as Sue leaves, Ronnie goes back to his desk.)

STANLEY What's holding you up, Ronnie?

RONNIE You don't expect me to help you with that. I got too much to do for Roberts. If I don't finish, I'll have to stay late again. I've been working late everyday since I came. I came last weekend and he wants me here tomorrow too. Imagine, I have to be here half-pas' seven tomorrow morning. Saturday morning!

STANLEY That's your problem. Now get over here and help me.

RONNIE You can do that yourself. What I know about all that? Besides Ramsamy will be here just now. He can help you.

STANLEY (Coming over to him) You use me to pull another fast one like that and you're in big trouble. Don't use me for your dirty tricks. I don't like being used.

RONNIE Hey, who you think you talking to?

STANLEY (Grabbing him by the collar) I am talking to you, Mr. Big Shot. There's nothing much to you but I'll beat the shit out of you, if you don't look out. (Pretending to search for a knife.)

RONNIE (Terrified) Hey, don't kill me. Don't kill me. Help! Help!

STANLEY (Pushing Ronnie into his chair) Don't be frightened, man. I won't touch you. You're not worth it.

RONNIE Look, I made a mistake, okay? I don't want to get in your bad books. After all, me and you got to work together after Ramsamy's gone.

STANLEY Who says?

RONNIE They gonna fire him, you know.

STANLEY And put you in his place? Even they can't be that stupid.

RONNIE I'm telling you they gonna fire him. The Boss told me. I feel sorry for him, but that's life. They gonna get a new man.

STANLEY Why do they need another new man?

RONNIE Well, you know Ramsamy. He doesn't want to work. He just sits around and won't put in any extra time. The boss is quite fed up with him. I got somebody in mind to take his place.

STANLEY Who? Your brother? Cousin? Uncle? Who?

RONNIE My broth... Hey, what you trying to say? You think I'm getting Ramsamy fired so I can bring my connections in. Hey, I'm not that type. The Boss was thinking of firing Ramsamy before I came here.

STANLEY You only helped him to make up his mind.

RONNIE I got nothing to do with it. If Ramsamy can't look after his job, that's his own business. He don't know how to handle the boss. I'm not a fool. I don't work on the boss' nerves. I never had a problem with bosses. I know how to treat them.

(Sadha comes in)

STANLEY Sadha, guess what? Ronnie has some news for you.

RONNIE Hey, what you mean? Shut your mouth. I didn't say anything. You just a troublemaker. You better look out or I'll ...

STANLEY (Amused) Yes ... or you'll what?

RONNIE Hey, I'm getting out of here.

SADHA (Calmly) Did Roberts tell you he's firing me?

RONNIE (Panic-stricken) I never said anything. I never said anything. You can't blame me ...

SADHA Oh, shut up. (Ronnie scuttles ou.) Imagine having to hear it from him.

STANLEY That's the divide and rule policy at work.

SADHA For once in your life, can't you say something a little sympathetic?

STANLEY You don't deserve any sympathy.

SADHA What do you mean? I have two little kids at home. What's gonna happen to them? I don't know why this had to happen to me. I do my work. I mind my own business. I don't want much out of life – just time to spend with my children after a hard day's work. That's all I want.

STANLEY That's the trouble with guys like you. You want to live quietly under the protection of the racist umbrella. You don't want to get involved. Only when something strikes into your personal world, then you wake up and find out the lie you've been living. You can't shelter under injustice. It's an illusion.

SADHA I'm not in the mood for this kind of talk. Look at me man. I have to go out at my age to look for a job.

STANLEY Stop feeling sorry for yourself.

SADHA I'm damn well caught in a trap. Can't you see that?

STANLEY At the end of the month, you'll be out. You'll be free.

SADHA Free for what? To jump in the bay?

STANLEY Do it in style, man. Like the others. Drive in!

SADHA They can't do this. They can't throw me out.

STANLEY They can do whatever they want. They have the power.

SADHA Do you know where I went just now? I went all the way to the top. I went to see Allen?

STANLEY (Whistles) The Big White Chief.

SADHA I shouldn't have bothered. Roberts is the blue-eyed boy in this firm. Allen told me he had every respect for Roberts. He could not interfere in Roberts' department. If only I had been more cooperative, not so slow with my work. Can you beat that – calling me slow and uncooperative?

(Sue comes in)

SUE (Laying parcels down on desk) That's a good day's work. Has Mr. Roberts come in yet?

SADHA Is he coming in? I thought he had gone for the day.

SUE He said he would be back this afternoon.

SADHA Good. I want to see him.

SUE Can't it keep till Monday?

SADHA It's urgent.

STANLEY I'm off. Gotta get moving with the wages. The men will be coming in for their pay packets. Sadha will you give me a hand?

(Sadha and Stanley exit. Telephone rings)

SUE Allen, Manning and Parker, good afternoon. ... Gary! I thought you were coming back to the office. ...

Oh no, don't bother. The bus drops me right outside my home. ... Really. It's quite unnecessary ... No. No. ... All right, if you insist. Well, perhaps it's a good thing you're coming in – Sadha wants to see you. He says its urgent ... Oh ... all right. I'll do that. ... 'Bye. (Sadha comes back as she hangs up) Oh Sadha, that was Mr. Roberts. He 'phoned to say he won't be coming in after all.

SADHA I see. Well, there's no point in hanging around here.

RONNIE (Coming in from inner office) Hey Ramsamy, you know what I was thinking. I was thinking maybe I could fix a job for you. I got some connections in Grey Street. Of course, the pay is not so good. But I can put in a good word for you. (Sadha ignores him and starts to move out. Ronnie blocks his way.) Listen, I'm just trying to help. You're old now. You got children, what you going to do? What you say man? I put in a good word for you? (Sadha sidesteps Ronnie) Hey, where you going?

SADHA Home. I'll just make my bus. (He walks out)

RONNIE (Shouting after him) You can't do that. You work here. Why you go and I must do overtime? (Muttering) Why I always got to stay late? This is not fair. I have to stay till eight, nine o'clock.

SUE Ronnie, I almost forgot. Mr. Roberts asked me to tell you that you don't have to stay tonight.

RONNIE I don't have to stay. But he told me this morning ... you sure? I can go?

SUE Quite sure.

RONNIE If he asks me ... ?

SUE He won't. He wants you to have an early night. In fact, we're all going to a show tonight. He'll be here just now to pick me up.

RONNIE Oh, he's coming. Then I'll wait. I rather hear it from his own lips that he doesn't need me.

SUE Suit yourself.

RONNIE It will be really nice if I can go home early for a change. Sometimes I get home 'leven, twelve at night. Don't think I'm complaining. No. No. I got nothing to complain about. Mr. Roberts is a very nice boss. He's a wonderful boss. So kind, so considerate. The way he has gone out of his way to help me understand this place. He even 'phoned to tell you I mustn't stay. See. That's the kind of man he is. I mean how many bosses

would worry about somebody like me. He's a very fine person.

SUE Yes, I'm sure he is.

RONNIE He works so hard for the firm. I never seen anybody work like him. I mean he comes Saturdays and Sundays too, you know. I'm meeting him here at 7:30 tomorrow morning. We're going to spend the weekend getting this office right.

SUE You're coming in at 7:30 tomorrow? I doubt if even your Mr. Roberts will be able to make it that early after a night on the town.

RONNIE He's a remarkable man. If he says he'll be here, then he'll be here.

SUE (Looking at her watch) He's late. If he doesn't come soon ...

RONNIE You shouldn't worry, if he said he's coming, he'll come. Don't worry.

SUE If I had taken my bus, I'd have been home by now. I wish he hadn't insisted on giving me a lift.

RONNIE That's one thing about him. He doesn't care about time. When he's working, he'll carry on. He never notices how late it's getting.

SUE He said he'd be here by five; it's past six. I still have to shower and change. This is downright annoying.

RONNIE No. No. You mustn't feel like that. What if he's little bit late? You just relax and calm down.

SUE Oh, shut up Ronnie! Stop going on and on about nothing!

RONNIE I'm very sorry, Mrs. Brown. I didn't mean to worry you. I'm sorry. Very sorry, Mrs. Brown. If I was annoying you, I didn't mean it. I hope you are not angry.

SUE No, I'm not angry. Just stop following me around with all that nonsense about Mr. Roberts. Right now, I can only think of him as rude and inconsiderate. I've a good mind not to go out with them tonight.

RONNIE Maybe it's not his fault, maybe he met with an accident. Maybe he's lying hurt somewhere. We should 'phone the police.

SUE Oh, shut up. Look, why don't you just go home?

RONNIE And leave you here by yourself? It's not safe. No I'll wait too. ... Don't you think we should 'phone the police?

SUE (Irritated beyond endurance)
I'll 'phone his flat. (Dials and waits) No answer.

RONNIE What about the police?

SUE Do me a favour will you? Don't say another word.

RONNIE (After a pause) Mrs. Brown, I'm very sorry. I didn't mean anything. (Sue marches off into Roberts' office.) Bloody bitch! Who the hell she thinks she is, telling me to shut up. Just because she's white. Loose thing. Playing around with the boss while her husband is out of town. I got half a mind to send him a anonymous letter. Then she'll catch it.

(Roberts comes in carrying a bottle of wine and two glasses.)

ROBERTS Ronnie! What are you doing here? Where's Mrs. Brown? She hasn't left, has she?

RONNIE I was waiting for you, boss. You told me you want to work late tonight.

ROBERTS Didn't you get my message? I left a message with Mrs. Brown? Where is she?

RONNIE In your office. I wasn't sure I didn't have to stay. I didn't want to take a chance.

ROBERTS What's the matter with you? Get out of here. Go on. Get out.

RONNIE (Picking up his things) Oh thank you boss. Thank you. Thank you. You so good to me, Boss. (Roberts about to go into his office) Mr. Roberts ...

ROBERTS What is it now?

RONNIE It's about Ramsamy. He went off early today. Just walked out when he knew ... (Roberts grabs him by the collar and virtually throws him out while he is still babbling on. Sue comes in while this is happening.)

ROBERTS (Sees Sue as he turns around) Ah, there you are. What a pest. I thought we'd never be rid of him.

SUE (Going to collect her parcels) Is that all you have to say?

ROBERTS Hey, what's wrong? What're you so mad about?

SUE Oh, you have no idea.

ROBERTS Just because I'm a few minutes late.

SUE (Moving to door with parcels) Minutes! I could have been home more than an hour ago if I hadn't had to hang around here for you. Why did you offer me a lift if you were going to be slapdash about it?

ROBERTS Just because I'm a little late? So ... you missed me. Look (Holding up wine) I brought a peace offering. (Starts opening bottle)

SUE Let's get moving. We're going to be late for the show.

ROBERTS Relax. It's all taken care of.

SUE What do you mean – taken care of?

ROBERTS There's no need to hurry. (Brings her a glass of wine) Here, let's celebrate. We're going to have a great time, you and me.

SUE We don't have time. The cabaret ...?

ROBERTS Oh, don't worry about that. I cancelled our booking.

SUE What! (She stares at him.) And Anne?

ROBERTS Don't worry about her. I cancelled her too.

SUE What! Why did you break your date with Anne?

ROBERTS Because you were here waiting for me. Besides Anne is not my type, and she wasn't very enthusiastic. But you ... did you miss me? (He reaches out for her. She evades his grasp. He grabs her, sits down forcing her on to his lap. She tries to jump up but he holds her down.)

SUE (Struggling) Let me go?

ROBERTS (Laughing) Don't pretend you don't want this. You've been coming on to me for some time now.

SUE Stop this! Help! Help! (Tries to bite his hand)

ROBERTS (Laughing) You're a tease.

SUE Let go of me. (Struggling with him and looking round for a weapon, finds her handbag.)

ROBERTS Now relax, do you hear me. (Sue hits him on the head with her bag, gets free and runs to the 'phone.

Roberts pulls the 'phone out of her grasp and throws it across the room.) You wanna play rough, eh?

SUE Don't touch me! Just let me out of here and I won't tell a soul. (She makes for the door. He bars her way.) I promise. I won't tell anyone.

(Roberts grabs hold of her and begins to pull at her clothes. She screams. They struggle. Roberts pushes her down and starts to pull up her skirt. She struggles. Then she pretends to give in and when Roberts relaxes, she knees him in the groin. He falls down and she runs off.)

(Lights out)

SCENE FIVE

(The following Monday. Ronnie is sitting with the chequebook. Stanley enters)

STANLEY (A slip of paper in his hand) What's happening around here? Has everybody gone on strike? (Ronnie does not answer. Stanley picks up the 'phone) What's this? Have we had a break in? (Notices Sue's Parcels and handbag on the floor) What's going on? I thought she bought these for her hot date with Roberts. Hey Chetty, have you seen Mrs Brown? Chetty, I'm talking to you. Where's Mrs. Brown?

RONNIE (Nervous, anxious) She hasn't come in.

STANLEY But her bag is here ... on the floor? (Waits) Hey, what's going on?

RONNIE (Very nervous) I don't know nothing. Don't ask me.

STANLEY Things don't look right around here.

RONNIE Leave me alone. I'm busy.

STANLEY (Puzzled) Well, I guess it's none of my business. Where the hell is everybody? It's past nine. (Notices what Ronnie is doing) If you're making out cheques, I need one. (Holds out a slip of paper). I'm paying off two men this morning.

RONNIE They only labourers.

STANLEY They're human beings. They have families that need food, shelter and tender loving care. I want a cheque for this amount. (Holds out a slip.)

RONNIE (Evasively) I'm busy.

STANLEY How long does it take to write out a cheque?

RONNIE I got something urgent to do for the Boss.

STANLEY This is urgent too.

RONNIE What you know what's urgent or not? Dammit! Why you don't wait for Ramsamy?

STANLEY You can't get that cheque signed till Roberts and Mrs. Brown come in. So while you're waiting, make this cheque out for me.

RONNIE (Getting ready to go) I got to go. I got something important to do in town.

STANLEY You're acting very strange. There's something fishy going on here.

RONNIE I don't know nothing.

STANLEY Let me have a look at that cheque. You're not ... (Stares at him)

RONNIE (Indignant) What are you thinking? I'm not a bloody rogue. I'm not trying to defraud the firm.

STANLEY Then show me the cheque.

RONNIE No, I can't do that.

STANLEY I want to see that cheque.

RONNIE (Intimidated) It's not for me you bloody fool. It's for Roberts.

STANLEY Roberts?

RONNIE Yes, he's inside.

STANLEY (Moving in the direction of Roberts' office) You mean he's been here all the time. Why didn't you say so?

RONNIE No man, he's inside. In jail.

STANLEY (Completely taken aback) In jail?

RONNIE This money is for him. Now let me go. He said I must be there before ten. He spent the whole bloody weekend in jail.

SADHA (Entering in a hurry) Have I been missed?

STANLEY You and a whole lot of others. Hell, for a moment there I thought this was a holiday.

SADHA (Hanging up his coat) Why? What's going on?

STANLEY I don't have all the details. Chetty here says Roberts is in jail.

SADHA (Unimpressed) Yeah. (Looks from Stanley to Ronnie)

RONNIE He said nobody must know. He gave me strict instructions. I have to take this cheque for his fine. Can you get it signed upstairs? They know you. They won't ask questions.

SADHA He's really in jail?

RONNIE That's what I'm trying to tell you.

SADHA Why? What did he do?

RONNIE Nothing. It's just a speeding fine. Just see to this cheque.

SADHA (Looking at amount) Phew! (Shows cheque to Stanley) Look at this. Looks more like bail money. I can't deal with this. It has nothing to do with the business. Ask Mrs. Brown. Maybe she can take care of it.

RONNIE No, no. She mustn't know anything about it. Besides she hasn't come in today.

SADHA I saw her outside. She was talking to Manning. She seemed sort of strange. ... A speeding fine? They don't lock you up for speeding. Come on, what's going on?

RONNIE Speeding. That's what he told me.

STANLEY Probably drunken driving. Doesn't want us to know. Sadha, I have to pay off two guys today ...

SADHA Okay.

RONNIE What about this cheque? Just tell me where to go.

SADHA Look, Mrs. Brown is just outside ...

RONNIE The boss doesn't want her to know.

(Enter Sue)

STANLEY Morning Mrs. Brown ... (He stares at her face which is a little bruised. She ignores him and goes for the 'phone) It's not working; someone ripped it out.

SUE Damn, I forgot. I'm going up to see Mr. Allen and Mr. Manning.

SADHA Mrs. Brown, Ronnie here needs your help. He has to get this cheque signed. Maybe Mr. Allen ...

RONNIE (Anxiously) No, no. Mr. Roberts said not to trouble you. I'll take care of it.

SUE (Suspicious) What is that cheque for? Let me see it.

RONNIE No, I don't want to trouble you. Mr. Roberts said not to trouble you because of your accident.

SUE What accident? I've not been in an accident. Let me have the cheque? (She takes it from Ronnie)

SADHA It seems he's in jail – a speeding fine or something.

SUE (Inwardly seething) So that's his story.

RONNIE Please, can I have the cheque? I'll ask Mr. Allen ...

SUE Don't you worry. I'll show it to him.

RONNIE Please, poor Mr. Roberts has been in jail the whole weekend ...

SUE Poor Mr. Roberts! Poor Mr. Roberts. That man tried to rape me in this office after you left on Friday night. Don't tell me about poor Mr. Roberts. I hope he rots in jail. I'll deal with this cheque. The nerve of the man, still expecting the firm to bail him out.

RONNIE Look he's my boss ...

SUE Oh don't worry about that. He'll be out on his ear after I've seen Mr. Allen. Do you know what the bastard did after I ran out of here? He broke into my friend Anne's flat. Luckily she wasn't there. Her neighbours called the police. He was hiding in there, waiting for her. He's in jail for attempted rape and housebreaking. He's not going to be anybody's boss much longer.

RONNIE But he's a good boss.

SUE The man is a rapist.

RONNIE That's got nothing to do with me. He's my boss.

SUE Tell your boss he won't get any bail money from here. I'll see to that.

(Sue goes off)

RONNIE (Running out after her) Hey, wait. You can't take that cheque. Gimme that cheque.

STANLEY (Shakes his head) Hey, what's happening to this place? (Stanley stares at Sadha for a moment, then shrugs) Still got two guys to pay off. Come on, Sadha.

SADHA (Sits down to make out a cheque) You'll have to get the people upstairs to sign this. (Stanley nods.) She's gone up there to fight them. She's brave, man. I'm putting all my money on her.

STANLEY You backing a filly?

SADHA If she wins, I have a chance.

STANLEY She's racing against thoroughbreds.

SADHA Outsiders are known to win ... I can't afford to lose this job. ... I went for an interview this morning

STANLEY Yeah? How did you make out?

SADHA I'm too old. They can't match what I'm earning here.

STANLEY You'll find something. Thanks for the cheque. (Takes out race card) What about making our selection. I've got a feeling we'll hit the jackpot this week. (Leaves)

(Sadha gets some coffee and sits down with the race card and newspaper. Sue comes back and sits down heavily. She just stares in front of her)

SADHA (Looking up and seeing her) Mrs. Brown ... Are you all right? (Sue suddenly bursts out crying.) Mrs. Brown ... is there anything I can do? ... Would you like me to call Mr. Brown? (Shakes her head.) Would you like some coffee?

SUE I'll be all right ... in a minute.

SADHA (Tentatively) Have you had bad news?

SUE I've just been fired.

SADHA (Shocked) Fired? I don't understand.

SUE Neither do I. I'm not the one at fault. He tried to rape me ... and my friend ... he broke into her flat ...

SADHA It doesn't make sense.

SUE I've worked here ten years. But I'm only a secretary. He's a head of department. He was head hunted for this position. They have their investment to consider. They sympathize but this has nothing to do with the business.

SADHA They made you feel like you were nothing.

SUE Exactly. They are sorry about what happened but it had nothing to do with them. They don't interfere in their employees' personal lives. They have no reason to be dissatisfied with Roberts. He's doing an excellent job. He's building up the firm. They can't have me making things difficult.

SADHA I am sorry, Mrs. Brown.

SUE They don't care about me. They only care about the firm.

SADHA I'm afraid people like us don't count.

SUE Are you saying I don't count?

SADHA We are just pawns. We serve their needs not our own.

SUE But I'm not black. I'm their own kind.

SADHA What kind is that?

SUE I'm a white woman and I deserve better treatment.

SADHA Why?

SUE (Stares at him for a moment) Why are you arguing with me? Don't you see what I'm going through?

SADHA I do. We're in the same boat.

SUE It's not the same. I don't deserve to be treated like this?

SADHA And I do?

SUE (Stares at him for a moment) God, why did I think I would get any sympathy in this place?

SADHA We have the same problem. The fact that I'm black and you're white ...

SUE Oh, for God's sake, now you're going to bring race into it. It's got nothing to do with race. I hold a high position here. I run this office.

SADHA You're still only an employee.

SUE You can't compare yourself with me. Anyway, I don't need this firm. I can walk into a dozen jobs tomorrow.

SADHA That's your good luck.

SUE I've always been good to you. I don't know why you're attacking me now. This is what I get for being friendly. I'm getting out of here. This is not the place I thought it was.

(She leaves as Stanley comes in. He smiles. She snubs him)

STANLEY (To Sadha) Hey, what did I do?

SADHA She's been fired.

STANLEY What?

SADHA The boys (Points upwards) are sticking together.

STANLEY That's the way it goes. (Sits down next to Sadha) Let's have a look at the selection you made. Maybe we'll win a fortune this week. Then we can buy our own firm and treat people like shit.

SADHA And live happily ever after?

STANLEY (Mock excitement) Hey, look here. In the first race – Cinderella. We gotta take that.

SADHA (Laughing) Let's see – maybe we can find Fairy Godmother and Pumpkin too.

(Enter Ronnie. He looks around the office carefully)

RONNIE Where's Mrs. Brown?

STANLEY Out.

RONNIE When is she coming back?

STANLEY Not today.

RONNIE That's good. Roberts will be back here just now and he doesn't want to see her.

SADHA He's out. Who paid his bail?

RONNIE The firm. Mr. Manning took charge of it himself. Went himself to pay and then took Roberts home. Roberts phoned to say he's coming in just now.

(Conspiratorially) You know what, he's not going to be here long.

SADHA But they paid his bail. Are they still going to fire him?

RONNIE No. It's got nothing to do with what he did. Last week, when he was in Jo'burg, he got a offer from a big outfit. They're giving him double what he's making here.

SADHA He's really going?

STANLEY (Getting up to go) Before you start getting hopeful again, I'm getting out of here. Gimme the dough. We gotta win this week. (Sadha gives Stanley money.)

RONNIE Hey, can I come in on it too?

STANLEY Sorry, we just closed the betting. (He leaves.)

RONNIE Ag, it's a mug's game. I wouldn't waste my money like that.

SADHA So Roberts has been scouting around for another job. What will you do when he leaves?

RONNIE I have my job here.

SADHA Who's going to do it for you?

RONNIE Look. I'm fed up with you. Always making funny remarks just because they kicking you out. You just looking for trouble.

SADHA You're right. I shouldn't take it out on you.

RONNIE You got to remember, a man has got feelings.

SADHA So I hear.

(Roberts enters. He looks a little uneasily at Sadha but does not betray any emotion.)

ROBERTS Are you people just sitting around doing nothing? Ronnie come with me. Let's get this office going.

RONNIE (As they exit) Yes, we didn't come Saturday an' Sunday, so we got lot to do.

(Sadha stares after them. Turns to his crossword puzzle, suddenly gets up and moves towards Roberts' office. Then stops. Comes back and sits down again.)

SADHA Why doesn't he say something?

RONNIE (Coming back with books) You want to hear something funny? Roberts 'phoned upstairs and they told him that Mrs. Brown got fired. Imagine, she was sure she was going to get Roberts fired, but she got backfired. (Laughs) You get it? She got backfired.

SADHA I thought Roberts wanted you in there.

RONNIE He said I must work here. What you think of it, eh? Mrs. Brown getting fired? (Confidentially) You know, this morning I was hanging around upstairs; the whole place was buzzing with this business. You should have heard the things they were saying about him. They say his wife divorced him because he used to beat her up. (Sadha ignores him) But you got to admit it, huh? He's really something. Boy, he looks so quiet, but he's really a hot one. How he went after Mrs. Brown? Imagine going to her friend's house and breaking in. (Laughs) Must have been a very urgent situation. (Laughs) He's a helluva character.

SADHA Did he say anything about me?

RONNIE You. He got no time for you right now.

SADHA (Moving towards Robert's office) Then he'll just have to make time, won't he?

RONNIE Where you going?

SADHA I want to know what's happening? Is he still planning to fire me, now that he's leaving the firm?

RONNIE Grabbing hold of Sadha) You can't ask him that. He'll know I told you. You can't go in there.

SADHA Let go of me. I won't get you involved but you can't stop me fighting for my job.

RONNIE You can't go in there. He might fire me too. (Ronnie bars his way.)

SADHA Get out of my way.

RONNIE You finished here, man. Just leave it alone.

SADHA I said get out of my way.

RONNIE Bloody old man! Just leave it alone. (Lashes out at Sadha and they get into a tussle.)

ROBERTS (Coming out of his office.) What the hell's going on? Stop it you damn fools. (They stop fighting. To Sadha.) Explain yourself, Ramsamy

SADHA I just want to see you about my job.

ROBERTS So why the fisticuffs?

SADHA That was Chetty's idea. I want to know what your intentions are. I hear that you are leaving ...

RONNIE I didn't tell him, boss. I don't know how he found out.

SADHA You're leaving. What difference does it make to you whether I stay on or not?

ROBERTS You have a bad attitude. It would be irresponsible of me to do nothing about it. You leave me no alternative. You have to go. I don't want to see you here tomorrow. You can pick up your severance pay at the end of the month.

SADHA You know perfectly well that I'm competent and responsible. What is it that you don't like about me? The fact that I don't regard you as a superior being? That I don't fawn on you like Ronnie?

RONNIE Hey, what you saying about me? What he means, Mr. Roberts?

ROBERTS (To Sadha) I don't care what you think. It makes no difference to me.

SADHA What kind of person are you? You don't care how many people you hurt. You should be ashamed of what you did to Mrs. Brown.

ROBERTS Don't speak to me like that. Who the hell do you think you are?

SADHA I'm not a rapist and I don't molest women.

ROBERTS Why you? (Rushes at Sadha. Stops himself and glares at Sadha) Get out of here before I kill you.

SADHA Not until I've had my say.

ROBERTS Get the fuck out of here. I don't care what you think about me, about Mrs. Brown's lies.

SADHA You're a coward. A sexist, racist coward, abusing your authority ... preying on others ...

ROBERTS (Grabbing him by the collar) Shut your fucking mouth! (They struggle for a moment. Then Sadha pushes him away.) I could kill you.

SADHA But you won't. Battering women is more your style.

ROBERTS (Charging at Sadha) You bastard. (Knocks Sadha down and kicks him.)

RONNIE (Trying to restrain Roberts)
Hey boss, be careful. You don't want to kill him.

ROBERTS (Turning on Ronnie) Keep out of this, you idiot.

SADHA (Rising slowly) Are you satisfied now? Beating people up makes you feel superior, eh? You can beat me up as much as you want, but you will never be my master. You're sick.

ROBERTS I don't have to listen to your rubbish. Now get out.

SADHA I just have one more thing to say.

RONNIE He's crazy.

SADHA You can't force a man's respect. You have to earn it. But you have to be a man yourself to do that.

ROBERTS Get out. Get out of here. Damn you. Get out. (Roberts rushes at him and shoves him out roughly. Turns on Ronnie) You too. Get out of here. (Ronnie scuttles out. Roberts grabs paper knife.) I could have killed him.

Lights fade

THE END

Striking a new racial chord

STAGE: Of No Account
— Communikon

OF NO Account is something of a milestone for local indigenous theatre. It has a multiracial cast, which is not new, but it also strikes a common chord with a multiracial audience, which certainly is.

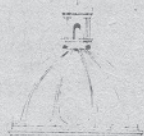
Since fringe theatre started here white audiences have been introduced to black tensions but with no substantial identification across the colour line — until this little miracle by Muthal Naidoo.

Suddenly blacks and whites are cheering and jeering together, equally agin the ingratiating Indian bookkeeper and the arrogant white accountant and all rooting for the black office clown who puts things in perspective.

The setting is an office where different races work together but on strict levels of hierarchy

— a situation that rings a bell, especially as the playwright highlights human motivations with a lot of humour balanced by realism.

Villain of the piece is a new accountant from Johannesburg, Gary Roberts (Rex Dunlop). He alternately tries to make it with his secretary, Sue Brown (Victoria Francis), and make trouble with the old bookkeeper, Sudha Naidoo (Mike Narsey), whom he is trying to oust in favour of an oily newcomer, Ronnie Naidoo (Faizel Bhayat). This provides a fertile field for power struggles strongly linked to racialism.



DURBAN ARTS
81

'Darkies got to put on a show for the boss,' is the comment of the black jack-of-all-trades in the office, Stanley Thwala, who acts as a sort of sage Shakespearian jester. Here Lincoln Nthuyana emerges as an important new find, an actor bursting with vitality and command. The other cast members all offer moments of passionate credibility, particularly when the action surges to a dramatic attempted rape and hardship merely stresses the segregation.

Dr Naidoo, who is backed by impressive academic and practical experience locally and in the States, imposes a welcome pace and discipline in her writing and directing. There are some pointed passages, as when the secretary and boss arrange social evenings which inevitably exclude the other workers.

The office is a microcosm of the local racial world and behind the laughs is a sobering look at how self-interest and lack of understanding perpetuates the System.

Subsidised by Durban Arts 81, *Of No Account* is a significant contribution to the drama festival. All those involved in its organisation, including Durban City Councillors, would benefit from seeing it.

Lynne Kelly

The Natal Mercury, Saturday, August 29, 1981

THE CRITICS

'Account' only just

It is always sad to find a play as thoughtful and pertinent as this that is marred by its lack of sheer technical proficiency.

THEATRE... by ROGER DEAN

PLAY: *Of No Account* (Langer at the Market)
PLAYERS: Mike Nursey, Faizel Bhayat, Rex Dunlop, Victoria Francis, Lincoln Nthanya.
DIRECTOR: Muthal Naidoo.

Muthal Naidoo's piece of racial office politics — she both wrote and directed it — comes to the Market from Durban, where it was very warmly received.

There is no doubting that it is earnestly motivated, compelled by the best of intentions and reflecting a deeply felt sense of human values. It is not possible to be totally enthusiastic about it.

there is no denying its basic warmth and humanity.

In a confused and unequal society, Naidoo says, it is all too easy to become insulated in a cocoon of self-sufficiency, wrapped in our own petty concerns and oblivious to the plight of others.

But when something happens to upset the status quo, each one of

us is as vulnerable as the next. Even a white skin may be no protection against the vagaries of fate — and it is finally in the interests of all to mind our fellow men.

The fatal inertia that allows injustice to flourish is symbolised here by Sudha Naidoo, a bookkeeper with a large construction company. He is a diligent and

capable worker, but unwilling to kowtow to his white bosses and determined to preserve his privacy for the sake of his family.

Sudha's quiet pride and unfavourable aloofness have irritated his immediate boss to the point where he is intent on squeezing him out and replacing him with his own more malleable protégé.

Ronnie Naidoo is everything Sudha is not: a sickly sycophant masking his incompetence behind clasped hands and chocolates for the chief.

balances



MIKE NURSEY, left and Rex Dunlop in a tense moment in the play "Of no Account".

'Of no Account' at Communikon

ANOTHER play which forms part of the Aris '81 theatre Festival is Muthal Naidoo's "Of no Account" which has its premiere at the Communikon theatre tomorrow night.

The play, which deals with the human follies and problems of a group of office workers, is in aid of the Tsipingo Jaycees.

"Of no Account" will run nightly at 8 p.m. until Saturday, September 5. For further details contact Communikon at telephone Durban 313625.



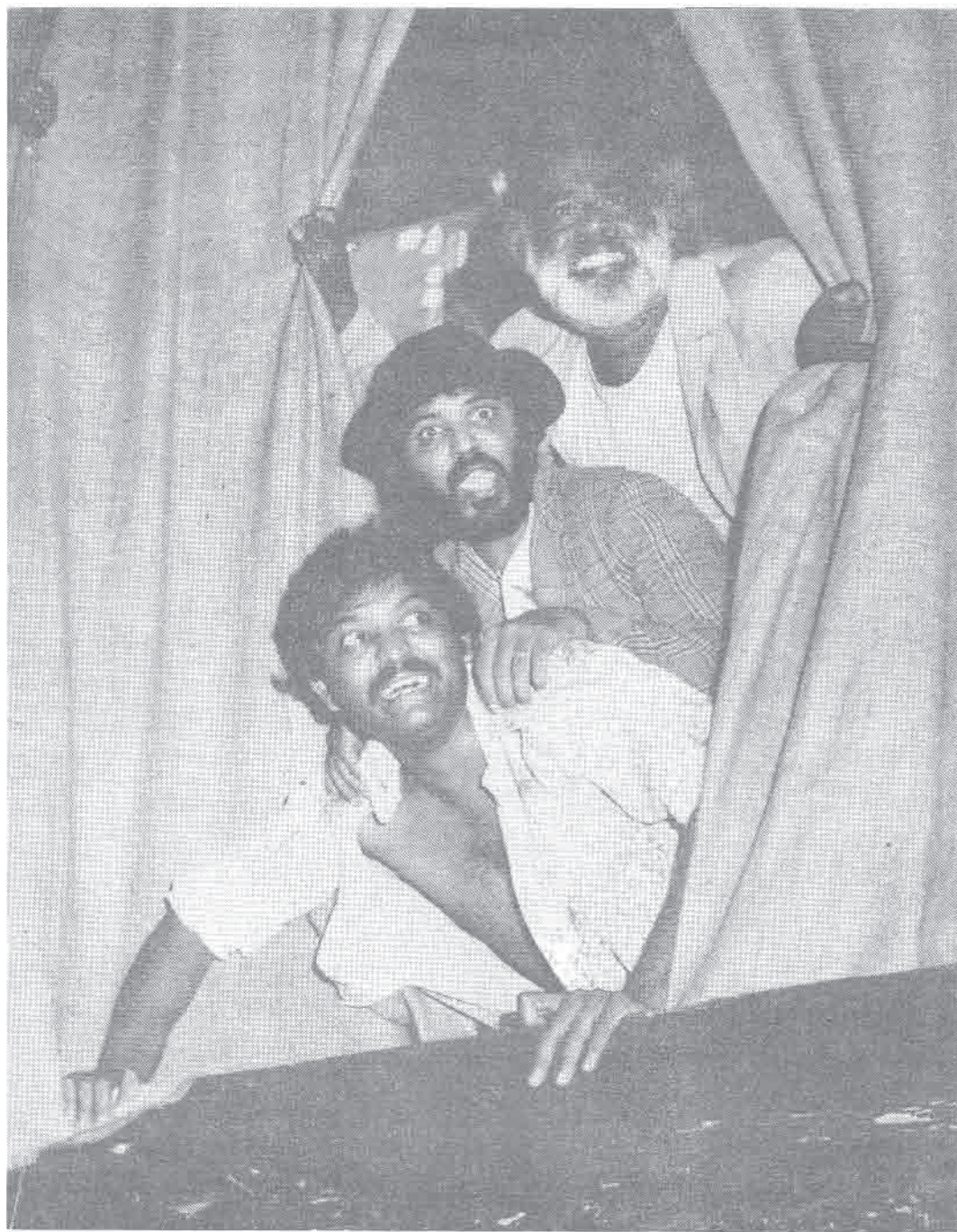
THE boss, played by Rex Dunlop, tries to separate two fighting colleagues — Faizal Bayat (left) and Mike Nursey in a scene from "Of no Account".

upstairs *presents*



**WE
3
KINGS**

18 April 1982



A RIGHT ROYAL SEND-UP!

UPSTAIRS Theatre will on April 28 mount its first major production for this year. The play chosen is *We 3 Kings* written and directed by Dr. Muthal Naidoo, who has joined forces with the Upstairs Theatre.

The play is a controversial, hilarious look at election campaigns and how leaders of the community are manufactured and the reasons why they allow themselves to be manufactured.

"The people that are in this play are people who function according to their very basic instincts of survival. This instinct of survival is what allows them to be manipulated," says Muthal.

The plot of *We 3 Kings* is very simple. Three hobos who spend their time bumping food, cigarettes and drink are told by an official that they could earn lots of money by doing nothing at all. All they would be required to do is stand as election candidates and canvas for people to vote for them. The hobos then embark on a massive and rather amusing election campaign. The three hobos are played by three of Durban's most talented and experienced actors — Essop Khan, Charles Pillai and Neville Josie.

The rest of the cast includes Mahomed Ali, Etienne Essary and Neville Josie.

"Muthal has written a wonderful piece of work. I can see her becoming one of South Africa's leading and most important playwrights," says Sara Essu, director of Upstairs Theatre. Sara's enthusiasm is reflected by all

the cast members who are looking forward to the audience reaction to a screamingly funny look at the election campaign from the inside.



ESSOP KHAN, (above) a very busy paint salesman by day is surprisingly enough a very busy actor by night. He has appeared in countless stage productions, a few of them being *Three for Tea*, *It's A Colourful World*, *Charles Aunt*, *Lahnees Pleasure* and *Over The Edge*. He was recently seen in *The Hermit Theatre production of The Indian Wants The Bronx*. "I enjoy working with Muthal. Her ideas are clear, experimental and very adventurous."



NEVILLE JOSIE (above) a graduate of Durban-Westville's Speech & Drama Dept, says:

"Relevant theatre for me is theatre seen from the eyes of the working class. That means concerning ourselves with issues that the working class feels are important and issues which are often neglected by the media."



ETIENNE ESSARY, (left) a former railway checker and student has taken the plunge and is now a full time actor. Although fairly new to Durban audiences, Etienne is fast becoming a very popular actor. "I enjoy working with Muthal, in combining the roles of playwright and director she is very firmly in control. However, by encouraging improvisation and doing a fair bit of rewriting Muthal has facilitated our transition from actor to character", he said.

CHARLES PILLAI, (right) a graduate of Speech & Drama has played leading roles in *A Man For All Seasons*, *Murder In The Cathedral* and *Inherit The Wind* and has recently appeared in Upstairs productions — *Over The Edge* and *Gandhi Act 2*. Charles has also recently completed a movie called *The Lost Focus*. *We 3 Kings* is exciting, stimulating and obviously necessary in our lives," he says.



ELECTION SATIRE TONIGHT

TONIGHT Reporter

DURBAN playwright Dr Muthal Naidoo's new play "We Three Kings" will be staged in Durban later this month.

The play, a comedy which satirises elections, features in its cast Essop Khan, Babs Pillay, Etienne Essary, Charles Pillay and Neville Josie.

It will be directed by Dr Naidoo, whose first play, "Of No Account" was staged with great

success in Durban and Johannesburg last year.

The play is about three hoboes who, by some strange twist of fate, become candidates in an election.

"We Three Kings", an Upstairs Theatre production, is scheduled to open on April 21 at a theatre to be decided upon.



□ ESSOP Khan (left), Babs Pillay and Charles Pillay (seated) in a scene from the play "We Three Kings" which opens at the Upstairs Theatre on Wednesday, April 28.

The GRAPHIC, 16 APRIL 1982

Satire comes to the Capital

MUTHAL Naidoo's election satire "We Three Kings" will be presented at the Marina Hall, Pietermaritzburg, at 8 pm on November 26 and 27.

The play has been well received wherever it was presented in Natal.

Members of the cast are: Essop Khan, Charles Pillay, Babs Pillay, Etienne Essary, Mohamed Ali and Neville Josie.

Tickets for the show can be obtained from Marie Pillay (phone 56351 or 74062).

THE Upstairs Theatre will mount its first major production for the year on Wednesday. The play chosen is *We Three Kings*, written and directed by Dr Muthal Naidoo, who has joined forces with the theatre.

The play is a controversial, hilarious look at election campaigns, how leaders of the community are manipulated and the reasons why they allow themselves to be manipulated.

"The people in this play are people who function according to their basic instincts of survival. This instinct is what allows them to be manipulated," says Muthal.

The plot is simple.

Three hoboes who spend their time drinking, food, cigarettes and drink are told by an official that they could earn lots of money by doing nothing at all. All they would be required to do is stand as election candidates and canvass for people to vote for them.

The hoboes then embark on a massive and rather amusing campaign. They are played by three of Durban's most talented and experienced actors: Essop Khan, Charles Pillay and Babs Pillay.

The play opens at the Albert Baumann Hall, 4th Floor, Central Methodist Church, on the corner of Aliwal and Smith Streets.

We 3 Kings

(A farce in two acts)

The play was written at the end of 1981 after the South African Indian Council (SAIC) elections, which it satirises, and was presented in April 1982.

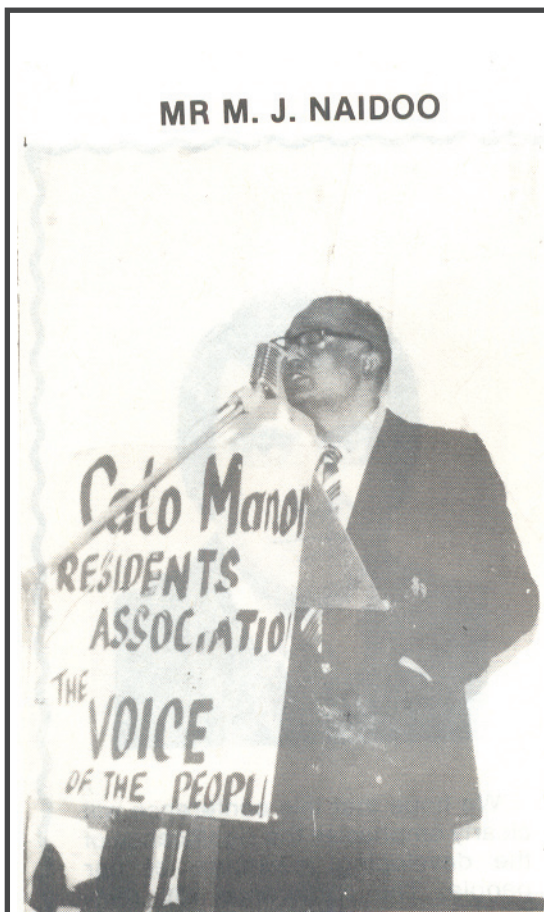
MR M. J. NAIDOO

Chairman
Anti-SAIC Committee (Natal)

The elections for the SAIC has provided an excellent opportunity for Indian South Africans to demonstrate in the clearest possible terms that they reject anything short of a vote for a single parliament in a democratic South Africa. The history of our people has shown that they are capable of resisting the imposition of false and powerless institutions. We have participated in the Defiance Campaigns and the Passive Resistance campaigns against injustice and this awareness of the political nature of our repression has been passed on from generation to generation. This heritage of protest has shown time and again in recent years that Indians do not have any faith in ethnic government created bodies.

Following on this tradition of resisting the imposition of these toothless institutions our people will again show their rejection by not voting for the SAIC. Our future certainly lies in the creation of our own democratic organisations guided by the Freedom Charter.

We welcome delegates to this conference in which we intend examining the prospects of true democracy and the elimination of fraudulent assemblies.



The first performances, under the management of the Upstairs Theatre, were at the Baumann Hall and then at the Hermit Theatre in Durban. The cast and characters for these performances were as follows:

Moon	Babs Pillay
Singh	Charles Pillay
Patel	Essop Khan
Whitely	Etienne Essery
Young Man	Neville Josie
Other Young Man	Mohammed Alli

When the play went on tour later in the year, it was presented by the Work-in-Progress (WIP) Theatre Company, which consisted of the members of the cast and the playwright/director. Some changes to cast and characters were made for the tour. The character of the Young Man became the Young Woman and the Other Young Man became the Young Man.

Moon	Babs Pillay
Singh	Mohammed Alli
Patel	Essop Khan
Whitely	Etienne Essery
Young Woman	Nasreen Moosa
Young Man	Neville Josie

Moon, Singh and Patel are fixed characters. The other three, Whitely, Young Woman and Young Man are multiple characters and each plays several different roles. In general, Whitely represents the apartheid establishment, the Young Woman the anti-apartheid view-point, and Young Man, the collaborator's position.

The play was presented on an almost bare stage. The props consisted of two main pieces: 1) a freestanding wall (a single or double flat), which when turned around was a polling booth and 2) a rectangular block, used as a seat, table, podium etc. as required. A bin, hand props, chairs, etc., were brought in as needed.

I revised the play in 1991 for publication in 1992 by Asoka Theatre Publications, University of Durban-Westville.

The play was revised again in September 2000 and edited in 2008.

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

(The lights come up on three hobos sleeping in a side street off Grey Street in Durban. It is early morning. Moon is lying on the ground in a drunken stupor. Patel is sitting quietly, waiting. Singh gets up and begins to look for stompies on the ground and in the bin. He can't find anything and finally pulls something out of his pocket and begins to munch on it.)

PATEL Hey, what you got there? Gimme some. I'm starving. (Singh evades Patel, quickly swallows what he is eating. Patel pulls out a knife to threaten him) Gimme some, or I'll bloody poke you.

SINGH (In fighting stance) Come on. Let's see you do it.

PATEL (Dancing, retreating from Singh) I'll poke you. I'll poke you.

SINGH Come on, man. Come on.

PATEL (Retreating) No. I feel sorry for you. (Puts knife away) Greedy swine. I'm bloody starving. How can you eat by yourself?

(Singh continues to look for stompies and comes to where Moon is lying. Singh almost faints from the stench.)

SINGH Man, he stinks like a dead fish. (Sees neck of bottle sticking out from under Moon and pulls bottle out.)

MOON (Waking up) Hey, you bloody shit! Bring that back! That's my bloody dop.

(Singh runs off, trying to drink from bottle. Moon chases him and finally gets bottle back.)

MOON (Examining bottle) You drank the whole thing. (He sucks up the last few drops) I'll kill you.

SINGH There wasn't anything there, man. Empty.

MOON You bloody liar. I'm dying of thirst. I'm hanging, man; otherwise I'll come and kill you now. You sneaking bastard. I must have a dop. (Searches pockets for money)

SINGH You got a skafe?

MOON You steal my dop and you still want a skafe. Fuck off.

PATEL (Sidling up to Moon) Hey, Moon? How much you got?

MOON 'leven cents. How I'm going to get dop with this?

PATEL Let's get some chow then.

MOON If you hungry, go knock on some doors.

PATEL But there are no Muslims around here.

MOON Look man, just say a prayer over the food, and it will be okay.

PATEL Don't be stupid.

MOON You the one that's stupid. You begging for food and you still want it halaal.

PATEL Hey, don't pick on my religion. (Pulls out knife) I'll bloody poke you. You bloody heathen.

MOON What the hell you mean, heathen? Eh? What you mean, heathen? I'll kick you, you shit.

PATEL You people don't even know your God, praying to sticks and stones, worshipping idols.

MOON You idiot. What you know about my religion? You don't know nothing about my religion. I'm a Hindu and I know nothing. You not even a bloody Hindu, how you know about my religion? You trying to convert? (While Moon and Patel have been arguing, Singh has been trying out a blind beggar routine. As the argument ends, he breaks into an improvised beggar's song. Moon and Patel turn in surprise.) What's wrong with you?

SINGH (Begging from Moon) Give five cents for a blind man.

MOON Shit, this fulla's gone mad.

SINGH You think I can't do it what? I'm going to be blind today. Just watch. I'll make enough marchè to buy skafes and dop.

PATEL And food, too.

SINGH Footsack. Go hustle for yourself.

MOON I wish I had a dop. (Young Woman, as university student, enters with "DON'T VOTE posters) There's a fish.

SINGH (Scuttling to Young Woman) I saw her first.

MOON (Trying to block him) You supposed to be bloody blind.

SINGH Hey girlie, give a blind man five cents.

MOON (Pushing Singh out of the way) You shit. I'll moer you. (To Young Woman) Don't give him nothing. He's not bloody blind. Gimme twenty cents.

PATEL Gimme twenty cents. I haven't eaten for two days. I'm going to die.

SINGH (Battling to get in front of Moon and Patel) Give five cents. Give five cents for a blind man.

MOON He's not blind.

SINGH (Exaggerating blind act) What he knows? Blind as a bat. Blind as a bat.

YOUNG WOMAN If you help me put up a few posters here, I'll pay you. But don't come begging.

MOON Go to hell. Do it your bloody self.

YOUNG WOMAN If you want money, you have to earn it.

SINGH What you have to do?

YOUNG WOMAN (Handing him a poster) Put this up.

SINGH Okay, I'll help.

MOON (Rushing up) Get out, man. I'll do it. You blind, remember.

SINGH You get out. She gave me the job

(Moon and Singh fight over poster)

YOUNG WOMAN Stop that. You can both help. (To Moon) You put one up here and you (To Singh) put one up there. You (To Patel) come here and hand these out to people passing by. (Gives him handbills)

PATEL Hey, what flim you advertising? Amitabh Bachchan? (Reads handbill) Hey, what's this? (Reads) "Don't Vote! Reject dummy bodies." What's this? Politics? (Throws handbills down in fear) This is politics. I don't want nothing to do with it. Moon, Singh, y'all better look out, this is politics!

SINGH What!

MOON (Throwing poster down) What you trying to do? Get us involved?

YOUNG WOMAN Why are you so frightened? You don't even know what this is about.

PATEL It's politics, man, politics!

YOUNG WOMAN Everything is politics. Look, let me explain. You see this poster ... (Holding up poster)

PATEL (Shielding his eyes) Don't look. Don't look. y'all might land up on Robin's Island.

YOUNG WOMAN Nonsense. I'll explain ...

PATEL I don't want to hear about it. Just gimme twenty cents.

(Singh and Moon make a rush for the young woman)

SINGH (Indicating Patel) He's not doing nothing. Gimme the twenty cents.

MOON Hey, you didn't put your poster up. Get out. (To Young Woman) Look. See, my poster is up. I get paid first.

YOUNG WOMAN You are just like these SAIC candidates. You want money for doing nothing.

MOON You owe us the money. We doing dangerous work for you.

PATEL They catch us doing this, they put us in jail.
YOUNG WOMAN Look, if you're not going to help me, just get out of my way. I've got work to do. (Puts up poster)

(Young Man, as the son of a candidate, comes in to put up his father's election posters)

YOUNG MAN (Pulling down Young Woman's poster) What you think you doing!

YOUNG WOMAN Let go of my poster. (They struggle)

YOUNG MAN (Covering Young Woman's poster with his own) You can't put these up. My father's standing for election.

YOUNG WOMAN He's a bloody sell-out. (Pastes a poster over Young Man's poster)

YOUNG MAN Hey, if you don't want to vote, don't bloody vote. But leave us alone. (Pastes a poster over hers)

YOUNG WOMAN If you can ask people to vote, I can ask them not to vote. (Appeals to hobos) Listen. You don't want to vote, do you?

SINGH Nah, what we got to do with it?

MOON All I want is a good dop.

PATEL Some food.

SINGH Skafes.

YOUNG MAN You want skafes. (Offers cigarettes. They accept eagerly) If you guys vote for my father, he'll get you skafes, food and dop. Come help me put these posters up. You want dop. (They rush to put up posters)

YOUNG WOMAN That's bribery and corruption.

YOUNG MAN Ah, shut up.

YOUNG WOMAN Why don't you tell these bums that your father only wants to get into the Council so he can get easy money? How much is it now? R1000 a month?

YOUNG MAN (To hobos) You hear what she called you? She called you bums.

(Hobos move threateningly towards Young Woman)

YOUNG WOMAN Don't you see what's happening here? He's gonna give you a few skafes so that his father can collect thousands for doing nothing. Nothing! He will do nothing for you!

(Hobos turn and move threateningly towards Young Man)

YOUNG MAN She don't know what she's talking about. My father will do great things for our people. (Hobos advance) You want money. (Waves a rand note in front of them. They stop in their tracks.) Carry on with the posters.

(Hobos rush to put up posters)

YOUNG WOMAN (Pulling down posters as they put them up) He's turned himself into a dummy, now he wants to turn us all into dummies.

PATEL You pull down my poster again, I'll poke you.

YOUNG WOMAN (To hobos) Do you want him and his father to be rich while you starve?

YOUNG MAN She's a woman, what does she know?

YOUNG WOMAN You and your father are sell-outs.

YOUNG MAN That's all you fools can do; call us sell-outs all the time.

(Picks up posters and leaves)

SINGH (Running after him) Hey, where you going? Where's our money? Bloody shit, he's gone without paying us. (To Young Woman) It's all your fault.

MOON Ya, we was gonna make a nice packet. You better shell out now.

YOUNG WOMAN (Picking up posters)
You didn't help me.

SINGH Give us the bloody money, man.

MOON Give us the bloody money, man.

PATEL Gimme the money or I'll poke you.

(Young woman moves off)

MOON (Getting in front of her) Where you going in such a hurry, girlie? I said give me money. You better give quick. (Grabs hold of her)

YOUNG WOMAN Hey, let go of me.

(Enter Whitely as a policeman)

WHITELY Ya, what's going on here?

(The hobos let go of Young Woman. Young Woman tries to run away. Whitely gets hold of her. The Hobos try to sneak away.)

WHITELY (Waves gun) Stop right there.

SINGH We didn't mean anything, Boss. Just having some fun.

MOON We wasn't going to hurt her. Just joking.

PATEL (Waving knife) I wasn't going to poke her.

MOON (Whispering) Shut up. And put that thing away.

PATEL Eh? What? (Moon indicates knife) Oh ya! (Patel puts knife away)

SINGH (Covering for them) No, boss. We was just having fun.

(Whitely has not been paying attention to hobos; he has been examining Young Woman's posters.)

WHITELY You putting up posters. Has you got a licence for it?

YOUNG WOMAN I don't need one. This is not public property

WHITELY Then why was you making a run for it just now? Distributing pamphlets, too. I think I better take you in.

(The three hobos, seeing that they are not the focus of Whitely's attention, watch with relief and uncertainty)

WHITELY So you three tried to stop this woman, eh?

(The hobos are not sure what to expect)

SINGH Well ... you see ... we were sitting here ...

WHITELY You fellows has done a fine job. Serving your country, eh? Well, you deserve a reward. Go to Ramchand's place and tell him to give you a good square meal. You'd like that, wouldn't you?

PATEL Yes, boss!

WHITELY Go on now. Get along with you.

MOON But Ramchand will kick us out!

WHITELY Not if I sent you. Tell him Whitely sent you. Say he must feed you if he wants to keep his licence.

SINGH But who's going to pay?

WHITELY Don't worry! It'll be on the house.

MOON But ...

WHITELY You better go now, before I changes my mind.

(Whitely takes Young Woman, pamphlets and posters and leaves)

MOON Think we should go to Ramchand's?

SINGH What we got to lose?

PATEL But Ramchand is not halaal.

MOON Oh shit, what we going to do with you?

(Hobos exit arguing. Fade out.)

SCENE TWO

(Enter Singh and Moon. They are from Ramchand's restaurant)

SINGH That Ramchand's restaurant is a lucka joint. Man, that mutton curry was first class.

MOON (Laughing) But Patel got left, eh?

SINGH Ya, there was no halaal chow. (Calling off) Hey, Patel, where you, man?

PATEL (Off-stage) I'm coming.

MOON You saw what he was eating?

SINGH The only thing he could eat was beans.

MOON You better doss far from him tonight. (Enter Patel jaunty, smiling. His pockets bulging) Hey, Patel what you smiling? What you up to?

PATEL (Archly) Nothing, man, nothing.

MOON (Pointing to Patel's pockets) What you got there?

PATEL Nothing, man, nothing.

(Moon and Patel tussle while Moon tries to get at what is in Patel's pockets. Eventually he pulls out a spoon.)

MOON What's this? Hey Singh, look at this. Silverware! (To Patel) What you going to do? Throw a fancy dinner party? What you steal this stuff for?

PATEL I didn't steal it, man. I took it. I took it.

MOON Anyway, it'll come in handy. We can sell it for dop.

SINGH Stealing spoons! You a heavy ou, ek sê

PATEL Y'all had mutton. I had beans. Had to make up for it.

SINGH Hey, you better doss far from me tonight.

PATEL I'm going to put my arse right next to your face and blow your brains out.

MOON (Evaluating spoons) Twenty cents each ... no, fifteen cents ... fifteen?

SINGH Hey, Moon, you better watch out. This fulla's gonna let off bombs tonight.

(Whitely, now a member of the bomb squad, jumps into their midst firing a shot. The hobos run about in terror.)

WHITELY Bombs! Who said bombs! Where's the bombs? (Pulls out walkie-talkie) Bomb squad alert. Another bomb in the city centre. (To Hobos) Hey! What's the matter with you? Come here. Where do you think you're going? Come here. Now, what's this about bombs.

PATEL I don't know nothing about bombs.

MOON Ya, because they your bombs.

WHITELY What's that!

MOON When Patel let's off his bombs, you can die of suffocation.

WHITELY (To Patel) So you're the terrorist, eh? Where's the bombs. (Pulls out bomb detector equipment and starts checking the area.)

MOON You holding it in the wrong place, sir.

WHITELY Wrong place? What do you know about it?

MOON If you looking for Patel's bombs, you gotta put it there. (Points to Patel's backside) If he joins the terrorists, he'll kill everybody faster with his bombs.

WHITELY What's this about terrorists?

MOON Nothing, boss, just joking.

WHITELY This is not a laughing matter.

MOON Sorry, boss.

WHITELY So you want to be terrorists, do you?

SINGH No sir, not me, sir. Terrorists are terrible people.

MOON There's no bombs here, boss, sathima. Only Patel's bombs. That's because he ate beans.

PATEL Well, Ramchand's is not halaal.

WHITELY What? What are you talking about?

MOON Remember, boss? You sent us to Ramchand's.

WHITELY I sent you?

PATEL Ya, when we caught that terrorist sticking up the posters.

WHITELY What?

MOON You know, this afternoon? When we was serving our country?

SINGH (Whispering) Shut up. He don't want to talk about it.

WHITELY What's the matter with you? You been drinking?

MOON That's what we forgot. You can organise that too, bossie?

WHITELY I don't know what you're talking about. Never set eyes on you before.
(Whitely leaves)

PATEL (To Moon who is not listening)
You bloody shit. What you telling that vet-ou about me?

MOON (Staring after Whitely) What's wrong with that vet-ou? He act like he don't know us. After all we did to help him, too.

PATEL (To Moon who isn't listening) What you was saying? I'll bloody poke you.

SINGH Maybe it's not the same vet-ou.

MOON But he looks just like the other one.

SINGH Ah, they all look alike.

MOON Ag, forget him. That was a lucka chow we had tonight. Nice if we could eat like that every night.

PATEL We can! We just catch more terrorists.

MOON Ya, catch a terrorist a day and chow will come our way.

SINGH Don't be stupid. Where we gonna find terrorists?

MOON That's easy.

PATEL Easy man. Easy.

MOON Terrorists are everywhere. Look how we caught that one today.

PATEL We just grab anybody sticking up posters.

MOON We just walk around and keep our eyes open.

PATEL Ya, look for them all over town.

SINGH Y'all prepared to graaf, eh?

MOON Graaf? You right man! That sounds like hard work. I got no time for work. Patel, you look for terrorists.

PATEL Hey, go to hell. If y'all not graafing, I'm not graafing.

SINGH What we need is nice easy jobs; like that girl with the posters was talking about. Do nothing and get big pay.

PATEL We doing nothing. Why we not getting paid?

SINGH Maybe we should try to get those jobs?

(Moon and Patel burst out laughing)

MOON You must be mad, man

PATEL Ya, he's getting as bad as that crazy vet-ou and his bombs.

(Moon and Singh fling themselves on the ground and cover their ears and eyes. Nothing happens. They open their eyes, look around cautiously and settle down again.)

MOON Man, when you said that word, I thought that crazy vet-ou would be back.

PATEL What word?

MOON Tsch! You know.

PATEL No, I don't.

MOON (Mouthing the letters) B ...O... M...B...S

PATEL Oh, bombs!

(Whitely jumps into their midst, firing his gun. The hobos jump about wildly. Whitely catches hold of Singh. Moon and Patel hide.)

WHITELY You let off another bomb. I'm taking you in as a terrorist.

SINGH No sir. Please sir. I am a patriotic citizen. (Salutes) Heil Hitler!

WHITELY (Frowning) Heil Hitler?

SINGH Sorry. (Salutes again) K.K.K.

WHITELY K.K.K.?

SINGH Sorry ... B.B.B.

WHITELY B.B.B.?

SINGH I mean B.B ... to The Brotherhood.

WHITELY That's better. Now you sound like an intelligent man ... a man I could use. Aren't you the one who caught that terrorist putting up posters today?

SINGH Yes, sir! That was me, sir!

MOON (Running out of hiding and standing next to Singh) Me too.

PATEL (Running out of hiding and standing next to Moon) Me too. We was working together.

WHITELY Nonsense. You two (Pointing to Moon and Patel) were working with the terrorist. (To Singh) Isn't that so?

SINGH (Salutes) Yes, sir.

WHITELY I'm taking you two in. (To Singh) Take them away.

SINGH Yes, sir.

PATEL AND MOON But we patriotic citizens too!

PATEL (Saluting) Heil Hitler!

MOON (Whispers) Shut up! To The Brotherhood.

PATEL AND MOON (They salute and adopt other military gestures as they chant the following)
To The Brotherhood.

Ride safe boys on the border.

We love our country, sunny skies, braaivleis and rugby.

(They go on their knees to Whitely)

Anything for you, Boss!

WHITELY No, you doesn't bluff your way out of this. (To Singh) Take them in.

SINGH (Saluting) Yes sir. (To Moon and Patel) You there, fall in. Ready. Forward march ... left ... left ... left.

(Singh marches Moon and Patel round the stage. They have great difficulty trying to march on the left leg only.

As they are thus occupied, Young Woman enters as an ordinary shopper. She is carrying a basket with among other things a tin of beans and a long green Indian vegetable.)

MOON (Indicating Young Woman) See that.

PATEL Ya.

MOON Let's grab her. (They dash over and grab hold of her) Got you.

YOUNG WOMAN Hey, what you doing? Leave me alone. What you fullas think you doing?

PATEL We got you.

YOUNG WOMAN Get your hands off me ...

MOON Shut up. We saw you.

YOUNG WOMAN What are you talking about?

MOON You were trying to leave that parcel here.

PATEL Want to blow us all up, eh?

YOUNG WOMAN What?

MOON Very clever. Very clever. Pretending you don't know what I'm talking about.

PATEL (Examining basket) Aha, look what we got here.

YOUNG WOMAN (Struggling to get free) Leave my vegetables alone.

MOON AND PATEL (Dragging Young Woman and basket before Whitely) Sir!

WHITELY Yes.

MOON Sir! This is the terrorist you've been looking for.

PATEL Just look in the basket. (Pulls out long green vegetable)

MOON AK47, Sir! (Patel pulls out tin of beans) Bombs!

YOUNG WOMAN Hey, those are my vegetables.

MOON Camouflage, sir! Very clever.

PATEL Ya, she's a terrorist. This is the evidence.

WHITELY Good work, men. We'll take her in for questioning.

YOUNG WOMAN Y'all all mad. (Whitely takes hold of her to lead her away) Hey, let me go.

WHITELY (To the hobos) Yes, I think I can use you. (Leads Young Woman out.)

YOUNG WOMAN (Screaming) My mother is waiting for me. We fasting today. I gotto bring the vegetables.

PATEL (Sighing with relief) Man, I thought we had it.

MOON Me too. (Turning to Singh) But not you, eh? (To Patel) You saw what he done?

PATEL Ya!

MOON He tried to shanghai us!

PATEL Ya!

MOON He tried to burn us!

PATEL Ya!

(Singh begins to sneak off)

MOON Hey, where you think you going? (Grabs hold of Singh)

SINGH Let me go. Don't kill me.

MOON Shut up, man. You're a rat.

PATEL (Waving knife) I'll poke him! I'll poke him!

MOON All in good time. The bloody shit. As long as he was all right, he didn't care about us.

PATEL I'll poke him! I'll poke him!

SINGH Help! Mr Whitely, help me!

MOON (Laughs) Look at this. Calling the vet-ou to help him. You ever saw a vet-ou coming to help one of us? He only come when you dead.

SINGH Please, listen. I didn't mean it. I was joking. I wasn't trying to burn you. True's God! I didn't know what I was doing. (Moon grabs Patel's knife, holds it against Singh's throat. Singh screams) Help! Help! (Suddenly gets an idea) BOMBS! BOMBS! BOMBS!

(Moon and Patel drop to the ground covering ears and

eyes. Nothing happens. Singh gets up and starts to run. Moon and Patel grab him and bring him back.)

MOON Think you too clever, eh? It didn't work, did it?

PATEL Ya, imagine that. (Imitating Singh) BOMBS! BOMBS!

(Enter Whitely as electoral officer. Moon and Patel drop to the ground in fear.)

WHITELY (Sits) Yes, I think I can use you.

(The hobos scramble to sit at his feet.)

PATEL You want us to pull a job for you?

SINGH Shut up, man.

MOON What can we do for you, bossie?

WHITELY You know, I like your style. I like the way you are able to smell out these terrorists.

SINGH That was nothing. We can do better.

MOON I get it. You want us to be spies.

PATEL Double O 7!

WHITELY You have your country's interests at heart. You are heroes.

PATEL Like J.R.!

WHITELY If your people knew about you, they'd be proud of you.

MOON Ya, they don't know how much we doing for them.

SINGH They don't know how we keeping them safe.

PATEL We they protectors.

MOON We should be great men in our community.

PATEL We should be known and admired.

SINGH We should be shown the greatest respect.

WHITELY In short, you should be leaders.

MOON, SINGH, PATEL
That's it, we should be leaders,
running our community

bringing tidings of comfort and joy
silent and holy nights
a partridge in a pear tree.
O come all ye faithful
and acknowledge your true leaders.

WHITELY There's only one way you can become acknowledged leaders.

MOON, SINGH, PATEL Oh? How?

WHITELY In a truly democratic election. Become candidates for the Indian Council.

MOON, SINGH, PATEL But us? How can we?

WHITELY (Handing out forms) Fill out these forms and hand them in with a R400 deposit and you will be nominated candidates for the election.

MOON R400? I don't think I'm a leader.

PATEL Me too.

SINGH Where we gonna get R400 each?

WHITELY What's R400, when you get back a 1000?

MOON, SINGH, PATEL 1000!

WHITELY Every month.

MOON, SINGH, PATEL Every month!

WHITELY And you don't have to do a thing to get it.

MOON You mean they give it to us for nothing? Hey, that's what we looking for!

SINGH But where we gonna get the R400?

PATEL Ya, it's no use. We can't stand in the 'lection.

WHITELY (Gently mocking) You mean, you don't know how to make money?

PATEL (Pointing to his feet) Would I be in this shoe, if I knew?

WHITELY (Laughing) Everybody knows how to make money. There's only one way. And you don't know it? I think I'm wasting my time with you. (He leaves)

SINGH Hey, you bloody fools, he was practically giving us that job and y'all throwing it away.

MOON What giving us the job? He wants R400 for it. You mad. He's making us a fool.

SINGH No, man! He told us we should go for that job.

PATEL I don't see how we can do it.

SINGH In the usual way.

MOON What!

PATEL You want that chap to come back here and take us all in?

SINGH You got a better idea?

MOON But that way we never made more than a few rands. How we gonna make R400 each?

SINGH We never really tried before. Now we'll plan better and do more jobs. We'll show everyone how it's done.

MOON It won't work.

SINGH Look man, it will. This is how we do it. We hit the shops in one area on Monday, another area on Tuesday. Then on Wednesday, we go into the main streets for some pick-pocketing and bag snatching. On Thursday, same thing in the small side streets. Friday, we do more shops. Saturday, we take the tote offices and racecourse. If we split up and go, we'll do it for sure.

MOON I'll die if I have to work so hard.

SINGH You only got to do it once. After that, we get it for nothing. You game?

MOON I dunno.

SINGH You, Patel?

PATEL Ya, I'm ready. Come on, let's do it Moon.

MOON Okay. If you fullas think it will work.

SINGH Right! We start tomorrow.

MOON (As they walk off) I hope it works.

WHITELY (Who has been watching unobserved) I'll make sure it does.

(Fade out)

SCENE THREE

(Young Man as Radio Announcer on the Indian Programme. He speaks after the signature tune is heard for a few seconds.)

YOUNG MAN This is your Indian announcer, Pathmanathan Pillay, bringing you our weekly news report about the Indian Community in our Indian Programme.

The increase in crime in the Grey Street area has reached alarming proportions. Bags are being snatched and pockets picked at the rate of one a minute. No man, woman or child is safe on the streets at any hour of the day or night. One man on his way to the bank states that he was robbed by three tramps who took his money, all his clothes, even his false teeth, and left him naked in the street.

According to Chief Constable Whitely, the police are doing everything in their power to trace the gang. So far they have not had much luck, but they are very close on the trail of the thieves and hope to apprehend them soon.

One member of the gang was almost caught by ten year old, Vikesh Varma. Vikesh, a karate student, was threatened by one of the thieves wielding a knife. According to Vikesh's father, Mr Varma, the boy, who has been at karate school for only three weeks, decided to put the little he has learnt into practice. The boy squared up to the man who turned tail and ran. According to Vikesh, the man shouted some strange prayer to the moon as he ran off.

The noted astrologer, Harsingh Narsingh, says that the moon is in conjunction with the astral body that remains within a blue aura and causes vapours to rise in the head. As long as this condition prevails, it is believed that the city will be plagued with crimes. Mr Narsingh Harsingh says that these thieves are obviously moonstruck.

Chief Constable Whitely has put out a special appeal to people to remain calm as he is certain that the situation will soon return to normal.

Now for some news about the forthcoming Indian election. The election which was to be held two years ago, and was postponed to April last year, and further postponed to August and still further postponed to June this year, has been postponed to November, and will definitely take place at that time ... unless, of course, there are still too few nominations to warrant an election.

That is the end of our news broadcast. We bring our Indian Programme to a close today with a number by that Indian singing sensation, Poopsie Baby Ki Rani. Until next week, Goodbye and God Bless.

(Music ends the broadcast. Fade out.)

SCENE FOUR

(The hobos are now neat, clean and smartly dressed. They come in like models and show off their clothes.)

PATEL How do I look, eh? You checked my clothes? I'm irresistible.

MOON Man, I feel sorry for all the women. When they see me, they gonna go wild.y'all have to help me keep them off.

SINGH Y'all got no chance. It's not just the clothes, man. You got to have style.

PATEL You think I got no style. Just check this. (Calls to someone in audience.) Hey there darling, you wanna go to the Wild Coast?

MOON (Laughs) You call that style? Watch me operate. Hello Baby, come to Moon, he'll play your tune.

SINGH I feel sorry for you guys. Nobody is gonna look at you, not when I'm around. But don't worry, what I can't handle, I'll pass on to you. (Enter Whitely as Electoral Officer. He sets up his office while the following conversation takes place.) Hey, the larney's here. We better pay our marchè.

PATEL Why we must pay him? We earned this money ourself.

MOON Ya, we made enough money. I don't need no other job.

SINGH I told you guys, you got no style. Me, I'm gonna trade this R400 in and collect my thousand.

MOON Ya, I forgot about that. You got a point.

PATEL But it hurts to give him this money. I worked so hard for this money.

SINGH Come on. I'm going to pay. (Goes off to Whitely)

MOON Come on, Patel. Don't be a fool. You'll get more than what you giving.

(Moon goes off to join Singh. Patel remains behind and removes some money from a heavy moneybag.)

SINGH Here you are, bossie, R400.

WHITELY Ah, I see, you do know how to make money.

SINGH (Laughs. To Moon) This larney is okay.

WHITELY (Hands receipt to Singh) Thank you, Mr Moon Sammy.

SINGH Singh, sir, Singh.

WHITELY Yes, that's right. Congratulations, Mr Singh. You are now a candidate for the SAIC elections. (They shake hands)

MOON (Hands over money) Here's mine, boss. (As Whitely counts) Nice new notes, eh bossie? Got them from the bank where I opened my new banking account. You know, boss, I told them at the bank, I got it selling vegetables. (Laughs, nudges Whitely) That's a good one, eh?

WHITELY (Putting money away) All correct. Mr Moon Sammy, you are now officially a candidate for the SAIC. Congratulations.

MOON Thank you, boss. (Goes to shake hands with Singh)

SINGH (Calling to Patel) Hey, Patel. Go on, man, pay your marchè.

(Patel who has been fiddling with his moneybag all the while, now comes up and plants it in front of Whitely)

PATEL There's mine.

WHITELY (Looking into bag) Good Heavens! How do you expect me to count all this? Do you have R400 there?

PATEL Yes, boss. Yes, boss.

WHITELY Sure?

PATEL Yes, boss. Yes, boss.

(Whitely makes out receipt.)

SINGH We okay now Moon. We got the job.

MOON You know, I can't believe it. I never thought we could get jobs like this.

(Patel has shaken hands with Whitely and approaches Moon and Singh who shake hands with him.)

PATEL Hey, y'all saw what I did? I gave him R10 short.

SINGH You fool. If he finds out, you'll lose the job.

PATEL Nah. He can't count all that. I gave him mostly five cents and two cents pieces.

WHITELY Well, gentlemen, you are to be congratulated. You have shown yourselves to be men with initiative and ability. I wish you every success in your campaigns.

SINGH The job's ours now, Bossie?

MOON Ya, we get back R1000, eh Boss? When's the first payment?

PATEL You can give me a cheque. I don't want no change.

WHITELY You haven't got the jobs yet. You are candidates for the election. Now go out and get yourselves elected.

MOON What! You mean after all that hard work we haven't got the job! This vet-ou pulled a fast one on us.

SINGH But you told us, if we give you R400, we get the job.

PATEL Ya. I don't want your job. I want my money back. Full R400.

MOON Ya, forget the whole thing. Just give the money back.

WHITELY But gentlemen, all you have to do is get yourselves known and get people to vote for you.

MOON No. I'm not doing any more graaf. Give the money back.

SINGH Ya, we changed our mind. Those jobs are not for us.

WHITELY You won't stand for election?

SINGH No.

WHITELY Well, gentlemen, you may have heard that there's been a spate of robberies in town. I know the gang responsible for it – three old layabouts who used to hang around in the Grey Street area. In fact, you look a lot like them.

SINGH What are you trying to say, boss?

WHITELY The police would be very interested to know how you raised the money for your deposits.

MOON Hey, but you told us to do it!

WHITELY How did you become so rich all of a sudden? Very nice suits you're wearing. Perhaps you know the gang I'm talking about.

PATEL Gang? We don't know any gang.

WHITELY No. You are candidates for the election, aren't you? Decent citizens, aren't you?

PATEL, MOON, SINGH Yes, boss.

WHITELY You are going to stand for election, aren't you?

PATEL, MOON, SINGH Yes, sir! Yes, boss!

WHITELY Splendid! I wish you every success. Happy campaigning.

PATEL(Mocking) Happy campaigning. Shit! He's gone with all our money.

MOON I told you fullas from the start that this wasn't for us. But no, you wanted the easy money. (To Singh) It's all your bloody fault.

SINGH What you mean, my fault. It's not my fault. He promised us the jobs. Can't trust a bloody vet-ou.

PATEL And he's gone with our money. Now what we gonna do?

SINGH (Resentfully) We have to get elected.

PATEL How the hell we do that?

SINGH We have to make people vote for us.

MOON I don't want to have nothing to do with it.

SINGH If you don't, you'll land up in jail. He knows about our fund raising.

PATEL What we got to do?

SINGH Well, like Whitely says, we got to get known.

MOON Nobody knows me. All the jobs I pulled, I had my handkerchief over my face.

PATEL I didn't. The people know me.

SINGH Shut up, man. We got to 'come famous. Then we got to tell the people to vote for us.

MOON How we going to 'come famous?

SINGH We must get in the papers, on T.V. Everybody must see us.

MOON How we going to do that?

PATEL If I poke somebody, it will be in all the Extras.

SINGH Don't be stupid. Then who will vote for you?

MOON I still want to know, how we going to come famous?

SINGH I'm thinking. I'm thinking.

MOON You bloody wasting time. We got no chance. I'm getting out of here.

PATEL Whitely will arrest you.

MOON He got to catch me first. I got my hide-out.

PATEL Wait. I'm coming too.

SINGH See how nice y'all look. Y'all want to go back to the gutter?

MOON At least that was a free life.

PATEL Free like the birds!

SINGH Ya, maybe you right. We got no chance of getting the jobs.

(Enter Whitely as a gay newspaper reporter. The Hobos stop frozen in their tracks.)

WHITELY Coo-ee. Hello there. Are you the candidates for the Indian Council elections?

SINGH, MOON, PATEL (Feeling trapped) Yes.

WHITELY Wonderful. Wonderful. I'm from the "Daily Dose". Just a few pictures first. (Brings out camera)

PATEL (Striking poses) You want me like this, or like this?

MOON (Jumping in front of Patel) Wait. Take mine first.

SINGH (Jumping in front of Moon) If you want a good picture, you better take mine.

WHITELY No. I'll have one of all of you together. (Arranges them) You over there, big boy. You up there, and you cuddle in close. That's it. Now say "cheese".

MOON, SINGH, PATEL Cheese.

WHITELY Fantastic. My, you are a bunch of handsome brutes. (Takes out pencil and pad) Now gentlemen, a few words for my paper. On what platforms will you stand?

MOON We won't have a platform. We all gonna be on the stage.

WHITELY Ha, ha, ha. Yes. Yes. Nice sense of humour. Now, now, you naughty boys, tell me, what made you stand for election to the Indian Council?

PATEL We Indians!

SINGH We want people to know that if they elect us, we will do great things for them.

WHITELY Oh, you wonderful, marvellous creature you. What will you do for them?

SINGH (Getting into his stride) We going to demand for our own homeland. We want to protect our own ancient culture.

WHITELY Such as?

MOON We are going to bring back the caste system.

WHITELY Why, of course. I believe that was a wonderful old Indian institution. How fascinating!

PATEL We going to have only arranged marriages. We going to bring brides from India. And the woman's place is in the house.

WHITELY Actually, I quite agree. I don't see the need for women at all. Not even in the home.

SINGH We going to make everybody learn his own language. The Hindustanis must speak Hindi, the Gujeratis, Gujerati.

MOON The Tamils must speak Tamil and the Telugus, Telugu.

PATEL The Muslims must speak Muslim.

SINGH, MOON, PATEL And for a mother tongue, everybody must learn Afrikaans.

WHITELY You are so right. Otherwise you'd lose your cultural identity. I must thank you gentlemen. It has

been a great honour meeting you charming boys. Before I go, I have a little present for you, from your well-wishers. (Gives them a box of posters and handbills.) 'Bye, 'bye boys, be good now. Don't do anything I wouldn't do. (Exits blowing kisses, Patel responds)

SINGH Y'all still want to run away?

PATEL (Going over to box) Let's see what he brought.

MOON Maybe things will turn out all right.

PATEL (Picking up poster of himself) Hey, look at this.

(Moon and Singh dash over to box)

MOON Why they got your picture? What about us? (Finds a poster of himself) Hey, they got one of me too. Look what it says? "Vote for Moon, He'll play your tune." Hey, this is lovely.

SINGH (Picking up his poster) This one got style.

(Hobos stick posters on wall)

MOON (Standing back, admiring his poster) Look at that. What a handsome fulla!

SINGH (Standing under his and adopting a similar pose) Check the pose man. Everybody will know I'm the brains. Good looks isn't everything. You gotta have brains too. Me, I got both.

PATEL (In tears) This is too much.

MOON Hey, Patel. What you crying?

PATEL (Sobbing) Man, I'm so bloody good looking, I never realised it before. I can't take my eyes off this poster. If I was a woman, I would die just looking at it.

MOON (Goes back to admiring his poster) You handsome dog, you! You going to drive the women mad!

SINGH But they all going to vote for me!

PATEL You mad. Everybody is going to vote for me.

MOON Nah, they'll vote for me.

SINGH They'll vote for me.

PATEL They'll vote for me.

SINGH, MOON, PATEL (Marching around and shouting) Vote for me. Vote for me. Vote for me.

(They start to shout each other down, go into auditorium and appeal to audience)

MOON Vote for Moon, he'll play your tune.

SINGH Vote for Singh, he'll give you everything.

PATEL Vote for Patel, he'll serve you well.

MOON Don't vote for them!

SINGH Don't vote for them!

MOON (Pointing at Patel) He's a Sulla, don't vote for him.

PATEL (Pointing at Moon) He's a Hindu heathen. Don't vote for him.

SINGH Don't vote for him. He's a Muslim.

PATEL Don't vote for him. He's a roti.

SINGH AND MOON Don't vote for him. He's a slum-ou.

PATEL Don't vote for them. They heathens!

SINGH AND MOON Don't vote for him. We Hindus must stick together. That way we can get control.

PATEL I'm depending on all good Muslims to vote for me. We cannot trust these infidels. Don't vote for them. If you don't vote for me, don't vote at all.

PATEL, MOON, SINGH

Don't vote for him.

Don't vote for him.

Don't vote for him.

Don't vote.

Don't vote.

Don't vote.

(Enter Whitely firing gun.)

WHITELY What is this? An election campaign or an Anti-election campaign. Don't let me hear you discouraging the people from voting. The people must vote. It is their democratic right. They must vote. (Faces audience, points gun straight at them) You vote, you understand.

(Blackout)

ACT TWO

SCENE ONE

(Moon and Patel seated at table.)

MOON These bloody Anti's are making me mad. They holding meetings all over the place telling people not to vote.

PATEL I thought Singh said they helping us. If nobody votes, we get in automatic.

MOON That's if you the only one standing.

PATEL I'm the only one standing in my area. Singh, too.

MOON Well, in my district, two other fullas standing, man. That means I got to make sure that the people vote and all vote for me. I donno why I must have it so hard.

PATEL Funny. In most of the areas they can't get candidates, why so many candidates for your area?

MOON My bloody luck! What I'm going to do about these other two candidates? (Enter Singh carrying a briefcase) Hey, Singh, where you been? What I'm going to do about these fullas standing in my area? One's a retired school principal and the other one is a business man. What you think of them, eh? They got enough but they still want to rob poor people like us.

SINGH The one is a retired school principal. Hmm. Well, he's easy. You know these teachers. They got no guts. We can scare him.

PATEL How we gonna do that? Set his house on fire?

SINGH Naw. We'll 'phone him and say if he don't pull out of the race, he'll die.

MOON Ah, he won't believe that.

SINGH He'll believe, man. He'll believe. Already one case is reported just like that. One of the candidates was threatened.

PATEL Who threatened him?

SINGH Dunno! He thinks it was the Anti's but I bet you it was another candidate that didn't want competition.

MOON What a dirty trick! Come on, let's do it. 'Phone the principal.

SINGH Check the number in the telephone book, Patel. Gimme a handkerchief, Moon.

MOON What for? He can't see you.

SINGH Give, man. You have to do it with a handkerchief. You never seen it in the bi'scope?

MOON Use your own damn handkerchief.

SINGH Who I'm doing this for? Just tell me who? You want my help or not?

PATEL (Busy with directory) Give him the bloody handkerchief, Moon. (Moon hands over handkerchief. Singh folds it and puts it over mouthpiece.)

SINGH Number? (Patel shows him directory entry and he dials. He waits a few moments, then speaks in a sinister voice.) Hello ... You running for the Indian Council. Anti's here! Anti's here! ... You better pull out. Don't you know you letting your people down. Sell-out! ... You pull out of the race, or else ... You'll find out. (Slams 'phone down and bursts out laughing.)

MOON Well?

SINGH You should have heard him, man. He was so frightened I could hear him pooping. I don't think we have to worry about him.

MOON Now what about the other chap?

PATEL (Eagerly) Let's 'phone him too.

SINGH Naw. He's a businessman. Business people such crooks, they don't fright for nobody.

MOON Then what we gonna do? This is not fair. Why I got to have it so hard?

SINGH There's only one thing to do. We got to go to the temple for something special.

MOON You mean, trick him.

PATEL Ya, muti, tagati!

MOON Ts. Umku, man, umku.

SINGH We can get something special from the temple man and burry it in his yard. Come on, let's go.

(Fade out as they exit. End of Scene.)

SCENE TWO

(A radio studio. Whitely, the announcer)

WHITELY

This is Radio Mouthpiece bringing you a special bulletin from our news desk. Several candidates have withdrawn from the forthcoming South African Indian Council elections. They claim to have been threatened with death and violence if they proceed with their campaigns.

It is not clear who is responsible for these alleged threats. Some candidates have accused Mr M.J. Naidoo and the Anti- SAIC Committee of conducting an abusive campaign against them. The Minister of Self Determination says that it is the first time that the Indian Community is going to the polls and it is to the credit of the system that it is such a keenly contested election. According to the Minister, this demonstrates without the least shadow of doubt, that the policy that nurtures the uniqueness of each population group and produces democratic practices, is the only policy for a country as diverse as South Africa.

According to Mr Always Reddy, a candidate for the S.A.I.C., the fact that most of the seats are uncontested, is a clear indication of unanimous support for the South African Indian Council in the Indian community. Mr Reddy is expecting a huge turnout at the polls. He has appealed for police protection of the candidates and voters on Election Day, as he believes that the Anti-SAIC activists will attempt to intimidate voters. In the interests of a fair and honest election, he has asked that police be present at all polling stations.

(Fade out. End of Scene.)

SCENE THREE

(Enter Moon, Singh, Patel)

MOON What I'm gonna do? Things are getting worse. The business man is providing biryani chow for the people.

PATEL I wonder if it will be halaal?

MOON And to make things even worse, the bloody Anti's are telling people not to vote.

SINGH I got a idea. Is more people voting, or is more people not voting?

MOON More not voting.

SINGH Why we don't work on them?

MOON But the Anti's already told them not to vote.

SINGH We'll print pamphlets telling them the Anti's changed they mind. They want the people to vote. We'll say the Anti's are backing you. They want the people to vote for you.

MOON People won't believe that.

SINGH They'll believe. They believe anything the Anti's say. We'll sign it 'M.J. Naidoo, Chairman of The Anti's.' They'll believe.

MOON What if it doesn't work?

PATEL (Pulling out knife) I'll give them this!

MOON Man, the bloody Anti's are getting me down. They don't want nothing to do with this election. Why don't they leave us alone and let us get on with it?

SINGH Don't worry, man, Whitely will think of something. He hates the Anti's, too.

(Enter Whitely as a T.V. producer. Young Man comes in as cameraman.)

WHITELY Gentlemen, let me introduce myself. I am a T.V. producer. I believe you are the most prominent among the candidates for the Indian Council Election. I have arranged interviews for you on Television.

(Whitely and Young Man set things up for the interview.)

PATEL On T.V.! How I look? Okay?

WHITELY I believe that there is great opposition to the election.

MOON You mean the bloody Anti's? They spoiling things for me.

WHITELY Well, we must do something about that, mustn't we?

SINGH (Whispering to Moon) See, I told you he'll help you.

WHITELY I've arranged to have an Anti-person in on the interview.

MOON That M.J. Naidoo? I'll poke him.

SINGH (To Whitely) Why you bringing the Anti's for interview?

WHITELY It's absolutely necessary. The opposition point of view must always be presented.

MOON Hey, this is going to be heavy, man. I don't know how we gonna deal with a Anti. I don't know about this vet-ou, man. You think he knows what he's doing?

SINGH Following him, we haven't gone wrong up to now, have we? Just trust him. He knows what he's doing.

WHITELY (Handing out sheets) These are the questions you are going to be asked.

PATEL (Beginning to get nervous) Questions? I don't think I can do this. I'm going home.

WHITELY Please! You have nothing to worry about. The answers are right below each question. Study the questions and answers carefully. I'll give you a few minutes. We have a great deal to get through before the Anti-person gets here.

(Whitely and Young Man continue setting up for interview)

MOON (To Singh) Hey, Singh, how you say this word, man. Cons-s-s-s-tit-tit-

SINGH Don't worry me, man. I have all this to read.

MOON They gave you so much to say?

PATEL Hey, I'm the lucky one. I don't have much to say. I just say 'I agree.'

WHITELY Well, gentlemen, are you ready? Shall we have a test run before we tape? Please be seated. I'm going to begin with you Mr Moon Sammy. I'll read the question and you give me the answer. Are you ready?

MOON Yes, boss.

WHITELY Mr Moon Sammy, tell me, which constituency do you represent?

MOON (Reading haltingly) Mr ... Moon ... Sammy ... which ... consit ... s ... tit ... tit ... sitit ... tency ... do you ... re ... present ... the Nela ... the Nela ... O Ya ... the Nelasia consit ... tit ... tit ... tency ... do you ... expect ... a good ... turn ... out ... on ...

WHITELY No, no, no! Don't read the questions. I will ask the questions. Now let's try again.

MOON Do ... you ... expect ... a good ... turn ... out ...

WHITELY No ... no ...

(Music plays while Whitely coaches them. The scene continues in mime with Whitely and the Hobos, reminiscent of Professor Higgins with Eliza Doolittle. Eventually after much jumping about and flailing of arms, Whitely collapses in his chair. At this moment, the Anti-Election person arrives. Whitely jumps up with great alacrity. The Young Woman is now Dr Hoosen, a member of the Anti-SAIC Committee of the Natal Indian Congress)

YOUNG WOMAN Hello, am I late?

WHITELY No, no. As a matter of fact, you're too early.

YOUNG WOMAN Too early? But all the others are here.

WHITELY Ha, ha, ha. Yes. We're all a little too early. Gentlemen, this is Dr Hoosen.

MOON AND SINGH Hulloo. Hulloo.

PATEL Asalaamu alaykum, bhen.

MOON (Whispering to Singh) She's a lucka cherrie, ek sê.

WHITELY Well, shall we begin?

PATEL (Waving sheet) No, no. I want to go ...

WHITELY (Cutting in quickly) Yes, yes, Mr Patel, certainly. The toilets are right through there, I believe.

PATEL No, I don't have to go to the toilet. I want to ...

SINGH (Whispering) If he says go to the toilet, go to the bloody toilet.

(Patel goes off puzzled and annoyed.)

YOUNG WOMAN I see you have a list of questions.

WHITELY O yes. I'm terribly sorry. Here's your copy.

MOON (Peeping at her copy) What about the answers? She got no answers.

WHITELY (Laughing) What a witty man you are, Mr Moon Sammy. Where are her answers, you say? Ha, ha, ha.

(Patel returns)

PATEL (Whispering to Singh) Hey, you must see the toilet, man. It's beautiful. Don't even smell like a toilet.

WHITELY Ah, you're back, Mr Patel. Well, I think we can begin. We'll get right down to the questions. Now, tell me, why do some people want elections while others do not?

YOUNG WOMAN The majority do not want these elections ...

WHITELY Thank you, Dr Hoosen. Now that we have heard the Anti-election point of view, let us turn to you, Mr Singh.

SINGH (Reading) People who do not want the elections are being my-zild ...

WHITELY Misled. You mean 'misled'.

SINGH (Smiling) O ya, misled (Nods at Whitely) by outside aggie ... aggie ...

WHITELY Agitators.

SINGH (Following on quickly as though he has said the word) Who are trying to take over this country and end our tradition of democracy. (He breathes a sigh of relief at having got it all out.)

YOUNG WOMAN Just one moment. You cannot make a statement like that ...

WHITELY (Raising his voice above hers) We've already had your point of view, Dr Hoosen. Mr Moon Sammy, can we hear from you now?

MOON (Reading haltingly) We ... know ... that ... the election ... is the ... only ... way ... to make ... our gree ... gree ... greevy ...

WHITELY Grievances.

MOON Greevy-yences ... (To Young Woman) Before too, I couldn't get that word ... greevy-yences known to the government.

YOUNG WOMAN Look here, I protest ...

WHITELY Yes. And aren't you glad you live in a democratic country where you are allowed to express your opposition to the government. Mr Patel, we'd like to hear from you now.

PATEL I agree.

YOUNG WOMAN The real reason for our opposition to the election is that we regard it as a farce ...

WHITELY A farce! That's quite funny. Now, let's move on to our next question.

YOUNG WOMAN Just let me finish ...

WHITELY We must move on Dr Hoosen, our time is limited, you know. I address this next question to all the candidates. Gentlemen, do you think you will be able to work together harmoniously once you have been elected? The majority of you are independent candidates, I believe.

YOUNG WOMAN (Cutting in) Of course, they are. That's because there are no political parties. There is no point in talking about parties until we can vote for the people who make the laws of this country. These men do not represent anybody, certainly not our community. We will never be represented until every adult in this country has the vote. We want one person, one vote, nothing less. These men here are traitors ...

(Whitely desperately trying to stop the Young Woman, is motioning to the cameraman, Moon, Singh and Patel. Finally Singh sees him, gets behind Young Woman and knocks her out. She slumps in her chair.)

SINGH To answer your question, we will have no problem. That's small matters. We are so new in the election game, that all this business of parties an' all ...

WHITELY (Whispering) Read what's written down.

SINGH Eh? Oh, yes. (Reads) We will have no problem because we believe we can achieve unity in diversity just as we have in our country with all the different population groups living separately and harmoniously together.

WHITELY Thank you, gentlemen. I wish you success in your ventures. (Fans Young Woman who wakes up) Are you feeling better?

YOUNG WOMAN What happened?

WHITELY You fainted.

YOUNG WOMAN Fainted?

WHITELY Here, let me help you. (Whitely supports her as they walk out.) You really must take better care of yourself.

(Exeunt Whitely, Young Woman, Young Man)

SINGH After that interview, we won't have any more trouble with the Anti's.

PATEL I agree.

MOON Ya, that Dr Hoosen didn't have much to say.

SINGH Congratulations, Moon. You'll win now.

PATEL I agree.

MOON Thank you, thank you.

SINGH Didn't I tell you Whitely will organise it?

MOON Ya, man. I think I'll buy him a Mercedes.

SINGH He got one already.

MOON You gave him already? What you trying to do, Singh? Make us fools?

SINGH No, man. I was just feeling so good, I gave him. Come on, let's go celebrate.

PATEL I agree.

(Lights fade as they leave)

SCENE FIVE

(This scene takes place at the Nelasia polling station. A marquee has been set up, there is loud, cheerful Indian music, big posters of Moon and his rival, Kader. Moon's campaign slogan is most prominent. "Vote for Moon, He'll play your Tune.")

MOON (Looking very worried) Hey, Singh, we got a big problem.

SINGH What's wrong?

MOON The bars are closed and all the bottle stores, too.

SINGH Ya, well this is Election Day.

MOON That's what I mean! This is Election Day so what the hell is going on.

SINGH The bars supposed to be closed on Election Day.

MOON What! Where you get that from?

SINGH That's the way it has to be, man. They do that for their elections, too.

MOON But why? They going to ruin all my chances. I'm finished.

SINGH Why?

MOON I couldn't compete with this Kader and his biryani chow, so I promised everybody a good dop. Now, if I can't provide the dop, what I'm going to do? Hell, man, why they close the bottle stores?

SINGH Voting day, broe. You can't dop and vote; same like you can't dop and drive.

MOON That's a stupid bloody rule. When I'm elected that's the first thing I'm going to change.

SINGH Don't get so worried, man. I got it all organised.

MOON (Hopefully) Ya?

SINGH Ya. There's two cars outside, full up cane and whisky. The voters get a good dop before they come in and then they vote.

MOON Two cars!

SINGH Ya, man, shebeens on wheels.

MOON How you got it organised like that. I didn't even know.

SINGH I was advised.

MOON How come he advised you, not me? I'm the one got to go through with this election?

SINGH I dunno.

MOON What else you give him besides the Mercedes, eh?

SINGH What you mean, man? Look, I'm helping you and you don't appreciate what I'm doing for you. I also got a bus to pick up some old ballies and aunties ... pensioners. They gonna go for a nice ride, catch a nice dop, and then they gonna put a X next to your name. YOUR name ... they all got it written down. I'm doing all this for you and you not satisfied. You don't want my help?

MOON I'm sorry, man. I didn't mean anything.

(Patel runs in)

PATEL The Anti's are coming! The Anti's are coming!

(Enter Young Woman wearing T-shirt with slogan "I WON'T VOTE".)

SINGH What you want here?

YOUNG WOMAN I came to see what's happening.

MOON You came to vote?

YOUNG WOMAN No.

MOON Well, get out.

YOUNG WOMAN I'm not troubling you. This is a public place. I can stand here.

SINGH You didn't read the newspaper. They passed a law two days ago to stop you Anti's from interfering with the election.

YOUNG WOMAN I'm not interfering.

SINGH The law says you can't come near the polling booths and stop people from voting.

YOUNG WOMAN I'm not coming any nearer. I'm not influencing people.

SINGH You got that sign. (Pointing to T-shirt) You can be charged. You not supposed to be picketing.

YOUNG WOMAN I'm not picketing. This design on my T-shirt doesn't say "Don't Vote".

(Whitely, now a policeman, has been observing. He steps in.)

WHITELY You think you're very clever, eh? You are not fooling anybody.

YOUNG WOMAN It's not my intention to fool anybody. I leave that to politicians.

WHITELY I can take you in.

PATEL Ya, take her in. Take her in.

YOUNG WOMAN What for?

WHITELY I've got my eye on you.

YOUNG WOMAN And I've got mine on you.

WHITELY What do you mean by that?

YOUNG WOMAN Exactly what you mean by it.

WHITELY Enjoy life while you can.

YOUNG WOMAN I advise you to do the same

WHITELY (To Singh) If she gives you any trouble, just let me know.

(Whitely leaves to patrol the area. Moon, Singh, Patel wait impatiently for people to come and vote.)

MOON Hey, where's the bloody people supposed to vote.

PATEL Maybe they gone for biryani chow the other side. It's halaal.

MOON Naw man, we got dop. They must come this side.

SINGH Patel, go check that side and see what's happening.

(Patel leaves. Moon paces)

YOUNG WOMAN You know what I like about this place? It's nice and quiet. I can really study here.

MOON You think you too clever, eh? You bloody Anti's put a stop to the people coming. You had no right.

YOUNG WOMAN You told them to vote, why didn't they listen to you?

SINGH Don't worry, they coming. It's just too early. After work, the rush will start.

(Patel returns in a hurry)

PATEL Singh, Singh. There's a busload of ballies. They came by the bus. (Rushes out again)

MOON What they doing here?

SINGH (Rushing out after Patel) The pensioners, man! The pensioners! Coming to vote for you!

(Moon starts fidgeting with voter's roll.)

YOUNG WOMAN (Looking off) So business is picking up. Where did you find all these old people? Been robbing the graveyards?

MOON Shut up.

YOUNG WOMAN Are all these people registered to vote?

MOON Shut up. Go read your book.

(Enter Singh and Patel supporting Young Man as drunk pensioner. Young Man is singing drunkenly.)

MOON Hey, what's wrong? Is he on?

PATEL We couldn't get him out of the car. I thought he was going to finish a whole case.

SINGH Shut up. He's just happy. So happy to be voting, aren't you, old man?

YOUNG MAN Hey, whatsh theesh, my birthaday? (Tries to dance with Singh and then Patel, who joins in.)

SINGH Patel, what the hell you doing!

PATEL (Stopping suddenly) Eh? Oh, Ya.

YOUNG MAN Only on my birthaday, my relatives come; but they don't bring good dop. Cheap stuff, rubbish. You fullas know what I like. Hey, I feel for another shot of that cane. (Tries to move out but is prevented by Singh)

SINGH Come back here.

YOUNG MAN But whersh my old lady? (Calls out) Velliamma, where you my kanna?

PATEL (Trying to get him to the voting booth) Come on Uncle, just go in there and make your mark. Then we'll find Vermicelli for you.

YOUNG MAN Is this the toilet? Ya, I gotta go.

PATEL (Pulling him back from the booth) No, not in there.

YOUNG MAN I gotta go. I gotta go.

(Moon dashes into booth and fetches ballot paper)

MOON Make your mark here. Then you can go.

YOUNG MAN You don't look out, I'll spray you and all your bloody papers. (He lurches off drunkenly.)

SINGH (To Patel) It's all your bloody fault. I told you not to give him so much.

PATEL I couldn't help it. Once he smelt it, he didn't wanna let go.

SINGH (Moving out) Come on. Let's get the others.

(They walk out as lights fade.)

SCENE SIX

(Early evening)

MOON How many votes we got so far?

PATEL We got thirty.

MOON And Kader?

PATEL Bad news, he got thirty five.

SINGH Yes, that dog. You saw what he done.

MOON What he done?

SINGH We should have got forty votes. I made sure. There was forty people on the bus.

MOON Then what happened?

SINGH While we was busy, this Kader came and chooned some of our voters.

PATEL Ya, he asked them if they enjoyed the chow and the bus ride and all. One aunty was so happy, she was almost in tears. She say how nobody ever worry about her, but today she got such a lovely ride and such a good chow. All she have to do for it, is to mark a X somewhere. Then he took her and showed her where to put the X.

SINGH You saw and heard all that and kept quite.

PATEL Well, he was showing her where to put the X.

SINGH Ya, for him.

PATEL For him! The dirty dog. I'll poke him.

MOON What I'm gonna do now. We five votes down. We have to find somebody to vote.

SINGH I sent the bus to the factory. It will bring the workers and this time, I'll stand guard. Patel, go see if the bus came. (Exit Patel) Don't worry, Moon, I'll make sure Kader doesn't get near our voters.

YOUNG WOMAN (Exercising) It's hard to keep awake. When are we going to have some action around here?

(Enter Whitely)

WHITELY You still here. Are you planning something? (Young Woman simply stares at Whitely.) Tomorrow is Guy Fawkes, you know?

YOUNG WOMAN So?

WHITELY You know what I mean. (Young Woman just stares at him.) Don't tell me you don't know what Guy Fawkes is all about?

YOUNG WOMAN He was a bit before my time.

WHITELY Play smart. I'll still get you.

YOUNG WOMAN And you don't even need a reason.

(Whitely goes over to Moon)

WHITELY Let's see. 66,430 registered voters. 65 voted. Hmm. A 10% poll. Not bad. Should increase by tonight.

MOON We must get at least another six votes, otherwise I lose. What I'm going to do?

WHITELY Well, if you lose, it will have been in a fair and democratic election.

(Whitely leaves)

MOON That Whitely doesn't care about me. He doesn't care if I don't come in.

SINGH He hasn't got time to care for each one of us, man. He just happy we stood for election. That proves he is democratic.

MOON Is that what democratic means ... standing for election, getting votes and doing nothing after that.

SINGH Ya, that's what it means.

MOON I thought there was more to it. Don't we have to make laws or something?

SINGH Don't be stupid, man! We can't do that! You can't make laws. You not a vet-ou.

MOON That's not fair. I want to make some laws, too.

SINGH You damn lucky and you don't even know it. Don't you see, man? They do all the work, and we get paid. Isn't that lucka?
(Enter Young Man as Kader)

KADER How y'all doing here?

MOON Fine. Just fine.

KADER But not so good as me, eh?

SINGH We not worried. All our people didn't vote yet.

KADER You expecting more? Ah, y'all haven't got a chance. I got five more votes than y'all. Y'all might as well concede. I'll win here. (To Singh) You and Patel already in, eh? Well, after I win here, y'all must join my party. I'm forming the Nationalist Indian Party.

SINGH Join your party! Why I must join YOUR party?

KADER I want to be Chairman of the SAIC. You must vote for me.

SINGH Why I must vote for you? I can get the Chairman's job.

KADER What you want it for? It's not a job for you. Being Chairman is hard work. You just join my party and everything will be easy for you.

SINGH You up to something. I don't trust you.

KADER Hey, what's the matter with you? I'm trying to do you a favour.

SINGH (Approaching Young Woman)
Hey, girlie, what this fulla wants to be chairman for?

KADER What you want to ask her? She's a woman, what she knows?

YOUNG WOMAN He wants the job because ...

KADER Shut your mouth. I'll have you arrested.

YOUNG WOMAN ... it pays more.

KADER Shut up. Shut your mouth.

SINGH How much more?

YOUNG WOMAN Double.

SINGH Double! So, you want me to join your party to make you chairman so you'll get double! You rogue! You swindler! You won't even get elected. I'll make sure of that! (Chases Kader out.) Moon, we got to get you elected.

MOON Naw, it's no use. No more people is coming to vote.

SINGH You forgetting the workers, man. I sent the bus for the workers. (Patel returns) Ah, here's Patel. Where's the workers? You brought the workers?

PATEL

The bus came back empty. The workers say they not voting.

SINGH They not coming!

PATEL No.

SINGH Even after I promised each one five rand! Maybe I should've given the money before.

PATEL Lucky you didn't. You woulda lost the money and the votes.

MOON I'm finished. I'll pack my things, now. You two will be in the Council. As for me, I don't have to go back to the streets. The fund raising was good. I can open my own joint.

PATEL Hey, man. There must be something we can do.

MOON It's no use. I got no chance.

SINGH Look, Moon, we been together so long, we got to stick together. You got to get in.

MOON (Sadly) No, it doesn't matter.

SINGH Yes, it does! You must get in. I'm counting on you and Patel to elect me chairman.

MOON So you going to help me?

SINGH We need only six votes, eh? I got it. Come here. (They whisper together)

PATEL (Indicating Young Woman) But what about her? Won't she ...?

SINGH She won't know what's happening. Come on, Patel, we got a lot to do.

PATEL (Giggling) We got a lot to do!
(Singh and Patel leave)

YOUNG WOMAN Why all the running around? What's happening? What's all the excitement?

MOON Nobody's running around. Just mind your own business.

YOUNG WOMAN There's something funny going on.

MOON I told you to mind your own business.

(Enter Whitely)

WHITELY (To Young woman) What are you reading?

YOUNG WOMAN Julius Caesar.

WHITELY I don't believe you. Must be some Marxist nonsense. Let's have a look. (Takes book) Ag, it is Julius Caesar. (Reads) "Hence! Home, you idle creatures, Get you home! Is this a holiday?"

MOON It must be a holiday. All the bars and bottle stores are closed.

WHITELY (To Young Woman) So, you read Shakespeare, eh? (Gives book back) What for?

YOUNG WOMAN I'm studying.

WHITELY That's sensible. You spend your time reading Julius Caesar, it will keep you out of trouble.

YOUNG WOMAN But Julius Caesar is a dangerous book, man.

WHITELY Nonsense. It's Shakespeare, isn't it?

YOUNG WOMAN But it's all about politics.

WHITELY Nonsense. It's about the ancient Romans. It's got nothing to do with us.

YOUNG WOMAN
O, Ya! You know how it starts.

WHITELY Yes. Those two ous tells the people to go home because it's not a holiday.

YOUNG WOMAN It's more than that, man. The play starts with the leaders of the workers calling for a boycott ... a boycott of the Baas's festival ...

WHITELY Don't be stupid. They didn't have boycotts in those days.

YOUNG WOMAN Then a group of revolutionaries get together and plan the assassination of the Baas.

WHITELY Shut up. You're talking rubbish. That's just Shakespeare. There's nothing in there about revolutionaries and boycotts. I know that story, man. It's about Julius Caesar who is killed by his good friend, Brutus. Then this other ou, what's his name ... O ya, Mark Antony says, "Friends, Romans, Countrymen, Lends me your ears. I comes to bury Caesar, not to praise him".

YOUNG WOMAN That's after the revolutionaries have assassinated the Baas.

WHITELY Ag, I'm wasting my time with you.

(Singh enters pulling Patel in behind him. They are dressed as women, Singh wearing a hat with a veil to hide his moustache and Patel as a Muslim.)

WHITELY

I think we have some voters here.

(Moon stares and bursts out laughing)

PATEL (Turning to leave) Hey, look how he's laughing. I'm getting out of here.

SINGH Come on, man. (To Moon) You want to give the game away?

PATEL I feel silly. (To Moon) You bleddy stop laughing.

SINGH Come on, man.

PATEL Look, my handbag is not matching my shoes.

WHITELY Get on with it.

PATEL Can't he see my bag is not matching?

(Singh minces up to Moon)

MOON Your name?

SINGH (In a falsetto voice) Mrs David.

MOON First name.

SINGH Mary.

MOON Mary. Right. Now you go in there and vote.

WHITELY Just a minute! Check the ID

MOON ID?

SINGH (Pushing his book at Moon) Here it is.

MOON O, thank you, dear. Hey, that's a nice photo of you. Mine came out rubbish. Let's see Harichandra Singh...

SINGH (Loudly) David. Mary David.

MOON What's wrong with you, man. I can read. It says ...

SINGH (Whispering) Shut up. You gonna give the whole game away ...

MOON Ohhhh, yes! (Very loudly) Mary David. 550550006105 That's right. Now you can go in there and vote. (Looks at Whitely to make sure) Right, go in there.

(Moon turns to Patel)

MOON (Trying to control his laughter)
Your name, please.

PATEL Zulekha Khan

MOON Not Zulekha Bibi? (Patel tosses his head) Okay. Your ID 6001019060103. Right, just wait for the other lady to come out. (Laughs)

PATEL (Hitting him with handbag) What you laughing?

(Singh comes out and Patel goes in. Singh leaves)

MOON Thank you, Mrs Mary.

(Patel comes out and walks off, lady-like and self-conscious. Moon whistles. Patel giggles and runs off.)

YOUNG WOMAN This takes the cake. I can't believe this is happening

MOON You thought it was all over, eh? Like that Kader chap. He thought I couldn't get more voters. Well, he was mistaken. I'm going to win.

YOUNG WOMAN (To Whitely) Aren't you going to stop this charade?

WHITELY You Anti's are only good at name-calling.

YOUNG WOMAN But those two 'women' ...

MOON They came to vote for me. Women can't resist me.

YOUNG WOMAN You won't get away with this.

(Singh and Patel are heard arguing off stage)

SINGH (Off stage) You bloody shit. I'm supposed to go as a Muslim now.

PATEL (Off stage) I don't care.

SINGH (Off stage) Gimme that bloody ijar before I knock your block off.

PATEL (Off stage) My ijar doesn't match your dress.

SINGH (Off stage) Shut up, you fool. It doesn't matter. Give it here.

(During this interchange the Young Woman has been trying to see what is going on off stage and has been prevented by Moon. Suddenly Patel comes running in, skirts hitched up high, followed by Singh)

PATEL Help! Help! He's trying to pull my clothes off!

SINGH (Chasing Patel) Gimme the bloody ijar. (Grabs Patel, pushes him down and struggles to pull off the ijar)

PATEL Don't! Don't! Help. He's pulling it off. Help, he's pulling my clothes off. How can you be so rude?

MOON Hey, Mrs Mary ...

SINGH (Getting ijar and stalking off)
This bloody fool didn't want to give me the ijar.

(Patel jumps up and runs off trying to pull his dress down over his ankles)

YOUNG WOMAN We can't have all this violence at the polling booth. (To Whitely) Aren't you going to do something about this?

MOON Shut up, I got to get four more votes. (Enter Singh in the same dress but with the ijar and a stole) Ah, another voter. Kem chë, Aunty. Come forward. Your name?

SINGH Amina Jazbhai.

MOON ID please. (Looks at Whitely) I didn't forget this time. ID Number 5505
500160005. Same as last time.

YOUNG WOMAN Same as what?

MOON Same as Mrs Mary.

YOUNG WOMAN They can't both have the same number.

SINGH (Whispering) It's not the same, you fool. Change it.

MOON But it is the same. (Moon shows Singh the book) Look here.

SINGH I know! It's my book. You have to change the number.

MOON Eh? Why?

SINGH Just change it. Change it.

WHITELY What's going on there?

MOON Nothing. I made a mistake. I'm changing the number.

YOUNG WOMAN You can't change the number.

MOON That's what I'm telling this fulla. What difference does it make anyway?

SINGH (Whispering) Shut up, you fool. Say you read the number wrong.

MOON I read the number wrong. (Frustrated and aggressive, advances on Young Woman) Anyway, it's none of your business. You Anti's said you didn't want nothing to do with this election. What you doing here? You been hanging round all day.

WHITELY Get on with it!

SINGH (In high pitched voice) If you don't mind, I'd like to go and vote now. Still got to go home and cook.

MOON Yes, yes, my dear lady. Right through there. (Singh goes into booth. Moon turns to Young Woman) Not another word out of you. Just sit there and read your book.

(Singh comes out of booth. The scarf is no longer covering his face and his moustache is clearly visible.)

YOUNG WOMAN That lady forgot to shave this morning. (Singh grabs scarf and runs off)

MOON You stop interfering with the voters. I'm giving you last warning.

(Singh comes back dragging Patel behind him. Patel is dressed in a sari)

SINGH Go on, now. Your turn.

PATEL I can't. I haven't got my earrings.

SINGH Shut up and go in there or I'll cut your bloody bun off. (Singh pushes Patel forward and leaves)

MOON Ah, good evening, Madam. Come to vote, I see. (Pinches Patel's bottom. Patel squeals.) Your name, please.

PATEL Munimah Singh.

MOON Your ID number. (This time he mumbles the number so that Young Woman cannot hear) Straight through there, Mrs Singh.

PATEL (Huffily) MISS Singh!

(Patel goes into booth to vote)

YOUNG WOMAN How many more times do they come in?

MOON Let's see? (Begins to count up and then remembers) Hey, what you talking about? Shut your mouth now.

(Patel comes out. The Young Woman jumps up)

YOUNG WOMAN Excuse me; can I take your picture?

PATEL (Blushing and coy) My picture? What you want my picture? (Smiles and then throws himself about like a model)

YOUNG WOMAN That's lovely. Go to it. (Whitely grabs hold of Young Woman.) Leave me alone. I'm just taking pictures of my aunty.

WHITELY What for?

YOUNG WOMAN My aunt is taking part in the Sari Queen contest.

WHITELY You're coming with me.

YOUNG WOMAN What for?

WHITELY (Picks up copy of Julius Caesar) For being in possession of a banned book.

YOUNG WOMAN But that's Shakespeare.

WHITELY Don't lie. That's a book on communism and terrorism. (Whitely drags Young woman off)

SINGH Come on. Let's go mark up two more ballots.

PATEL You don't want me to change?

SINGH No need now, they all gone.

PATEL That's not fair. I was saving my best outfit for the last.

MOON Got to hand it you, Singh. You too smart. (Singh goes in to cast vote)

(Singh comes back and Patel goes in)

SINGH Well, that's that! You'll win now.

MOON I'm damn lucky. I thought I wasn't going to get enough votes. But thanks God, the voters came.

SINGH Ya, you won by one vote.

PATEL (Coming out of voters' booth)
Ya, my vote!

MOON By one vote, eh? Man, that's unbelievable. It was a close contest. Such a close contest. (Moving forward to audience) But I'm glad the people had faith in me. I hope to prove worthy of their trust.

SINGH Now the election is over, let's celebrate. Patel fetch the dop. Moon, we'll provide the music. But wait. We mustn't forget one thing. Who helped us get where we are today?

MOON AND PATEL Whitely!

SINGH Without him we would have been nowhere. He's our guiding star.

MOON Ya, look how far we travelled by his light. From nowhere to right here.

SINGH All we gotta do is follow him. I feel like taking him some gifts.

MOON Gold!

PATEL Agrabatti!

MOON Sambrani!

(Enter Whitely in a motley of all his costumes. He stands like a god)

SINGH (Garlands him and kneels) Star of wonder!

MOON (Kneels) Star of light!

PATEL (Kneels) Burning Bush!

SINGH, MOON, PATEL (Chanting)
Our Whitely, our Saviour!
Our Whitely, our Saviour!
Our Whitely, our Saviour.

(Music. Disco Diwani. Lights fade as Singh, Moon and Patel dance to celebrate their victory.)

THE END

GLOSSARY

agrabatti	(frankincense)	sathima	(Tamil for True's God)
Amitabh Bachchan	(Indian film star – matinee idol)	shell out	(pay up)
Anti's	(Activists working for the Anti - SAIC Committee of the Natal Indian Congress, chaired by M.J. Naidoo, of the Natal Indian Congress.	skafe	(cigarette)
Asalaamu alaykum	(Muslim greeting "Peace be with you")	slum ou	(derogatory term for a Muslim)
ballies	(old men)	stompies	(cigarette butts)
bhen	(sister)	sulla	(derogatory term for a Muslim)
broe	(brother)	trick	(bewitch with a spell)
burn	(betray, malign)	vet-ou	(white man)
cherrie	(chick)		
chooned	('tuned,' flattered)		
Council	(SAIC, Indian Council) - South African Indian Council, an apartheid structure devised by the government for administration of matters in the Indian community.		
dop	(drink)		
doss	(sleep)		
ek sê	(I say)		
Extras	(Separate Ethnic Supplements put out by English Sunday papers for Africans, Coloured and Indians and sold only in their areas.)		
footsack	(go to hell)		
graaf	(work)		
halaal	(meat purified by prayer granting absolution for the slaughter of the animal)		
hanging	(thirsty)		
ijar	(trousers worn by Muslim women with dress)		
Is he on?	(Is he drunk?)		
kanna	(Dear)		
Kem che	(How are you?)		
larney	(white man)		
lucka	("lekker", swell, nice)		
marchè	(money)		
moer	(kill, murder)		
muti, tagati, umku	(black magic)		
ou	(chap, guy)		
roti	(bread) (derogatory term for a Hindustani)		
Sambrani	(myrrh, incense)		

THE LEADER, 23 APRIL 1982

Biting satire on hobo-kings

BY TREVOR HARRIS

PARTICIPATION in Government-created institutions is the subject of a new satirical play by Dr Muthal Naidoo.

The play, which centres on the campaigning of three hoboes for an 'election', is due to go on stage later this month.

"We are living in a situation where there are so many pretences, so much lies and hypocrisy, I find it extremely disgusting and humiliating, but I wasn't going to sit and cry, I'd rather send it up", Dr Naidoo said of the play.

Written over ten days during the December vacation, the play, titled "We Three Kings", concerns three hoboes who stand for election. Two are returned unopposed and so throw their energies behind the third in his campaign.

The title, Dr Naidoo says, is a reference to a Christmas carol of the same name, which helps provide the ethnic touch characteristic of the type of institution she attacks.

"I've taken three absolute idiots and put them up as leaders of the community," she said.

When Chatsworth playwright and actor, Mr. Krish Swarnivel, last year put on his send-up of the Sale in Save All Indian Curry-Tv, he was subjected to threats and harassment, but, says Dr Naidoo, she is not scared of the same thing occurring.

NO REFERENCE

There is no reference in her play to the Sale or any specific institution. She said that if anyone wanted to make that sort of parallel they were welcome to do so, but that she would not.

The play, she says, "ought to be of interest outside the Indian community, as it has application to all Black communities. Whites, and their attitudes to the farcical 'election', are also dealt with in the play. She had had ideas for the play for some time, but finally put it down on paper in December.

"When I want to write, I take whatever I am obsessed with and try to turn it into a play," she said.

The only "inspiration" about the play was to make the candidates hoboes, Dr Naidoo said.

The problems facing theatre have left their mark on her work. A cast of many actors would have proved an expensive undertaking, so she uses three of the six actors in a host of roles.

"They represent variations on a point of

view," she said. Opposition to the 'election' is portrayed by one actor, the pro-election forced by another, and the system's point of view by a third. Only the three hobo-kings are each portrayed by a single actor.

Dr Naidoo, who is now working with the Upstairs Theatre, is also involved in an Upstairs project of presenting high school set works.

NEW THEATRE

In addition to fostering appreciation of the literature, the project could help create new theatre audiences and interest in professional theatre, and help provide actors with jobs, she says.

"The only way that theatre can become viable is if we try to make this happen. If we believe in it, we have to make it happen."

"We'd like to think of actors as professionals and, in the experience and talent, some could be said to be professional, but they cannot be true professional actors until they can make a living from it."

The major problem, she said, was in trying to create theatre. In the fifties, there was easier access to town, but this was more difficult now.

People lived further away — largely as a result of Group Areas removals — and it was harder to draw them to the theatre.

"Another factor is that there is no venue for a proper theatre. You can't always share halls where you have to try to build sets over the remains of a room from some function or the other. We need a properly equipped theatre."

NEED SUPPORT

"Then, because theatre is a gamble, theatre people need some sort of support and subsidy."

"Because of all this work is sporadic, and you can't build a theatre where you have to make a living for six months and try to work creatively for the other six," she said.

"We Three Kings" will be staged at the Albert Rasmussen Hall at the Central Methodist Church in Aliwal Street from 28 April.

It is initially scheduled to run for a week, with the possibility of this being extended for a further week if response is good.

Then, says Dr Naidoo, it is hoped that they can go on tour around Natal. As yet there are no plans for touring in the other provinces, although she would like to stage the play in Lesotho.

The three hobo-kings are played by Charles Pillai, Baba Pillay and Essop Khan, while Neville Joshi will play the opponents to the 'election', Mahomed Ali and pro-participation role and Etienne Essery the White reactions.



A policeman, played by Etienne Essery, tries to coerce the three hoboes into working for him in a scene in the play. The hoboes are played by Mahomed Ali, Charles Pillai and Baba Pillay. Below: Charles Pillai being apprehended by the policeman in the play.





Laughter is the best medicine

By Marilynne Holloway

MUTHAL NAIDOO has a sparkling command of colloquialisms and her words are well exploited in **WE THREE KINGS**, a farcical look at elections.

The natural language which breezes through her script finds ready response with spectators — most of whom seemed delighted on the night I attended.

The production did so well at the Baumann Hall in Durban that it was transferred to the Hermit Theatre and an extra performance will be given tonight. The new-cast package deal of R6,000 includes a three-course dinner at the restaurant downstairs.

The play opens with three hoboes engaged in typical activities — smoking meat, a dustbin, investigating samples. "I need a ship, bud," one says between coughs.

A young radical (collected University of Durban-Westville type) rushes in distributing "don't vote" posters, and he later confronts a candidate's son. Both of them try to get the hoboes to help.

Enter a gun-wielding cop caricature of the "don't you got a permit" variety. Etienne Essery plays him with an apparent crooked smile and snaky reflexes — he beats everything in sight to touch.

Essery also copes beautifully with other lively paradoxes: the camp Daily News reporter; the snarling announcer from Radio Mouthpiece; and a TV personality trying to manipulate the hoboes into some semblance of responsibility. "No, just read the answers on that sheet, you fool, not the questions!"

The hoboes are given marvellous larger than life energies by Essop Khan, as the knife-toting simpleton, who is campaigning for the return of the caste system and arranged marriages; and by Charles Pillay and Babs Pillay's hoboes adopt drug in when they don suits — they look their parts with terrifying credibility.

During the elections, Khan and Pillay's hoboes also adopt drug in series in cast fake votes with amusing exaggeration.

There are also sly digs at death threats to candidates and the bribery of voters.

This is vigorous propagandist theatre using laughter as a most effective way of exposing political and social ills. Seen purely on the entertainment level, Mr Naidoo illustrates again that she has her finger on the pulse of popular enjoyment. Apart from a few patches where the pace lagsged, I thought her satire both bright, astute and exact.

HERMITY MONDAY HALL, 1982

STAGE: We Three Kings
— Baumann Hall

THE Upstairs Theatre Company — homeless for several months — is back in town at a new venue with the first production of a new play.

The sizeable opening night audience for local playwright Muthal Naidoo's political comedy indicates that the company has retained its following. The warm-hearted response indicates that the Upstairs might well have another winner on its hands.

We Three Kings takes a sly look at the local political scene at a time of elections for what is termed "the Indian cabinet". Dr Naidoo holds up to ridicule the quirks shaping the political animal as well as the system.

In the process, she also takes side swipes at marriage customs, religious rivalries and the caste system among other targets.

Points are made in a light-hearted but direct fashion that reflects a good ear for dialogue. Not all the lines are particularly bright or original but they flew with relative ease.

The humour, too, is often heavy-handed and obvious but it cannot be disputed that it greatly amused the audience. They clearly loved every minute of it.

What passes for a plot centres around three hoboes — the three kings of the title — who are talked into standing for election in the absence of other interest-

Sly dig at local politics

ed candidates.

Their growing awareness that there are far richer pickings in the political arena than in any dustbin they have chanced upon makes for much of the fun as the pace quickens and becomes ever wilder.

Essop Khan, Babs Pillay and Charles Pillay play the trio with a Crazy Gang rest that tends to get a little out of hand at times. There is a tendency to accentuate the laugh lines with antics that are not always relevant.

Support in a wide variety of roles — from police constable to newspaper photographer, radio announcer to political agitator — comes from Mohamed Ali, Etienne Essery and Neville Josie.

The fact that the playwright directed has undoubtedly improved the end product — an entertaining enough evening for the undemanding.

David Coleman

Muthal Naidoo, a doctorate in theatre and drama from Indiana University, USA has left her lecturing and teaching career to spend more time writing plays.

Her latest play, "We Three Kings", a satire on elections is a highly acclaimed stage play, which is directed by Dr Muthal Naidoo and features Babs Pillay, Charles Pillay and Essop Khan as three hoboes, who through some strange twist of fate, become candidates in an election, and the play is a satire of the

system we have in this country.

"We Three Kings" is a Lady Smith Indian Child and Family Welfare Society presentation to be staged at the SDS Hall on October 2. The proceeds will go towards their R60,000.00 building project and work has already commenced on the project.

Luci's Dilemma

I wrote this play in 1982, soon after I had written *We 3 Kings*. It has never been performed. It was originally entitled *Oh God!* But I was warned that that was a breach of some law or the other.

CHARACTERS

Angels
Luci
Mayor
Councillors
Woman
Leader
Spoogoopoo
People (Voices)

SETTINGS OF THE PLAY

The Communications Centre In Heaven
A Street
The Mayor's Office
A Stadium In Soweto.

SCENE ONE

(The scene is in 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 Starship 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 sixteenth 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 hast kept Thy end of the bargain and we joyously fulfil 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 made us aware 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 the groans 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 better shut the whole works down. (Dashes out)

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

(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, education, put up the prices of bread, milk and sugar only when necessary every month ...

ANGEL 1 (Struggling with keyboard)
This is driving me mad. How could they access 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 that sneak transmission simply highlighted the problem.

ANGEL 1 A kind of challenge to the Boss' omniscience, eh? I don't think 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 all 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 has set 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 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 it. I severed the connection.

ANGEL 2 (Checking to see if 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 up their hands 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, waving 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?

ANGEL 2 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 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 all 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 that 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 here. So I let them think the Homelands Policy comes from 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 This is 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 the 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 him. I know how to work your Boss. (Falls on knees) Lord, where is thy compassion? Wilt thou deny a petitioner? (The Angels fall about laughing.)

ANGEL 2 (Indicating Luci) He's been listening to that Dominee too long.

LUCI (To Angels) 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 thunder bursts of laughter) 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 authorised 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 Arrgg! Do you know how frustrating it is talking to one who knows it all? Like talking to your mother-in-law! (Angels 1 and 2 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. You've always had 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 (Yawns) All right. Go ahead.

LUCI The problem is one of over-crowding. There is a serious shortage of accommodation in my place. It's full to overflowing; 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. St Peter's always asleep at the gates.

SECRETARY (Yawns) 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 declares 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 that God stands for?

LUCI Did it ever occur to God, that I deserve the 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 and 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 there for some time.

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?

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 (Shaking head) 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 name's not Gabriel. You're stuck with the job. Hey, how about a trumpet? Would you like me to organise 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 thing over with.

ANGEL 2 All set for take off. 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 TWO

(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!

No, it's a UFO!

A nuclear plant has exploded!

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)

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)

And 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's 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

VOICES (People fall about laughing)

Ha, ha, ha. So it's HIS turn!

Ha, ha, ha. Hey man, what's the gimmick?

GABRIEL (Shoots a bolt of light at people and they freeze) 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 and put in position. Reporter climbs up. Holding mike 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 over and 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? This camera is on you now.

GABRIEL (Ignores request, cameramen go scuttling about)
It is God's intention to come down here and conduct a commission of inquiry into conditions in South Africa.

(People have recovered from their paralysis)

VOICES

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

GABRIEL All those who wish to give evidence are invited to meet 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? Isn't He aware that we have far more suitable accommodation available? Why 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 one of the people) What do you think about God coming to South Africa?

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

REPORTER (To 2) Why do you think God had chosen to make his appearance in Soweto?

PERSON 2 Maybe he's after all the Communists there.

REPORTER Well viewers. This has been a momentous occasion. We cannot even begin to speculate on its significance. The fact that the Lord has chosen to visit South Africa, shows that the attitudes of critics to our country and to the 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 a 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 upward) 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 laugh heartily)

MAYOR Don't be ridiculous! Would you like 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 the 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 3 But if the Blacks find out that we've asked God to change the venue, they'll probably get the Russians to register protests 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 the Councillors get on their knees.)

MAYOR (Getting up) No, this is a bunch of crap!

COUNCILLOR 1 But why?

MAYOR Okay we put in our 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. 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 never would 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 (Jumps 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 swapping 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 swap ...

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 1 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 would want to live there!

MAYOR (Motions them to be quiet)
Ja, Koos, it's the only way ... Yes, 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. ... What are you staring like that for?

COUNCILLORS
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 (Sheepishly) No.

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

COUNCILLORS (Sheepishly) Yes.

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 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 de luxe 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 realise who is coming down here ... Then get the hell on to 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 the new homes available for white occupation in Soweto. Get Immigration on the line. (To Councillor 2) See if you can get hold of Snel Bowman.

COUNCILLOR 1 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 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 Bowman on the line.

MAYOR (To Immigration) Just get on with it. (Switches to Snel Bowman) 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're gonna call it The Milky Way. Why not something like The Paradise? ... You think that's kitsch, huh? ... Well, I'll leave it to you. When do you think it'll 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 2 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 2 (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 2 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 Four?

COUNCILLOR 3 No. 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 Leader)

COUNCILLOR 3 Your worship, the leader of the protesters.

MAYOR Now what's this all about?

LEADER Our houses have been bulldozed. We have been expelled from our homes. When are you going to realise that we are human beings and should not be hounded like animals?

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

LEADER Rubbish. You had no right to do it!

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

LEADER 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?

LEADER I've heard.

MAYOR Well? Isn't that justification enough?

LEADER 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?

LEADER I've heard this kind of crap before. I just want you to know that we are now in a situation of war.
(Councillor whispers in Mayor's ear)

MAYOR Look, we need to discuss this rationally. Please take a seat. (Leader remains standing) I realise that 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.

LEADER Will it accommodate all the people of Soweto?

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

LEADER And what about the others?

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

LEADER Meanwhile they become squatters somewhere.

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

LEADER (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 reorganisation of Soweto.

COUNCILLOR 2 Why don't we get our own Black leaders? The one's we created. There's Yesman Mpimpi and JaMyBaas Spoogoopoo.

MAYOR Okay. See which one is available, brief him and arrange nationwide TV and Radio coverage. Get it done right away.

(Councillors rush off)

(Lights fade)

SCENE FOUR

(TV broadcast. JaMyBaas Spoogoopoo seated at the Mayor's desk)

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 about 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 offering. No people are more blessed than we are. We can say that we 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 Coloured and I won't have to carry a pass. Anytime you need me again, I shall be happy to oblige. Goodday 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 cherubims.

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 Bowman'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 credo. 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 have to do something about that name afterwards!

(They leave. Lights fade)

SCENE FIVE

(The day of God's arrival. Everyone is running around in great excitement. A throne, chairs for dignitaries

etc. have been set up. A choir can be heard singing the hymn 'God the all Terrible')

MAYOR (Mayor signals to Councillor 2) Stop them! Stop that Commie hymn! Tell them to sing 'The Lord's my Shepherd.' (Councillor 2 rushes out. We hear 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 Bowman 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 organised will you?

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

VOICES

Yay! The Lord is coming.

Look at that cloud.

I have never see 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, right up there!

MAYOR (Pulling out binoculars) I can't see anything. Just a cloud.

COUNCILLOR 2 Well, 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. A 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 without being announced. 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?

(There is 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. They look up at the sky.)

COUNCILLOR 1 Do you see anything?

COUNCILLOR 2 A tiny speck but it's not moving.

COUNCILLOR 1 Maybe He's changed his mind.

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 (Looking through binoculars) 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 that's ever been 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 organising 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 believers.

(Exit Councillor 1)

COUNCILLOR 2 We should get the airforce 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 and lights up the path to the throne and forms an aura around a moving figure. The crowd is horrified.)

MAYOR (Jumping up) What is she doing there?

COUNCILLOR 1 How did she get in?

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, move off. Hamba. Voertsek! (Goes up 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 woman) Man, these people are slow! You can't come here. Go home, to your khaya. Wena can't hamba lo side. Hamba lo other side. (Pointing)

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

COUNCILLOR 2 She's sitting on God's throne. (Faints)

COUNCILLOR 1 (Falling on knees) Lord, if Thou seest this, we beg Thy pardon. We didn't anticipate this unfortunate intrusion. We can't make this woman understand. If Thou canst, we'd 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 bleddy 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 his officer) What the hell's wrong with you? Why you bring an empty bucket here?

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, 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 1) 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.

(Councillor checks and sprays 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

(Lights up. 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 say 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 You think? ... Maybe? ... This is a hoax?

COUNCILLOR 1 It's beginning to look like it.

COUNCILLOR 2 But who would pull a dirty trick like this?

COUNCILLOR 1 Terrorists!

MAYOR Terrorists don't have a sense of humour. They don't go in for practical jokes.

COUNCILLOR 1 Communists?

MAYOR No, they don't have a sense of humour either.

COUNCILLOR 2 But what about that Russian plane that was circling above?

COUNCILLOR 1 You mean they hijacked God before He could get here?

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

COUNCILLOR 2 What puzzles me is that Black woman who appeared right 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 on and get her while I calm the crowd. (The Councillors leave. Mayor speaks to crowd.) Mr President, Mr Prime Minister, Honourable Guests, 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 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 Commies need Him more than we do. But we have a lead in the case and we are following it 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 apprehend her?

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

VOICES

That's because she's 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 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 around)
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 his laughter) She (pointing) says ... she's ha,ha,ha,ha,ha, ... she says ... ha,ha,ha ... she's says she's ... ha,ha,ha ... God! She says she's God!

(The whole crowd becomes hysterical with laughter)

VOICES

Oh, God! She's God?

Send her back to Weskoppies!

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 1 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 lighting, flashing red lights and smoke. The Mayor and riflemen fall to their knees. People scream. Lucifer steps forward out of the smoke.)

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

MAYOR Oh my God, it's God!

LUCI Your stupidity will destroy the whole 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 on 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.

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 whole lot.

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

LUCI (Shakes 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 need to find out why free will doesn't work.

LUCI You'll never figure that out. The longer you take to realise that, the more my problem grows. Don't you realise 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 It is. Why can't you see that? Speaking of black and white, why did you come as a Black and a woman?

WOMAN 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, red 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. 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 up 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. When they have settled Luci in the throne, they all 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, the lightning, red flashes and smoke. Your air of command. The masterly 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 O Lord, we are Thy humble sheep.

COUNCILLOR 1 We will serve thee more faithfully, O Lord.

LUCI (Enraged) Stop it! Stop calling on the Lord. Don't you know me?

(Mayor and Councillors prostrate themselves before Luci)

MAYOR Thou art the Lord, our God, forever and ever. Amen. Hosanna 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 a rage) I am not God. Do you understand? I am not God. Stop grovelling 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 and tail and cloven hoofs? I too was made in God's image – just like you, you damn fools!

MAYOR I'm getting totally confused. I give up. I don't know what's happening any more.

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 doesn't go forward.) 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?
(Luci is fuming)

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 Yes. 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 recognise 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 your 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?

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 (Still 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 a blanket when you come. That's all I have place for.

MAYOR You're serious. (Stares in horror) And we went to so much trouble changing Soweto for Him ... er ... 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! How could she? If 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 set up. 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, it's 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, 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 recognise Him and now He is 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 that Black woman, right? (Mayor and Councillor 1 nod) If God were Black, why would He make a deal with us?

MAYOR AND COUNCILLOR 1 He'd go to that Commie Bishop 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 & COUNCILLOR 1 Yes! So?

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

MAYOR & COUNCILLOR 1 Yes! So?

COUNCILLOR 2 We must believe what we know to be true in our hearts. 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 & COUNCILLOR 1 (Pointing in direction of Luci) HE is!

COUNCILLOR 2 We must embrace our true God!

MAYOR Yes, you are right!

COUNCILLOR 1 Are you sure? What if we're wrong?

MAYOR Okay, we'll put Him to a test. I know exactly how!

(Luci returns alone)

COUNCILLOR 2 You didn't find 'God'? (He grins knowingly at Mayor and Councillor 1)

LUCI I think she's gone back up.

COUNCILLOR 1 (Grinning) 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, do you still have doubts?

MAYOR (Smiling broadly) Oh no! No doubts! Just something we want to know.

LUCI (Sighing) Oh, okay.

MAYOR Did 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 Lucifer singing Exultate Jubilate. They pick Lucifer up on their shoulders and place him on the throne. Then they kneel before him)

MAYOR O Lord. We acknowledge Thee as our 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! The ruler of the universe. I can do what 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 alarmed. Luci clutches his head and runs about wildly)

MAYOR Lord, forgive us our sins.

COUNCILLOR 1 Mercy Lord! Mercy Lord! Mercy Lord!

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

LUCI (With a manic laugh) And which I will now destroy!

(He raises his hands and Woman comes running in)

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 LUCI! 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 Look here 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 planet 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 elements 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 free will.

ANGEL 1 The way I see it, if you grant free will that means a 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 a scene of 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 this time.

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 one is munching on an apple. Adam and Eve are a Coloured couple.)

ANGEL 2 A mixed race couple and eating apples! Boy, this is 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 you 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

Coming Home



BY MUTHAL NAIDOO

Ukwi "Coming Home" uHamilton Ncayiyana

ILANGA, AUGUST 26-28, 1982



□ UHamilton Ncayiyana waKwaMashu.

IGAMA elithi Hamilton Ncayiyana, okwamanje kalisho lutho ezingqondweni zabantu abaningi, linjalo nje kalisilo negama ongalibala nawabantu abadumile. Kepha kubadlali kanye nababhali bemidlalo yasesiteji abaphakeme bazo zonke izinhlanga, leligama lalensizwa yaKwaMashu seliqalile ukhlonishwa.

UHamilton wakwa-E.124 KwaMashu, noyindodana yomfundisi, waqala ukukhombisa izimpawu zothando nekhono lokudlala imidlalo yasesiteji esemncane kakhulu, edlala ikakhulukazi ezike-shini zikaSunday School, ebandleni likayise. Namhlanje usengomunye wabadlali baseThekwini ababangwayo, nabaqha-nyukelwa ubuthaphutha-phu yizicelo zokuba bazo- dlala izindawo eziphambili ngisho nasemidlalweni emikhulu enabadlali abaxube izinhlanga.

Njengamanje udlala indawo ebalulekile emdlalweni othi "Coming Home", oqale ukudlala izolo kusihlwa eHermit Theatre maphakathi neTheku. Kulomdlalo uHamilton uyena yedwa owoMdabu phakathi kwabadlali babelungu bodwa. Lomdlalo obhalwe wuqweqwe lombhali, uDr Muthal Naidoo uzodonsa kulendawo zonke izinsuku ngo-8 kusihlwa kuze kube mhla kaSeptember 6. Izinsuku kuphela ongezudlala ngazo ingolwesi-Bili.

Kulomdlalo uHamilton udlala indawo ka "Shlobo", insizwa yoMdabu eqoma ukuya ngqo emizini yabaMhlophe iyobashumayeza ukuba baguquke kulempilo abayiphilayo, nokuba kebahlo- lisise iphutha kulokuhla- lisana kwabo kalukhuni nabantu bezinye izinhla- nga abakhe kulelizwe. Ngesimanga sobunzima anqwamana nabo kulo- mkhankaso wakhe, kune- ziwombe asebenzisa kuzo izindlela namagama ahlaba- yayo, kepha agcine eze wabanqoba.

UHamilton waqala uku- bhala imidlalo yasesteji esafunda isikole. Kepha umdlalo wakhe owaba yimpumelelo enkulu, ngo- thi "Iqili", owaba ngu- mdlalo wokuqala obhalwe nodlalwa ngabaMnyama, ukudlalwa e-Alhambra Theatre eThekwini, nga- lesosikhathi ekwakusa- ngena abamhlophe ku- phela kuyo. Ngaphambi kwalomdlalo wakhe waye- kade edlale indawo ye- nyanga emdlalweni othi "Chief Mamba."

Emuva kukaChief Ma- mba wadlala emdlalweni owawuxube abadlali bezinhlanga ezehlukene owawuthi "Ghandi 2". emuva kwawo wabe ese- thola indawo kwiComing Home. Njengamanje usanda kuqeda ukubhala

umdlalo othi "Big Sized Small", ongesingisi okhu- luma ngezinto umphaka- thi waKwaMashu obhe- kana nazo imihla namala- nga.

-Abangawazisisi uHer-

mitage Street lapho ukho- na, ungumgwaqo omncane, ohlanganisa u-Espla- nade noSmith Street. Uphakathi kukaFenton noParry Road, bude bu- duze naseSupreme Court.



U Pippa Dyer kanye no Hamilton Ncayiyana kwezinye zezigcawu zomdlalo othi "Coming Home".

'Coming Home'

NGOMHLA KA-AUGUST 25, (ngolwesiThathu), kuzoqala umdlalo wasesteki othi "Coming Home", oqukethe umyalezo obaluleke kakhulu kunoma ngumuntu waliphi ibala onesifiso sokubona siguquka isimo sokuhlalisana kwezinhlanga eSouth Africa. Lomdlalo uzoqala eHermit Theatre, ekuHermitage Street, maphakathi neTheku.

Lomdlalo obhalwe ngomunye wababhali bemidlalo yasesteki abahlonishwayo, uDr. Muthal Naidoo, uzodlala kuTheatre zonke izinsuku kusukela ngomhla ka-25 kuze kushaye uSeptember 6. Izikhathi zokungenza kuwo ngu-8 kusihlwa zonke izinsuku.

Awuzudlala nhlobo njalo ngolweziBili.

Umongo wendaba ye-"Coming Home", ungenziwa yomdabu efike ingalindelwe muntu emzini wendoda nonkosikazi wayo, abangabelungu, ngenhloso yokuzotshala umoya wokuba bahlolisise impilo abayiphilayo njengoba bengabelungu eSouth Africa, bayiqhathanise naleyo ephilwa ngabamnyama abasesimweni esifana nesabo, ukuze babone lapho kushayisa khona lempilo yabo.

Lomdlalo udlalwa ngabadlali abathathu vo, owoMdabu oyedwa kanye nabelungu ababili. UHamilton Ncayiyana waKwaMashu, odlala indawo ka"Shlobo" kanye noEtienne Essery noPippa Dyer, abadlala izindawo zikaDavid noSally Kane.



PIPPA DYER and Hamilton Ncayiyana in "Coming Home".

New play for Hermit

TONIGHT Reporter

"Coming Home", a new play by Durban's Dr Muthal Naidoo, whose "We 3 Kings" was enthusiastically received earlier this year, will open at the Hermit Theatre on August 23 for a two-week season.

The play, as in all other works by Dr Naidoo, questions various aspects of South African society.

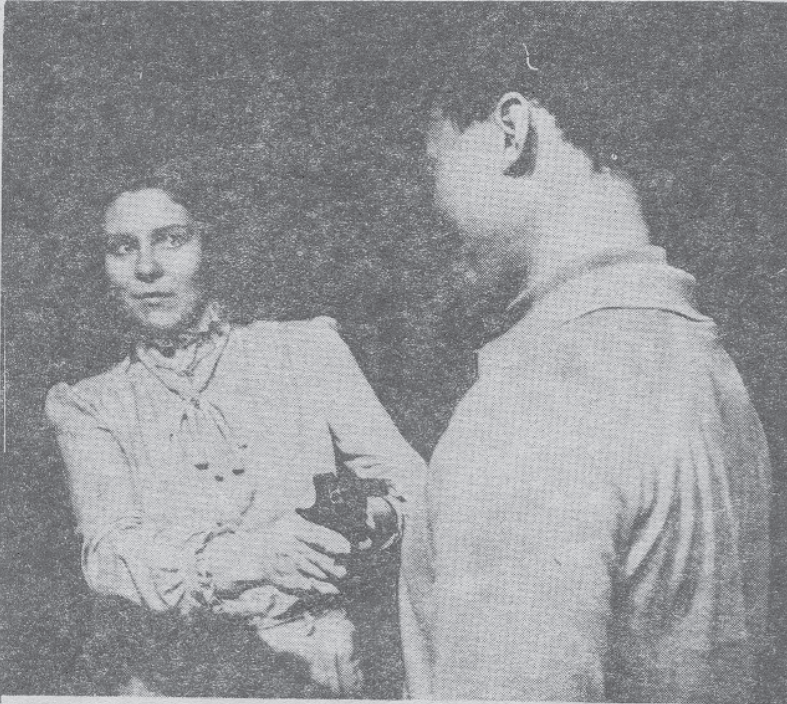
"Coming Home" is about a black vagrant who comes into the home of a white couple and forces them to examine their attitudes towards him. He is able to do this because he does not accept apartheid. Etienne Essery and Pippa Dyer play the white couple, David and Sally Kane, while Hamilton Ncayiyana plays the black stranger.

Of the title of her new play, Dr Naidoo says choosing names has always been a problem for her. "I chose a title that I think sums up the main theme of my play and them I find nobody likes it. I don't seem to be able to come up with something catchy," she told TONIGHT.

"Coming Home" will be presented nightly at 8, except Tuesdays when the theatre is closed, until September 6.

THE LEADER, 6 AUGUST 1982

New play By Muthal



Pippa Dyer (as Sally Kane) and Hamilton Ncayiyana (as S'hlobo) in "Coming Home."

IN a new play to be presented at the Hermit Theatre, a stranger walks into the home of a wealthy couple, and in announcing his intention to stay, gives rise to a confusing and harassing situation.

The fact that he is Black and they are White, initially modifies reactions, but eventually complicates them to the point that feelings, suppressed at the beginning, surface with a vengeance later on.

The play is called "Coming Home" and is by Muthal Naidoo, author of "We Three Kings" and "Of No Account."

The stranger who intrudes into the home of a White couple is played by Hamilton Ncayiyana who appeared in the Upstairs production of "Gandhi". Etienne Essery and Pippa Dyer play the White Couple.

Essery has appeared in "Mango Leaf Magic, and "We Three Kings." Dyer, who has appeared in numerous productions, was most recently seen in "Accidental Death of an Anarchist", "The Restoration of Arnold Middleton" and "Canterbury Tales."

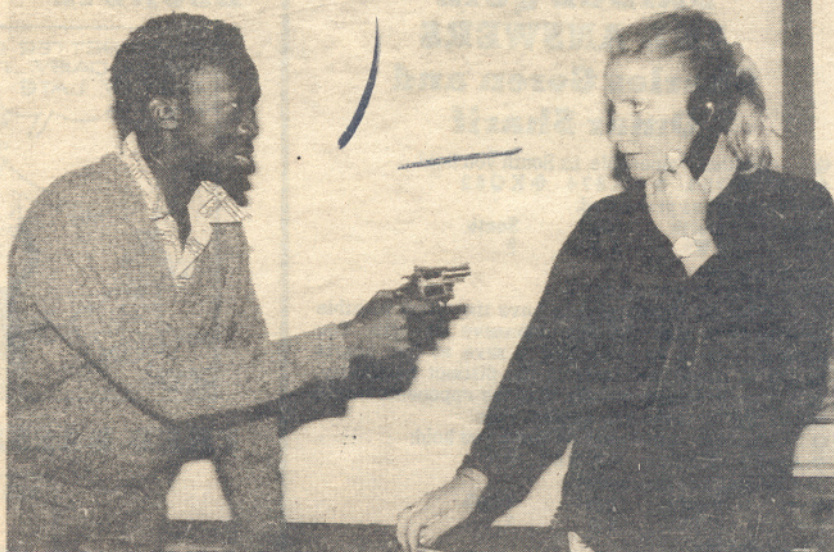
"Coming Home" opens at the Hermit Theatre on August 25 for a two week run (excluding Tuesdays) and ends on Monday, September 6.



Marthy Watson and Tom Swart in Ikhaya lethu at the Laager at the Market 1987

The Star TONIGHT! Friday August 28 1987

214
17



Two one-act plays by Muthal Naidoo — "Nobody's Hero" and "iKhaye-
lethu" — opened last night for a short season at the Laager in the Market.
Featured here in a scene from "iKhayeletu" are Goodwill Mokoena
and Marthy Watson. Tom Swart also stars in this production.

Ikhaya lethu

(Coming Home)

IKHAYALETHU was first produced in Durban under the title COMING HOME and was presented at the Hermit Theatre in August 1982. The play was in two acts. The Detainees' Support Committee of Durban sponsored the first performance.

When the play was revived in 1987 and presented at the Laager, at the Market in Johannesburg, it was cut down to one act and formed part of a double bill with NOBODY'S HERO. The Detainees Parents' Support Committee of Johannesburg sponsored the opening performance. The 1987 version of the play makes reference to the elections in which the Progressive Federal Party lost its status as the official opposition in the white parliament.

THE 1982 CAST, DURBAN:

S'hlobo	Madoda Ncayiyana
David Kane	Etienne Essery
Sally Kane	Pippa Dyer

THE 1982 CAST, JOHANNESBURG:

S'hlobo	Fana Mokoena
David Kane	Tom Swart
Sally Kane	Marthy Watson

The play was revised in September 2000 and edited in February 2008

Setting

The living room of the Kanes' home.

(Enter David and Sally. They have just returned from the polling station and are dispirited)

DAVID The whole bloody thing was a farce. (Pulls off rosette in disgust.)

SALLY Forget it now. Let me fix you a drink.

DAVID What kind of campaign manager am I? It was a safe seat. What the hell went wrong?

SALLY Don't go on about it

DAVID But to be wiped out; we were counting on this seat.

SALLY The party's lost a lot more than one seat.

DAVID The country's lost a damn sight more.

SALLY I'm tired. We've been going over the same ground all night.

DAVID Dammit Sally, this was our moment in time, how could we have let it slip?

SALLY (Moving to window) Don't be ridiculous David, the party was going nowhere.

DAVID How can you say that? We're the only hope left; we're the only ones who can turn this situation around. With people of little faith like you, right in our midst, no wonder we lost.

SALLY Don't take it out on me.

DAVID The country's doomed now.

SALLY (Suddenly) David! That car's out there again.

DAVID Get used to it. That kind of surveillance is going to increase.

SALLY I can't stand it. What do they want with us? We have never acted outside the law. Just because we don't condone their policies, they're watching us. Dammit, we have the right to criticise. This kind of coercion is damwell undemocratic.

DAVID Don't let them get to you. That's what they want. They'll do anything to stop those of us who want change.

SALLY Well, we don't have to put up with this! And they had better be told that. They come here like thieves in the night, sit outside our homes to intimidate us.

Well, I've had enough. (Turning to open window and shouting.) Hey, you there! What ...

DAVID (Putting his hand over her mouth and pulling her away from the window) Sally! Are you crazy? You know they're ruthless! Think of the people who've been shot, inside and outside their homes.

SALLY (Trying to get to window) Let go of me. Damn it. They can't just sit there with impunity. They must know they don't have power over us. I am going to confront them.

DAVID (Preventing her) No, no, you can't go out there. (They struggle) All right, all right. I'll go and speak to them. (Moves to door)

SALLY (Holding on to him) I'll go with you.

DAVID No! No point in both of us getting killed. (He pushes her away.)

(David goes out. Sally rushes to window to watch. Sound of a car moving off.)

DAVID (Coming back) Did you see what happened? They drove off as soon as they caught sight of me.

SALLY I'm sorry. I shouldn't have made you go out there. They could have killed you.

DAVID Darling, you mustn't let these things upset you so much. Come on. Let's go to bed.

SALLY David, I can't take it any more. It's hopeless.

DAVID No it's not. We'll find a way. Look the party suffered a setback tonight but

SALLY The party lost because it's out of step. There's no place for us here any more. We don't belong. Let's leave it to the terrorists on both sides. Let them hack each other to pieces. Let's be sensible. Let's get out. Leave the country.

DAVID You don't mean that. This is our home. This is where we belong.

SALLY That's right. Turn your back on the truth – on me. I'm not having a tantrum, David. I don't want to go on living like this.

(They stand looking at each other. Suddenly there is a loud knocking at the door. They are startled by it.)

SALLY (Runs to window) Have they come back?

(Knocking continues)

DAVID I'd better see who it is. (Goes off stage to answer door.)

SALLY No! Don't go! (Sally, very tense, listens intently)

DAVID (Off stage) I don't understand. Who are you looking for?

S'HLOBO (Off stage) M'fowethu.

DAVID (Off stage) I beg your pardon.

S'HLOBO (Off stage) M'fowethu.

DAVID (Off stage) Where are you going? Wait a minute.

(Enter S'hlobo followed by David. S'hlobo is wearing a blanket and carrying a bundle. He walks in, sets bundle down and begins to fold blanket. As he does these things he is singing softly "Shoshaloza")

S'HLOBO (Bowing to Sally) Sawubona, Miesies. (Sally looks from S'hlobo to David)

SALLY Sawubona. (To David) What's going on?

DAVID (Shrugging) I don't know. I don't think he understands English.

S'HLOBO (Looking around appreciatively) It's good to be home.

SALLY I beg your pardon?

S'HLOBO (Sitting down and making himself comfortable) It's good to be home.

DAVID (Bemused) Home? What are you talking about?

S'HLOBO I'm very tired. I have been travelling so long.

SALLY But this is not your home. (Looks at David) You don't work for us.

S'hlobo (Laughs heartily) No, I don't work for you.

SALLY (Beginning to smile) Have you come to see Beauty?

S'HLOBO Beauty?

SALLY She doesn't work here any more. She left. I don't know why.

S'HLOBO Oh, your maid! (Laughs again) No, I don't want to see Beauty.

SALLY Well, there's no one else. (Looks to David for support) Oh, are you looking for work?

(S'hlobo bursts out laughing again)

DAVID (Laughing uncertainly) At this hour?

S'HLOBO (Continues to make himself at home) This is very nice. Very comfortable.

DAVID Are you sure you've come to the right place?

S'HLOBO O yes.

DAVID Are you looking for David Kane? I'm David Kane.

S'HLOBO (Shakes David's hand) Very pleased to meet you. (Offers to shake hands with Sally)

SALLY (Perplexed shaking hands) Sally Kane.

S'HLOBO I am S'hlobo. I like what you have done here. And the garden ... the garden is perfect.

DAVID Yes ... it is nice, isn't it?

S'HLOBO I had a good look around. The ancestors are pleased.

SALLY Ancestors?

DAVID Look, are you sure you want to see me? David Kane? (Slowly and clearly) DAVID KANE?

S'HLOBO Oh, I didn't forget. David Kane (Points to David) and Sally Kane (Points to Sally). Ahh! Maybe you forgot my name. S'hlobo. (Slowly and clearly) S'HLOBO.

DAVID Mr S'hlobo, I think there's been some misunderstanding.

S'HLOBO Oh no. Everything is all right.

DAVID No, I mean ... I don't understand what's going on.

S'HLOBO (Surprised) You don't?

DAVID (Puzzled) No. Please explain.

SALLY What my husband wants to know is, why have you come here?

S'HLOBO (Even more surprised) You don't know!

SALLY (Beginning to smile) No, we don't.

S'HLOBO (Shaking his head) That is very strange. You don't know.

DAVID Please tell us.

S'HLOBO (Smiling, looking straight at David) It is so simple. I am waiting for my brother

DAVID Your brother?

S'HLOBO (Smiling) Yes.

DAVID Who is your brother?

S'HLOBO (Laughing) Now you are making fun of me.

DAVID (Confused) What do you mean? Do I know your brother?

S'HLOBO (Laughing) You can't fool me. I won't fall for your tricks. Now tell me, where's the bathroom?

SALLY The bathroom?

DAVID Look. I really don't know what's going on. Will you please explain?

S'HLOBO You skellum. You're just pulling my leg.

SALLY Wait! I know. Maybe somebody sent him to us. Were you given this address?

S'HLOBO Oh, I didn't need an address.

SALLY Then that's it, you see.

S'HLOBO No, I don't see.

SALLY (To S'hlobo) You don't have an address, so you don't know if you're at the right place.

S'HLOBO I'm in the right place. Now stop playing games. I'm going to have a wash. Don't worry, I'll find the bathroom. (He leaves to find the bathroom)

(David and Sally look at each other and despite themselves are amused.)

SALLY The man's crazy. Why did you let him in?

DAVID I had no choice. He just pushed past me.

SALLY What are we going to do with him? You'll have to find some way to get rid of him. (Goes over to bundle) And look at this – right in the middle of our living room. (She steps back from it suddenly)

DAVID What's the matter?

SALLY Why has he left it here? (She looks at David) He's up to something. He's obviously putting on an act. He could be dangerous.

DAVID What are you talking about?

SALLY We don't know what's in there, (Pointing to parcel) do we?

DAVID You're letting your imagination ...

SALLY We'd better get it out of here. I don't want to take any chances.

DAVID You're being ridiculous.

SALLY What if he's one of those people who watch the house?

DAVID Oh Sally! He's not an SB. (Goes to inner door and calls) Mr S'hlobo. Hello there, Mr S'hlobo. (Waits, then turns to Sally) Why doesn't he answer?

SALLY He's probably made his escape out the back way. Let's get out of here.

DAVID You're being silly. (He approaches bundle)

SALLY (Pulling him back) Don't go near it.

DAVID Let go of me. It looks harmless enough. (Reaching for bundle) I'm sure this ...

SALLY (Pulling him away) Don't touch it! It may explode.

DAVID Calm down, for goodness sake.

SALLY We have to get it out of here. (She gets S'hlobo's stick) Here use this.

(David picks up bundle on end of stick and moves towards door)

SALLY (Dashing ahead to open door) Be careful David. Not so fast. You'll drop it.

(S'hlobo, towel draped around his neck, enters and watches unobserved for a moment and then bursts out laughing. David startled drops bundle)

S'HLOBO What are you doing with my bundle? (Picks up bundle) It's quite clean. You can't put it outside. I need it in here. (Laughs) It's the best I could do for a travelling case. (Opens bundle and pulls out things, mugs, billycan, packets of tea and sugar and arranges them round the fireplace.)

SALLY What are you doing?

S'HLOBO Making tea. Will you join me?

SALLY You're going to make tea there?

S'HLOBO Don't worry, I'm used to it. I'll make a fire, hang up my billycan and we'll have tea in a jiffy. All I have to do is get some water. I have tea (Shows packet) ... sugar. No milk though. That's a luxury.

SALLY You can't make tea in there.

S'HLOBO Hmm? Well, then I shall have to go outside. Tea will be a little delayed. (Starts to move off)

DAVID There's no need. Sally will make us all some tea.

SALLY What are you doing? Do you know what time it is? Do you want him to stay?

DAVID What harm is there in giving him a cup of tea before he goes?

S'HLOBO (Suddenly remembering)
Of course! How stupid of me. You have a kitchen. You must forgive me. I'm so used to camping out, even in towns. I forgot all about kitchens. (Picks up things) Don't worry, I'll find the kitchen.

DAVID (Stopping him) No, you sit down. Sally, make some tea for Mr S'hlobo

SALLY I don't believe this.

DAVID (Softly to Sally) Go on. I'll try to get rid of him after that.

SALLY (Whispering) Did you hear what he said about camping out? I think he's a terrorist.

DAVID (Ironically) Yes, and he walks about with bombs in his bundle.

(Sally goes off in a huff)

S'HLOBO (Offering tea and sugar) Do you think she will need these?

DAVID No, no. Put them away. You'll need them on your travels.

S'HLOBO No, I won't. I've come to the end of my journey.

DAVID Oh, you plan to live in this city?

S'HLOBO (Laughs) Oh yes.

DAVID After you've had your tea, I'll be happy to drop you off wherever you want to go. If you need any money ...

S'HLOBO Money?

DAVID Yes, if you've just come in from the country, you probably need some help. I don't mind ...

S'HLOBO But I'm waiting for my brother.

DAVID Of course, of course. And he'll provide for you. Well, if you want me to take you to your brother, I'll be happy to do that. Where does he live?

S'HLOBO You don't know?

DAVID (Puzzled) No. Do you want me to help you find him?

S'HLOBO There's no need.

DAVID (Stares at S'hlobo) You can't wait here, you know.

S'HLOBO I have to.

DAVID (Examining him closely) Wait a minute ... there was an item on the news ... Are you on the run? (Pause) You are, aren't you?

S'HLOBO (Getting up) Only to the kitchen. That tea is taking too long.

DAVID (Blocking his way) You are. You're on the run and so is this brother of yours.

S'HLOBO Do you think Sally knows how to make tea? Perhaps I ought to give her a hand.

DAVID According to the news, some terrorists were

shot down today. (S'hlobo goes back to his bundle and gets billycan) Stop fidgeting with those things.

S'HLOBO But I want tea.

DAVID Stop pretending. You know what I'm talking about. The police didn't get all of them. Two terrorists escaped.

S'HLOBO Excuse me; I am going to fetch some water.

DAVID (Prevents him from moving) Your "brother", is he all right?

S'HLOBO You are being quite mean, you know. I'm thirsty. (Pulls bread out of his bundle) This will have to do. (Offers David) Would you like some?

DAVID No ... thank you.

S'HLOBO It's a bit hard. Would be better with tea.

DAVID You're not going to put me off, you know. You are involved in the bombings, aren't you?

S'HLOBO (Casually) So are you.

DAVID What! Because you've come here? (Goes to look out of window) Were you followed? (S'hlobo gets up suddenly) Where are you going?

S'HLOBO (Fetching a potjie pot he has just seen) If I can't make a fire in there (Pointing to fireplace) this pot will have to be my stove.

DAVID You can't do that. (S'hlobo lights some newspaper in the pot. David rushes forward to stop him.) Stop, are you trying to burn the house down? (Grabs hold of pot)

S'HLOBO (Trying to get pot back) Don't worry. I'll be careful.

DAVID Don't be ridiculous. Let go. Let go of the damn thing.

S'HLOBO I just want to boil some water. It won't take long.

DAVID Let go, you fool, let go!

S'HLOBO No, you let go!

(Sally bursts in pistol in hand)

SALLY David, I've got him covered. Call the police. I heard what you said about the bombings.

(S'hlobo gives up the struggle with David who puts pot away. S'hlobo comes to Sally pretending she is holding a tea tray in her hand and takes imaginary tray from her.)

S'HLOBO Ah, so our tea has arrived, at last.

SALLY (Nervously) Keep back ... or I'll shoot.

DAVID Sally, he just wanted to...

S'HLOBO (Pretending to pour out tea. Offers Sally a cup) Your tea. (She stares at him) You don't want tea?

SALLY This is not a joke. I will shoot, you know.

S'HLOBO (Pretending to drink tea) Ah, now I feel better. Thank you.

SALLY David, he's trying to trick me. Don't just stand there. Help me.

DAVID Sally, put that thing away. There's no need.

SALLY But David, he tried to blow us all up. I saw the smoke.

DAVID Put that away. Fix yourself a drink or something.

SALLY (Putting pistol down) I hope we're not going to regret this. (She spins on S'hlobo) Why have you come here? What do you want from us?

S'HLOBO (Examining liquor cabinet) Here, let me help you.

SALLY Damn it. Get away from there. I will pour the drinks in my house.

S'HLOBO Fine. I'll have a brandy.

SALLY David, do something. Get this man out of here!

DAVID Sally, calm down. He's waiting for one of his comrades and he'll go as soon as he comes.

(S'hlobo pours himself a drink and relaxes)

SALLY (Turning on S'hlobo) You think you're safe here, do you? Well, we're being watched, you know. You've chosen the wrong house.

DAVID That's true. We're being watched.

S'HLOBO It makes no difference?

SALLY You can't wait here. Damn. I've had enough of this. Take your things and get out. (S'hlobo doesn't move) David, do something. This man is taking advantage of us. (Turns to S'hlobo) Listen, if you don't get out of here right now, I'm calling the police.

S'HLOBO Where do you keep your books? I think I'll read a little before I turn in.

SALLY This is not a game. I said, get out!

S'HLOBO (Searching through books)
Something on South African history ...

SALLY (Looking for pistol) I told you to get out. Now get out before I ...

S'hlobo (Holding out pistol) I think you're looking for this.

SALLY Thanks. What the ... you're trying to confuse me. It won't work. (Points pistol at him) Get out.

S'HLOBO I'm very tired. I can see I have a long wait. I think I'll take a nap. (Pulls out blanket, spreads it in front of fireplace and wraps himself in it.)

SALLY David, this is the limit. Aren't you going to stop him? (She pulls blanket off S'hlobo, grabs his things and throws them out the front door.) Now get out.

S'HLOBO (Laughs) You're a spunky little woman. You remind me of my mother.

SALLY Your mother?

S'HLOBO Yes. My mother was a feisty woman. She died at Sharpeville, you know. I was still a little piccanini then. One moment she was waving her passbook, dancing and singing. The next, she was reeling. I thought it was part of the dance. She fell right over me. That's what saved me. I didn't realise she was dead until I felt her warm blood oozing over me.

SALLY This is emotional blackmail and it won't work either. Now get out of here before I call the police.

DAVID Pick up your things and I'll take you wherever you want to go. I'll just get my coat. (He goes to get coat)

(S'hlobo goes out. Sally slumps into a seat, leans back, eyes closed. S'hlobo returns with his things and sets them up while Sally stares incredulously. He wraps himself up in his blanket and lies down again.)

SALLY (Screaming) David! David! (She rushes over to S'hlobo and begins to pull at his blanket.)

DAVID (Rushes in, sees the struggle with the blanket and attacks S'hlobo)
Let go of my wife! What the hell are you doing? Take your hands off her. (They struggle.)

SALLY Throw him out, David. Throw him out.

(S'hlobo gets free and stands ready to defend himself.)

S'HLOBO Keep away from me. I don't want to hurt you.

David
Don't threaten me. You attacked my wife.

S'HLOBO I did not. Ask her.

DAVID I don't have to. I saw what was going on.

S'HLOBO She attacked me.

SALLY He went out and brought all his things back in again.

DAVID You get out of here. We've had enough of this nonsense.

S'HLOBO I can't go. Not until my brother comes.

SALLY (Going to telephone) There's only one thing to do. (Picks up phone) I'm calling the police.

S'HLOBO Don't do that.

SALLY You've had your chance.

S'HLOBO Kane, tell her not to do that.

SALLY (As she dials) Oh, you're worried, are you?

S'HLOBO Mrs Kane, put the 'phone down.

SALLY (Into 'phone) I want to report ...

(S'hlobo moves swiftly, rips 'phone out of her hand and cuts line. Sally screams. David lurches at S'hlobo but stops seeing the pistol in S'hlobo's hand.)

S'HLOBO (Raging like a wounded bull) Ahhh! Look at what you have done! You should be ashamed of yourselves.

(Sally and David are astonished and afraid)

SALLY He's mad.

S'HLOBO Do you see what you've done? You've turned me into a savage. You terrify me.

SALLY Please, don't kill us.

S'HLOBO Kill you! You are the killers.

SALLY What is he talking about?

S'HLOBO I look at you and I despair. I feel helpless. Thank God, I am not alone. The ancestors will help me. They will know how to deal with you. (Calls on ancestors) Ancestors, I call on you. Help me. Show me what I must do. Spirits of our people, help me for I have felt the touch of death upon me. (He goes into a trance)

DAVID Don't be afraid, Sally.

SALLY Why is he staring like that?

DAVID I think he's in a trance.

SALLY Let's get out before he comes to.

DAVID But this is our house.

SALLY Come on, David!

(They move cautiously past S'hlobo to the door. S'hlobo remains motionless. They come back after a few moments.)

DAVID Damn! When did he lock the door? And where's the key?

SALLY He must have it on him.

DAVID Let's try the back way.

SALLY (Pointing to pistol in S'hlobo's hand) The pistol. Get the pistol.

(David comes forward and reaches out to take the pistol)

S'HLOBO (Still motionless and in a hollow voice) Stop Kane!

(David stops, startled. Sally flings a cushion at S'hlobo. David tries to get the pistol, S'hlobo knocks him down, then stands over him, pistol pointed at his head.)

DAVID What are you waiting for?

S'HLOBO I'm sorry about this gun. But it's the only way I can make you hear me. Go and sit over there. (Motions to Sally) You too.

(They sit. S'hlobo walks about regarding them thoughtfully)

S'HLOBO The ancestors have spoken to me. They say you have been bewitched.

SALLY Is he going to kill us?

S'HLOBO No, I am going to restore you. The ancestors have shown me how.

SALLY What does he mean?

DAVID I don't know. Perhaps, it's some kind of ritual.

SALLY You mean, like a blood sacrifice.

S'HLOBO We are going to start over again. (Sally and David are puzzled) Only this time, I shall be the host. You will be the guest who comes knocking on my door. (To David) Now go to the door. (They stare at him.) Move! (Sally and David get up to move to the door. To Sally) Not you. You stay there.

SALLY David ... I want to be with you.

DAVID Just play along Sally, until we can figure out what to do.

S'HLOBO (To Sally) You sit here. You can play hostess.

SALLY Why should I? This is your game, not mine.

S'HLOBO
For now, you are the hostess.

SALLY And you're the host, I suppose. I should have known. That is all you've wanted all along.

DAVID Sally!

SALLY I know what's going on in the mind of this ...

S'HLOBO (To David) Go to the door. (David does so) Now pretend you are knocking. (David knocks. S'hlobo goes to him and pretends to open the door.) Hau, my brother, I see you are travelling. You look tired. Please come in. (Pretends David is responding and listens intently) You want to rest for a few minutes? Hau, you are very welcome. (Listens again) You are cold and hungry? We have plenty of food. Come and sit by the fire.

(David stands where he is.)

SALLY David, don't just stand there. (David comes to sit next to her)

S'HLOBO Ah, you see how my sister welcomes you. She will bring you some refreshments. Go, my sister, bring our brother some beer. (Sally just stares at him) You must forgive my sister. She has lived too long in the city. She has forgotten our ways.

DAVID Go on, Sally.

SALLY You want me to take part in this charade?

DAVID What does it matter? Get me a drink. I could use one.

(Sally gets David a drink)

S'HLOBO My sister, you have forgotten my drink. Our brother cannot drink alone.

SALLY This is ridiculous. If you wanted a drink, why didn't you just say so?

DAVID Oh, give him a drink.
(Sally gets S'hlobo a drink)

S'HLOBO Thank you, my sister. Now go and prepare a meal for our brother.

SALLY What!

S'HLOBO My brother is hungry.

SALLY (To David) Now what am I expected to do? Knock up a meal at this god-forsaken hour? How far do we go with this game?

DAVID I don't know. I don't know.

SALLY Look at you, just sitting there. If you would do something, perhaps we could get out of this. But all you want to do is humour this madman. Well, I'm not cooking at this hour of the night.

S'HLOBO (Pretends to take food from her and sets it on the floor in front of David) Ah, do you see how my sister welcomes you. As you see we have killed the fatted calf. (Pretends to listen to Sally) Yes, thank you my sister. We must make our offering to the ancestors. Thank you for remembering the ancestors. (S'hlobo pretends to take utensils from her and goes through ritual of offering to ancestors.) Now we can eat. (Mimes eating with relish) Don't hold back my brother, the meat is well prepared.

(Smacks his lips) My sister has honoured you.

SALLY Oh, shut up. Shut up, you crazy fool.

S'HLOBO Yes, you are quite right, my sister. My brother would like more beer. (David hands his glass to Sally who snatches it and sets it down angrily.)

SALLY Stop calling me your sister. You are nothing to me

S'HLOBO The ancestors are pleased with you my sister. Come, my brother, eat.

SALLY Go on, David, eat! (David reaches down to take imaginary meat. Sally becomes even more furious. She kicks at imaginary food.) Damn you and damn your ancestors. Damn them!

(S'hlobo grabs hold of Sally who screams. David leaps forward but is stopped by the pistol.)

SALLY Let me go. Let me go. David...

DAVID Let go of her.

S'HLOBO Keep back. Go on, get back. (David backs off.)

SALLY Help me, David.

DAVID He's got the pistol trained on me.

S'HLOBO (To David) Sit down. I am not going to harm you or your wife. But your wife has made the ancestors angry. She will have to humble herself before them.

SALLY Don't believe him, David. Don't let him do anything to me.

S'HLOBO (To Sally) You must respect the spirits of the house.

SALLY There are no spirits in this house.

S'HLOBO You still do not feel their presence, but they are here.

DAVID Listen, this game has gone far enough.

S'HLOBO This is not a game. (To Sally) Your part was a game. You didn't play it well. (Forcing Sally to her knees) Now, bow down before the ancestors and ask for forgiveness. (Takes sangoma's whisk from wall and hands it to David) Now dance around her and make the whisk talk.

DAVID No.

S'HLOBO Do as I say. It is the custom.

DAVID It's not my custom.

S'HLOBO Isn't it your custom to atone for wrongs?

DAVID Not like this.

S'HLOBO You'll do it in the way the ancestors can accept.

DAVID Your ancestors, not mine.

S'HLOBO The spirits protect all who live in the house. You cannot reject them. Their benevolence is freely given. Now take the whisk and make it talk.

(David picks up the whisk and shakes it.)

S'HLOBO That's it. Make it talk. Now dance. (S'hlobo beats out a rhythm on a drum that is also part of the decor). Now say after me, "Spirits of the Dead," ... Go on, say it.

DAVID & SALLY (Tentatively) Spirits of the Dead

S'HLOBO Forgive me.

DAVID & SALLY Forgive me.

S'HLOBO I have offended you.

DAVID & SALLY I have offended you.

S'HLOBO It was my ignorance.

DAVID & SALLY It was my ignorance.

S'HLOBO I honour you.

DAVID & SALLY I honour you.

S'HLOBO I honour you.

DAVID & SALLY I honour you.

S'HLOBO I honour you.

DAVID & SALLY I honour you.

SALLY (Rising in a trance-like dance)
I honour you. I honour you. I honour you. I honour you.
I honour you.

DAVID Sally you don't have to go on with it.

SALLY (Still dancing) I honour you. I honour you. I honour you.

DAVID That's enough now. You're making a fool of yourself

S'HLOBO Let her alone, my brother. She is communing with the spirits.

DAVID Sally, will you stop it.

(Sally slowly comes to the end of her dance as S'hlobo stops drumming.)

S'HLOBO Do you feel better my sister?

SALLY (Quite relaxed) Yes, it's very strange, but I do feel better.

S'HLOBO You have heard the ancestors.

SALLY That beat. I feel it inside of me. It's a release.

DAVID (To Sally) Snap out of it Sally.

SALLY I feel strangely free.

DAVID Sally, we're hostages.

S'HLOBO Sit down, David. Relax.

SALLY I'm free. I feel released. I feel my energy flowing.
(Sally stares strangely at David)

DAVID Why are you staring at me like that?

SALLY Is that really you?

DAVID What do you mean?

SALLY Why do you look like that? Have you always looked like that? (She touches his face and gasps with horror.)

DAVID For goodness sake, Sally.

SALLY You don't look ... you don't feel, real.

DAVID What's got into you?

SALLY (Goes to touch S'hlobo) At least you are real.

DAVID Sally, come and sit down. (He approaches her.)

SALLY (Screaming and running away from him) Keep away from me. Keep away.

DAVID Stop it. (He goes after Sally) What's the matter with you?

SALLY No, keep away.

DAVID (Coming close to her and whispering) What are you doing? Are you trying to throw him off guard?

SALLY (Hiding behind S'hlobo) Keep him away from me.

DAVID What have you done to my wife? She's acting crazy. What the hell is going on here?

(After a silence in which David stares at S'hlobo and Sally, he gives up and sits down.)

SALLY (Coming very close to S'hlobo) Mr S'hlobo, what is your name?

S'HLOBO S'hlobo.

SALLY No, I mean your first name.

S'HLOBO I am just S'hlobo.

SALLY S'hlobo. S'hlobo. You have such strength, such power. You make me feel safe.

S'HLOBO It's just the gun.

SALLY I like the way you hold it. (Runs her hand over his)

S'HLOBO Are you trying to get it away from me?

SALLY Don't you trust me, now? Can't you feel how I feel about you?

S'HLOBO You're a clever woman. I think you're trying to throw me off my guard. Isn't she, David?

DAVID Sally, don't go on with it. He's not fooled.

SALLY (To S'hlobo) This has nothing to do with David. He belongs to some shadow world in a time before I was born. I love you, S'hlobo.

DAVID Sally, that's enough.

(Sally leans forward to kiss S'hlobo who withdraws from her)

SALLY You don't believe me. All right, I'll prove it to you.
(She goes off to her bedroom)

S'HLOBO (Examining the room) I don't like the way this place is built. We're going to have to change it.

DAVID (Coming up to him) To accommodate you, I suppose. You think you have Sally in your power, don't you?

S'HLOBO Why did you build it like this?

DAVID She's too clever for you, S'hlobo

S'HLOBO (Examining the African art objects) I suppose she chose these. The ancestors must have been talking to her. This is a shield of my people. And these drums – you would never have chosen these.

DAVID Why do you say that?

S'HLOBO You don't hear the ancestors.

DAVID (Laughs) So much for your psychic powers. I chose all these things.

S'HLOBO These are just curios to you.

DAVID You know nothing about me.

S'HLOBO Oh, so these mean something to you.

DAVID Yes they do. But you wouldn't understand.

S'HLOBO (Points to a shield) Does this have a special meaning for you? (Waits)

DAVID I don't understand the old tribal connections but I see the new ones and they include me.

(At this point, Sally enters in tribal dress. She is carrying a tea tray. She dances in, singing an African song.)

SALLY Well, S'hlobo, what do you think of my outfit? (She models the dress) This is the dress of a daughter of Africa. Do you like it, S'hlobo?

DAVID What are you doing, Sally?

SALLY I am an African woman.

DAVID You don't need tribal dress to prove that. Even S'hlobo here is not decked out in tribal dress. (Approaching her)

SALLY (Backing away from him) Don't touch me, David. I don't belong to you any more. This is how I shall dress from now on.

DAVID You're making a fool of yourself.

SALLY The only fool here is you. (Showing off her dress) Well, S'hlobo? What do you think?

S'HLOBO It is beautiful. You make me feel welcome at last.

SALLY Let's have tea. (To S'hlobo) Milk and sugar?

S'HLOBO Thank you.

(Sally pours tea for S'hlobo)

S'HLOBO What about David?

SALLY He's not one of us.

S'HLOBO Why do you say that?

SALLY Forget about David. Tell me, can you accept me now?

S'HLOBO But what about David?

SALLY This has nothing to do with David. I'm so glad you came. I didn't realise how much I needed you.

DAVID What do you mean Sally?

SALLY (Unaware of David) I realise it now. I have always wanted you. My life has been empty, caught up in a world of make-believe. In you, I see a new life for me.

S'HLOBO Mrs Kane ...

SALLY Don't you find me attractive?

S'HLOBO You are beautiful, my sister.

SALLY Then kiss me.

S'HLOBO You are David's wife.

SALLY I don't care about him any more. Tell me you love me.

S'HLOBO You are my sister.

SALLY Tell me you want me.

S'HLOBO You are my sister.

SALLY Don't deny what you feel for me. You have been reaching out to me ever since you entered this house. Don't pretend that you don't want me.

S'HLOBO I have been reaching out to you and to ...

(Sally cuts him off in mid sentence as she leans forward to kiss him.)

SALLY I knew it. I love you. I love you.

S'HLOBO (Restraining her) No Sally. You are deceived.

SALLY No, no. There is a bond between us. I felt it the moment you walked in here. (S'hlobo holding her off) You don't want me? I thought ... (Staring at him for a moment) I have made a fool of myself.

S'HLOBO No, you are my sister and I love you as a sister.

SALLY (Very upset) I've made a fool of myself.

DAVID Don't blame yourself, Sally. This is a crazy situation.

SALLY (Not hearing David)

I don't want to go on in the old way. (She flings herself at S'hlobo) I need you to show me the way.

DAVID (Trying to pull her away)

Sally, you're hysterical. You don't know what you're saying or doing.

SALLY S'hlobo you can't abandon me now.

(Sally clings to S'hlobo who tries gently to free himself. David tries to pull them apart. In frustration David picks up the gun.)

DAVID Stop this now or I'll shoot.

SALLY (Standing in front of S'hlobo)

Go on then, shoot.

DAVID Sally get out of the way. This has gone far enough. (To S'hlobo) Either you get out or I'm taking you to the police.

S'HLOBO We have to talk.

DAVID It's too late for that now.

SALLY No it's not.

(Sally dashes over to grab gun, struggles with David and suddenly stops and stares first at David, then at S'hlobo.)

SALLY David? What's going on here? (Examines her outfit) Where did this come from?

DAVID (To S'hlobo) S'hlobo, leave quietly and there won't be any trouble.

S'HLOBO I am here to stay.

DAVID Don't force me to call the cops.

S'HLOBO You can't call the cops. And I can't leave. You know that. I have to wait for my brother.

DAVID Well, it looks like he's not coming.

S'HLOBO He must. There is no hope without him.

DAVID That's too bad. Now pick up your things and leave.

S'HLOBO I'm not leaving.

DAVID (Becoming agitated and shaking gun) Look, I don't want to use this thing. Please leave quietly.

(Silence. S'hlobo approaches David)

DAVID Keep back, keep back, or I'll shoot. Do you want me to kill you?

S'HLOBO (Comes to stand so that the gun is right against his chest.)
You wouldn't, would you ... my brother?

(Lights Fade.)

THE END

Coming Home
Hermit Theatre

MUTHAL Naidoo's *Coming Home* is one of those rare local plays that combines the ever-present political message with polished entertainment, exploring prejudices and customs in a package that is both taut and amusing.

There is nothing new in its theme about a mysterious stranger invading a home and upending the pretensions of the owners—it has been used by a range from Priestley to Peter Weir.

But Durban playwright Dr Naidoo, whose discipline I have admired since her *Of No Account*, has something to say beyond the familiarity of her ingredients.

Reminiscent of Weir's Australian film *The Plumber*, this revolves round a character who descends on a so-called liberal white couple. Like the aborigine in the movie, Hamilton Ncayiyana's S'hlobo is a commanding, magnetic force. The blanket and bundle he dumps on the

Political and entertaining

sittingroom floor belie his insight and ability to manipulate his victims as he wittily answers questions with questions and alternates between gusty mirth and menace. The Kanes (Pippa Dyer and Etienne Essery) react with astonishment, then suspicion. When they cannot eject S'hlobo, they predictably swop their liberalism for derogatory remarks about blacks. They alternately accuse him of being a terrorist and an SB agent and, when he takes command, they fear a ritual killing.

The tables are constantly turned in a *Sleuth*-type power struggle and the white couple's gun becomes the

only language they understand.

S'hlobo insists he is 'waiting for his brother' (I would suggest a better title for the play) whose identity finally becomes apparent. There is symbolism in the territorial acquisition of whites, which is contrasted with the black man's philos-

ophy of hospitality.

The dialogue tends to be repetitive and reactions of the victims underplayed, while I would also question their taste in furniture.

However, this is a clever theatrical polemic worth catching.

Lynne Kelly

The Natal Mercury, Tuesday, 31 August, 1981



CARL COLEMAN
at the theatre

Play: "COMING HOME" (Hermit Theatre).

Cast: Etienne Essery, Pippa Dyer and Hamilton Ncayiyana.

Director: Muthal Naidoo.

Hypocrisy bared

MUTHAL NAIDOO's latest play is something of a double-edged sword, making incisive comments on the overall South African situation but at the same time ruthlessly laying bare the hypocrisy of the so-called white liberal element.

It's the kind of play that will make many a white member of the audience squirm uncomfortably as he hears the pompous pleas for equality so often exhortated with self-satisfied smugness in certain circles, reduced almost to bitter parody.

There's an uneasy familiarity in the setting — the secure living room of a fairly affluent young white couple who enjoy all the privileges of their status in the South African way of life.

But David and Sally Kane believe they're caring, concerned whites who espouse progressive ideals to improve the lot of their black fellowmen.

They're an easily recognisable pair — Sally is a member of a women's organisation pressing for peaceful change and David is an influential businessman who talks at conferences.

Their hollow concern is questioned and exposed when a black stranger, S'hlobo, ap-

pears mysteriously in their home one night and announces he has come to stay.

Their initial incredulity changes to warm welcome, then anger, horror and finally disillusion.

S'hlobo tells them he's "coming home to wait for my brother," which in the denoue-

ment is a biblical reference to Cain's slaying of his brother Abel.

"Coming Home" makes for fascinating and intriguing theatre, often tense and gripping within the sometimes humorous framework of Muthal Naidoo's writing.

Performances on the opening night this week were a little uneven, but one expects the cast to lose their rough edges as the run continues.

Pippa Dyer captures the image of a young northern suburbs liberal with convincing ease.

Etienne Essery, as David Kane, at times lacked the authority one would expect from a successful businessman.

Ncayiyana's S'hlobo is a delightful performance — despite his occasional hesitancy — giving the character an edge of caricature when needed but striking deep when portraying the bitter, despairing man.

"Coming Home" is a rewarding piece of theatre, one that sets Muthal Naidoo as one of our most important local playwrights.

Objector Essery gets jail and discharge

Leader Reporter

DURBAN actor, Etienne Essery was last week sentenced to four months imprisonment in a civilian jail and dishonourably discharged from the Defense Force for refusing to do service when he was called up for a 30-day camp.

Mr Essery, who was a member of the Work In Progress Theatre Company which was founded by Dr Muthal Naidoo, took part in "We Three Kings", a thinly veiled satire on the Saic — and in "Coming Home" last year.

Dr Naidoo, who wrote and directed both plays, said that Mr Essery had been caught between the idea of leaving the country and getting a proper education in theatre or to stay and face the consequences of not doing military service.

"He knew that prison wasn't going to help his career, but felt he had to make a choice between his career and what he saw as

his moral obligation," she said.

Theatre, she said, was an integrative art which promoted creativity, life and harmony, while the army stood for fighting, killing and destruction, and these opposites had a traumatic effect on Mr Essery.

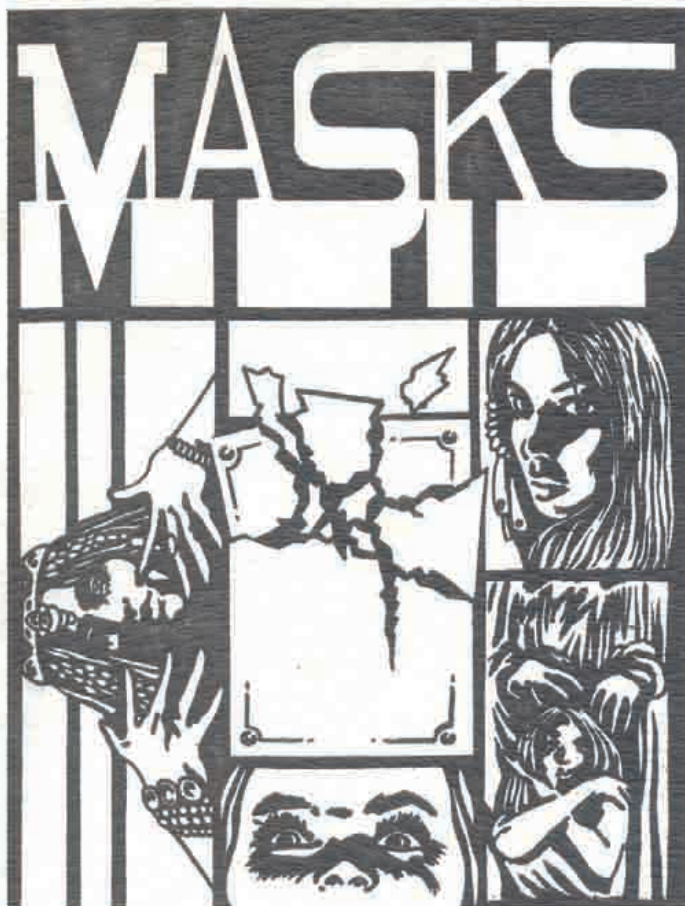
"The only thing that kept him going in the last few months was the 'We Three Kings' tour," she said.

While he was battling with the problem of whether to leave the country or go to jail, Mr Essery wrote a play about a White family faced with the issue of conscription.

"He wrote it at about the time we were doing 'Coming Home' Dr Naidoo said, adding that for several reasons the play had not been ready for staging.

"I think its terrible that a man who stands up for his rights can be treated as a common criminal and sent to prison," she said.

"The Leader" is printed for the proprietors, Bramdaw Publications (Pty) Ltd., by Leader Press (Pty) Ltd., 81 Sparks Road, Overport, Durban.



DEPARTMENT OF SPEECH AND DRAMA
UNIVERSITY OF DURBAN-WESTVILLE

18 - 23 APRIL 1983

At last — Muthal's 'Masks'

TONIGHT Reporter

"MASKS", the first play written by Durban playwright Dr Muthal Naidoo, will be staged next week in dance-drama form by students of the University of Durban-Westville's Speech and Drama Department. It will be presented in the university's Asoka Theatre nightly from Monday to Saturday.

The 8 pm performance on Monday and the 6 pm show on Tuesday will be followed by a discussion with the author, the director, Suria Naidoo, and the cast.

Dr Muthal Naidoo wrote "Masks" in 1966 when she was living in the United States, but this will be its first airing. "I was inspired to write it after I had seen Fellini's film 'Juliet of the Spirits'. The first draft was crammed with a variety of happenings and needed a good deal of trimming.

"But I had no idea how to improve the script because I liked everything that was in it. As I was only flirting with the idea of becoming a playwright at that time, I set

'Masks' aside with the idea that I would work on it at some later stage," Dr Naidoo said.

When she was asked a few months ago to write something for the students at the University of Durban-Westville, Dr Naidoo, who had devoted herself to writing plays in 1981, immediately chose "Masks". She adapted the play to include songs and dances.

Dr Naidoo describes "Masks" as a happening in a woman's mind, showing her moving from insanity into sanity. "The woman's psychosis results from living in a divisive society. Constant focus on difference has cut deep into her mind so that her self has become divided against itself. It is only when she can accept that all the separate fragments of her identity, represented by the phantoms of the play, are parts of herself, that she can become whole," Dr Naidoo explained.

"Masks" will be staged nightly at 8 — except on Tuesday when it will be presented at 6 pm. Admission is by programme which costs R1. Seats may be reserved by telephoning 821211 ext 251.

Daily News, TONIGHT, Wednesday, 13 April, 1983

The Natal Mercury,

Wednesday, April 20, 1983

'First' for Varsity stage

MUTHAL Naidoo's latest play, *Masks*, is being presented by Durban-Westville University this week until Saturday.

It is the first full-length indigenous black work to be staged by that Department of Speech and Drama.

According to its director, Suria Naidoo, it has been used to broaden the students' experience of the creative process involved in play-making.

The students and staff of the department have worked with the playwright, even as far as creating some of the scenes with her, and an interesting feature of the production is that the first two performances will be followed by a discussion with the writer, director and cast.

The play is about a South African Indian woman who struggles to accept her hybrid identity after trying to shut herself off from the different racial influences around her.

A second and third-year student project, the play is being presented at 8 p.m. except on Tuesday when it starts at 6 p.m.

Admission is by programme costing R1 each and seats may be reserved by telephoning 821211 ext 251.

ot time

Masks

(A Dance-Drama)

I wrote this piece in 1967. In 1983, I rewrote it for the Department of Drama at the University of Durban-Westville where it was performed in the Asoka Theatre from 11 – 23 April 1983. I revised and edited the play in August 2000 and again in 2008.

Masks deals with the schizophrenia that results from living in a racist society. A woman who is of mixed parentage, clings to one aspect of her ethnicity in order to find acceptance in one ethnic community. She is a member of the Indian community, but hankers after a White identity, shows tolerance of a Coloured identity but denies her African origins. She has to learn to see herself holistically before she can rid herself of her psychosis.

Though the play focuses on an individual woman, she is symbolic of the cultural ambivalence and racist attitudes that manifest in the Indian community.

It is my view that anyone who was born in South Africa and socialised into an apartheid culture, has imbibed racist norms and values. There are those who believe themselves to be free of racism; there are those who believe that only whites are racist. I believe that racism is a disease that we all contracted through living in a society based on racial discrimination.

In *Masks*, Seetha goes through a process of rooting out her own racial prejudice; she has to destroy values that diminish her as a human being, accept and understand values that affirm her human dignity and all human dignity. I believe that every South African, Black and White, has to go through this process at some time in their lives.

Masks takes the form of a nightmare and is full of seeming irrationalities and contradictions. I was inspired to write this play after seeing Federico Fellini's film *"Juliet of the Spirits"* in the 1960's. My original title for the play, *"Phantasmagoria,"* was rejected by the Drama Department at the University of Durban-Westville, so I chose the title *"Masks."*

MUTHAL NAIDOO

CHARACTERS

SEETHA, a young woman, half Coloured, half Indian

PHANTOMS (Seetha's multiple personalities):

NONKULULEKHO (Seetha's African persona)

RADHA (Seetha's Coloured persona; the word Coloured in South Africa means a person of African and White parentage.)

SHANTI (Seetha's White persona)

SEETHA'S MOTHER

KAMALA (Seetha's sister)

VISHNU (in love with Seetha)

VISHNU'S MOTHER

REENA, Vishnu's sister

RAJ, a young Indian man

HARI, a young Indian man

OTHER PHANTOMS (who swell this chorus)

(It was performed by students of the Drama Department at the University of Durban-Westville)

SETTING

The play takes place in Seetha's mind. The setting – a reflection of her psychosis – is a weird mixture of interior and exterior environments. An element in the set is a full-length mirror that remains covered until the very end.

ACT ONE

(The lights focus on Seetha lying on her bed. She is dressed in the outfit of an Indian classical dancer. She is very tense and is listening intently. A low murmuring is heard. She sits up and looks about in fearful anticipation. She peers into the darkness around her, afraid to move. The murmuring grows louder. She puts one foot tentatively over the edge of the bed. As her foot touches the floor, a hand from under the bed grabs her ankle. She screams. A laugh is heard. She tries to free herself and move away. A dark bat-like form emerges from under the bed and pushes her down. As it leaps about, other dark forms emerge from under the bed and in a grotesque kind of game, terrify Seetha. She attempts to free herself of them and get to her lamp (the small holy lamp that Hindus use). The phantoms pull and toss her about. The Phantoms at this stage have no individuality; they are vague, black cloaked forms. Later when they emerge as individuals, they discard the cloaks. Their whole attempt to frighten Seetha should be represented as a dance. Seetha uses bharatha natyam gestures to ward them off; they use modern dance movements.)

SEETHA (Holding her head in pain) My head is bursting ... ohhhh! (Turning on the phantoms in anger) Why have you come back? Why do you haunt me? Who are you? Go away. Leave me alone.

PHANTOMS

We come at your bidding. You give us life. We are nothing without you.

SEETHA (Laughing)

Ridiculous. You are nothing to me.

PHANTOMS

We are your reflection.

SEETHA

You are a nightmare.

PHANTOMS

Your nightmare.

(Singing or chanting)

Born in your mind
burst from your brain
separate in kind
free from the strain
holding us all
joined into one.
we have fought
to make you naught.
we have fought
to make you naught.

Now we are free
elements to be.

(This song or chant should be accompanied by movements suggesting elements breaking away from the central core which is Seetha)

SEETHA (Alternately laughing, crying)

Dear God, help me. (Laughing) Look at me. (As the pieces fly off from her) See how I fly. See how I fly.

PHANTOMS

Disembodied fancies
breaking through the frame
we are the divided self
bits and pieces
your shattered image

INDIVIDUAL PHANTOMS

I'm a bit.

I'm a bit.

I'm a piece.

I'm a piece.

PHANTOMS

Growing independently
separate bits and pieces
separate bits and pieces.
Let no god join together
what Man has put asunder.
Never shall we unite
to form the whole of you.
Never let you find yourself
Or then we are lost
We are lost,
we are lost, lost, lost.

NONKULULEKHO (Seetha's African persona , a separate and distinct form)

We are lost now
shaken from the frame
shattered bits and pieces
without any name

PHANTOMS

We are free.

We are free.

We are free, free, free.

NONKULULEKHO

No!

We are lost.

We are lost.

We are lost, lost, lost.

Let the image form again.

Join bits and pieces up again.

(She tries to link phantoms together; they resist her efforts. She goes to covered mirror) Seetha! Come. Remove the cover. You have to remove the cover.

PHANTOMS (Indicating Nonkululekho) Danger. She is trying to destroy us. (The phantoms swoop on her and pull her away.)

Let no god join together
What Man has put asunder.

SEETHA (Elated) Whee! Free, free, free. (Suddenly deflated) Lost, lost, lost.

NONKULULEKHO
What is the point
of being
in separate elements
formless
meaningless
lifeless

Not anything at all?
(She moves to mirror again.)

PHANTOMS (Pulling her away again)
But we are free,
we are free,
we are free, free, free

SEETHA Free, free, free,
freeeeeeeeeee!

NONKULULEKHO (Giving up)
to be nothing,
formless,
meaningless,
lifeless,
nothing.

SEETHA Nothing?

PHANTOMS Free!

NONKULULEKHO Nothing!

PHANTOMS Free!

SEETHA Nothing?

PHANTOMS
Free,
free falling,
free floating.
Separate and free
free to fight
and live in strife
free to fight and live in strife!

SEETHA (In pain) Oh, my head! Oh, my head! Stop this noise at once. Stop it.

(Phantoms move toward Seetha. Nonkululekho, using strong African dance movements, scatters the phantoms.)

SEETHA (Turning on Nonkululekho) YOU! What are you doing here? Who asked you here?

(The phantoms set up a low mocking laugh.)

NONKULULEKHO Why do you conjure me up every night, if you don't want me here?

SEETHA I DON'T conjure you up. I don't want you here. We have nothing in common.

NONKULULEKHO But you bring me here. Every night when you call us, I come, hoping that at last you will let us fall into our appointed places.

SEETHA I don't know what you're talking about. I don't want you here. I wish I could get rid of you.

NONKULULEKHO Do you really want to get rid of me?

PHANTOMS Don't listen to her Seetha. She is trouble. She means to harm you.

NONKULULEKHO Do you want to be rid of me?

SEETHA Yes.

PHANTOMS Don't trust her. She wants to destroy you.

NONKULULEKHO Then do it. You know what to do.

PHANTOMS No, don't listen to her. She's trying to confuse you.

NONKULULEKHO If you want to get rid of us, you know what to do.

PHANTOMS (To Nonkululekho) You stupid woman! Stop it! Are you trying to destroy us all?

NONKULULEKHO (To Seetha) Go on, do what you have to do. (Points to the covered mirror)

SEETHA Don't tell me what to do. Who do you think you are?

NONKULULEKHO Who you are.

SEETHA (Laughing) You don't make sense. You don't belong here. Go back to your own people.

(Nonkululekho just looks at her) Very well. I'll send you back. (Seetha makes for her lamp)

NONKULULEKHO That won't help. You know what you should do.

(Seetha's mother and sister, Kamala, emerge from the mass of phantoms)

SEETHA'S MOTHER Seetha, you light the lamp. What does she know about our culture?

NONKULULEKHO Light it if you want – but you're wasting your time. (Goes to mirror) Come, here. Remove the cover and I will disappear forever.

KAMALA (Pulling Seetha to lamp) No, that's a waste of time. Come. Light the lamp.

SEETHA Yes. I will light the lamp. Then she will disappear.

SEETHA'S MOTHER This is a kamatchie-vilaku, a god-lamp. Its light makes wicked things disappear.

(Seetha lights the lamp. Seetha's mother and Sister disappear into the mass of Phantoms.)

SEETHA (Looks at Nonkululekho) She's still here.

NONKULULEKHO This is the only way. Come here. Remove the cover.

(Vishnu's mother and sister, Reena, appear)

VISHNU'S MOTHER AND REENA

(Pointing at Nonkululekho) Is she your relative?

SEETHA (In disgust) She's not! She has nothing to do with me!

REENA Then what is she doing here?

SEETHA I don't know! I don't know! I don't know how she got here!

VISHNU'S MOTHER Aw, you don't know what? She's here because she belongs to you.

SEETHA No! No! No. (To Nonkululekho) Go away. Get out of here. I never called you here.

NONKULULEKHO I am because you are.

VISHNU'S MOTHER Chi! I told you. Why you think she never disappear, when you light the lamp, eh?

SEETHA I don't know.

VISHNU'S MOTHER You are not pure. You shouldn't touch the god lamp.

REENA We are high caste. Brahmins. (Giggling) You ... you (Points at Nonkululekho) ...

(Vishnu's mother and Reena laughing, merge with the phantoms again.)

SEETHA (To Nonkululekho) Go away and leave me alone! You have cursed my whole existence.

NONKULULEKHO You have cursed it.

(Seetha's mother and Kamala reveal themselves again)

SEETHA'S MOTHER Never mind, my dear. You don't have to prove anything. Anyone with eyes in his head can see that you are a good Indian girl. Are you not called Seetha, after Rama's wife? You are everything an Indian woman should be – pure and obedient.

SEETHA (Indicating Nonkululekho) But mother, why does she come here?

KAMALA You have nothing to be ashamed of.

SEETHA Mother answer me. Who is she?

SEETHA'S MOTHER You speak Tamil. You have not given up our customs. What more can anyone ask?

SEETHA Mother, answer me! (Forcing her to look at Nonkululekho) Who is she? What is she to us?

KAMALA Don't be silly, Seetha. We don't know who that is. How should we?

SEETHA Are you sure?

KAMALA Of course, I'm sure.

SEETHA'S MOTHER Come on, Kamala, let's go. (Averting eyes from Nonkululekho) Come, quick, quick! (She and Kamala move away quickly and merge with the phantoms again.)

SEETHA Mother, wait. (Turns on Nonkululekho) Do you see what you have done? Everyone runs away from me because of you. Why do you haunt me?

(Radha, Seetha's Coloured persona, reveals herself. She dances up to Seetha and dances her away from Nonkululekho)

RADHA (Singing a pop song and dancing. All the

phantoms join in) Come on Seetha, you know you love to dance.

SEETHA (Freeing herself from Radha)
Not that kind of dancing.

RADHA Hey, Seetha. Look at your clothes. Jy lyk soos 'n ware koelie, man. Long skirts are out, bokkie. It's the mini now. (Twirls around showing hers off.)

SEETHA Decent Indian girls don't wear things like that.

RADHA (Laughing) Then there aren't any decent Indian girls left in the country – apart from you, of course. Now come on dance. (Starts to do a popular dance movement)

SEETHA No! That is not part of our culture. It's vulgar, shaking your body like that.

RADHA What! Stop pretending. You taught me this dance. Come on now! Show me a few new steps. You always latch on to these things faster than I do.

SEETHA No! Dancing is holy and should be dedicated to the gods.

RADHA That's not what you taught me. You showed me that dancing is foreplay.

(Sings)

Char-ous

Are mar-ous

Bruin-ous

may be winos

But for me

they are the main-ous.

SEETHA You should be proud to be Indian. You have a tradition that goes back centuries.

RADHA That's the trouble. It goes back! Me. I'm going forward. It's more fun.

SEETHA Your behaviour is disgraceful! It's not fun.

RADHA I don't care what you think. (Pulls out cigarettes) Smoke? (Seetha turns away from her) Don't tell me you've given up?

SEETHA I don't smoke. I have never smoked.

RADHA (Laughing) That's news to me. Oh go on, nobody's looking. Have one.

SEETHA No. I don't want to be like you. I don't want anything to do with you.

RADHA Tough. You know I am because you are.

SEETHA What are you talking about?

RADHA Come on. I'll show you. (Moves to covered mirror) Come and look here.

PHANTOMS (Rush about in panic)

Radha, you're mad. You can't do that. You'll destroy us all.

RADHA (To Seetha) Come on. Just pull off that cover.

PHANTOMS (Coming between) No, no! Stop!

RADHA (To phantoms) Where's your sense of adventure? How did I get stuck with all of you? You're scared to a take a small risk. Risk! It's not even a risk. She won't go through with it. You'll see. Come on, Seetha.

SEETHA What are you trying to do to me? What's under there? I don't trust you.

RADHA (Laughing) You see. What did I tell you? (Grabs hold of Seetha and forces her to the mirror.) Go on remove the cover.

SEETHA (Struggling with Radha) Let go of me. You're trying to hurt me. I know that.

(Phantoms laugh, grab hold of Seetha and push her towards mirror.)

SEETHA (Screaming) No. No. Vishnu, help me. Where are you? Help me. Don't let them do this to me.

PHANTOMS (Laughing) You were right Radha. This is fun. (To Seetha) Come on, Seetha, go for it.

RADHA (Laughing) Don't be alarmed Seetha. You want your freedom. Well, pull off this cover and take a look.

SEETHA Vishnu, help me. Where are you?

PHANTOMS (Ranged round mirror, laughing) Hey Seetha, don't be afraid. Come now, be a good girl.

(Seetha turns to run away but runs right into Nonkululekho who is behind her. She screams.)

NONKULULEKHO It's all right. Pull off that cover and you will be free. Come, let me show you.

(She takes the resisting Seetha by the arm. The Phantoms surge forward and surround Nonkululekho who smashes them out of her way as she drags Seetha to the mirror. Just as Nonkululekho holds Seetha's hand

to the cover, Shanti, Seetha's white persona, jumps out from behind the mirror, cracking her whip. She drives Nonkululekho off)

SHANTI (To Nonkululekho) Traitor! You're bent on destroying us, aren't you? (To Phantoms) Get her away from here. She's a terrorist. Hold her in custody. (Phantoms push Nonkululekho away.) Radha, this is all your doing. What do you think you're playing at?

RADHA Oh, get off your high horse. We were just having fun.

SHANTI Fun! You call it fun! You were playing with fire.

RADHA Don't go on about it.

SHANTI It's my curse – to live amongst the uncivilized.

RADHA And mine to live with cowards.

SHANTI You were aiding and abetting her. (Points to Nonkululekho)

RADHA Rubbish, Shanti.

SHANTI (Cracking her whip) Don't call me that. My name is Chantal. How many times do I have to tell you that?

RADHA (Laughing) Oh? Chantal?

PHANTOMS (Mocking)
Chantal
Well, well,
Chantal.

RADHA (Laughing) Okay, Chantal. Be careful with that whip. You may hurt yourself.

SHANTI (Cracking whip) Listen to me all of you. If I ever catch you behaving in this irresponsible fashion again, I shall punish you severely. Just stay away from that. (Points to mirror.)

RADHA
Yes, Baas.

VISHNU'S MOTHER Shut up, Bushman. She's right. You are just a mischief-maker.

SHANTI I'm the only one with any sense around here. If it weren't for me, all of you would have been wiped out.

RADHA We know how to survive.

SHANTI Without me, you are nothing. You'd better get one thing clear. You are here to serve me. I'm the brains, you are the brawn. I'm not like you.

(Sings)

I've got class.

I can pass.

Cultivated accent.

Cultivated ways.

From my tone
on the 'phone
you'd swear, y'know
Whiter than the driven snow.

Cultivated accent.

Cultivated ways.

I watch the whiteys like a hawk
And never miss a trick
At lunch, I lift the right fork
So you see, I catch on quick.
Cultivated accent.
Cultivated ways.

My pleasure and my love
Is spending every day
In imitation of
The white and only way.
(She cracks her whip.)
So remember, my name is Chantal.

RADHA (Pointing to Nonkululekho) How do you explain her?

SHANTI She is my slave.

RADHA Does she know that?

SHANTI Oh, shut your mouth. Let's get on with the big event. Where's Vishnu? He should have been here by now.

VISHNU'S MOTHER Why you want my son? Leave him out of this.

SHANTI If you'd done your job, we wouldn't need him.

VISHNU'S MOTHER I don't want him mixing up with that girl. (Indicating Seetha)

SHANTI (Cracking her whip) Who's fault is that? Just do as I say. (To Radha) Get Vishnu.

RADHA (Curtseying) Yes, your majesty. (Goes over to bed and calls) Hey there, lover boy, how long do you plan to hide out under there? It's time for you to play your part.

VISHNU'S MOTHER (To Radha) You leave my son alone.

RADHA Oh, be quiet. I'm bored. I want some fun. You know what's going to happen so why are you worrying? He must come out now.

VISHNU'S MOTHER Leave my son alone. I don't want him mixing up with a fast girl like you.

RADHA Hey Vish, come on out. The night will soon be over.

VISHNU'S SISTER Vishnu, you stay right where you are.

(Vishnu sticks his head out from under the bed)

VISHNU (To Radha) Hey beautiful, how are you?

RADHA Come and find out.

SEETHA & NONKULULEKHO (Who are being held by the phantoms and have been watching for Vishnu's appearance. They speak together. Seetha tries to stop Nonkululekho responding with her) Vishnu, why are you so late? I only put up with the rest because of you.

(In the following exchange between Vishnu and Radha, the interjections of Seetha-Nonkululekho seem like mad ramblings. Nobody pays any heed to them.)

VISHNU (Approaching Radha and getting intimately close) Hey baby, I've missed you.

SEETHA AND NONKULULEKHO (Struggling to get free) I expect you to come promptly. Don't you care how these others annoy me?

RADHA (To Vishnu) Why didn't you come out sooner? What are you doing wasting half the night away? Don't you know it will be daylight soon? What's wrong with you man?

VISHNU (To Radha) I'm tired of all this shit. Come on, let's get away from here. Just you and me.

RADHA (To Vishnu) That's a nice dream.

SEETHA AND NONKULULEKHO (Seetha trying to restrain Nonkululekho)
Vishnu, I love you. You know that.

VISHNU'S MOTHER Vishnu, get away from that girl.

VISHNU (To Radha) Come on. Let's get away from here.

RADHA (To Vishnu) You know that's not possible.

VISHNU (To Radha) You're beginning to bore me.

RADHA You want something more interesting? (Points at Shanti) Try her.

SHANTI (Disgusted) You keep him to yourself.

RADHA (Pointing to Nonkululekho and laughing mockingly) Maybe that's more to your liking. (Vishnu looks at Seetha eagerly)

SEETHA AND NONKULULEKHO Vishnu, you love me, don't you?

SHANTI (Cracking her whip) Come on Vishnu, stop delaying.

VISHNU You crack that whip again and I'll wind it around your neck.

SHANTI Shut up. Do as you're told.

RADHA Oh, forget her. You've got a job to do.

SEETHA & NONKULULEKHO (Speaking together; Seetha still struggling with Nonkululekho) Vishnu, I love you.

VISHNU (Ignoring Nonkululekho) I love you too.

PHANTOMS (Gasping in horror)
That's not right. What are you doing?

VISHNU'S MOTHER Chi! You must have nothing to do with that girl.

VISHNU But I love her.

SHANTI (To phantoms who have been holding Seetha and Nonkululekho) Let her go. (They let Seetha and Nonkululekho go)

(Seetha runs to embrace Vishnu.)

SEETHA When will we be married?

VISHNU (Embracing her) Today, today. Let's do it today. (Phantoms gasp in horror)

SHANTI That is not the right response.

PHANTOMS What's the matter with you, Vishnu?

VISHNU I love her.

(Phantoms gasp again.)

SHANTI That is not the way it goes. Vishnu, what's wrong with you. Reena, Kamala, intervene!

REENA (Coming between Vishnu and Seetha) You want HER in our family? We are high caste people. You can't marry her.

KAMALA There is nothing wrong with our family. Look at my sister. (Pointing at Seetha) She is a good Indian girl. She follows the customs.

REENA (Looking at Nonkululekho) She must have given him muti. He doesn't know what he is saying.

VISHNU (To Seetha) Let's get away from here. Then we can be married.

(Phantoms gasp again)

SHANTI Vishnu! Behave yourself. That's not the right response.

VISHNU Oh, all right. (To Seetha.) But my mother won't agree?

SHANTI Come on, Vishnu. What else? (Vishnu is silent) Tell her you cannot marry her.

VISHNU (Wincing) But I love her.

SHANTI (Cracking her whip) What the hell's the matter with you! Tell her you cannot marry her.

RADHA (Intervening) Hey, Vishnu, say you'll marry me, man.

VISHNU I am going to marry Seetha.

(Phantoms gasp.)

SHANTI (To Radha) What's got into him? He usually cooperates.

RADHA Things aren't exactly going according to schedule tonight. Something is happening to Seetha.

PHANTOMS Maybe she's going sane.

SHANTI (Cracking whip) Don't say that! (To Vishnu) Do you realize that you are committing treason?

VISHNU I don't care.

SHANTI Do you want to destroy us all?

VISHNU I am going to marry her.

SHANTI This is treason. You will have to stand trial.

VISHNU I don't care.

RADHA Hey, don't be ridiculous. Do we have to have a trial? Let me have a go at him. We can organize a disco and I'll persuade him?

SHANTI I make the laws here. Get ready for the trial. Radha, you will be Prosecutor and Counsel for the Defence.

RADHA Bitch! I'll get her for this.

SHANTI Where is the jury?

RAJ AND HARI Here. Guilty, your worship.

SHANTI Not yet. Bailiff read the charge.

PHANTOM Vishnu, you are charged with attempted mass murder. How do you plead?

RADHA (Putting on hat labelled Defence) My client pleads not guilty, my lord.

SHANTI Prosecutor, your opening remarks.

SEETHA Why won't you let us get married?

SHANTI (Pointing to Seetha) You are in contempt of court. Confine her. (Phantoms come forward, gag and tie up Nonkululekho) Prosecutor, are you ready to make your opening statement.

RADHA (Putting on hat labelled Prosecutor) M'lud, this clearly is a case of treason. The accused is bent on committing genocide. By insisting on entering into unholy matrimony, he condemns us all to annihilation.

SHANTI Counsel for the Defence.

RADHA (Resuming the first hat) The Defence will show that the accused has acted with great courage. Marriage, as you are aware, is lethal in our community. It matters not whether the alliance is holy or unholy; that it is an alliance, is against the fundamental code of our existence. We have all been immunized against unity in any form whatsoever. My client, in defying the law, should be honoured as a hero, one who has created greater disharmony amongst us by advocating harmony.

SHANTI Prosecutor, put the state's case.

RADHA (Looking for her other hat) Who the hell has taken my hat? (Sees it on Raj's head and goes to grab it.)

RAJ Sorry, thought you were done with it.

HARI Yeah, why go through all this. We know he's guilty. Let's get to the sentence. That's the best part.

RADHA You know Shanti. She's a control freak – must do everything according to her rules. Okay. Let's get this over with. I call my first witnesses – Seetha's Mother and sister, Kamala.

SEETHA'S MOTHER & KAMALA Seetha must marry Vishnu.

(Phantoms boo)

RADHA (In Prosecutor's hat) Do you not regard such sentiments as treasonous? Answer me. ... Clearly, this is a conspiracy.

SEETHA'S MOTHER & KAMALA (Very nervous) It's not our fault.

RADHA Do you deny that you are advocating marriage? (They cower in shame) That completes the case for the prosecution, M'Lud.

SHANTI Defence.

RADHA (Putting on other hat) M'lud, this is a clear case of prejudice against my client. His understanding of the law shows a unique and creative appreciation of disunity. If he is found guilty, it will be the usual travesty of justice.

RAJ & HARI Good. The jury finds the accused guilty of treason.

SEETHA (Yelling at Nonkululekho) This is all your fault.

NONKULULEKHO If it's my fault, it's your fault.

SEETHA You spoil everything for me. Why? Why do you interfere in my life?

NONKULULEKHO It's not interference. It's my life.

SEETHA It's not. You are African. I am Indian. I'm going to block you out of my mind. Wish you away forever. (She closes her eyes) One, two, three – vanish! (Opens eyes) Oh no, you're still here.

(All the phantoms boo.)

PHANTOMS Boo! Hiss! You call that a magic trick. I want my money back.

SHANTI Silence in court! Before I pronounce sentence, Defence do you wish to present evidence in mitigation.

VISHNU'S MOTHER I will speak on behalf of my son. That woman (Pointing to Seetha) has just shown how she uses magic tricks. Well that's how she bewitched my son. She (Pointing to Nonkululekho) gave him powerful muti. He had no interest in her. He was bewitched.

SEETHA AND NONKULULEKHO That's not true; he loves me.

VISHNU'S MOTHER My son doesn't want her. I found a girl for him. Where's Sati? Sati, step forward. (Hari steps forward with a drape over his head to suggest a shy bride.) See this is Sati.

VISHNU I don't want that girl. I'll never marry her. I love Seetha.

SEETHA & NONKULULEKHO
I love you too!

PHANTOMS Yes! That's the crime. Requited love! Sentence him! Sentence him!

REENA Don't be a fool, Vishnu. This girl is from the same caste and very rich. (Hari/Sati tosses his head.)

VISHNU I don't care. I don't want her. I want Seetha.

VISHNU'S MOTHER Chi, she is a harijan. Sati is pure.

KAMALA (Seetha's sister) Objection! That is libellous.

REENA It's not. It's the truth.

KAMALA This is the age-old libel. Seetha has suffered before for this kind of maliciousness. She had to walk through fire and still was banished.

VISHNU'S MOTHER You keep out of this. We are presenting evidence in mitigation of sentence.

SEETHA'S MOTHER It's our turn.

SHANTI No, it's not. It's my turn.

SEETHA'S MOTHER But they are lying ...

SHANTI (Banging her gavel) Quiet. It's my turn, do you understand. (She gives Seetha's Mother a fierce look and she backs down) Where's the jury?

RAJ Hey, Hari, take that off and come here. (Hari doffs sari and joins Raj)

SHANTI What's the verdict?

RAJ & HARI But we told you right at the beginning.

SHANTI You're totally illogical. You have no idea of court procedures. The verdict comes at the end of a trial. What is your verdict?

RAJ & HARI It's a draw.

VISHNU'S MOTHER & KAMALA What do you mean a draw! We won fair and square.

SHANTI Quite right. I'm overturning the jury's verdict. This is my sentence. Vishnu you are guilty of treason and you are sentenced to be exorcised and then to marry Sati.

VISHNU'S MOTHER (Jubilant) A Daniel come to judgment.

RADHA Vishnu, Stop playing the fool man. You want to go through with this exorcism? What's wrong with you, tonight? Just tell Seetha to go to hell, the way you usually do.

KAMALA It's those two. (Pointing to Seetha and Nonkululekho) See how they are working together. It's driving him mad.

SHANTI Forget the fool! Let's get on with it. Vishnu's mother, I appoint you chief executioner. You will be responsible for the exorcism and the wedding.

VISHNU'S MOTHER Let us begin with the exorcism. Don't be afraid, my son. She's bewitched you. But we're going to fix that. (To Kamala) Has he come yet?

KAMALA No, not yet.

VISHNU'S MOTHER Let's get ready for him. Vishnu, take off your shoes and sit down there.

(Vishnu doesn't respond. The phantoms force him down and remove his shoes. Vishnu's Mother brings a clay double lamp and a pair of scissors. Reena puts red peppers and ashes in the lamp. Vishnu's Mother advances on Vishnu with the scissors as a phantom pulls his head back viciously. Vishnu gives a little gasp. Mother cuts a lock of his hair and puts it in the lamp. They light the lamp, turn it three times in front of him, then put it to one side.)

KAMALA (Suddenly adopts a listening posture) He's coming.

VISHNU'S MOTHER Good. (She spreads a mat)

(Raj enters as Priest wearing a dhoti and carrying a book. Vishnu's Mother goes to greet him. They all greet each other in a solemn manner)

RAJ Is he ready? Is everything prepared?

VISHNU'S MOTHER Yes. Is this an auspicious time?

RAJ Yes. The moon is in eclipse. Light the camphor.

(Vishnu launches into a popular love song)

KAMALA Stop that, Vishnu.

(Vishnu continues to sing)

RAJ (Going into a trance) Ahhh. Do you hear him? The Evil One? That is the Evil One speaking. (He sprinkles water over Vishnu, who sings louder) Out, out, out, release this boy. (The phantoms pull Vishnu up, circle round him and shake him. He sings louder. Raj, the priest, moans and groans. The phantoms set Vishnu down again) Bring the photograph. (Kamala brings a photograph of Seetha) Show him. Show him. (Hari holds photograph before Vishnu) You know this girl? (Vishnu continues to sing) Do you know this girl? (Vishnu goes on singing. Hari grabs him by the hair and forces him to look) Do you know this girl? (Vishnu takes picture and sings to it. Raj grabs photo back, mumbles over it, throws ashes on it and then presents it to Vishnu who takes it and sings to it.) No, no, no! (Raj takes picture back and holds it in front of Vishnu)

VISHNU'S MOTHER Spit on it.

(Vishnu goes on singing)

VISHNU'S MOTHER Spit on it. Spit! Spit!

(Vishnu goes on singing)

KAMALA Do as mother says!

(Vishnu goes on singing)

RAJ Asura! Asura! The Evil One is working in him. Spit on this photo! Do it!

(Vishnu goes on singing. Raj makes a sign. The Phantoms grab hold of Vishnu and his mother and sister sprinkle ashes on his head. Vishnu struggles to get up but the phantoms hold him down)

VISHNU'S MOTHER This is for your own good.

RAJ This is a bad sign.

VISHNU'S MOTHER What do you mean?

RAJ We will have to take stronger measures. (He takes a tray, puts sambrani on it and lights it. A stream of smoke issues from the tray. Raj signals to the others.

They hold Vishnu firmly. Raj holds tray under his nose.)

VISHNU (Choking and coughing) Get this bloody thing away from me.

(Raj who has been mumbling prayers all the time, stops and shakes his head.)

VISHNU I've had enough of this. Let me go.

RAJ (Holding photograph in front of Vishnu) Spit first.

VISHNU (Kicking out at him) Go back to your dirty hole. And take your stupid tricks with you.

VISHNU'S MOTHER Don't be so wicked. Just spit on the picture. What's wrong with you? You know that girl is no good. Spit on the picture and you will forget her.

VISHNU Never! (Raj hits him)

RAJ Say you will give up this girl.

VISHNU I love her. (His mother hits him.)

RAJ Say you will give up this girl.

VISHNU No. I am going to marry her. (Phantoms take hold of him and hold him up to be lashed by Raj)

RAJ (Presenting photograph again)
Now spit!

(Vishnu spits at the priest. Raj begins to lash Vishnu with all his might.)

SEETHA Stop! Stop! You'll kill him. Vishnu, I'm coming.
(Nonkululekho rushes forward and scatters all the phantoms. She leans over the prostrate and exhausted form of Vishnu and cradles him in her arms)

NONKULULEKHO You are safe now. Don't be afraid. You are safe in my arms.

(Phantoms stand paralysed with fear)

VISHNU (Slowly opening his eyes) Seetha ... (Sees Nonkululekho and begins to squirm)

NONKULULEKHO I am here

VISHNU (Squirming) Keep your hands off me. Get away from me, Seetha. (Shudders in disgust)

NONKULULEKHO But my darling, you are hurt. Don't try to get up.

VISHNU (Crawling away from Nonkululekho) Get away from me, Seetha.

(Phantoms swirl around Nonkululekho and pull her away from Vishnu. Vishnu's Mother beckons to Raj who is still holding Seetha's picture. Raj holds picture before Vishnu who, looking steadfastly at Nonkululekho, spits on it. All the Phantoms cheer. Raj puts the picture on the tray, scatters ashes over it and sets it alight. Raj gives the tray to Vishnu and makes him walk backwards around the lamp three times.)

VISHNU (As he walks around the lamp) I renounce Seetha. I renounce Seetha. I renounce Seetha.

SEETHA & NONKULULEKHO (Holding on to one another)
Vishnu, Vishnu.

(Vishnu's mother brings Sati forward. This time Sati is a skeleton draped in a sari)

VISHNU'S MOTHER See, Vishnu. I brought Sati. She will make a good wife. Obedient and quiet. No trouble at all. You do want her for your wife, don't you?

VISHNU (Like a zombie) Yes, Ma. Let us have the wedding now. (He takes the skeleton's hand)

SEETHA Stop, Vishnu! What are you doing?

VISHNU I Vishnu, take you Sati, as my lawfully wedded wife. I now pronounce us man and wife.

(Vishnu places a garland over his head and hangs one on the skeleton. The bridal procession leaves carrying lamp, tray etc.)

SEETHA Vishnu. Vishnu. Come back. Come back. (She tries to follow him but is confused because all the phantoms are now wearing masks of Vishnu's face. She reaches out desperately to all and sundry) Vishnu. Vishnu. Vishnu.

PHANTOMS (Swirling around Seetha)
Here I am.
Here I am.
Here I am.

SEETHA Vishnu. Are you Vishnu? Which one is Vishnu?

PHANTOMS (Whispering)
I am.
I am.
I am.

(They laugh as Seetha tries to pull off their masks.)

SEETHA Who are you? Who are you? Why are you doing this to me?

(Some of the phantoms grab hold of her and place her on an altar to be sacrificed. They stand around ready to plunge knives into her.)

SEETHA Vishnu! Vishnu! Where are you? Help me?

PHANTOM (Mounting altar and standing over her, knife held high)
I am Vishnu.

SEETHA No, you are not. Vishnu would never hurt me.

PHANTOM (Laughs maliciously) Is that so?

SEETHA (Calling out) Vishnu! Vishnu! Where are you?

PHANTOM Right here with you. (She tries to push him off. He pulls off his mask and reveals himself to be Vishnu)

SEETHA Vishnu! What are you doing? This is a cruel joke.

VISHNU This is no joke. I am going to be rid of you at last. (He raises knife and plunges it into her breast)

(Lights fade.)

ACT TWO

(As the lights come up, we see Seetha kneeling by her dead body.)

SEETHA I know you had to die. I don't understand why. But I am glad you're dead. (She removes flowers from her hair, and throws them on the body. Her hair falls free. Vishnu's mother enters, hair dishevelled, supported by Reena and Hari as Sati, crying and tearing his hair.)

VISHNU'S MOTHER (In exaggerated mourning) Oh, my baby. My son, my only son. You were such a good boy. You looked after your mother. Who's going to look after me now? Vishnu, Vishnu. My life is over. Why didn't I die too? Why didn't she kill me too? I have no life now. Let me die. (Tries to throw herself on the body)

SEETHA That is not Vishnu.

VISHNU'S MOTHER (Stops crying for a moment) Shut up. What you know? (Resumes crying.)

HARI Please, Aunty, don't cry like that. You'll get sick.

VISHNU'S MOTHER Oh Sati, my poor girl. Who's going to marry you now? You were going to be his wife. Now you'll land up on the shelf.

HARI (Crying) Don't worry about me, Aunty. Try to forget. All good people die young. He's gone to God.

VISHNU'S MOTHER He was a good boy. Such a good boy! Always worrying about me. He never let me work. He always say, 'Ma, you are my life. I don't want you to wash one single cup, not one single cup.' O Vishnu, my dear, dear son!

REENA Mother, the body must go now. See the face before they close the coffin.

VISHNU'S MOTHER (Screaming)
Oh, Vishnu, Vishnu.

PHANTOMS (Sing)
Oh Vishnu, Vishnu
Oh Vishnu, dead
Oh Mammy blue
Oh Vishnu, Vishnu
Oh Vishnu dead
Oh Mammy blue

(A shroud is draped over the body and a wreath put on top. Seetha comes forward.)

VISHNU'S MOTHER Keep her away! Keep her away from my son. (To Seetha) Not enough you killed my son, you come here to make us fools. (Mother lunges at Seetha. Reena and Hari try to restrain her. Mother breaks free and goes straight for Nonkululekho and grabs her by the throat.) You killed my son because he didn't want to marry you.

SEETHA He wanted to marry me.

VISHNU'S MOTHER (To Nonkululekho) You tried to force him. He didn't want to marry you so you killed him.

NONKULULEKHO Yes, I killed him.

SEETHA No, you didn't. I killed him. You didn't have anything to do with it.

NONKULULEKHO I had everything to do with it.

SEETHA You don't have to protect me.

NONKULULEKHO I'm not protecting you.

SEETHA But I killed him. I know I did. Why are you trying to take the blame for it?

NONKULULEKHO I'm not.

SEETHA Then you admit you didn't kill him.

NONKULULEKHO Oh, I did it all right.

SEETHA This is not fair. Why are you laying claim to my acts? (Appeals to Phantoms) You know the truth. Tell her who killed him.

PHANTOMS (Encircling Nonkululekho and pointing to her) You did it. You were the one who plunged the knife into his heart. You watched his blood flow into the ground. You did it.

SEETHA (Trying to break through the circle) That's not true. Look at me. I did it. You know I did it.

PHANTOMS (To Nonkululekho) You did it. You did it.

SEETHA You're being grossly unfair. Never mind, I know how to settle this. (She goes to the body and pulls off the drape. Vishnu is now lying there with a knife stuck in his chest.) Vishnu, will you kindly tell these fools who killed you.

VISHNU (Sitting up) It's about time. I thought I was going to suffocate under that shroud.

SEETHA Vishnu, tell them who killed you.

VISHNU (Stretching) They know. Man, am I stiff.

SEETHA No, they don't.

VISHNU (Pointing to Nonkululekho) You did it, of course. You knew I couldn't stand the sight of you.

SEETHA
You couldn't?

VISHNU (Still looking at Nonkululekho) No. I never saw you so clearly till now. I should have listened to my mother.

SEETHA Vishnu, look at me. Talk to me.

VISHNU (Looking at Nonkululekho) I am

PHANTOMS (To Seetha)

Stop trying to upstage us. This is our show you know.

SEETHA But why won't you admit that I killed Vishnu.

VISHNU (Still focused on Nonkululekho) I admit it. You killed me.

PHANTOMS He ought to know. He's the victim.

SEETHA How can you take a dead man's word?

VISHNU'S MOTHER Are you trying to make out he's lying? My son is very honest. When he was small, he used to get it for telling lies.

SEETHA I demand justice. I demand that the court be reconvened.

SHANTI Who do you think you are? I am in charge here. I make the decisions. You are an alien being. Let's see your pass.

SEETHA What!

SHANTI Your pass. Your reference book. Dompas.

SEETHA I don't have one. I don't need one.

SHANTI You're an alien. You need a pass.

SEETHA This is my territory.

PHANTOMS Not any more. It belongs to us now.

VISHNU She doesn't have a dompass. Lock her up.

SEETHA I demand justice.

SHANTI You want justice. Very well. (Holding out whip to Nonkululekho) Go on beat her. She killed your lover.

(Seetha grabs the proffered whip and beats the Phantoms holding Nonkululekho. They flee.)

SHANTI Stop. You have no right to take over. I run things here.

SEETHA Not any more.

SHANTI Give it back to me at once. (Goes for whip.)

SEETHA (Laughing, cracks whip at Shanti) Come and get it.

SHANTI (Evading whip) Stop that. (Tries to get whip but is repulsed) Seetha, you can't do this to ME.

SEETHA Seetha? Seetha? Who are you calling Seetha? I am Chantal.

SHANTI Chantal? You – Chantal? Now you have gone too far. Give me that whip. (Makes a dive for it.)

(Shanti tries to get whip away from Seetha but Seetha whips the ground around her, beating her into submission.)

SEETHA Now, who are you?

SHANTI I am Shanti. Peace be upon you.

SEETHA That's a laugh. You've done nothing but sow division here. (To Phantoms) Laugh! (The Phantoms laugh.) That's enough. This woman is an impostor. (To Shanti) Sit there.

SEETHA Radha, step forward. (Radha emerges from among Phantoms) Begin the interrogation.

RADHA Look here, Seetha ...

SEETHA (Cracking whip at Radha who flinches) I am Chantal. Can't you see that? (Radha stares at her) Answer me. Perhaps you are in cahoots with her.

RADHA I am an independent agent.

SEETHA Then question her. Find out why she has been impersonating me. Use any methods.

RADHA How far do you want me to go?

SEETHA All the way.

RADHA But we can't have another suicide in detention!

SEETHA Why not? Get on with it.

RADHA All right. Jees, you're worse than Chantal.

SEETHA (Cracking whip) Than who?

RADHA Okay. Okay. (Turning to Shanti) Now Shanti ...

SEETHA (Laughing) Shanti! Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti. Is that a name for an oppressor? (To Radha) Begin.

RADHA Shanti, make things easy for yourself ...

SEETHA (Interrupting) Why have you been impersonating me?

RADHA Shanti, why have you ...

SEETHA (Interrupting) Why have you been impersonating me? Go on. Answer the question.

RADHA (To Seetha) If you want to interrogate her, why did you call me?

SEETHA Oh, just get on with it.

RADHA Shanti, it will go much easier for you if you cooperate. Just tell us why you've been impersonating Chantal.

SHANTI I have not been impersonating her.

RADHA Do you deny that you call yourself Chantal.

(Shanti does not answer)

SEETHA (Cracking whip) Answer the question.

SHANTI Why would I do such a thing?

SEETHA Liar!

RADHA (To Seetha) Leave this to me. (To Shanti) Shanti, we know you're lying. Admit that you made yourself known to everyone as Chantal.

SHANTI I told you. My name is Shanti.

SEETHA Liar!

RADHA Admit that you call yourself Chantal.

SHANTI I do not.

SEETHA (Whips the floor all around Shanti who screams as though being beaten) You liar! You are ashamed of who you are. You want to be me. You want to be white like me. Admit it! Admit it!

(Shanti faints)

RADHA Stop it. She's passed out.

SEETHA Revive her. Throw a bucket of water over her.

RADHA You won't get anything out of her this way.

SEETHA All right take her back to her cell.

(The Phantoms carry Shanti to Nonkululekho. One Phantom draws imaginary bars around them. Nonkululekho is singing South Africa ikhaya lam. Lights focus on Shanti and Nonkululekho. Shanti wakes up. She sees Nonkululekho, jumps up, grabs hold of the imaginary bars and begins to shake them)

SHANTI Let me out of here. Let me out. Why have you put me in here with her? (To Nonkululekho) Stop singing that dreadful song. Why am I in the same cell as you? Help! Help! Let me out of here.

(One of the Phantoms emerges as Jailer)

JAILER What's going on in here?

SHANTI Why am I in the same cell with this woman?

JAILER This is a jail, not a hotel. Besides, you're both guilty of the same crime.

SHANTI What!

JAILER Impersonation.

SHANTI Get me out of here. I don't want to be in the same cell with her.

SEETHA (Confronting her) But you are, because she is. Have you forgotten how you played together as a child?

SHANTI No. Stop torturing me. I have nothing to do with her. I am Chantal. I am Chantal.

SEETHA Did you hear that? She's confessed. She admits to impersonating me.

SHANTI I am not impersonating her. She is impersonating me. I am Chantal. Quick get the whip away from her and I'll show you.

PHANTOMS (Clapping) Wonderful. Marvelous. That's a great impersonation. She really knows how to get inside a role.

SHANTI What are you talking about? I AM Chantal.

SEETHA Is that so? (To Phantoms) Do you accept that? (Cracks whip menacingly)

VISHNU'S MOTHER She can't fool me. I know she's lying. I was watching her all those years hanging round my son.

SHANTI You old fool. You're mixing me up with her. (Pointing to Seetha). She wanted Vishnu. I did not.

VISHNU'S MOTHER No, no. It was you. Acting like a white woman. Talking like a white woman. I remember.

SHANTI You're crazy. Why would I want to marry an Indian? I can do better than that. Seetha wanted to be Indian. Seetha wanted to marry Vishnu. I am Chantal.

PHANTOMS (Applauding again) A winning performance.

SHANTI I am not performing!

VISHNU'S MOTHER No doubt you are a master of disguise but I know you. I know who you are.

SHANTI Of course you do. I am Chantal.

VISHNU'S MOTHER Now, now Seetha, you must calm down.

SHANTI Seetha! Who are you calling Seetha?

PHANTOMS You. Seetha. Impostor.

SHANTI No, you're wrong. (Pointing to Seetha) She's the impostor. She's Seetha. I'm Chantal. You must help me. Get the whip away from her.

PHANTOMS Bravo. Bravo. Wonderful performance. You're outdoing yourself, Seetha.

SHANTI I'm not Seetha. I'm one of you.

PHANTOMS One of us? Chantal would never say that. (They sing)
Chantal's got class
She can pass.

Cultivated accent
Cultivated ways
Her pleasure and her love
Is spending every day
in imitation of
the white and only way.

SHANTI I am Chantal. I'll prove it. I can sing that song better than any of you. Listen. (Nonkululekho sings. She mouths the word) 'South Africa ikhaya lam' ...

PHANTOMS (Laughing) Yes, that's your song all right.

SHANTI No, that's not the song. I don't know what happened. Wait. (Nonkululekho sings. Shanti mouths) 'South Africa ikhaya lam' ... No, no. Why am I singing this song? Why can't I sing my song?

PHANTOMS You want some help. (Singing)
Cultivated accent
Cultivated ways

SHANTI (Trying to sing along) South Africa ikaya lam

PHANTOMS (Singing)

My pleasure and my love
Is spending every day

SHANTI (Trying to sing along)
South Africa ikaya lam

PHANTOMS (Singing)
In imitation of
the white and only way.

SHANTI (Turns on Nonkululekho) What have you done
to me? Why am I singing this song? This is not my song.
This is your song.

PHANTOMS It is your song, Seetha.

SHANTI I am NOT Seetha!

SEETHA I suppose you are Chantal?

SHANTI No, I am not.

SEETHA Ah, so you admit that I'm Chantal.

SHANTI No, you're not. There's no such person as
Chantal.

(Shanti and Seetha stare at one another in horror and
then as mirror images of each other collapse. The
phantoms go completely wild, running and screaming.
They finally gather around Seetha)

PHANTOMS She's a monster. She's trying to destroy us.
She killed Vishnu, now Chantal.

(Radha goes over to Seetha and takes whip out of her
hand)

RADHA (Cracking whip) No, Chantal is not dead.

PHANTOMS Hooray. Chantal is not dead. Long live
Chantal. We are safe again.

RADHA Yes, but we are in great danger. The insecurity
of our state is under great pressure from cohesive
elements trying to establish contact. We must cut their
lines of communication. See, they are at it now. (Radha
points to Nonkululekho who is bending over Seetha
and cradling her in her arms.)

SEETHA (Opening her eyes) Chantal ...

RADHA That's not Chantal. I am Chantal.

SEETHA (Looking at Radha) You?

RADHA (Cracking whip) Take up your positions. (Raj
and Hari take up positions on either side of covered
mirror)

SEETHA (Looking at Radha) Chantal?

RADHA Yes. You are going to be executed for trying to
usurp my authority.

SEETHA You can't destroy me.

RADHA Proceed with the execution. (The phantoms
seem reluctant. Radha cracks the whip) We have to
find out what's going on with her. This is the only way.
I'll stop her, if there's danger. Now get on with it. (The
Phantoms seize Seetha and take her to stand in front of
covered mirror) Remove the cover.

SEETHA No, no. Not that. (She struggles)

RADHA You see. That shows you we are still safe.

NONKULULEKHO (To Seetha) Do not be afraid. We will
be together.

SEETHA You too. I thought you were my friend.

NONKULULEKHO (Takes her by the hand) I am more
than your friend. Remove the cover.

SEETHA (Takes both Nonkululekho's hands. They look
into each other's eyes) Are we ... ? Am I ... ? Are you
and I ... ?

(The Phantoms are terrified)

RADHA Quick! Draw them apart. (Phantoms pull
them apart) We will have to appoint a special agent to
sabotage communication links between them. Vishnu
...

VISHNU No, I can't do it. I blew my cover.

RADHA (To Seetha's mother) Then you are our best
bet.

SEETHA'S MOTHER No, you want me to show motherly
love and tenderness. It's against my beliefs.

RADHA Think of Shanti. She gave up her existence
just so that we could go on. Are you going to let her
sacrifice be in vain?

SHANTI (Walks in, carrying her clothes like a body) This
is all that is left of Shanti. (She lays the clothes down,
spread out to represent a person)

RADHA (Examining the clothes corpse) What happened to her?

SHANTI Complete disintegration.

RADHA True to her beliefs, even in the manner of her dying. Let us pay our last respects. (Clears throat) Though she was called Shanti, she never allowed her name to be a hindrance. In fact, it inspired her to fight. She began life fighting her name and that led to an existence dedicated to strife. We are proud of her. She is a credit to us. Her fighting spirit will go on forever.

SHANTI Of course it will. (She puts on clothes) I won't take this lying down.

PHANTOMS Yay, Shanti's back!

RADHA Just remember one thing. I'm Chantal now.

SHANTI (Still dressing) We'll see about that.

RADHA There's no trusting you. Back to business. Special agent step forward.

SEETHA'S MOTHER (Comes forward) Yes.

RADHA You know your assignment. Seetha must think of herself as Indian.

SEETHA'S MOTHER I know.

RADHA Good. Go to it.

SEETHA'S MOTHER But I can't do it. She doubts me.

SHANTI Just give her a dose of the whip. You're hopeless. You don't know how to use it. Let me show you.

RADHA Uh, uh. Not so fast. Jeesh, I'm going to have to watch you like a hawk. (To Seetha's Mother) Get on with it.

VISHNU'S MOTHER Why are you fussing? It's not so hard. Remember how I cried for Vishnu? You think I cared about him? Go on you can do it.

SEETHA'S MOTHER Well, you're a born actress. You can fool any one. I'm not so lucky. People can tell when I'm lying.

VISHNU'S MOTHER You're just fishing for compliments because this is a very important job.

SHANTI (Using Chantal's voice) Yes, it's our last chance.

RADHA Hey, hey, hey. Hold it. I'm Chantal remember.

SHANTI You really aren't suited to the part, you know.

RADHA (Showing whip) Makes no difference. I've got it now. Go on special agent. We're depending on you.

(Seetha's Mother comes to Seetha who is now on the bed. Mother has flowers in her hand)

SEETHA'S MOTHER Seetha!

SEETHA Ma. (Runs to embrace her mother who makes a grimace but is urged on by Phantoms)

SEETHA'S MOTHER (Disentangling herself) Sit down, Seetha. I want to make you look very beautiful today.

SEETHA Why, Ma?

SEETHA'S MOTHER I have a surprise for you.

SEETHA What kind of surprise?

SEETHA'S MOTHER (Laughing) You'll see. Sit down now. I want to do your hair up.

SEETHA Are we going somewhere?

SEETHA'S MOTHER (Laughing) I'm not telling you.

SEETHA All right. Ma, why are you doing my hair like that?

SEETHA'S MOTHER I like it like this.

SEETHA But I don't wear it like that any more.

SEETHA'S MOTHER But it's beautiful with the flowers in it. You don't want to forget your traditions now do you.

SEETHA But Mother, I prefer it down.

SEETHA'S MOTHER No, Seetha. This is the way it should be. Then you'll look like Rama's bride.

SEETHA But why do you want me to look like that?

SEETHA'S MOTHER It's the way you have to be today.

SEETHA Ma, can I talk to you about something?

SEETHA'S MOTHER Oh my, you look so serious. Smile. You must look your best.

SEETHA Mother, do you know who you are?

SEETHA'S MOTHER (Startled) What do you mean? What are you trying to say?

SEETHA Do you sometimes have the feeling that you're sitting back as one person, watching yourself as another person?

SEETHA'S MOTHER (Uneasily) Of course not. Forget this nonsense now. (Raising her voice) Kamala will be here just now with your surprise.

SEETHA Mother, listen to me. (She looks at Nonkululekho) I want to know about her.

SEETHA'S MOTHER (Calling out loudly, not allowing Seetha to finish)
Kamala, you've come at last. You kept us waiting. Seetha is dying to know what the surprise is. (Seetha is still looking at Nonkululekho and Kamala has still not made her appearance.)

SEETHA Mother, why don't we have pictures of my grandmother?

SEETHA'S MOTHER (Calling out loudly) Kamala, you fool, where are you?

(Kamala appears with Hari)

SEETHA'S MOTHER What's the matter with you? Couldn't you hear what she was asking me? You're part of this mission, you know. You'd better be alert.

KAMALA It's all Hari's fault. He was looking for a sari.

HARI Well, I thought I had to play Sati again.

SEETHA'S MOTHER We've finished that. This is the second act remember. Now get on with it.

KAMALA (Sits next to Seetha)
Hello, Seetha.

SEETHA Hello. (Seeing Hari) O hello Hari, what brings you here?

KAMALA He came to see you.

SEETHA Oh?

KAMALA Yes, mother told me you've been pretty depressed.

SEETHA (Excited) Did she tell you that I keep jumping out of one person into another. In fact, (Pointing to Nonkululekho) ...

KAMALA (Interrupting quickly, laughing) What nonsense. You don't want to give Hari the wrong impression do you? (To Hari) That's just her sense of humour.

HARI (A little confused, laughs, too)
Oh yes.

KAMALA You must get over your disappointment about Vishu. Hari knows about it, but he doesn't mind.

SEETHA Why should he? It has nothing to do with him.

HARI What do you mean? I was involved. I had to play Sati.

KAMALA (Interrupting quickly)
Shut up, Hari. (Laughs) That's Hari's sense of humour. You two have a lot in common, you know.

HARI Ya. I keep jumping out of one person into another too.

SEETHA (Interested) You do? Thank goodness. I thought I was the only one.

HARI Well, that's why Vishnu didn't marry you. He never knew who you were.

(Seetha is shocked)

KAMALA (Interrupting) Don't listen to him. He's talking nonsense. Excuse me a moment. (Taking Hari aside) You'll ruin everything if you go on like that. Try to be like Vishnu. Then she'll fall for you. And do me a favour, let me do the talking.

HARI Okay. Okay. It's all yours. (They go back to Seetha)

KAMALA Seetha, my darling sister, don't you want to know what your surprise is?

SEETHA You're going to tell me who I am?

KAMALA Don't be ridiculous. Look. (Pushes Hari forward)

HARI I'm the surprise.

SEETHA Oh? That is a surprise.

SEETHA'S MOTHER (Whispering to Kamala) Leave them alone. He can do it by himself now.

KAMALA You trust him? He's a fool.

SEETHA'S MOTHER Come on! Come on! Let's go.
(Pushes off a very reluctant, Kamala.)

HARI (Sidling up to Seetha) Hey Seetha, you turn me on, you know.

SEETHA What?

HARI (Getting close) You are exciting.

SEETHA Don't be ridiculous. Go away.

HARI (Grabs hold of her and pushes her down on bed) Hey stop pretending. You know you want it.

SEETHA (Struggling with Hari) Let go of me you fool.

(Seetha frees herself from Hari, dashes over to Radha, grabs the whip but Radha doesn't let go. Seetha stares into Radha's eyes and Radha slowly let's go. Seetha taking the whip rises. Radha rises with her like a mirror image. Seetha removes the flowers from her hair and puts them into Radha's hair)

SHANTI (To Radha) You fool! I told you, you couldn't handle the whip. (Radha looks dazed) Hey, what's the matter with you?

RADHA (In a daze, slinks off and approaches Hari seductively) Hi, handsome.

HARI What did you run off like that for? Come here. (She swings away from him. He enters into the game and chases her.) Come here, where the action is.

RADHA It's not there, man. It's here, where I am.

HARI (With a low laugh) Is that so? (The chase continues.) I'll get you baby.

(The chase slowly transforms into an intimate dance)

SEETHA'S MOTHER (Breaking it up) Stop it. How dare you treat my daughter like that? Get out of here.

HARI But I thought ... Isn't that what you wanted?

RADHA Come on, Ma. Don't spoil my fun.

SEETHA'S MOTHER What will people think of you? Carrying on like that? (To Hari) You keep away from my daughter. She's a decent girl.

HARI (Confused) Hey lady, make up your mind. Do you want me to play the part or not?

SEETHA'S MOTHER Look, it's not my fault. I don't know what's happening tonight. I think I have to chase you off. So, get out of here.

HARI Okay. Okay. I'm gone.

RADHA No, don't go. Mother you keep out of this.

SEETHA'S MOTHER (To Radha) You, stop behaving like this.

RADHA I'm only following in your footsteps.

SEETHA'S MOTHER How dare you? (Turning to Shanti) What are we going to do? She (Indicating Radha) is ruining everything.

SHANTI We can't do anything until we get the whip away from her (Indicating Seetha). Let me try. (Approaching Seetha) Chantal ...

SEETHA I'm not Chantal. I'm Seetha.

SHANTI (Shocked) You know you're not Chantal.

SEETHA (Indicating Radha) Why does she think she's me?

SHANTI Hey Radha, what the hell are you up to? If you're just doing this for kicks, why did you give her the whip? (Radha doesn't respond) Radha ... Radha!

SEETHA'S MOTHER (Shaking Radha) Radha!

RADHA Hey, let me go. If you want Radha, there she is. (Indicates Seetha) Hey, Radha, these people want you, man. Why don't you talk to them?

SEETHA'S MOTHER (To Radha) She's not Radha, you are.

RADHA (Laughs) I wish. I always wanted to be like you, Radha. I didn't want to put on an act, like you Ma.

SEETHA'S MOTHER Quiet, you don't know what you're talking about.
(Raising hands in confusion to Shanti)
Shanti do something.

RADHA I'm talking about us. You and me, Mother. (Examines Mother) You know, Ma, you've got to stop wearing these outfits. And this stuff on your forehead. (Rubs off mother's kunkum) We are not Indians. We are Coloureds.

SEETHA'S MOTHER Radha!

RADHA Why are you still pretending? Everybody knows.

SHANTI This whole thing has got completely out of hand.

RADHA (To Seetha) Hey, Radha, why are you dressed like that? Who do you think you are? Me? Look even I don't dress like that anymore.

SEETHA Are you Seetha?

RADHA Isn't that obvious?
(Shanti has in the meantime crept up behind Seetha)

SEETHA (Calmly turning to Shanti) You want this, I suppose. (Gives her the whip then turns back to Radha) It's all right. I know you're Seetha. (She looks right into Radha's eyes)

RADHA (Coming out of a daze) You're destroying me. (Seetha continues to look deep into Radha's eyes. Radha slowly collapses)

PHANTOMS (Terrified) She's killed Radha.

SEETHA (To Nonkululekho) I want to speak to you.

SHANTI Stop. I can't allow that.

SEETHA (To Nonkululekho) I think I know you now. May I sit down with you?

KAMALA (Comes to drag Seetha away) No, Seetha, come away. This woman has tricked you. She gave you muti. Come away from her.

SEETHA No.

KAMALA She wants to kill you. She has put a spell on you. Mother has gone to the temple to seek help.

SEETHA (Laughs) Mother has gone to the temple?

KAMALA What's funny about that?

SEETHA Mother is a fake. You're a fake. I'm a fake.

KAMALA You're talking nonsense.

SEETHA Are you ashamed of mother?

KAMALA Are you mad?

SEETHA I didn't realise it before, but I have always been ashamed of her.

KAMALA You wicked girl. Stop it.

SEETHA But I learned it from her. She pretends she is Indian.

KAMALA Help! Seetha is having a fit.

SEETHA Don't be ridiculous. (Sits down with Nonkululekho)

KAMALA Help, she's becoming violent. She's trying to kill me.

SEETHA'S MOTHER (Running in)
I got this from the priest. (She is holding a vial filled with a strange concoction) We must give her some right away. (They drag Seetha to the bed, hold her down and force some of the stuff into her mouth)

SEETHA Ahhh! My throat is on fire. You've poisoned me.

SEETHA'S MOTHER It's working. That's the devil in her. (Seetha suddenly slumps on the bed)

KAMALA Is she dead?

(Seetha's mother bends to listen to Seetha's heart. Seetha bites her ear)

SEETHA'S MOTHER Ow, ow. She bit me.

(Seetha sits bolt upright)

KAMALA Why did you bite mother? What's wrong with you? Why are you staring like that? Mother, this is scary.

SEETHA (Seems insane)

This
Indian flower
yellow, brown, black
born in an African garden
greets you
namasthè
siyabonga
greetings
lekgae
groete
vanakum.

NONKULULEKHO Take my hand.

SEETHA I know you.

NONKULULEKHO You have always known me. Take my hand.

The Phantoms begin to mass, they hiss and move menacingly toward Nonkululekho)

PHANTOMS Stop. Do you want to die?

NONKULULEKHO Come Seetha. Take my hand.

PHANTOMS (Surround them) Do you want to die?

(Seetha takes Nonkululekho's hand. The Phantoms swoop down on them and separate them. A fierce dance battle begins in which, bharatha natyam is opposed to Zulu dance. Seetha is forced into bharatha natyam and Nonkululekho into Zulu dance. The Phantoms try to keep them separate through the dance movements but Seetha and Nonkululekho begin to adjust their movements and despite the effort of the phantoms to confuse them, their steps and gestures become synchronized and form a harmonic pattern. Their growing harmony weakens the phantoms who fall back in exhaustion. The two dancers are left to dance alone. At the end of the dance, Nonkululekho takes Seetha by the hand and together they walk to the covered mirror. The Phantoms try to rally to stop them. Nonkululekho and Seetha stop a few paces from the mirror. Seetha goes up to the mirror alone and with supreme confidence pulls the cover off the mirror. As she stares at her reflection, the phantoms disappear. Slowly her reflection changes and she is staring at herself as Nonkululekho. She smiles)

SEETHA Nonkululekho, I have found you.

We are together again.

Whole again.

I know who I am.

All races run together

in my being

I am the future

I am Azanian

(Her image in the mirror reflects herself again. She sings)

South Africa ikaya lam

(As she sings, Nonkululekho's voice can be heard singing with her. Then the voices of all the phantoms join in.)

THE END

New ground

THE Speech and Drama Department at the University of Durban-Westville is breaking new ground with Dr Muthal Naidoo's play, "Masks".

It's the first time UDW students have worked with an experimental play and it's also the first wholly indigenous work undertaken by the department.

Although written by Dr Naidoo in 1966 (it was her first play) when she was lecturing in the United States, this is its first staging and director Suria Naidoo and her students worked with the playwright in adapting it for the Asoka Theatre.

"Masks" is an intriguingly effective play, if a little obscure for some viewers, in its symbolism. Dr Naidoo says she was inspired to write it after seeing the surrealistic Fellini film, "Juliet of the Spirits", in which the central character conjured up spirits for her own sensual gratification in response to her husband's infidelity.

In "Masks", the young woman's psychosis manifests itself in the disintegra-



CARL COLEMAN
at the
Theatre

Play: "MASKS" (Asoka Theatre, University of Durban-Westville).

Cast: Students of the Speech and Drama Department.

Director: Suria Naidoo.

tion of various facets of her total being. These are represented by nightmarish phantoms which aim to destroy her, literally tearing apart her psyche.

On a superficial level, "Masks" is a play about a mentally tormented woman who struggles to find her single identity and, in turn, salvation and ultimate survival.

But this is not what the play is about. Without revealing this in the programme notes — Dr Naidoo simply describes "Masks" as "a happening in a woman's mind show-

ing her moving from insanity to sanity" — the central character's trauma is really a metaphor for what is happening in South Africa today.

The symbolic references may be a little simplistic for some, too obscure for others, but "Masks" does pose a very pertinent question: just who is a South African in a system that demands that ethnic and cultural differences be maintained?

It's not an easy work for students, but this cast acquit themselves with conviction and obvious enjoyment of being involved in the stimu-

lus of an experimental play.

The first two performances of the play's run were followed by an informal discussion between members of the audience, the playwright, the director and the cast which revealed a valuable insight into the audience's understanding of and reaction to the work.

This is an innovation that should be used more often for productions of this kind.

The Daily News TONIGHT, Friday, 27 August 1982

WORK-IN-PROGRESS

(W.I.P) THEATRE CO.

PRESENTS

**OUTSIDE
- IN**

by

MUTHAL NAIDOO

PIPPA DYER



ESSOP KHAN

MARRIAGE ACROSS THE COLOUR LINE

EXPLOSIVE THEME IN MUTHAL'S NEW PLAY

MARRIAGE across the colour line has always been regarded, in this country particularly, as a very controversial issue.

For decades the newspapers have highlighted

the plight of couples who are victims of the Mixed Marriages Act or the Immorality Act. Over the years, the activities of the police, in their relentless hunt for lovers across the colour line, have come under sharp criticism.

And now the churches have taken a stand declaring that they would marry any couple — irrespective of their pigmentation.

Yet very seldom has the public been given the opportunity to understand the tensions and hardships that plague a mixed couple's life, in a racist society.

"OUTSIDE IN"

Now, Dr. Muthal Naidoo, playwright and director, who was responsible for the recent "We Three Kings", has tackled the sensitive areas that surround a

mixed couple in her latest play, *Outside-in*.

Outside-in picks up the story of such a couple when they are on the verge of breaking up their marriage.

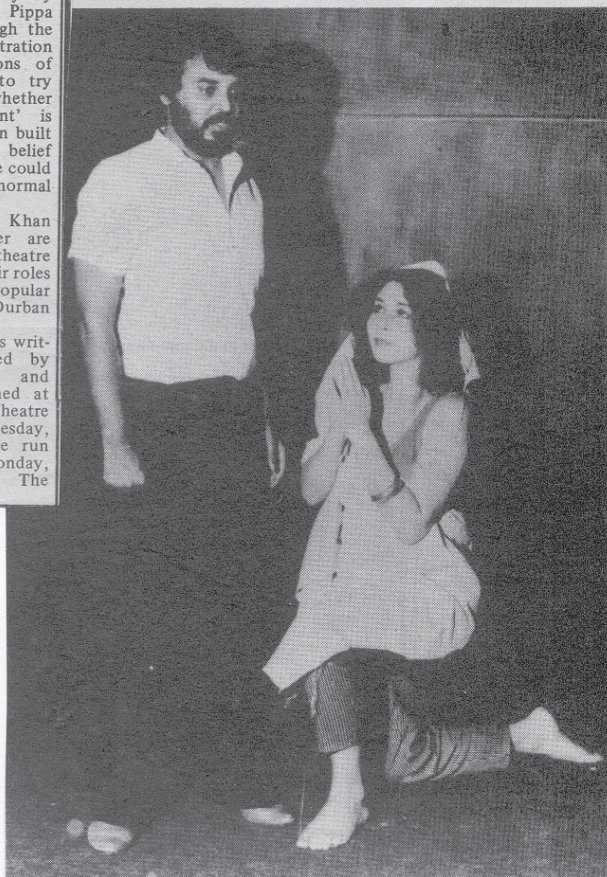
Kassim Mohamed and Kate Reynolds, played respectively by Essop Khan and Pippa Dyer, dig through the bitterness, frustration and recriminations of their marriage to try and discover whether their 'experiment' is simply an illusion built upon the naive belief that a normal life could be led in an abnormal society.

Both Essop Khan and Pippa Dyer are well-known to theatre audiences for their roles in a number of popular plays in the Durban and district area.

"*Outside-in*" is written and directed by Muthal Naidoo, and will be performed at the Hermit Theatre from Wednesday, February 9. The run will end on Monday, February 21. The

shows will start at 8 p.m. every evening. There will be no shows Tuesdays.

THE GRAPHIC, January 21, 1983



Essop Khan and Pippa Dyer in one of the dramatic scenes in *Outside-in*.



Outside-In: A mixed marriage backfires

DURBAN playwright Muthal Naidoo is currently directing her new play *Outside-In* to be staged at the Hermit Theatre next month.

The play, a production of the Work-In-Progress theatre company, is about a mixed marriage.

A Muslim man, Kasim Mohamed and a white woman, Kate Reynolds, discover how difficult it is to maintain a normal marriage in a racist society.

Pippa Dyer plays Kate Reynolds and Kasim Mohamed is played by Essop Khan.

Outside-In will be presented at the Hermit Theatre from February 9 to 21, except Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.

POST
26-29 JAN
1983

The Daily NEWS
TONIGHT
WEDNESDAY, FEB 9,
1983



PIPPA Dyer and Essop Kahn in a scene from "*Outside-In*", Muthal Naidoo's latest play about a mixed marriage which opens tonight at the Hermit Theatre. The play will be staged nightly at 8 except Tuesdays until February 21.

Outside-In

Essop Khan gave me the idea for *Outside-In*, which was written in 1982/3, in the last decade of the apartheid era when the system was in its dying throes and therefore, most vicious and quite demented. Though there were glimmerings of hope, it was the darkness that enveloped us and ordinary people were engulfed in tremendous fear. *Outside-In* portrays the troubled relationship of two very ordinary apolitical South Africans who struggle to find each other in the darkness of a fear ridden society.

The play was first produced by WIP Theatre Company at the Hermit Theatre in Durban in February 1983. The South African Theatre Organisation, administrator Mike Stainbank, took the play to the Grahamstown Festival in July 1984.

The play was revised in 2001 and published in 2002, in *South African Indian Writings in English*, compiled by Rajendra Chetty.

The play was revised and edited for this publication in 2008.

Setting :

The living room of a sparsely furnished flat.

CHARACTERS

Kate Reynolds, a white woman in her late twenties
Kassim Mohamed, an Indian man about thirty

CAST

Pippa Dyer
Essop Khan

SCENE ONE

(Kate is seated at a table smoking and drinking. She hears a key in the door, stiffens, looks at her watch, half-rises from her seat, and then flops back. Enter Kassim. He sees Kate and stiffens. Kate has her back to him. He is half inclined to slip out again, but just stands looking at Kate who does not turn around.)

KATE Oh, what the hell. I know you're there. Why don't you come in? (Pause) You're back early. Are you disappointed to find me here? (Kassim is silent) Well, I wasn't expecting you so soon either. Frankly, I'm disappointed.

KASSIM (Entering and closing the door) How long have you been here?

KATE You mean, how much have I had to drink? (Holds up bottle) What's not in there, is down the hatch.

KASSIM You're drunk.

KATE I wish I were. But don't worry, I won't disappoint you. I'll get there. Your unexpected arrival sobered me up. So I'll have to start over. (Pours another drink.) Sorry, I can't spare any.

KASSIM How did you get in? I thought you lost your key.

KATE (Indicating lower floor) I got the spare from Johan.

KASSIM What did you want to see me about?

KATE (Laughing loudly) You make it sound like a business appointment. Well, sit down then and wait. You're too early. (She laughs) You look like a mouse, a large brown mouse. Can you make your nose twitch? (Laughs).

KASSIM I was actually looking forward to seeing you. I missed you. Why did you have to spoil it with your drinking?

KATE I was putting myself in the right mood, especially for you.

KASSIM Do you have to be so loud?

KATE (Laughing) Are you afraid I'm going to disturb the neighbours?

KASSIM For god's sake, keep it down.

KATE Oh, don't worry. Everyone's out. Only Johan

down there, grinding away as usual. You don't have to worry about him. He's our friend. Anyway, he's up to his eyes in work. He can't hear me. Can you hear me down there? Yoohoo, Johan, can you hear me?

KASSIM (Taking bottle from her) You've had enough.

KATE Bring that back, you shit! You think you'll shut me up. Well you won't. (Goes to door) Hello out there, is anybody listening? This is Kate calling. Kate, you know, of Kate's shebeen. Come on in, the jol's on.

KASSIM (Rushes to pull her in and close door) Stop it! What's the matter with you?

KATE Are you afraid, little mouse, that someone will come in and find us together?

KASSIM Why are you drinking so much?

KATE Why? It's simple, I want to get drunk.

KASSIM Well, it doesn't help.

KATE Why not? (She marches over to get bottle and glass, pours out a drink and raises her glass) Here's to you, Kassim, a mouse in man's clothing. (Drinks) Now what were you saying about my drinking. (Pause) What's the matter? Cat got your tongue, mousy? Do you know why I drink? (Takes a swig) Because every time I look at you, I want to get drunk.

KASSIM Look, we have to talk ...

KATE Be patient. Plenty left in here. (Shows bottle) I'm in no hurry.

KASSIM It's Thursday. Aren't you going to visit your parents?

KATE I put that off in favour of domestic duties.

KASSIM Domestic duties? Is that what you call getting sloshed?

KATE Ah, you think I should be a dutiful wife, with slippers and pipe at the ready ... Oh no, you wouldn't know about that. I know what you expect. (She pulls tablecloth off table)

KASSIM I'm going to make coffee.

KATE (She runs to block his way) No, don't run away. (She drapes tablecloth crudely to resemble a sari) This is more like it, isn't it? (She pulls end of cloth to cover her face) Welcome home, lord and

master. (She bows, hands held in an Indian greeting) Pray, how can I serve you?

KASSIM Don't be ridiculous.

KATE That's what you expect, isn't it? Well, (She pulls off cloth and flips it aside) I'm not an Indian wife. (She picks up glass again)

KASSIM And I'm not this fantasy that you're busy creating.

KATE Admit it! You expect me to be an Indian wife, a slave, who kowtows to her husband. Well, I have a mind of my own. You can't make a slave of me.

KASSIM Look, Kate you're not thinking clearly. I'm not the monster here ...

KATE Oh? I suppose I am!

KASSIM Neither of us is perfect, but that's not the point. ... Look, we have to discuss this rationally. I don't want to give up on us. Do you?

KATE (Laughs) Ah, you still love me. Is that it? That's why you bounced in here, thrilled to see me.

KASSIM You put me off with the drinking. We have serious things to discuss and we need clear heads.

KATE We have nothing to discuss.

KASSIM You and I have something and I don't want to give it up.

KATE Stop it. Stop deceiving yourself. It's finished. It is beyond repair. We can't make it work.

KASSIM Because you don't want to?

KATE Don't put the blame on me! You jumped into something you couldn't handle.

KASSIM No, no! This is not the way. We keep falling into the trap of recriminations. We can't handle this on our own. We need help. Let me call Johan in here. He's our friend. He cares about us. He'll help sort out this mess. I'll go down and see if I can tear him away from his work. (Moves to door)

KATE Don't waste your time.

KASSIM (Opening door) It's not a waste of time? Johan's the only one who can help.

KATE (Goes past him, shuts the door and stands with her back to it) I don't care if he's Jesus Christ himself, he can't help. It's all over.

KASSIM But we haven't given our marriage a chance ...

KATE Marriage? What marriage? That little ceremony we invented was just an illusion. We were crazy to think it would work. We put ourselves together and we can just as easily put ourselves asunder. So I say it's over. Kaput. Finished. Klaar.

(She goes back to the table and picks up her drink. Kassim paces about for a few moments, then comes to the table and sits. He takes out a little jewel case and sits there fingering it)

KASSIM Today is Eid. This was meant as a peace offering. (He holds out the box.)

KATE It's too late. It's over. You can't buy me off.

KASSIM This is not a bribe. I bought it, because I love you.

KATE Are you kidding? When you walked in here today, you were so cold.

KASSIM Because you were drinking. Look, I don't want to fight.

KATE But you can't help it. Neither can I. That's what makes this situation hopeless. Especially when love turns to hate. Admit it, Kass you don't want this relationship.

KASSIM That's not true. (Holds out box) This is proof. Please take it.

KATE I can't.

KASSIM (Puts box down in front of her) I love you and I believe you love me.

KATE Give it up, Kassim. I'm leaving you.

KASSIM (Opens box and holds it out) I bought this for you.

KATE (She hesitates, then takes locket) Oh Kass, this is beautiful. (She puts it round her neck)

KASSIM Let me help you. (He fastens locket, then puts his arms around her and kisses her cheek)

KATE No, no, no. Stop! It's over. (She pulls away from him) I'm sorry Kass. It's all over.

KASSIM No, we still love each other. We can still make this work. I've been doing a lot of thinking and I know now where we went wrong. We were aiming for a traditional marriage but that can't work in this society.

KATE And we've proved it. So it's over.

KASSIM No. Our marriage is a challenge to the system. If we make it work, we will have overcome.

KATE That's what you said before. It was all going to be so exciting! Marching off into the future, we were going to be so different, no hiding, nothing clandestine, and everything open for all the world to see. Was all that just a new kind of sweet talk? What happened to your guts, man?

KASSIM What happened to yours? ... Anyway that was stupid bravado. We didn't really understand the challenges. But we do now! (Takes her by the arms) Look at me. Tell me you don't love me.

KATE Why won't you face the facts? It's finished. I can't stand being with you anymore. Always looking over your shoulder, hiding behind my skirts. Once and for all, it's over! Now let go of me.

KASSIM I can't. Not now that I am really beginning to understand. Now that I am beginning to see how we can make our marriage work.

KATE Give it up, will you? Why did I get involved with you? I never wanted this relationship. I fought it. I struggled against it but the more I struggled, the more I was caught.

KASSIM Because you loved me.

KATE No. Because I didn't really know you. I didn't know you were a snivelling little mouse.

KASSIM (Reasoning with her) Kate, don't ...

KATE (Forcing the mockery) Mousie, mousie, mousie!

KASSIM Stop it, Kate.

KATE Mousie, mousie, mousie!

KASSIM Stop Kate. This doesn't help.

KATE (Somewhat hysterical) You won't shut me up! You won't shut me up! Mousie, mousie, mousie! So what are you going to do? (Challenging him) Hit me? (She stands defiant; he incredulous) See! You are a mouse! (The telephone rings) Perfect. A timely intervention to prove my point. The phone is ringing.

KASSIM I hear it.

KATE Answer it, mousie.

KASSIM You know it's for you. I don't get calls here

KATE A nice excuse. You're afraid. (Answering phone) Hello ... (Laughs) You're not too bad yourself. ... No, I'm sorry, not tonight. ... No, really. ... Well, I'll think about it. But definitely not tonight. ... I usually spend Thursday nights with my parents. As a matter of fact, I was just leaving. ... Yes, you too. 'Bye. (Puts phone down deliberately) That was Roger.

KASSIM Your boss?

KATE He's more than my boss.

(They stare at each other for a long moment. Then Kassim slumps on sofa.)

KATE

I didn't want to hurt you. Honestly, I didn't. I came here today to tell you about Roger, but I couldn't. That's why I tried to get drunk. Please try to understand. We can't go on like this. For a long time now we've been avoiding each other. You're happier with your friends. I'm happier with mine. We're freer away from each other. (Kassim doesn't move. Kate begins to plead) I have to get away from this. Do you think it's a pleasure, coming here and looking at these walls night after night? This is a prison. With Roger, I am free. I can breathe. I can do ordinary things like going for a walk on the beach. I want to be free again. With you, I am trapped. So let me go will you. Just let me go. I want to get out of here. (Kassim still says nothing) I'm sorry. But ... Please understand. I can't go on like this. I can't take this any longer – this ... this cage with two animals inside snapping at each other because they can't get out. I want to be with Roger. He has shown me what I've been missing; what I've been throwing away. With him I can go anywhere. With him I can be a woman again. He is strong. He can protect me because he is a man.

KASSIM (Angry) And I'm a mouse. Damn you. Don't compare me with your Roger. What the hell do you know about him? You think he's strong, but that's only because everything out there reinforces the idea of his strength. Because doors open for him and don't open for me, you think I'm weak. I know I can never be a man in your eyes because my strengths and weaknesses are apparent. But Roger's manhood is structured by this society. He need not make much effort to achieve it. Go on. Go to Roger. It doesn't matter whether he's a man or not, he will appear to be so. Nobody will ever know whether he is a man or a mouse.

KATE He is a man. I know it.

KASSIM It's not hard to be a man when you're protected, right or wrong, by the law. Don't you know that there is no protection for man or woman where I stand?

KATE If you weren't scared, you'd go out there and change things. Isn't that what we were supposed to be about – change? You didn't have the guts.

KASSIM What about you? (Pause) Why have you never told your parents about us?

KATE Have you told yours then?

KASSIM No, I have not, but then I am a mouse.

KATE I couldn't tell my parents. They wouldn't understand.

KASSIM Neither would mine and that makes me a mouse but not you.

KATE It wouldn't have been so difficult for you.

KASSIM Why? Because you're white. You think my parents would feel honoured to have you in the family? I suppose I should feel honoured to have you as a wife.

KATE You know that's not what I mean. Your parents should be more understanding because they are victims of discrimination. Don't they want to end discrimination?

KASSIM (Sarcastic) As much as yours.

KATE My parents are different. They were born and brought up in prejudice.

KASSIM So were mine. Only mine don't have the power to enforce their prejudices.

KATE My parents are not racists? They are as much victims of circumstances as you and your parents.

KASSIM Circumstances that they condone. When we are born, we don't come into the world, fists raised shouting 'Amandla.' We soon learn to accept our places in society. Your parents are racists and so is Roger and so are you with him.

KATE You don't understand about my parents. Just leave them out of this.

KASSIM I see. Your parents are excused but mine aren't. Let's not tamper with your parents' self-centred,

uncharitable peace of mind ... because that's what you really want too, the comforts of exploitation. That's what your Roger represents. So ... you never felt bound by our marriage. What was I to you? An experiment to see what it would be like with a black man?

KATE You shit! Why don't you talk about yourself? You're the kind that goes sniffing around white women. Did you think that if you got inside a white woman, you'd become white too?

KASSIM (Angry) I don't go sniffing around white women.

KATE Oh yes you do. You just wanted me because I was white, so you could show off with me. I gave you status. Your friends were green with envy, weren't they? Knowing you were with a white woman. You even let some of them have a go at me so that you could feel superior when I chased them off. You're nothing but a pimp.

KASSIM Damn you. Call yourself liberated! You're just a good time girl.

KATE I am liberated but I still want to be with a man, not a mouse. An independent man. Not a man who's trying to assert his manhood through me.

KASSIM Get out then! Go to him. Go back to a life of false superiority. I was a fool to think we could escape the system.

KATE That's your trouble, you keep blaming the system. This has nothing to do with the system. It has to do with us. The way we live. I hate you. I hate this little rat-hole. I want to get out. I want to breathe again. I'm getting out of here and I never want to see this place ever. (Exit to bedroom)

(Kassim sits down and pours himself a drink. The door opens and Kate appears with a small suitcase. They stare at each other for a moment and then she leaves.)

KASSIM What the hell has all this been about? ... I've made a fool of myself. ... Did I only want her because she's white? ... What a mess. I am nothing but a mouse. I wanted a white woman to give me a sense of self worth. Perhaps they're right. ... Perhaps we should stick to our own. (Raises glass) Eid Mubarak, Kassim.

SCENE TWO

(Kassim is sitting at the table drinking. He looks unkempt. He tries to pour out a drink but the bottle

is empty. He gets up to fetch another. As he returns, he catches sight of himself in the mirror. He stops and begins speaking to his reflection)

KASSIM Hey there, you with your nose in the air. Don't I know you? You're Kassim Mohamed aren't you? (Stares at his reflection) That's funny. You haven't changed a bit. Just turn around so I can have a good look at you. (Makes a sign that reflection should turn around) Turn around, man. Don't just stand there imitating me. You're a bloody idiot. All right, don't turn around. I can see you haven't changed. (Drinks) Hey, you shouldn't be doing that. Put that glass down. You call yourself a Muslim. Man, you're a hypocrite. (Drinks) You know what I think? I think you don't know who you are. (Drinks) You know, I'm surprised you haven't changed. You've been trying so hard to be white; living in a white area, with a white woman, drinking wine, I thought you'd have become white by now. Ya, I've heard you too, trying to talk like a white man. But with all that, you didn't become even one shade lighter. You're still as black as ever. (Examines reflection carefully) Hey, you should check man. Maybe there's a zipper down the side. (Puts glass down, pulls up his shirt and examines his body). Look carefully, you'll see it. Just pull it down and you'll get out of that black skin. (Laughs at his reflection) You're a bloody fool. You think it's that easy to become white. (A knock on the door.) God, what some people will do to become white. (Another knock. He refills glass. Looks at reflection) Do we want visitors? I don't think so. (Sits down. Picks up newspaper.)

(A key turns in the door and Kate comes in carrying books and a parcel.)

KATE Oh ... I thought no one was here. You didn't answer. (Kass ignores her) I got the spare key from Johan. He sent these things up. Wants you to keep them for him.

KASSIM Sure. Anything for Johan.

KATE What's up with him? He seems very tense.

KASSIM Don't know.

KATE He seems very worried. ... Don't you care? ... I thought he was your friend. ... What about this parcel that he's sent up?

KASSIM He doesn't want me prying into his activities. The fewer the people who know about him and his work, the safer. (Examines parcel and puts it aside)

KATE (Tentatively) I don't know. I think he needs help.

KASSIM Did he ask for your help?

KATE No, but ... he's going through his papers and getting rid of stuff

KASSIM A necessary precaution ... he does it all the time. Sometimes I hold stuff for him.

KATE I still think there's something strange ... (Long pause) ... Anyway, I came to collect my things ... I didn't expect ... Do you have the day off?

KASSIM I'm not at work. So I must have

KATE Do you mind if I ... ?

KASSIM Go right ahead.

KATE I thought I'd ...

KASSIM Don't let me stop you.

KATE I've been trying to get you at work ... I wanted to tell you I'd be coming for my things ... Every time I called, they said you weren't there.

KASSIM I've been finding it difficult to get started in the mornings. So I've been using this high octane stuff (Holds up glass) to warm up the old engine. They didn't seem to think much of it at work. Said I had bad breath or something. Told me they were thinking of firing me. I told them not to trouble themselves. I'd think it over for them. So I have come here to think.

KATE Have you been fired?

KASSIM I'm still thinking about it.

KATE When did you start drinking so heavily?

KASSIM Didn't you come here to pack?

KATE You're right this is none of my business. (Goes to look out of window)

KASSIM Yes, none of your business. Ours was an anti-marriage contract.

KATE You mean ante-nuptial.

KASSIM Always correcting my English. No, I mean anti-marriage.

KATE Are you blaming me for the failure of our marriage?

KASSIM How can I? You never make mistakes.

KATE I didn't come here to fight with you ... I was wondering ... About this flat? ... Are you ... going to move back into your parents' home?

KASSIM No.

KATE But you can't stay here. This is a white area. Besides the flat's in my name.

KASSIM I'm staying.

KATE But it's dangerous for you. Haven't you noticed the police presence in the area?

KASSIM What's strange about that? We live in a police state. I'm not leaving. This flat is perfect for me. I can get away from everyone here.

KATE You mean you can't booze at home.

KASSIM I'm sure you can sympathise with that.

KATE Look you don't really need the flat. You just visit here ... I need this place.

KASSIM Why? You have your parents and what about Roger?

KATE Oh forget it. (Exit to bedroom)

KASSIM

None of my business. (Is about to pour a drink, changes mind, takes bottle and glass to kitchen. Comes back, paces about restlessly. Looks for cigarettes. Finds empty packet. Squashes packet and throws it down. Sits down with paper). White parents are different. They do like the birds. When the kids get to a certain age, they kick them out and say "Fly or die." I suppose she can't go back home. Anyway, it's none of my business. (Reads) ... She can always get a place somewhere. She's white. She'll have no problem.

(Kate comes in, takes out cigarettes. Lights one, is about to put pack away)

KATE Would you like a cigarette?

KASSIM Thanks. (Lights cigarette)

KATE (Goes to window) Look here, Kass. I have to talk to you. About this flat. I must have it.

KASSIM I don't understand you. Three weeks ago, you couldn't wait to get out. Now you come here and demand it. I thought this was your prison.

KATE I need this flat.

KASSIM Too bad.

KATE But I have nowhere to go.

KASSIM Everything is wide open for you out there. Surely your parents will take you in.

KATE I can't go back there. They kicked me out ... (Long pause) I told them about us.

KASSIM What? Why? There was no need. We broke up.

KATE I had to.

KASSIM Rubbish, you didn't have to.

KATE I didn't tell them because I wanted to. It just happened.

KASSIM Things like that don't just happen.

KATE Well, this did.

KASSIM I don't believe it. You're making this up so you can get the flat.

KATE You just want to believe the worst about me. What do you understand? You've been sitting here, getting drunk, wallowing in self-pity, hiding in this self-made cage, but I've been out there again. I became part of that world and I found out a few things.

KASSIM Why did you tell your parents? Didn't you want to stay in that world?

KATE I couldn't. ... their world ... they're trapped inside a prison for whites only. Anything that happens outside it is either non-existent or there to bolster their self-importance. They're decent people but their decency is limited. I can't go back to that.

KASSIM Isn't that better for you than this?

KATE No. I don't want that kind of life. God help me, I don't. I wanted to walk out of there and just leave it alone, but it didn't work out that way.

KASSIM What happened?

KATE I lost my head. ... We were at the dinner table. Dad was talking about things getting harder, recession and inflation and things like that. The dreadful effect on his firm. Profits had dropped to half what they had

been the previous year. They would have had to settle for a much smaller dividend but it didn't come to that.

KASSIM Lucky for them.

KATE How do you think they solved the problem? They fired half the Black workers ... I almost choked when Dad said that. "But, Dad," I said, "Why did you allow that to happen? Just think of all those people. They won't be able to find jobs; they'll starve." Do you know what he said? He said they'd manage somehow; they always did. I asked him how he could let something like that happen and told him he should go back to the firm and tell them to take back all the workers. He just laughed at me. I insisted – told him they were being immoral. He said I was naïve. Besides they had acted on his suggestion. He had told them to fire the workers. My father! When I told him how shocked I was, he told me not to get hysterical. I didn't understand business, those were only kaffirs anyway ... Then I went mad. I grabbed hold of the tablecloth and pulled with all my might, upsetting all the dishes. They just stared at me. I screamed, "How can you sit there filling your fucking guts, when you've condemned whole families to starvation?" My mother said if I couldn't keep a civil tongue in my head, I had better get out. That's when I told them. I said, "I'm getting out. I'm going back to my husband. Yes, I've been married for six months. I never told you because he's black. The next time you fire black men, just remember one of them could be your son-in-law and that you'd be taking the bread out of your grandchildren's mouths."

KASSIM (Not knowing how to respond) When did this happen?

KATE A week ago. O Kass, those are my parents. I love them.

KASSIM Don't worry, they probably didn't believe you anyway.

KATE What do you mean?

KASSIM They probably thought you said all that just to shock them. I'm sure when you go back ...

KATE I'll never go back!

KASSIM But they are your parents. You love them.

KATE Yes, but do I love them just because they are my parents? Even if they are selfish and full of prejudice? Am I trapped into loving people out of habit, out of sheer habit? Oh Kass, there's no such thing as freedom.

KASSIM You're just angry that's all. You love your parents because they have been good and kind to you. They love you.

KATE No, they don't. They loved me because parents are supposed to love their children. Now they don't love me any more. If they loved me, they would love me for whatever I am. But they love me only as long as I am a reflection of them. And I don't want to be like them.

KASSIM Well, you're not

KATE Do you know what happened after I left the dinner table that night? My mother came up after me when I went to my room to get my things. She wanted to know if I was really living with a Black man. Can you imagine it? Of all the things I had said to them, that was all they were concerned about. Then I told her that I had married an Indian and showed them a photograph of us together to prove it. She told me I had brought disgrace upon the family and if I persisted in this affair, I was no longer welcome in their home.

KASSIM But the "affair" is over. Why didn't you tell her?

KATE Because I don't want to go back to that kind of life! Don't you understand? Because they live in a cage – I don't want to live in a cage anymore.

KASSIM But you've come back here. To this cage.

KATE (After a long pause) I went off with this the last time. I didn't mean to. (Holding out locket)

KASSIM I can't take it back. It meant something when I bought it. Let it be a memory of that. (The phone rings. They stare at the phone) Are you expecting a call? ... Roger? ... (He reaches out to answer. Kate tries to stop him) Hello ... Hello ... Hello. (Putting phone down) ... Wrong number I suppose.

KATE No one answered?

KASSIM No ... maybe they weren't expecting to hear my voice.

(Phone rings again)

KATE Don't answer it.

KASSIM Why not?

KATE You know it's not for you. You never answer the phone.

KASSIM I just did. (Reaches for phone)

KATE (Stopping him) Don't answer it. For God's sake, don't answer it.

KASSIM What's going on?

KATE Just wait. It'll stop just now. (She listens intently and when the phone stops, she is obviously relieved)

KASSIM Was that Roger?

KATE Roger? (Looks at him blankly)

KASSIM Yes, Roger. Your lover, remember?

KATE How could it have been?

KASSIM How stupid of me. You would have answered. So who was it?

KATE (Looking furtively out of the window) Probably Roger.

KASSIM All right. It's none of my business. So let's get on with the packing. Here, don't forget this. (Holds up a book, opens it) Interesting inscription – "Merry Christmas. I love you. Roger". So that's where you spent Christmas.

KATE (Preoccupied) What?

KASSIM So you spent Christmas with Roger?

KATE Yes.

KASSIM You told me you were spending it with friends. After all the trouble I had taken too, tree, decorations, turkey, the works. I wanted to make it so nice for you. But at the last minute you couldn't come. You said it was your Christmas not mine. ... So how is it in Never-Never-Land?

KATE My life is not a fairy tale.

KASSIM No it's the real thing. Roger is a man.

KATE No. He is Prince Charming.

KASSIM And you're Cinderella.

KATE No, I don't have a fairy godmother. I can't go to the ball. I can't wear glass slippers. They'd probably cut my feet and leave me in a pool of blood. And Roger would be most upset to have his cosy world mucked up like that.

KASSIM Have you broken it off with Roger?

KATE There was nothing to break off. I couldn't get close to him. All his beautiful antique furniture, original paintings – trappings of a gilded cage. He doesn't look through the bars at the ugly world outside. He concentrates his attention on his beautiful possessions.

KASSIM But isn't that what you want?

KATE Dammit, we all live in cages. I want to get out.

KASSIM Perhaps it would be better to be like Roger.

KATE No. He lives in a world of illusion – pretending that the problems out there don't exist. I can't do that. That's why I left him. (Telephone rings again. Kate is frightened) Don't answer it.

(They wait for the 'phone to stop ringing)

KASSIM Now what's this all about? Why are you so afraid of the phone? Is it the police?

KATE No, I don't think so.

KASSIM Then who is it? I want to know.

KATE Oh, it's not important.

KASSIM Come on, Kate.

KATE I don't know who it is, really I don't.

KASSIM Then why are you so afraid?

KATE Because I don't know who it is. ... I've been getting calls at work all week, obscene calls. I've been called vile names. It's unnerving.

KASSIM It's never happened before.

KATE No.

KASSIM Only since you told your parents.

KATE No, don't say that. I don't want to think about that.

KASSIM No.

KATE I'm going mad. I don't know what to do.

KASSIM (After a pause) It's okay. ... You can have the flat. I'll go back to my parents.

KATE (Very upset) That's not what I came back for. (Kassim looks at her enquiringly) I didn't come back

because I wanted the flat ... I came back because I wanted to see you

KASSIM Why? ... You and I don't see things the same way

KATE I don't know how I see things anymore. I thought I knew. But things have changed.

KASSIM Nothing's changed. You're still white and I'm still black. We'll always see things differently.

KATE I don't know anything anymore. Do I love my parents because they are my parents? Did I love you for yourself or because you were Black? Our choices are not really free.

KASSIM In this society, you and I were not conditioned to love each other.

KATE You're right. Not to love just to desire. (Holding out locket) Here take this. I can't keep it. (Pause) If you and I were not conditioned, were we free, were we making real choices? Was it love? Or was it desire and were we just programmed after all?

KASSIM I don't know.

KATE Don't you want to find out? I feel my whole life is a lie. Nothing is authentic! It's driving me crazy. Are we just automatons? (Long pause) I can't work things out on my own. Not in my parents' world. In here, you and I just went on living in that world. That was our mistake. That's what you tried to make me see. I had to go back to understand. And I see it now, that's why I'm back. We had a glimpse of freedom.

KASSIM Yes we did, didn't we? But we threw it away.

KATE But we can find it again.

KASSIM What makes you think we can?

KATE Because what I feel is not a lie. It goes against everything I was brought up to believe. It is frightening. When I went back, I saw that I had given in to fear and my life would be a sham. ... I know now that I want to be with you. With you, I have a chance to find out who I am, a chance for freedom. (They stand looking at each other. The phone rings. They stare at it a moment)

KASSIM (Reaching for phone) Hello ... This is Kassim Mohammed ... What am I doing here? I live here. Yes, that's right, I am an Indian ... Yes, she's here. Who shall I say is calling? ... Yes, it does matter. Please identify yourself ... That's no way to speak to me. ... Go ahead,

report me to the police. Call in the army and the navy too, while you're at it!
(There is a long silence)

KATE You can't stay here, Kass. They know. ... I was pulled in for questioning yesterday.

KASSIM What!

KATE ... They know all about us. Where you work, about the flat, our visits to Swaziland. I was shocked. How could they know all that? Tonight, when I came here, it felt strange. I kept looking out for police. I didn't know whether I'd find you here or whether ... I think we are about to be picked up?

KASSIM Why did you come here if you thought that? (Goes to look out of window) Why didn't you tell me right away? I don't see anything out there. ... If they know about us, they must have been watching us for a long time. Why didn't they pick us up a long time ago? Pick me up, at any rate? ... What did they want to know?

KATE They asked a lot of questions. They were very interested in Johan.

KASSIM Johan? They wanted to know about Johan? What did you tell them?

KATE Nothing. He's a nice guy. He's a friend.

KASSIM My God, I hope Johan's not in trouble because of us. Why did you wait so long to tell me? Where's that parcel? (Opens parcel — takes out note and reads) Kassim, I don't want to alarm you, but I don't think I'm safe here anymore. Please hide these papers and when you get a chance deliver them to the address below. Do it discreetly. They must not fall into the wrong hands or be traced back to you. It would be dangerous. Sorry to involve you in this. I have no other choice. Johan.

KATE Oh, Kass!

KASSIM (Suddenly taking her by the shoulders) My God. Do you see what we've done? We've led them to Johan. They're not after us. They're after Johan. They found out about him because of us. We've got to help him. (Sirens and noise outside. Flashes of blue light illuminate the window. They rush to look out. Sounds of police moving into the building)

KATE Police! ... They're swarming all over the place. (Kassim dashes down the stairs) Kass ...

(She runs after him. Sounds and voices are heard

shouting police commands, Kass's and Kate's voices shouting at the police and trying to speak to Johan. A huge commotion. Sirens, the hubbub dies down, then silence. Kass and Kate return)

KASSIM (Picks up parcel) They found about Johan through us. We led the cops right to him. We were safe even though the police knew about us. They didn't even come here to search. They knew we were nothing.

KATE You don't know that. He may have led the cops to us.

KASSIM But, we didn't get picked up! By finding us this flat, Johan put himself in danger. I'll never forgive myself for that.

KATE How bad is it? What exactly is he involved in?

KASSIM I don't know. I never asked him. I never asked! Oh God, I never asked.

KATE He probably wouldn't have told you anyway.

KASSIM I didn't ask him because I didn't want to get involved. Now because of us ...

KATE Where have they taken him?

KASSIM To some hellhole. They never tell you ... Oh God, let him survive ...

KATE When they picked me up, I thought they were after us.

KASSIM Makes you feel stupid, doesn't it? Our selfish concern for ourselves. Meanwhile Johan ... I've got to let his family know.

KATE Kass, I know they didn't come for us tonight but that doesn't mean we're safe. We've been defying the law ...

KASSIM No, we haven't. By hiding, we showed that the law was right and we were wrong. We accepted the law. We were no threat ...

KATE It's not going to help to sit here and blame ourselves.

KASSIM You're right. We've got to do something.

KATE But how? ... They've taken Johan.

KASSIM Not us, because we were no threat. But not anymore.

KATE What do you mean? ... Do you want to ... ?

KASSIM I'm not going downstairs to pick up where Johan left off. I have to find my own way. But I won't go on like this, tumbling in bed, pretending to be a revolutionary. I won't live just for myself anymore. (Pause) I wish I could be like Johan. He was fearless. He knew what he was about. I can't even handle this relationship ... but I will learn and I am going to join the fight for change.

KATE So am I ... alongside you.

(They look at each other for a long moment)

KASSIM This time it's not a fight in here. We'll fight the battle out there. (She nods)

(Kassim extends his hand to her as the lights fade)

THE END

21/1/83 Sunday Times What's Happening



WELL known Durban actress Pippa Dyer (above) is to play opposite Essop Khan in Muthal Naidoo's latest play "Outside - In", which opens at the Hermit Theatre on Wednesday, February 9.

Dr. Naidoo is the founder and director of the Work-In-Progress Theatre Company which produced her first full-length play, "Of No Account", in 1981.

"Outside - In" is about a "mixed" couple who struggle to discover whether their relationship has a solid foundation or whether it is built on illusion.

After "Outside - In", the WIP company, which includes actors Babs Pillay and Mahomed Pillay, is to stage productions at regular intervals throughout the year.

SUNDAY TRIBUNE, FEBRUARY 13, 1983



AN Indian marries a white woman in South Africa. The dramatic possibilities of such a situation for a writer are immense, and full marks to Durban playwright Muthal Naidoo for her initiative in exploring the issue in **OUTSIDE-IN** (Hermit Theatre, Durban).

It will be a relationship marked with tensions. He is a Muslim, she a Christian. She drinks, he doesn't. She enjoys snacking on mushrooms on toast; he prefers "interminable little pots of curry".

To surprise her, he decorates a Christmas tree, only to learn that she has decided to spend Christmas with friends. Such are the details woven by Mrs Naidoo into her drama to give it impact.

Details rather than big speeches add up to divorce, and the play loses tension when Kate and Cassim, (splendidly played by Pippa Dyer and Essop Khan), resort to repetitious dialogue about freedom, society and status. The pressures out there are known to us all; they do not need heavy underlining.

The quarrel achieves its greatest realism on

the personal level. She grabs the tablecloth and wears it mockingly as a sari; he trembles at the sound of a telephone, afraid to answer because he is in a white area.

She calls him a mouse because he refuses to defy society; he cries out in desperation: "We did not come into this world with fists raised, shouting amandla".

The flat in which they live becomes a cage. Kate rushes out to find freedom only to find the world out there is full of cages, some of them more gilded than others. Whites-only groups erect their own bars.

"Your cage is invisible — it would take Houdini to get out," he tells her.

After interval there is a metamorphosis. She returns with her lessons learnt; he is seeking a new dispensation through the bottle. "I'm using this high octane stuff to start up the engines," he says.

It is only when a mutual friend is arrested by the police with terrifying thumpings, sirens and flashing lights that they both realise their problems are relatively insignificant.

The solution to their predicament is not a move to an independent

black state, like Transkei or Ciskei, which would be too simple, but a concerted effort by both to defy the society in which they live.

Their response is emotional, provocative and desperate, and most certainly not sensible. But in the end it is not they who are indicted in our minds, but the unnatural laws they confront.

Muthal tackles problems of mixed marriage in SA



Essop Khan and Pippa Dyer, the "mixed-marriage" couple in Muthal Naidoo's "Outside-In."

Leader Reporter

THE Work-In-Progress Theatre Company is off to an early start this year. Their first production for the year — and they promise there will be several others — opens at the Hermit Theatre on 9 February.

"Outside-In" is the latest offering from the pen of Dr Muthal Naidoo founder and director of the W.I.P. Theatre Company, who also wrote and produced "Of No Account", "We 3 Kings" and "Coming Home".

The new play is about a mixed marriage (Muslim man and White wife) in South Africa and the trials and difficulties of such a relationship in a racist society.

Pippa Dyer, who worked with Muthal Naidoo in "Coming Home", plays Kate Renolds and Essop Khan plays Kassim Mohamed in "Outside-In".

Both have had a busy time in 1982. Pippa Dyer appeared in "Children of the Wolf", "Accidental Death of an Anarchist", "The Restoration of Arnold Middleton", "Canterbury Tales" and "Coming Home."

Essop Khan started off 1982 in "The Indian Wants The Bronx" then appeared in "We 3 Kings", "The Restoration of Arnold Middleton", and was set director for "Coming Home".

"Outside-In" will run at the Hermit Theatre in Heritage Street from Wednesday 9 February to Monday 21 February, except on Tuesdays. Performances begin at 8 p.m.

THE LEADER, 21 JANUARY 1983

THE CURIOUS WORLD OF MIXED LOVERS AS SEEN THRU' THE ROSE-COLOURED GLASSES OF MUTHAL NAIDOO ...

by Strini Moodley

Muslim wife and they all live unhappily ever after.

Whether Dr Naidoo is trying to tell us that Indians and whites can make it together — a case for the President's Council proposals? — I am not sure, but the play is at times decidedly embarrassing when it comes to dialogue and extremely maudlin in its attempts to investigate the realities of mixed marriages in this country.

The play has more strength when Muthal sticks to straight repartee between the protagonists, and she dishes out better lines to Kassim than she does to Kate, making Pippa Dyer appear less articulate than Essop Khan.

In the final analysis, the play is parochial in that it restricts its examination to the Indian/White conflict — and fails even there — rather than to encapsulate the real tensions between mixed couples. Except for the throw-away lines about chicken and mushrooms and pots of curry, there is nothing that lifts this play out of its morass of political confusion, sentimental preaching and tired clichés.

Essop Khan failed to make any impact — perhaps through no fault of his own — because he whined his way through the play, so that his sudden discovery of his 'manhood' is totally out of character.

Pippa Dyer can be a competent actress. It is clear that she tried her best to give reality to the character. To some extent she was believable, but again there was too much repetition in her dialogue, so that even she tired of her role by the end.

Dr Muthal Naidoo writes copiously. Last time out she looked at black/white relations as well — although, in *Outside-in* Kate makes the distinction between her 'Indian lover' and the blacks who work under her father.

At the end of both *Coming Home* and *Outside-in* I was left with the distinct impression that Muthal is trying very hard to prove that blacks are also human. Why the need for this I cannot tell. But I should think that the only time I can judge Muthal as a truly black writer is when she looks at the relationships between and among Africans, Indians and Coloureds.

That is a subject that is far more relevant and will help Work - In - Progress Theatre Company accomplish one of its goals — "to foster in ourselves and our audiences the understanding that we are one people. Not separate population groups. Though we live artificially separated in group areas, we are one people with a common culture and we must work for the good of all."



Kate Reynolds (Pippa Dyer) and Kassim Mohamed (Essop Khan) ponder the future in mad South Africa as they watch a friend being hauled away by the police.



DIE SUID-AFRIKAANSE TEATERORGANISASIE
THE SOUTH AFRICAN THEATRE ORGANISATION

P.O. Box/Postbus 91245
Auckland Park 2006
Tel.: 726-4390

"OUTSIDE - IN" by Dr.MUTHAL NAIDOO - GRAHAMSTOWN FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS

DATE..... 5,6,7 July 1984
VENUE..... P.J.HOERSKOOLO
PRODUCER..... S.A.T.O. PERFORMING ARTS
PLAYWRIGHT..... Dr.MUTHAL NAIDOO
DIRECTOR..... WILLIAM ABDUL
CAST..... GREGORY SCHUBERT AND BELINDA MILLS
CO-ORDINATOR CLIVE METZ - Theatre Artservices

In the true spirit of S.A.T.O. Performing Arts developing its' communication with the people of South Africa, it was decided to stage a production at the prestigious Grahamstown Festival of the Arts.

The possibility of becoming involved in the Fringe Theatre aspect was investigated and discussed with Mr.Clive Metz of Theatre Artservices. After successful negotiations with Mr.Metz it was decided to stage the indigenous production "Outside-In" by distinguished playwright Dr.Muthal Naidoo.

Because of S.A.T.O.'s limited resources at the time a committed and yet competent cast had to be chosen in order to circumvent the obviously enormous cost of a production of this calibre.

William Abdul, a trustee of S.A.T.O. Performing Arts with extensive theatre experience agreed to direct.
Belinda Mills, a reputable actress from Durban and now a member of S.A.T.O. Performing Arts agreed to play the part of Kate.
After negotiations with the Cosair Drama Group of Boksburg, we successfully secured the services of Gregory Schubert in the role of Cassim.

...../1

Advisers/Advisory Board Dr PPH Breytenbach, Dr Emil Jammine, mnr Henry Jefferys, Mr Otto Krause, Mr Clive Metz, Dr Adam Small, Mr Vivian Solomons, mnr Louis van Niekerk, mnr Esther van Ryswyk

After discussions with all concerned the following financial arrangement was agreed upon:

The Director - William Abdul - agreed to keep costs to a minimum without jeopardising the production. It was then decided that S.A.T.O. Performing Arts would bear all the costs involved in making this production a success. These costs would then be deducted from box-office takings. Any monies over and above the costs would be shared equally between Dr. Muthal Naidoo, William Abdul, Gregory Schubert and Belinda Mills.

POST - PRODUCTION COMMENTS

A special word of thanks and congratulations to Theatre Artservices for the competent handling of the entire Fringe Theatre effort. On the production "Outside-In" - the newspaper reviews and the personal sentiments of those who had seen the production is an indication that the effort and dedication was well worth the trouble.

MUTHAL - DOOLEY - GREGS - BELINDA

-THANK YOU-

Yours-in-the-Arts



MIKE STAINBANK
ADMINISTRATOR

P.S. Please find attached the financial report.

FINANCIAL REPORT - "OUTSIDE - IN"

EXPENSES

TRANSPORT	R150-00	
ACCOMODATION IN GRAHAMSTOWN	50-00	<i>l.h.m.</i>
PROGRAMMES	61-00	
REVOLVING LIGHT (PROP)	41-25	
ADVERTISEMENTS IN BROCHURE	11-00	<i>l.h.m.</i>
TAPE RECORDING	10-00	
	<u>R223-25</u>	
CONTINGENCIES @ 5%	11-16	
TOTAL	<u>R234-61</u>	

INCOME

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>AUDIENCE</u>	<u>INCOME</u>
5 July 1984	2.30pm	42	R118-00
6 July 1984	5.30pm	11	21-00
7 July 1984	11.00am	62	<u>175-00</u>
			R314-50
MINUS THEATRE ARTSERVICES COMMISSION OF 5%			<u>15-73</u>
TOTAL			<u>R298-77</u> - <i>l.h.m. for theatre services</i>

FINAL SUMMARY

INCOME	R298-77
EXPENDITURE	<u>234-41</u>
PROFIT	<u>R 64-36</u>
AS PER AGREEMENT SHARES = R64-36 ÷ 4 =	<u>R 16-09</u>

Handwritten signature: [Signature] Rainbank.



THE STORM THAT BREWED IN ALLI'S TROUBLED TEACUP

BY JANE ARGALL

A REHEARSAL of "Three For Tea" — the show to be staged by the Shah Theatre Academy in Durban this month — nearly ended like the Boston Tea Party last week with actor Mahmood Ali threatening to rebel and walk out.

His anger was aroused by the suggestion that "something stronger than tea" should be served to patrons during the interval at the show's premiere.

Alli (above) said he would quit immediately if the idea was not aban-

doned. He was aware it was the done thing to serve cheese and wine at such functions, but the organisation, he said, was founded on the belief that people don't necessarily have to do the "done thing".

"Our show," he said, "is called 'Three For Tea', so why not serve just tea?"

"How corny can you get!" interjected Shirley Sumich, who plays the lead in two of the three one-act plays that make up the show.

"We're talking about tea, love, not corn," retorted Alli.

As producer Ronnie Govender listened to the brew getting stronger, he decided to pour tea on the troubled waters, and told Alli: "We're only tea-sing you, mate. The 'other than tea' thing we planned to serve was coffee."

Alli breathed a sigh of relief and the storm in a teacup was over.

Now tea and coffee will be served at the interval when the show opens on February 22 at the APS Hall in Carlisle Street.

'Three for Tea' opens soon

THIS way of committed non-racial activity, not being an easy one, the Shah Theatre Academy has had to face all sorts of problems in its thirteen years history, none the least being the lack of a non-racial venue.

Following the record breaking success of "The Lahnec's Pleasure," which is still running, the group has had to hold back its next production "Three For Tea" because it was not able to

find a suitable venue. Now that problem has been overcome and the show will take to the road on February 22 at the APS Hall in Carlisle Street, Durban.

The production features three one act plays. Two of these are written and directed by Dr. Muthu Naidoo and the third is a play which was written and staged by Ronnie Govender fifteen years ago.

This will be Dr. Naidoo's first effort after returning to this country after being away in America for eleven years.

The group was forced to stage the plays in Maritzburg in December after it failed to secure a venue in Durban. Packed houses on both nights enjoyed the productions which in keeping with the Academy's aims are thoroughly indigenous.

Veteran

The cast of "The Lahnec's Pleasure" with the exception of Sammy Cluthier and Thavenes Govender are featured in the new production together with veteran Buba Pilay, and newcomers Kogi Govender, Thara Singh, Mugi Pilay and Shirley Sumich.



* They're at it again, these canny characters from The Lahnec's Pleasure. Seen giving newcomer Kogi Govender a hard time are Mahmood Ali and Mann Palayamath.



The three story stars of "The Lahore's Pleasure," Mahomed Ali, Essop Khan and Solly Pillay are up to move prods to the new production "Three For Tea" which goes on in November.

Theatre group thwarted

THE Shah Theatre Academy, perhaps the most active theatre group in the country, is finding itself severely hampered by the lack of a suitable non-racial venue — so much so that its next production has had to be put off until a venue can be found.

The new production called "Three For Tea" was originally scheduled for the end of October but has had to be postponed for later in November.

The production features three one-act plays, two of them written and directed by Dr. Muthal Naidoo and one written and directed by Ronnie Govender.

Ronnie Govender, who wrote and produced the very successful "The Lahore's Pleasure" told "The Leader": "For years we have battled along without a venue. Now that we have responded a greater consciousness of the theatre amongst the masses, it is most frustrating to be thwarted by the lack of facilities. We have the talent and have public support."

"It is a sad commentary that deprived as we are as race and low-paying artists, those among us who can help continue to give their energies and vast

"It is about time, after all these years of having to prove ourselves against tremendous odds that we gained some support from people who profess interest in culture. A lot of time has been wasted and much talent has been allowed to die in some forgotten nook. It is time community and public leaders gave us a thought and helped us with securing a venue."

Speaking about the new production Mr. Govender said that although it featured mostly all the stars of "The Lahore's Pleasure" it would run concurrently as the latter was still running. Others in the play are actress Raki Pillay and new-comers Rogie Govender, Tara Singh, Sharley Saminur and Magic Pillay.

February 3, 1978

Shah Theatre secures venue

Graphic Reporter.

THE Shah Theatre Academy has succeeded in securing a venue for its next production, "Three For Tea". The three one-act plays will go on at the A.P.S. Hall in Carlisle Street from February 22.

Following the runaway success of its hilarious production "The Lahore's Pleasure", which is still being staged, the go-ahead group was hampered in its desire to put on more plays because of the lack of a suitable non-racial venue. This problem now appears to be temporarily overcome.

The production will see the return of Dr. Muthal Naidoo to the local theatre scene after an absence of eleven years. She has written and directed two of the three one-act plays. She told The Graphic: "The first play, 'Black Magic Woman', deals with a divorcee who finds herself the centre of sudden and unwanted attention, and the second play is about an Indian marriage proposal featuring a hapful young suitor."

Ronnie Govender, the author of "The Lahore's

Pleasure", completes the trilogy of plays with his one-act, "Beyond Calvary". He wrote and staged this play 15 years ago. While the basic conflict, which is one of a clash of religions between two lovers, may not be as relevant today, the soul-searching and the quest for values which follows the plight of the lovers is certainly very much a modern dilemma.

ATRE

Three for Tea

TONIGHT Reporter.

DURBAN'S Shah Theatre Academy celebrates its 13th anniversary next week with three short plays under the title "Three For Tea".

The plays, "Black Magic Woman", "Have Tea and Go", and "Beyond Calvary" will also celebrate the return of Dr. Muthal Naidoo who has spent the past 11 years in the United States.

Two of the plays were written by Dr. Naidoo, and the third by Ronnie Govender who founded the Shah Theatre Academy. Dr. Naidoo will also direct all three plays.

They will be staged at A.P.S. Hall in Carlisle Street nightly at 8 for a week from Wednesday, February 22.

The Daily News
Tonight
15-2-78

Theatre



Lotus Hall: Shah Theatre Academy — Three For Tea.

THREE For Tea satirises current preoccupations — money, mating and marriage — with a refreshingly light touch.

The farcical element in the first and third of these one act plays was so strong that the underlying seriousness of the second play was largely lost.

The first play, *Black Magic*, deals with a divorcee faced with a struggle against stereotyped expectations. She is pursued by a series of men featuring her in their favourite fantasies.

Her would-be lovers conflict in a slapstick squabble which raised roars of laughter from the audience.

The second play, *Beyond Calvary*, has a more serious theme — possible clashes in an interfaith marriage.

Both sides of a question that has recently become less contentious are explored in a slightly overdriven performance. There was a sensitive approach to the individual characters, although the audience failed to register that this represented a real crisis.

The third play, *Have Tea and Go*, dealt with a young lover, deftly played by Manu Padayachee. His embarrassment when confronted by the girl he adores changes after she laughs at him. He is overcome by sudden resolution and succeeds. The custom of arranged marriages is dealt with a broadly comic prelude as the two families discuss the merits of the candidates.

The spontaneity of the actors aided by the simple but effective sets made a natural and convincing production.

Directed by Mannie Pillay, the latest Shah Theatre Academy production has its final performance tonight at the Lotus Hall. The group aims at producing contemporary drama "that speaks for us", said Ronnie Govender who produced and directed the second play.

The other two were written and directed by Muthal Naidoo, who recently returned from the United States with a doctorate in drama.

Despite urgent invitations to play in Durban, the group was forced to refuse by the lack of a suitable multi-racial venue.

DANNE PRETORIUS

Theatre history

THEATRE history will be made this week when, for the first time, Maritzburg will have the South African premiere of a non-racial production when the Shah Theatre Academy stages its next show at the Lotus Hall on December 14 and 15.

The show, which will feature three one-act plays under the title, "Three For Tea", has been written and directed by Ronnie Govender, author of the smash hit, "The Lahnuc's Pleasure" and Dr. Mythai Naidoo. The plays feature most of the stars of "The Lahnuc's Pleasure."

11
DEC
1977



• MOHAMED ALLI (left) and Kogi Govender play the leads in "Black Magic Women".



A scene from Dr Muthal Naidoo's one-act play "Have Tea and Go", part of a trilogy of plays being staged at the A.P.S. Hall, Carlisle Street. From left to right, Solly Pillay, E. asop Khan and Babs Pillay.

Three For Tea

In 1977, The Shah Theatre Academy put on a trilogy of one-act plays under the title, Three for Tea at the APS Hall in Carlisle Street, Durban. I wrote two one-acts for the production, Have Tea and Go and The Divorcee (originally Black Magic Woman) and the third was Ronnie Govender's, Beyond Calvary, written in 1963 at the workshops conducted by Krishna Shah at St Aidan's Hall in Leopold Street Durban. It was part of a trilogy of one-acts called Trio Against Trains.

In 1983, Work-in-Progress (WIP) Theatre Company put on another production of Three for Tea for which I wrote It's Mine, the obverse side of Beyond Calvary. The plays were performed at the Hermit Theatre from 20 April 1983.

HAVE TEA AND GO

(1977)

(A One-Act Play)

CHARACTERS

Rajan
Radha, His Cousin
Vanita, Radha's Teenage Sister
Radha's Father (Mr Reddy)
Radha's Mother
Anand Pillay
Mr Pillay, Anand's Father
Mr Pillay 2, Anand's Uncle

1977 CAST

Solly Pillay
Shirley Sanichur
Mogie Pillay
Mahomed Ali
Kogi Govender
Manu Padayachee
Babs Pillay
Essop Khan

CHARACTERS

Rajan
Radha, His Cousin
Vanita, Radha's Teenage Sister
Radha's Father (Mr Reddy)
Radha's Mother
Anand Pillay
Mr Pillay 1, Anand's Father
Mr Pillay 2, Anand's Uncle

1983 CAST

Oliver Raman
Vishvani Naidu
Subashni Naidoo
Mahomed Ali
Nasreen Moosa
Ajay Hurbans
Babs Pillay
Essop Khan

Setting

The living room-dining room of the Reddys' flat.

SCENE ONE

(The living room of the Reddy home. Music and the sound of dancing bells. Vanita is practising Bharatha Natyam movements. From off-stage we hear Rajan banging on the bathroom door)

RADHA (Off-stage) What do you want?

RAJAN (Off-stage) Radha, you haven't forgotten have you? ... Hey, can you hear me? You remember, don't you?

RADHA Go 'way. Don't nag me. Leave me alone.

RAJAN When are you coming out? You've been in the bathroom for over an hour. It's nearly two o'clock. He'll be here just now.

RADHA Leave me alone. I'll be out just now.

(Rajan enters the living room. Sees Vanita.)

RAJAN What are you messing about here for? Come on, come on, clear out. You can practice later.

VANITA Wait. I just want to get this movement right. (She does part of a dance. Rajan sits down and picks up paper.) Hey, watch! (She repeats the movements) What do you think? (He takes no notice. She pulls the paper away.) I said watch. (She repeats dance movements) What do you think?

RAJAN Nice. Very nice. (Gets out thablas) Now let's see that again.

(He plays and she dances. Radha enters, towel around her head and watches.)

RADHA I see! I have to hurry up but you two can fool around. (Vanita dances towards her, takes Radha's face in her hands and then breaks her knuckles against Radha's temples.)

RADHA (Pushing her away) You're both mad. I hope your friend isn't crazy too? (Rajan continues to play and begins a love song) Rajan ... (He ignores her.) Rajan, stop that now ... (He goes on playing and singing) ... Rajan stop that and tell me about this friend of yours. (Vanita joins in the teasing and dances around her. Radha shakes Rajan and tries to chase Vanita away) What's he like? You haven't told me a thing about him. (Rajan continues playing.) Will you stop that noise?

RAJAN (Pretending to be shocked) Noise! You're a barbarian. Absolutely no appreciation of your own

culture. (With a flourish on the thablas) Imagine calling that noise.

RADHA O shut up. Now tell me something about this chap. He is your friend, isn't he?

RAJAN (Off-hand) Ya..a..a

RADHA Well, what's his name? (Rajan ignores her) He's got a name, hasn't he? ... Tell me his name. (No answer) That does it! It must be that horrible Bala. I'm getting out of here. (She begins to stalk out)

RAJAN (Stopping her) Wait! Don't get excited. It's not Bala. This guy's name is Anand.

VANITA (Dancing up, teasing, cracks her knuckles against her temples)
Anand ... Oh ... Anand means love.

RADHA Nobody asked you. Rajan what's the matter with you? Why don't you want to talk about this guy? There's something wrong with him, isn't there? Isn't there?

RAJAN Yah, there is.

RADHA I knew it! I knew it!

RAJAN Yah, the crazy fool is madly in love with you. (Throws his arms around Radha who pushes him off) He begged me, on his hands and knees, to get him a date with you.

VANITA I told you ... Anand is love. (Vanita and Rajan romp around Radha dancing and singing, Bollywood style)

RADHA Stop this nonsense. Rajan, what does he look like? ... Rajan! ... Will you stop that ... what does he look like?

RAJAN He's okay.

RADHA What do you mean okay? ... Is he good-looking?

VANITA Of course! He's tall, dark and handsome.

RADHA You keep quiet. Anyway what are you doing here? Aren't you supposed to be at a rehearsal or something?

RAJAN Listen, you want to know what Anand looks like? Well, he's ... he's ... (looks at Vanita)

VANITA AND RAJAN (Together) Tall, dark and handsome!

RAJAN And the minute he walks in here, it will be love at first sight for you too.

RADHA (Turns to go) You're just wasting my time.

RAJAN Yah. Go on, go on. If you don't do something about that face of yours, you're gonna die an old maid.

(Enter Radha's mother)

MOTHER Radha! What you doing here? Go get ready. Rajan, what time your friend coming?

RADHA Ma, what you think of this Rajan? Who does he think he is? Bringing a boy to meet me, as if I can't get someone myself.

MOTHER Well, maybe you can't. I don't see any nice fullas coming here and you're twenty-four already. When you gonna get married? I'm telling you, the next time you get a proposal, you better accept. I'm glad Rajan is trying to help you.

RADHA Ma! How can you say that? I'm not in a hurry to get married.

MOTHER Just now you'll be sitting here, forty years old and not yet married. Like aunty from next door ... shouting at all the children.

(Rajan and Vanita laugh)

RADHA (To Rajan and Vanita) Shut up. (Goes to her room)

MOTHER What you standing around here laughing? The boy will be here just now. Come on. Tidy up. Quickly.

VANITA But Ma, why are you getting so excited? The boy is coming to meet Radha. It's not a proposal.

MOTHER You want him to think we live in a pigsty, what? Come on. Hurry up. Take your things and go.

VANITA I don't know what all the fuss is about; he's not even her boyfriend. (She takes her things and goes.)

(A knock on the door)

MOTHER (In a flap) Ayo! Vantheta! The boy is here. Rajan, you open the door. Where's Radha? (Calls) Radha! Hurry up, he's here. Where's uncle? (Rushing off)

(Rajan opens the door and is surprised to find Mr Pillay 1 and his brother, Mr Pillay 2 outside. It is very obvious from their dress that they are from the country. Mr Pillay 2, in particular, looks quite odd.)

RAJAN (Greets in the Indian way) Er ... Namaskarum.

MR PILLAY 1 Rajan! What you doing here? (To Mr Pillay 2) See Annè, its Rajan.

MR PILLAY 2 (Who always echoes his brother with great energy and enthusiasm) Rajan! What you doing here?

RAJAN This is my uncle's house. I came for a holiday.

MR PILLAY 1 Your uncle? Your uncle is Ponsamy Reddy?

MR PILLAY 2 Ponsamy Reddy, your uncle?

RAJAN Yes. Come in, uncle. I always come here for holidays.

MR PILLAY 1 I see, I see. (To Mr Pillay 2) What you think of that, eh? This Ponsamy Reddy is Rajan's uncle.

MR PILLAY 2 (Eagerly) Rajan's uncle!

MR PILLAY 1 Tell me Rajan, your uncle got one unmarried daughter?

MR PILLAY 2 Unmarried? Unmarried?

RAJAN Yes, uncle. Come in, uncle.

MR PILLAY 1 Very good. Very good.

MR PILLAY 2 Very good. Very good.

MR PILLAY 1 Is your uncle home?

RAJAN Yes. Come in, uncle. (Pillay brothers step inside)

MR PILLAY 1 Actually why we came ...

MR PILLAY 2 Why we came? Why we came?

MR PILLAY 1 ... because of Anand. He likes this girl. So we thought, we too will come and see her and if everything is all right, might as well fix it up one time.

MR PILLAY 2 Fix it up! Fix it up!

RAJAN (Shocked) You mean you came to make a proposal?

MR PILLAY 1 Something like that.

MR PILLAY 2 Something like that! Something like that!

RAJAN (Horried) Anand didn't come?

MR PILLAY 1 Ya, he's here. Anand. (Turns around, so does Mr Pillay 2, but there's no Anand.)

MR PILLAY 2 Anand!

MR PILLAY 1 (To Mr Pillay 2) Where's Anand? (Mr Pillay 2 shrugs. Mr Pillay 1, followed by Mr Pillay 2, goes to the door to call Anand) Anand. Anand, what you doing outside? Come inside now.

MR PILLAY 2 Come inside! Come inside!

RAJAN Uncle, don't worry about Anand. I'll look after him. Please come in and take a seat.

MR PILLAY 1 Thanks. Rombo thanks.

MR PILLAY 2 Thanks. Very much thanks.

(Rajan goes out to fetch Anand. The Pillays sit. Mr Pillay 2 makes himself comfortable and begins to take off his shoes.)

MR PILLAY 1 What you doing? You think this is our house? Put your shoes on. You bleddy mad, what? Put your shoes on.

(While Mr Pillay 1 is trying to get Mr Pillay 2 to put his shoes on, Rajan enters with Anand. He takes him to one side. Anand is wearing green pants, a purple shirt and a maroon coat)

RAJAN What's going on here? What are your father and uncle doing here?

ANAND Well ... er ... I told them about your cousin and ...

RAJAN Man, you're a fool. What a stupid thing to do. What's my cousin going to think of you? My cousin is with it man. She's gonna be mad. And what's worse, I'm gonna be in big trouble now.

(Mother and Father come in. They are surprised to see the Pillays)

MOTHER Rajan! Why you didn't tell us ...?

RAJAN Aunt, Uncle. This is Mr Pillay, Mr Pillay's brother and Anand.

(They greet in the Indian way.)

FATHER Please be seated. (They all sit)

MOTHER Your'll had lunch? I didn't cook anything special today. This Rajan never tell us nothing. But I got some nice mutton curry and rice. y'all must have something to eat. y'all came from so far.

MR PILLAY 1 Rombo thanks, Akka. But don't worry. We had our lunch and came.

MR PILLAY 2 Had our lunch. Had our lunch.

FATHER We thought only your son coming. If we knew whole family coming, the wife would have prepared something special.

MOTHER Have little bit, Annè. It won't take long to dish up. Eat little bit.

MR PILLAY 1 No, no. Please, you mustn't worry.

MOTHER If only this Rajan told us.

MR PILLAY 1 You mustn't blame him. He didn't know nothing.

MR PILLAY 2 Nothing! Nothing!

FATHER Where did you say y'all coming from?

MR PILLAY 1 Amatikulu. We got sugar estates there.

MR PILLAY 2 Sugar! Sugar!

FATHER (Impressed, nods at mother) I see. I see.

MR PILLAY 1 I'm sorry Mrs Pillay couldn't come too. But she is not well.

MR PILLAY 2 Not well! Not well!

MOTHER Oh, shame. What's wrong?

MR PILLAY 1 She suffers with back trouble.

MR PILLAY 2 Back trouble. Back trouble.

MOTHER 1 Ts, ts, ts, I know how that is Annè. Sometimes I get backache, I can't stand it. I have to go lie down. Doctor say I got lumbargo. When I get that pain, the way I suffer. I think my life is leaving me. I can't stand it ...

FATHER (Cutting in) All right, Ambigay. That's all right. Go make some tea.

MOTHER I'll make some tea. Y'all must be thirsty coming all that way. (Exit to kitchen)

FATHER Y'all live very far from town. Must be very lonely.

MR PILLAY 1 You quite right, brother. Very lonely.

MR PILLAY 2 Very lonely! Very lonely!

MR PILLAY 1 That's why I been telling Anand, it's time he get married.

MR PILLAY 2 Get married! Get married!

MR PILLAY 1 I'm very glad he's making up his mind at last. ... Brother, I think you know why we came.

MR PILLAY 2 Why we came? Why we came?

MR PILLAY 1 My son, Anand, is very interested in your daughter. And we came to see the girl.

MR PILLAY 2 Came to see. Came to see.

FATHER I see.

(Vanita enters. Mr Pillay 1 jumps up. Mr Pillay 2 jumps up too.)

MR PILLAY 1 Is this your daughter?

FATHER This is Vanita. My younger daughter. (Pillay brothers sit down again.) Radha, my older daughter is still dressing. Vanita, go and see what your sister is doing.

(Vanita whispers to Father and exits. Father calls Rajan, whispers to him, digs in his pocket for money that he gives to Rajan. Rajan turns to leave, then stops.)

RAJAN Assorted, Mamè?

FATHER (Frowning) Yes! (Rajan leaves. Father turns to Mr Pillay 1) Tell me brother, what work is Anand doing?

MR PILLAY 1 Anand, uncle wants to know what work you doing.

MR PILLAY 2 Anand, what you doing? What you doing?

ANAND (Sitting with eyes fixed on the floor) Well ... I ... I (Looks at his dad)

MR PILLAY 1 He works with me in the sugar business. He is a good boy. Very hardworking, very respectable. No drinking. No smoking. He's a good boy. Very good boy.

MR PILLAY 2 No smoking! No drinking! Very good! Very good!

FATHER Brother, tell me, y'all related to the Pillays from Ver'lam?

MR PILLAY 1 From Ver'lam?

MR PILLAY 2 Vellam? Vellam?

MR PILLAY 1 No. But we related to the Pillays from Stanger.

MR PILLAY 2 Dukuza!

FATHER I see. Those Pillays. Yes, I know them very well. Very well. Very good family. Yes, my mother's uncle's sister-in-law married old Mrs Pillay's cousin's son ... Do you know them? They are the M.Y Pillays. ... They live near the market.

MR PILLAY 1 (Consulting Mr Pillay 2) Yem. Y? Yem. Y? ... (To Father) I know Murugas.

MR PILLAY 2 Murugas! Murugas!

FATHER No, no, no. Not him. I know him too. ... I know Murugas very well. But I'm not talking about him.

MR PILLAY 1 Yem. Y? ... Yem. Y?

MR PILLAY 2 Yem. Y? Yem. Y?

FATHER Wait. I think you know Runga.

MR PILLAY 1 Runga? ...

MR PILLAY 2 Runga? ... Runga?

MR PILLAY 1 Runga? He lives opposite the hotel?

MR PILLAY 2 Hotel? Hotel?

FATHER That's the one. That's the one. Now you got it. You see, Runga's wife's uncle's cousin's, brother-in-law is Mr M.Y. Pillay's father.

MR PILLAY 1 O yes, yes, yes. Now I know who you mean.

MR PILLAY 2 O yes, yes, yes. (But he looks puzzled and raises his eyebrows at his brother.)

MR PILLAY 1 (Explaining) You know who it is. It's Tiny's cousin-brother's son.

FATHER That's right. Same one. Same one.

MR PILLAY 2 (Even more puzzled) Aw, yes, yes, yes.

MR PILLAY 1 Then that means we related.

MR PILLAY 2 Related! Related!

(Mr Pillay stands to shake hands with Father. Mr Pillay 2 also shakes hands with Father. Then Mr Pillay 2 shakes hands with Mr Pillay. Rajan comes back with a packet of assorted biscuits which he takes to kitchen)

FATHER It's a small world. Every time I sit down to talk with somebody, after while, we must find out we related.

MR PILLAY 2 Related. Related.

(Mother and Rajan come in.)

MOTHER The tea is ready. I'm just waiting for Radha. (Radha enters) There you are, Radha. Come now. Come help me.

MR PILLAY 1 Is this your daughter? (Mr Pillay 1 and Mr Pillay 2 come forward.)

FATHER Yes, this is Radha. Radha, this is your uncle from Amatikulu.

RADHA Namaskarum. (Turns to Father) My uncle, Pa?

FATHER Yes, when you were small we went to visit their people in Stanger.

RADHA (Mystified) Oh ... I see.

MR PILLAY 1 Anand what you sitting there so quite for? Come and meet Radha.

MR PILLAY 2 Radha! Radha!

(Both Pillays go up to Anand and stand on either side of him)

MR PILLAY 1 This is my son. (He nudges Anand. So does Mr Pillay 2.) Anand!

MR PILLAY 2 Anand! Anand!

(Mr Pillay 1 and Mr Pillay 2 grab hold of Anand and propel him forward and camouflage the fact that they

are moving him. Mr Pillay 2 extends Anand's hand, which Radha barely takes before it is pulled back. During the whole operation, Anand's eyes never leave the floor)

MOTHER Radha come. The tea is ready. Come and fetch it.

(Radha and Mother exit to kitchen)

MR PILLAY 1 Beautiful girl. What a beautiful girl?

MR PILLAY 2 Beautiful! Beautiful!

MR PILLAY 1 She will make a very good daughter-in-law.

MR PILLAY 2 Very good! Very good!

(Radha brings in tea and they move to dining area. Anand remains where he is. Mr Pillay 2 begins to stuff himself with biscuits. After some persuasion from her mother and with encouraging looks from Mr Pillay 2, Radha takes a cup of tea to Anand.)

RADHA Excuse me ... (Anand's eyes are fixed on the floor.) Excuse me, would you like some tea?

MR PILLAY 1 Anand, take your tea!

MR PILLAY 2 Take your tea, Anand!

MR PILLAY 1 You must forgive him, my child. I don't know what's got into him. Probably too much in love. (Laughs.) Too much in love, eh? But he's a good boy.

MR PILLAY 2 In love! In love!

RADHA Yes, uncle. (She puts cup of tea in Anand's lap) Ma, Rajan, can I see you in the kitchen, please? Now!

(Rajan and Mother go off with Radha to the kitchen)

MR PILLAY 2 (Pushing plate away) Satisfied. Satisfied.

MR PILLAY 1 What do you say brother?

FATHER Well, brother. I am very proud that you come to ask for my daughter. I got no objection. No objection. But I will leave it up to my daughter. She must say if she wants to get married. I'll go find out if she made up her mind. (Exits to kitchen.)

MR PILLAY 1 Anand! What you sitting here like a fool?

MR PILLAY 2 Bleddy fool! Bleddy fool!

MR PILLAY 1 What will these people think of you? You can't open your mouth and talk what?

MR PILLAY 2 Can't talk! Can't talk!

MR PILLAY 1 What you looking at the floor all the bleddy time? What you lost? Who will marry a silly fulla like you?

MR PILLAY 2 What you lost? What you lost?

MR PILLAY 1 Don't you know how to talk to a girl? (He hears a cough behind him, sees Father and forces a laugh) Oh, there you are, brother. We were just talking how nice it will be if marriage can join our two families, eh Anand?

MR PILLAY 2 Join the families. Join the families.

FATHER Brother, you are welcome in our home. But I am sorry, I don't think there will be any wedding to join us. You see my daughter feels she's not ready for marriage yet. She wants to wait a little bit more.

MR PILLAY 1 How long, she's going to wait? She looks like she's already twenty-five.

MR PILLAY 2 Twenty-five! Twenty-five!

FATHER No, no, no. She's only twenty-four. Beside she wants to wait. You know nowadays children. You can't tell them what to do. They know everything.

MR PILLAY 1 Yes. I understand. Well brother, I'm glad we met. Too bad things didn't turn out right. Come Anand. Goodbye brother. Come Anand.

MR PILLAY 2 Goodbye. Goodbye. Come Anand.

(Father sees the two men out. Anand is about to follow but Rajan comes in and stops him. Vanita comes to get the tea things but hides and listens instead.)

RAJAN I hope you're satisfied. You made a complete mess of things.

ANAND Hey, man.

RAJAN You've lost your chance, broe. My cousin won't touch you with a ten-foot pole now. Why did you do such a stupid thing? Coming to propose before you even met Radha? You got me in trouble too. She doesn't want to talk to me. Just keeps throwing things, cups, saucers, plates.

ANAND It's not my fault.

RAJAN Not your fault! Whose fault do you think it is? Even your father is more wakker than you are, man.

ANAND What can I do? I like her so much.

RAJAN Just forget about her. Forget all about her.

ANAND I can't. Listen. You must help me!

RAJAN I tried today and I got burned. No, I'm finished with you.

ANAND (Pleading) But you are my friend.

RAJAN Yeah. And I nearly died of shame. Listen man, no one can help you.

ANAND Then there's only one way ... suicide!

RAJAN Please don't try. You'll only make a mess of that too.

ANAND You must help me. Please. Please

RAJAN For God's sake, don't beg. I can't stand it. (Anand goes on pleading) Okay. Okay. I give up. I'll help you. But this is the last time. After that you better commit suicide.

ANAND Thanks. You're a real pal. Now what are we gonna do this time?

RAJAN Come back tomorrow and I'll tell you.

ANAND Here?

RAJAN Hey, you don't have to be scared. No one will be here. The whole family is going to 'Maritzburg.

ANAND Okay. See you tomorrow. (He leaves.)

(Vanita comes out of hiding, giggling. She goes to get tea things. Rajan sees her and laughs too. He goes to help her)

RAJAN He's a hopeless case, but I feel sorry for him.

(Lights fade)

SCENE TWO

(The next afternoon. Rajan is in the living room, playing a guitar and singing. A knock on the door.)

RAJAN Come in! (Anand sticks his head round the door and looks about carefully.) Come in, man. There's no one here.

ANAND Hi, how's it?

RAJAN (Putting down guitar and examining Anand) You know she was right.

ANAND Who?

RAJAN She was absolutely right. (Walks round Anand, looking him up and down.) What are we going to do with you?

ANAND What's wrong?

RAJAN Just look at you. (Pushes him to mirror) This shirt, these trousers, this coat, these shoes. You call these clothes?

ANAND But what's wrong?

RAJAN Where did you get this stuff? At a jumble sale? Boy, you sure look colourful.

(Rajan goes off to fetch some of his own clothes. Anand is trying to figure out what is wrong with his appearance.)

ANAND (Examining himself in mirror) Hey, Rajan, what's wrong with my clothes? Rajan, where are you?

RAJAN (Off-stage) Just getting a pair of sunglasses.

ANAND Ah, you're just jealous, man. (Rajan comes back with clothes.)

RAJAN Look this coat is better. (Pulls off Anand's coat.)

ANAND Hey, what are you doing?

RAJAN The way you dress, nobody will marry you. Certainly not Radha!

ANAND But isn't this the latest fashion?

RAJAN (Pulling Anand's shirt off) A yellow shirt, with green trousers and a red coat? Man, Radha almost fainted.

ANAND (Trying to pull his shirt back on) Hey, what are you doing?

RAJAN Don't worry. There aren't any females here. (Puts another shirt on Anand)

ANAND (Struggling) What's wrong with my shirt? I don't want your shirt, man. What are you doing?

RAJAN (Standing back and examining Anand) Hmm ... yes, that's an improvement.

ANAND Isn't it too small?

RAJAN (Shoving trousers in Anand's hands and pushing him towards bedroom) Put these on.

ANAND Wait a minute. I don't like wearing other people's clothes. And whose bedroom ...?

RAJAN Hurry up. We can't be wasting time on clothes all day long.

ANAND (Backing out) Hey, this is a girl's bedroom

RAJAN (Shoving him inside) Hurry up. You have two minutes. If you don't get those trousers on, I'm washing my hands off your case. (Rajan picks up shirt and coat.) I thought he had more sense. (Goes to kitchen, fetches a packet and shoves clothes into it.) You can't even give this stuff away. Hey, Anand, come out man. How long does it take to put on pants?

ANAND I'm coming.

RAJAN Hurry up. (Enter Anand. Rajan holds out packet.) You better send these back to the jumble sale.

ANAND Hey, what are you doing? How can you crush my clothes like that? I bought them specially for Radha.

RAJAN You should have saved yourself the trouble. (Puts a different coat on Anand) At least now we can see you. (Stands back to look at him.) Not bad. Well let's get started.

ANAND What are we going to do?

RAJAN I am going to show you how to act with a girl.

ANAND What?

RAJAN We will pretend that you have come to see Radha. Now go outside and knock on the door.

ANAND (As Rajan pushes him out) But what must I do? What must I do?

RAJAN (Closing door) Just knock.

(Rajan sits down and strikes a pose as though he is Radha waiting for a knock on the door. Nothing happens. Rajan listens, becomes impatient and opens door.)

RAJAN What's the matter? Why didn't you knock?

ANAND I was afraid she would bang the door in my face.

RAJAN Don't be ridiculous. I am playing Radha. I won't bang the door in your face. Try again.

(Rajan closes the door and sits down again. This time there is an uncertain knock on the door. Rajan opens. Anand is standing with downcast eyes)

RAJAN Look man, this is no time to examine your shoes. Look me straight in the eye and say, 'Hello' in a very charming way ... and smile! (Anand doesn't budge) Now look ... O for goodness sake! Come here. Look, you be Radha, and I'll be you. I'll show you how it's done. (About to go outside) When I knock, open the door. Don't be afraid. Radha is never afraid of anyone.

(Rajan goes out and knocks. Anand opens the door but hides behind it. Rajan is revealed framed in the doorway with a playful smile on his lips. Then he looks around for Anand)

RAJAN Anand, where are you? (Finds him behind the door) What are you doing behind the door? I told you Radha is never afraid.

ANAND I forgot I was Radha

RAJAN One more time. Now remember, open the door and look me right in the eye. In the eye!

(Rajan knocks, Anand opens door, stands with downcast eyes. Rajan lifts Anand's head, but Anand averts his eyes.)

ANAND I can't look in her eyes.

RAJAN
But she's not here. It's me. You can look in my eyes.

ANAND Not if you're Radha!

RAJAN But you are Radha, dummy. Now what do we do ... ? Wait! I've got just the girl for you. (Disappears into the bedroom)

ANAND I didn't know you had a girl in there. I'm getting out of here.

(Rajan returns with a pillow.)

RAJAN Relax man. Look here she is. (Shows pillow) Try again. Look the pillow straight in the eye and say, 'Hello, glad to meet you.'

ANAND (Hesitantly) Hello, glad to meet you. (Relieved) Hey, that's not hard.

RAJAN Now she will ask you to sit down. You sit on the sofa.

(Anand sits on sofa. Rajan puts pillow next to him and Anand jumps away from it)

RAJAN Now what's wrong? Remember, it's just a pillow. Come on, come closer. (Anand moves closer) Right. Now talk to her. Tell her how pretty she is.

ANAND (Turns to pillow, puts an arm around it, then looks up at Rajan) How can I talk to a pillow?

RAJAN Just imagine it's Radha.

ANAND (Jumping away) Radha!

RAJAN What am I going to do with you? (Stares at Anand for a moment.) I've got it. (Takes off his watch and swings it front of Anand and speaks like a hypnotist.) Look into my eyes. You are falling asleep. You are getting sleepy, sleepy, sleepy. (Anand stares straight ahead like one hypnotised) Anand can you hear me? (Anand nods) Think the pillow is Radha, so you can talk to her. When you feel afraid, remember it is only a pillow. (Snaps fingers)

ANAND (Turns to pillow, takes it in his arms and speaks in a sexy voice) Hello Radha ... (to himself as if hypnotised) I know it's only a pillow. Only a pillow. (Resuming sexy voice) You are so lovely. You have the most beautiful hair and ... and ... and (falters)

RAJAN Go on, go on. Keep it up. You're doing fine. Remember it's only a pillow.

ANAND And your large black eyes are so enchanting that I could kiss them, and kiss them and kiss them. (He kisses pillow passionately)

RAJAN Shabash! That was terrific. Boy, you sure learn fast.

ANAND (Coming out of daze) What am I doing with this pillow?

RAJAN Listen man. You got it dead right. Now that's

the way to act with Radha. Promise me you will try. All you have to do is think that she is a pillow. (Gives him pillow) Go on, give it a go.

ANAND I will. I am a new man. I know I can do it now. And I don't need the pillow. (Flings pillow aside.) I will take her in my arms like this. (Sweeps an imaginary Radha into his arms) and I will say, 'You are my woman.'

(Just as he is about to kiss the imaginary Radha, he hears a laugh from Radha who has been standing at the door. He dives into a chair and sits with downcast eyes)

RAJAN Radha! What are you doing here? I thought you went to Maritzburg.

RADHA I didn't feel like it. I've been out shopping. I see your friend is back.

RAJAN (With a false laugh) Anand, look who's here? (Whispering) Come on, man. Remember she's just a pillow.

(Anand does not look up)

RADHA (Going to kitchen) I feel like some tea. I'm going to put the kettle on.

RAJAN Don't let her get away, man. Just think she's a pillow.

ANAND I can't.

RAJAN You must try, man. (Radha comes back and Rajan pushes Anand towards her.) Anand has something to say to you.

RADHA Oh?

(Anand looks right into her eyes, makes a wide circle and comes back to his chair. Radha shrugs and goes into her bedroom)

RAJAN You fool. Now look at what you've done. Why didn't you just think 'pillow,' 'pillow'?

ANAND Because when I looked up, I saw she wasn't a pillow.

RAJAN (Sits) You are hopeless. You're just wasting my time.

ANAND I know. I know. I give up. I'll never have the courage to look her in the eyes. (He takes pillow) If only she really were a pillow.

RADHA (Runs in screaming) Snake! There's a snake on my bed. (She falls into Anand's arms and faints.)

RAJAN She's crazy. How can there be a snake in there?

ANAND (Putting Radha on sofa) Quick man, get a stick.

(They run off to kitchen, come back armed with a broom and dash to bedroom door.)

RAJAN (Holding Anand back) Wait, man. Be careful, if there really is a snake in there ...?

ANAND Don't be scared. I know how to deal with snakes. (Creeps in)

RAJAN (Peeping through door, whispering) Can you see it?

Anand (Off-stage) She said it was on the bed, didn't she?

RAJAN Yes.

(Rajan disappears through door. There is a loud thud, then we hear Rajan laughing. Rajan comes back holding Anand's green pants.)

RAJAN I told you your clothes would make her faint. (To Radha) Hey, sleeping beauty, wake up, wake up. We found your snake. (Waves pants over her.)

(Radha makes a dramatic return to consciousness, sees pants and screams.)

RADHA The snake! But that's someone's pants.

ANAND (Getting angry) All right. That's enough. You don't have to go on with it. I know I behaved like an idiot but you don't have to rub it in. Just hand me those pants. If you don't mind, I'll go back in there and change and then I'll get out. (Grabs pants and goes off into bedroom)

RAJAN You don't have to do that.

RADHA (Looking in Anand's direction) My, isn't he beautiful when he's angry?

RAJAN You're crazy.

RADHA Don't tell me he's really going to change into those horrible clothes. When I saw him decently dressed, I thought he had wised up. But I see it's all your influence. You know, he's not bad looking. Too bad he's so shy and scared.

RAJAN So you think he's good-looking, eh?

RADHA Oh shut up. He's still a fool and I'm not interested in fools, handsome or otherwise.

(Enter Anand. He has not changed.)

ANAND Look, I can't wear those ridiculous clothes, so if you don't mind, Rajan, I'll go home in these and return them when you're back from your holiday.

RAJAN Sure

ANAND (Looking Radha straight in the eye.) I'm sorry I bothered you miss. I know I behaved like a fool, but don't worry, you won't see me again. I won't trouble you any more. And now, if you'll excuse me, I'll be on my way. (He goes to door.)

RADHA Wait. I'm sorry I played that trick on you. Please forgive me. (She holds out her hand. Anand just looks at her.) Please ... I'll feel terrible if you go away angry. (Anand shakes her hand.)

RAJAN I hope we're all friends again. (Anand is looking deep into Radha's eyes) I said I hope (His voice trails off) we're all friends again.

ANAND Goodbye. I'm sure you'll make someone a good wife someday.

RADHA You think so? My parents think I'm getting old.

ANAND Nonsense, you don't look a day over twenty.

(Rajan laughs. Radha gives him a threatening look)

RAJAN Anand, why did you come here in those loud clothes, man? I've never seen you dressed like that before.

ANAND That was my uncle's idea. He said it was the latest fashion.

RAJAN Your uncle's idea!

ANAND I felt like a real fool but I didn't want anything to go wrong.

RADHA You didn't want anything to go wrong? Why?

ANAND Well, you are the prettiest girl I've ever seen.

RAJAN This conversation is getting boring.

RADHA Rajan, go and see what they're showing at the bioscope. Maybe we can all go and see a film. (Rajan goes to look at paper) You really think I'm pretty?

ANAND Yes. You have the most beautiful hair and your eyes ... (He gazes into her eyes and gets lost for a moment) ... well ... they're beautiful.

RADHA You really think so?

RAJAN (Returning with paper) Are we going to the bioscope? (No response from Anand and Radha who are gazing into each other's eyes.) Why should we? We have a show on right here! (Fetches guitar and begins to sing an Indian love song.)

RADHA (Giving Rajan an annoyed look) Come on. Let's go. We don't want to be late. (Anand and Radha go to the door followed by Rajan still singing and playing his guitar. Anand is out first. Radha turns to Rajan and pushes him back.) Three's a crowd.

(Radha closes the door as she exits. Rajan still singing, shrugs, finishes song as lights fade)

THE END

The Divorcee

(1977)

(A One-Act Play)

CHARACTERS

Mrs. Singh, A Divorcee
Dan, Her Neighbour
Bommie, His Wife
Perry, Dan's Younger Brother
Runga, Dan's Friend
Gopal, Dan's Friend

1977 CAST

Kogi Govender
Mahomed Alli
Shirley Sanichur
Manu Padayachee
Babs Pillay
Solly Pillay

CHARACTERS

Mrs. Singh, A Divorcee
Dan, Her Neighbour
Bommie, His Wife
Perry, Dan's Younger Brother
Runga, Dan's Friend
Gopal, Dan's Friend

1983 CAST

Nasreen Moosa
Mahomed Alli
Vishvani Naidu
Oliver Raman
Babs Pillay
Ajay Hurbans

Setting

The living room-dining room of the Chetty's (Dan & Bommie's) flat.

(As the play opens, Mrs Singh is on the phone in Dan's flat. Dan is hovering like a bee around a flower)

MRS SINGH (On phone) If the car is going to give you so much trouble, why don't I get a taxi and pick you up? ... What? Listen I am looking forward to this dance. I haven't had any fun since my divorce. So you look out. If you let me down ... Why don't I just get a taxi? ... It would be silly for you to bring a taxi all this way when you live right next to the Island ... (Perry enters) All right. But don't let me down. 'Bye.

(As soon as she puts 'phone down, Dan comes up ready to offer cigarettes, but Perry starts a conversation and Dan does his best to cut in.)

PERRY Are you going to the Island tonight? (Mrs. Singh nods) So am I.

DAN (To Mrs. Singh) Cigarette?

PERRY Thanks. (Takes cigarette which Dan, frowning, is forced to light) CREAM is a good band, and I hear tonight is going to be something special.

DAN (To Mrs. Singh) How about a drink?

PERRY No thanks. (Dan is fuming)

MRS SINGH I only hope I get there.

PERRY Why?

MRS SINGH This car that I'm going in is a crock. I don't know why Kumar won't let me take a taxi and fetch him.

PERRY You know how that is. A man wants to treat his date right.

MRS SINGH Oh, he's not my date. He's my cousin and the family put him up to taking me out tonight. They all feel sorry for me. They think I'm dying of loneliness since my divorce.

DAN But it must be lonely. You must miss having a man around.

MRS SINGH Not really.

DAN Come on. You don't mean that.

PERRY Excuse me. I must get ready. Don't want to keep my date waiting.

MRS SINGH Maybe I'll see you there tonight.

PERRY May I ask you to Dance?

MRS SINGH Sure. Why not?

DAN What about your date, Perry?

PERRY Saras won't mind.

MRS SINGH Why would she? An old aunty like me!

DAN (Laughing loudly) Old aunty!

PERRY But Saras will mind if I am late. Excuse me. (Exits)

MRS SINGH I must get ready too. I don't know why though. I may not be going to the dance at all.

DAN Well, if your cousin can't make it, I'll be glad ...

MRS SINGH I wouldn't dream of it. All the way to Isipingo! No. Thanks very much for letting me use the phone. I don't know when my phone is coming. I applied over a month ago.

DAN You'll have to wait until next year.

MRS SINGH That long. I thought they had lots of lines out this way. Anyway, thanks very much. I have to go.

DAN Why are you in such a hurry? (Offers cigarettes)

MRS SINGH No thanks I don't smoke.

DAN How about some wine?

MRS SINGH I don't drink either.

DAN Oh, come on. Try some wine. You don't know what you're missing.

MRS SINGH No thank you. Goodnight. (Exits)

(Dan stands at door looking out after her. Bommie who has been watching him make a play for the divorcee comes in and slaps him on the backside)

DAN Hey, what's wrong with you?

BOMMIE Your eyes are going to fall out just now.

DAN What do you mean? .

BOMMIE (Imitating him) Come, have some wine. Have a cigarette. Have tea. Stay here. My wife is not looking. What's wrong with you? Have you forgotten you're married?

DAN I was just being a good neighbour.

BOMMIE You think you're the only one who can be a good neighbour? You know that Ali from upstairs? He likes to be a good neighbour too – with me! If he offers me wine and cigarettes, I'll be a very good neighbour. Just like you.

DAN If I see that fulla in here, I'll kill him. You look out.

BOMMIE Ever since that Mrs. Singh moved in here, you're suddenly very interested in your neighbours.

DAN Don't be silly. You're just letting your imagination run away with you. Don't you feel sorry for her? Living all alone like that?

BOMMIE Maybe she likes it like that. At least she doesn't have to slave for anyone. It sounds like a very nice life to me.

DAN (Laughing) You want to try it? You'll never manage. You can't do without me. (Slaps her playfully on backside.)

BOMMIE Get out. You think you're so wonderful.

DAN (Grabbing hold of her) You know I am.

(Perry enters)

PERRY What's going on here?

BOMMIE (Breaking away from Dan) I'm going back to my kitchen. (Exits)

(Dan takes out comb and starts to fuss with his appearance)

PERRY What are you poshing up for? Your wife is in the kitchen.

DAN This is not for her.

PERRY What do you mean, not for her?

DAN Shhh. You want Bommie to hear you?

PERRY Why, what's going on? You were acting like a couple of lovebirds just now.

DAN Oh that. That's just to make her happy. Wives expect that sort of thing.

PERRY So what are you poshing up for?

DAN (Pointing in direction of Mrs. Singh's flat) In case she comes back. If she can't make it to the dance, I want to be ready.

PERRY What about Bommie?

DAN What about her?

PERRY She's your wife, or have you forgotten?

DAN How can I forget a thing like that? (Picks up newspaper) See this. The Tellypot is now worth 80,000. It's gotta be mine this week.

PERRY What's that got to do with Bommie?

DAN (Still engrossed in paper) Mine. It's gotta be mine. (Slaps paper) This is my ticket to freedom. If I win, I go straight to Mrs. Singh and take her for a holiday to Paris. And oo-la-la!

PERRY But what about Bommie?

DAN I can't take both of them. Besides with those French chicks waiting ...

PERRY Maybe you won't even need Mrs. Singh!

DAN Maybe. But I'll make a start with her.

PERRY (Laughs) Listen Dan. I'm short of change. Can you lend me some money for tonight?

DAN Listen little brother, I'm not made of money. Next week, after I win the Tellypot, I'll consider it. But now! I put my last cent on the jackpot. I don't even know how I'm doing. The last race must be over by now. (Looks at watch) Man, a long time ago. (Goes over to radio and fidgets with it) I didn't have a chance to listen to the results. I'll have to wait for the news. Then I'll know if I'm rich.

PERRY Don't be so stingy. You have plenty. I don't know why you're so worried. I always pay you back.

DAN You're a bloody pest!

PERRY Okay, okay, I'll ask Bommie.

DAN Shut up. How much you need?

(Gives Perry money and Perry exits to bedroom. A knock on the door. Dan opens. Enter Runga, dressed to kill, carrying flowers and a large box of chocolates. These are his permanent props. He is tipsy and gets progressively more drunk throughout the play)

RUNGA Hullo.

DAN Hey, look at you. Flowers and chocolates. (Holds out hands for them) Thanks. But you didn't have to.

RUNGA Shut up, man. It's not for you.

DAN Where's Gopal?

RUNGA He's downstairs in the car.

DAN Why didn't he come up?

RUNGA We don't have time. His wife, Rani, warned us to be home by eight. How do I look, eh?

DAN What are you decked out like this for? You look like Don Juan disguised as a hippo.

RUNGA You bloody jealous. Don't these clothes make me look young and handsome? Just smell my aftershave lotion. Go on man, smell. (Gets close to Dan)

DAN Phew! Where you buy your aftershave? From a shebeen?

RUNGA Hey! What you got to drink? I'm thirsty. (Puts flowers and chocolates down and looks for something to drink) I'll go bring Gopal. He always carries something.

DAN Why didn't you get milk chocolates? I don't like this dark, bitter stuff.

RUNGA (Running back and grabbing chocolates) I told you it's not for you. Guess who it's for?

DAN Hey, Bommie is my wife! Or are you forgetting?

RUNGA Calm down. Calm down. It's not for Bommie. Besides she's more like milk chocolate. Who's black and beautiful around here, eh? Can't you guess?

DAN You don't mean ... ?

RUNGA You got it. Mrs. Singh. Ever since I saw her, I can't get her out of my mind.

DAN What do you mean?

RUNGA Poor little thing. All alone like that. What she needs is a man.

DAN A man like you I suppose.

RUNGA Ya. Can't you see us together? What a handsome couple. And I can give her just what she

needs. I'm gonna ask her to spend the weekend with me in Swaziland.

DAN Hey, you leave her alone. Just because she's divorced ...

RUNGA Shut up, man. You got Bommie. You worry about her. Mrs. Singh is lonely. She needs protection. She needs someone to show her a good time. Make her forget about that no-good husband of hers. Show her what it's like to be with a real man.

DAN A real man! You can't even stand up straight. Besides with me around, nobody else stands a chance.

RUNGA What about your wife?

DAN She's got me. And I have enough for her and to spare.

RUNGA But Mrs. Singh is choosy. She likes the elegant type. (Sashays around room)

DAN (Laughing) You elegant! Face it man. You're not her type.

RUNGA I suppose you are?

DAN Of course! She comes here to use the 'phone. That's just an excuse. She comes here to see me.

RUNGA You're just imagining it. Admit it, man. You're not her type, I am.

DAN Don't make me laugh. She wouldn't look twice at you.

RUNGA You wanna bet.

DAN Ahh. You don't have a chance with her.

RUNGA You bloody scared to take a bet.

DAN Scared. I'm not scared. But why should I waste my time.

RUNGA You bloody scared you'll lose your money. You're a scrooge. Scroogesami! Come on; let's see the colour of your money, Scroogesami. (Takes out money and puts it on table)

DAN I'm not scared. I just want to know what the bet is?

RUNGA That she'll go for me.

DAN What! A great lover like you! That's all you want

to prove! Come on man, let's have a real bet. Or maybe you know you don't have a chance.

RUNGA What you talking about? She's already crazy about me. The other day when I was coming up in the lift, she gave me a look that was an open invitation.

DAN Then why didn't you accept?

RUNGA Because I have class. I believe there's a right time and place for everything. I'll wait till I get her to Swaziland.

DAN Hah! When I win the jackpot and the Tellypot, I'm taking her to Paris.

RUNGA Paris! You! (Laughs) Hey, you wanna bet? My money is still on the table.

DAN (Taking out money) Okay. I bet you she won't go to Swaziland with you.

RUNGA You're on. (Laughs) This will be the easiest money I ever made.

DAN Don't be too sure.

RUNGA Man, you better kiss your money goodbye. This is going to be so easy. I'll send you a postcard from Swaziland. No, better still, a picture of us together.

DAN (Picks up all the money) I'll keep the stake. Might as well. It's going to be mine.

RUNGA No you don't. (Grabs money) I don't trust you. We'll give it to Bommie. (Calls) Bommie.

(Bommie comes in)

BOMMIE Hullo. I didn't know you were here.

RUNGA (Coming close to her. She averts her head to avoid fumes) You're looking very beautiful today. If you weren't married to Dan, I'd steal you away from here.

DAN Okay. Okay. That's enough. Give her the money.

RUNGA Dan and I have this little bet going and we want you to keep our money, okay Kanmanni?

BOMMIE What are you betting about now?

RUNGA Don't trouble your pretty head with these little business matters. A lovely woman like you should be thinking beautiful thoughts.

DAN Take the money Bommie, and put it away.

BOMMIE (Takes money. Runga holds on to it to keep her there) All right if you don't want me to keep it for you, I'll just get back to my cooking. (Runga lets go and she leaves)

RUNGA What a woman! Man that's one time you beat me to the draw.

DAN I always do. Now when are you going to tackle Mrs. Singh?

RUNGA Right away. (Going to door) While I'm gone, call the airways and see if you can get a booking for two to Swaziland. For next weekend. (Exit.)

(Dan goes to the door to watch him. Perry enters dressed, except for coat)

PERRY (Calling out) Bommie, if supper's ready, I'll have a quick bite.

BOMMIE (Off-stage) It's ready.

PERRY Wasn't that Runga here just now?

DAN The fool is going to try to get Mrs Singh to spend a weekend with him in Swaziland. He's got no chance. The woman only has eyes for me.

PERRY I don't think so. She's been divorced just a few months. From all I hear, her husband gave her a rough time. She may be off men for a while,

DAN That's why she's going to the dance tonight?

PERRY She just wants to have some fun.

DAN You're a kid. What do you know? When a woman's been married, she gets used to certain things. Besides I told you, she's been giving me the eye.

BOMMIE (Off-stage) Perry, your supper's dished.

PERRY Coming. (Exits)

(Knock on door. Dan opens. Enter Gopal)

GOPAL (Almost fainting) Oh God!

DAN (Helping him into a chair) What's the matter with you?

GOPAL That perfume.

DAN What are you a talking about?

GOPAL Just came up in the lift. With HER!

DAN Who?

GOPAL Mrs. Singh.

DAN Is that what you came here for? To pester that poor woman?

GOPAL My heart. I can't stand it. (Staggers up) I'm going back.

DAN What for?

GOPAL I need her

DAN Don't be ridiculous. Besides Runga is with her.

GOPAL No, he's not. She's alone.

DAN He must be there. I saw him knocking on her door.

GOPAL But she just came up in the lift with me.

DAN Are you sure? ... Then where's Runga?

GOPAL That's what I'd like to know. I was coming up to get him. Rani said I must be home by eight and it's getting late. She's gonna bust me up.

DAN Is it nearly eight? Don't tell me I missed the news. (Rushes to radio, switches it on) I want to hear the jackpot results.

GOPAL Well you're too late.

DAN Shut up. I want to hear what's on. (Listens to radio) Thank goodness. It's not time yet.

GOPAL I gotta go. I must talk to that woman.

DAN (Dashes after him) Where you think you going?

GOPAL I can't stand it anymore. I must see her.

DAN You stop right here.

GOPAL (Rushing towards door) I must see her! I must see her!

DAN (Grabbing hold of him) You leave her alone. What do you think she is?

GOPAL (Struggling) She doesn't belong to you.

DAN She's my neighbour.

GOPAL So haven't you heard of love thy neighbour? Well, I love thy neighbour. (Runs to door)

DAN (Jumping up in front of door)
You stay right here.

GOPAL (Cowering) Keep away from me.

DAN What you so frightened for? I'm not going to hit you.

GOPAL Let me out, man. I must find Runga. We got to get home. You don't know my wife!

DAN You're not leaving here till Runga gets back.

(Enter Perry and Bommie from kitchen)

BOMMIE What's going on here?

GOPAL (Runs behind Bommie) He won't let me out. Bommie, tell him to let me out.

DAN Don't hide behind a woman, man.

GOPAL He doesn't want to let me go because he's jealous. He thinks ...

DAN (Cutting him off quickly) Don't listen to him. He just wants to worry the neighbours.

BOMMIE You mean Mrs. Singh. That's his business. If he wants to go, why are you stopping him? He also wants to be neighbourly.

(Perry goes to get his coat)

DAN What about Rani?

BOMMIE That's his business too. Why are you so worried about her? You don't worry about me like that.

GOPAL (From behind Bommie) Yes. Why you suddenly worried about my wife. Rani can take care of herself. Bommie, tell him to let me out. Get out of the way, man. I'm getting out of here.

DAN (Going through karate motions)
Come on then, come on. You'll get out only over my dead body.

GOPAL Hey man. What's the matter with you?

BOMMIE Stop this nonsense. Both of you.

(Enter Perry putting on coat)

PERRY It's nearly eight o'clock. I have to go now.

DAN Nearly eight. (Rushes to radio.) Damn! I've missed the racing results. (As he fidgets with radio, Gopal rushes out) Hey! Come back here. (Rushes after him)

BOMMIE (Rushing to door) Come back here, Dan. Dan! Dan if you don't come back, I'm leaving you. (Turns to Perry) Go bring him back. Tell your brother I'm leaving him. How much more does he expect me to take? I'm leaving. He can't treat me like this. (Pushes Perry to door)

PERRY But I'm getting late. I still have to ...

BOMMIE Go and tell your brother I'm leaving. (Perry goes. Bommie makes a telephone call) Hello. (Crying) Will you send a taxi to 40 View Street. Right away. I'm going to Reservoir Hills. Right away please.

(She puts down receiver and goes to bedroom to pack. Comes back with bag, clothes sticking out on every side. She sits down on sofa and cries.)

BOMMIE He's got no respect for me. The way he begged my parents to let me marry him. Now he treats me like this. My mother told him I was too young. But he forced them. Now he treats me like this. What does he think I am? In my mother's house, they treated me like a queen, gave me everything of the best. I shouldn't have married him. Why did I ever get married?

(Runga staggers in)

RUNGA Hello Bommie. Why you crying? That bloody husband hit you? That swine. I'll bust him up. Where's he? (Goes to bedroom door) Come out of there and fight like a man. Come out of there, you dog. I'm going to make mincemeat out of you.

BOMMIE What are you making so much noise for? Dan is not here. They've all gone over to Mrs. Singh's place. Why didn't you go? There seems to be a great attraction at her flat.

RUNGA (Sitting next to her) Nobody's here? You all by yourself?

BOMMIE Yes.

RUNGA Then I'll stay with you. (Leers at her) You are very pretty. You want to go with me to Swaziland?

BOMMIE (Moving away from him) You're drunk!

RUNGA (Grabbing hold of her) My kanmanni. (She pulls herself away. He gets up to follow and almost trips over her bag) I see you packed your bag! You do love me after all. (Grabs her) I knew you loved me. Who can resist me?

BOMMIE Let me go, you fool! (She pushes him, he falls and she runs out)

RUNGA (Tries to pick himself up, then crawls out after her) Kanmanni, where you, my pussycat? (Dan and Perry come back and watch Runga crawling out.)Pussycat, pussycat. (Exit)

DAN (Looking for Bommie) Bommie! Where are you? Bommie. (Runs into bedroom, kitchen) Where is she? I can't find her?

PERRY Don't tell me she's really gone?

DAN I was only joking. What's wrong with her?

PERRY Maybe Runga knows where she is. No, he probably doesn't even know where he is.

DAN That Bloody Runga! He was hanging around here. He's always had an eye for her. Man, she's gone off with him.

PERRY (Pointing to door) But how?

DAN She can't do that to me. I'll go and bring her back. She's my wife. She can't walk out of here whenever she feels like. She belongs to me. I'll fix her! I never raised my hand to her, but now she's asking for it. (He rushes off to get his coat)

PERRY (Calling) What are you going to do?

DAN (Off-stage) I'm going to bring her back.

PERRY From where?

DAN (Re-entering) From her mother's house. That's where she always goes.

PERRY But I thought you said she went off with Runga.

DAN That bloody Runga! Wait till I get hold of him. I'm going to kill him. Give me the car keys.

PERRY Calm down. Calm down. Why don't you wait?

DAN Wait! How can I wait? She's with Runga.

PERRY Cool it, man. She can't be with Runga.

DAN Give me the keys. Give me the keys before I punch you.

(Bommie comes rushing in through door. She sees Perry and Dan. Stops. Walks past them calmly then bolts into bedroom. Dan and Perry look at each other in amazement. Bommie comes in again cautiously.)

BOMMIE Nobody came in after me?

DAN You expecting someone?

BOMMIE No, no, no. (Closes door. Very sweetly) I'll go and get supper. (Exit)

DAN (To Perry) What's going on here? (Perry shrugs)

(Phone rings)

PERRY I'll get that. Probably Saras, wondering if I am ever going to pick her up. (Answering 'phone) Hello. Yes ... Hold on. I'll call her. (To Dan) It's for Mrs. Singh. (Exits)

(Dan whips out comb and starts to posh up. Re-enter Perry with Mrs. Singh)

MRS SINGH Hullo Mr. Chetty. (Picks up phone) Hullo ... Oh hullo Kumar ... What! Now what are we going to do? Well, let me get a taxi and meet you. (A taxi is heard hooting outside) Hold on. (Turns to Perry) Is that a taxi out there?

BOMMIE (Rushing in) I forgot all about the taxi.

MRS SINGH Is that your taxi?

BOMMIE Yes. But I don't need it now. (Sees Dan's look and disappears into kitchen)

MRS SINGH Good. Then I'll use it. (Into phone) Kumar, you still there? ... Listen, I've got a taxi. ... But why? ... Okay. Then you get a taxi and come and fetch me. ... What! You're broke? ... Are you sure you wanted to take me to this dance? ... Okay. Okay. I understand. We can't go.

PERRY Wait, don't hang up!

MRS SINGH Hold on, Kumar.

PERRY Why don't you and Kumar come with Saras and me? We're going to the dance. It won't be any trouble.

MRS SINGH You mean that? (Into phone) Hey Kumar, listen. A friend of mine is prepared to give us a lift ... Yes, he's going to the dance ... Okay? ... And don't make any more excuses. Okay then. See you in a little while. (Puts

phone down) That cousin of mine. He did his best to back out. Thanks a lot Perry. You've saved my evening.

PERRY Don't mention it. What are neighbours for?

MRS SINGH (Moving to door)
I just have to get my bag and wrap.

PERRY I'll come with you and we'll go straight down.

DAN (Pulling Perry back) You go ahead, Mrs. Singh. I just want to talk to Perry about something.

MRS SINGH (Leaving) Right.

DAN Listen, little brother. She's too old for you.

PERRY What are you talking about?

DAN Just don't try anything with her. That's all. I'm warning you.

(Mrs Singh comes back, holding Gopal by the scruff of his neck)

MRS SINGH I think someone forgot him. (Deposits Gopal in chair) Come on, Perry. Let's go. I can't wait to get to the dance.

DAN (At the door) Perry, just remember what I told you.

BOMMIE What did you tell him?

DAN What? Oh, to drive carefully. (Shouts out the door) Drive carefully!

GOPAL (Crying) She laughed at me. Just laughed at me.

DAN What did I tell you?

BOMMIE What did you tell him?

DAN I told him to leave her alone. She's a decent woman. I don't know what's wrong with all these people. They think she's looking for a good time.

(A knock)

GOPAL I hope that's Runga. We must go home. Rani is going to kill me.

BOMMIE Runga! I think I'll go back to my kitchen.

DAN No. You wait here. ... (Bommie disappears into kitchen fast)

(Enter Runga, drunk as a lord)

RUNGA Hey man, did you call the airways?

GOPAL What for?

RUNGA Did I talk to you? I'm talking to this friend of mine. Did I speak to you, eh? Hey, Dan, did you 'phone the airways. Did you get my reservations for Schwaz ... Schwaziland. You thought I couldn't do it, eh? (Giggles) But I did it. Where's my money? O ya ... Bommie got it. (Going towards bedroom) Bommie! Bommie! Kanmanni ...

DAN (Barring his way) I want to talk to you. What do you want with my wife?

RUNGA (Starts giggling) Your wife? I want my money.

DAN Shut up before I hit you.

RUNGA (Giggling even more) You can't take it. You lost the bet fair and square. You lost man. You lost. Bommie, bring me the money!

DAN I didn't lose.

RUNGA I'm telling you man you lost. (Starts giggling again) Hey! You thought I couldn't do it, eh? But I got her – zap! Like that!

GOPAL Who?

RUNGA The gay divorcée.

GOPAL But you didn't go there.

RUNGA You don't believe me, eh? (Starts giggling again) Man, she couldn't wait. Couldn't wait. Had her bag packed and all.

DAN You're lying, you dog.

RUNGA She was ready and waiting. Sitting on the sofa. Crying. She was crying for me.

GOPAL You're a bloody liar. You didn't go see Mrs. Singh.

RUNGA You see this fool. He's a fool. (To Gopal) Where you think I'm coming from now?

DAN Where?

RUNGA I was there with her. She wanted to go to Swaziland right away. Right away. Had her bag packed,

the clothes sticking out all over. (Points to bag) Look, see if I'm lying. (Pulls out panties) There you see. That's proof.

(Dan rushes at Runga but misses as Runga goes for phone. Dan begins to go through karate motions again)

RUNGA (Picks up phone) Gimme the airline. What's wrong with the bloody phone? It's not working. Nobody's answering me. Dan! Dan! Scroogesami, you miser, you got it plugged in? Dan is the 'phone plugged in. If you don't want to plug it in, why didn't you put in a bloody pay phone? (Sweetly) Dan, your 'phone isn't plugged in, nyna.

GOPAL (Exasperated) It's plugged in! It's plugged in!

RUNGA Then why isn't it working? It's just going bzzz, bzzz, bzzz. (Shouts into 'phone) Hey gimme the bloody airline!

DAN (Goes over to Runga) Put the damn thing down. (Grabs phone and slams it down. Faces him in karate position)

RUNGA (Gets into boxing stance) Hey, you wanna fight eh? Just because I got Mrs. Singh? Come on.

GOPAL You didn't. I was in her flat and you didn't come there.

RUNGA (Turns to Gopal) You swine. You trying to jol with my bokie? I'm gonna kill you, man. Come here, you dog. I'm gonna moor you.

DAN (Chasing after him) What were you doing with my wife, eh?

(They chase each other round the room. Runga takes a few wild swings at Gopal who ducks, frightened for his life. Runga trips over bag and stays down over it. As soon as he is down, Gopal straddles him and starts pummelling him.)

GOPAL Get up. You bloody coward. Get up and fight.

(Bommie enters)

BOMMIE What's going on? (She sees Runga and is about to go but Dan pulls her forward)

GOPAL (Still pummelling Runga) Get up. Fool. Get up and fight.

DAN There he is. Your lover.

BOMMIE He's not my lover. Are you a fool?

DAN (Kicking bag on which Runga is lying) There's the proof. This bag.

BOMMIE (Trying to get bag) Hey, get him off my bag. He'll make all my clothes stink.

DAN Gopal, didn't Runga tell us about this bag just now?

GOPAL (Who is still pummelling Runga) You scared to fight now. You scared, eh?

BOMMIE (Trying to pull bag from under Runga) Get him off my bag.

DAN (Trying to wake Runga up)
Wake up you bloody fool. I want to know the truth about you and Bommie.

BOMMIE (Pulling bag) Get off my bag. Get off my bag.

RUNGA ((Runga opens eyes and sees Bommie) Who's been massaging me? You? My kanmanni. (Reaches out for her) My pussycat. Come on. We going to Swaziland. Dan made the reservations. (He passes out again)

DAN So we have it at last. The truth. I never raised my hand to you before. ... But you shamed me with a friend!

BOMMIE You touch me and you'll be sorry.

DAN (Grabs hold of her) When I'm finished with you, there won't be anything to be sorry about.

BOMMIE You're a fool. (Pushes him off) Sometimes I think you're no better than that drunken slob.

DAN Now he's a drunken slob. Earlier you were rolling with him. Even thinking of going to Swaziland.

BOMMIE You are a fool.

DAN Are you trying to deny it?

BOMMIE You can believe what you want.

DAN So, you admit it.

BOMMIE (Exploding) If you think I'm silly enough to go with a drunken fool, then I'll really leave you. You're the one looking for somebody else. You're the one not satisfied with our marriage. Now you have the cheek to accuse me. And with a stupid fool like that. I put up with

him for your sake because I'm your wife. But I wouldn't have a friend like that. And another thing, if he made advances to me, it's all your fault.

DAN What?

BOMMIE You're busy running after other women. You leave me here alone and then your friends come and they think ...

DAN What?

BOMMIE They think I'm lonely. They feel sorry for me, the way you feel sorry for Mrs. Singh. And they try to be neighbourly like you. I wish you had some respect for me.

DAN All right. That's enough now. (Turns to Gopal) Gopal! What you still doing here? It's two o'clock in the morning. Get out and take your drunken friend with you!

GOPAL (Who has been dozing on top of Runga, jumps up) Two o'clock! Rani is going to kill me. Hey, Runga wake up! We got to go. Rani is going to kill me.

(Dan helps Gopal and they get Runga up and out. As Runga is being dragged out he winks at Bommie and calls out)

RUNGA Pussycat, pussycat.

(Dan boots them out.)

DAN (After an awkward silence) We didn't eat tonight, eh? But it's too late now, I suppose?

BOMMIE I can make some tea and sandwiches.

DAN Okay.

(Enter Perry and Mrs. Singh)

BOMMIE Hullo.

PERRY What are you doing up so late? We just saw Runga and Gopal in the parking lot. That Runga! He's still out there performing.

DAN Did you have a good time?

MRS SINGH Lovely. Your brother is a perfect gentleman. I haven't had so much fun in a long time. You really boosted my morale, Perry.

DAN What do you mean?

MRS SINGH I'm so used to being treated like trash just because I'm divorced. It was really refreshing to have someone treat me with respect for a change.

BOMMIE I'm glad you went out and enjoyed yourself. I'm making tea and sandwiches. You will join us, won't you?

MRS SINGH That sounds lovely.

DAN Yes. My wife is a wonderful cook. (Looks at Bommie) And she's a wonderful woman too.

MRS SINGH Yes, I know. (To Bommie) Let me give you a hand in the kitchen.

(She follows Bommie. As she passes Dan, he slaps her playfully across the bottom and winks. She goes off shaking her head)

PERRY (Shaking head at Dan who grins and shrugs) You know, she's a very nice lady. I hope she finds herself a good man someday.

RUNGA (Calling from off-stage) Pussycat!

(Perry and Dan go off into kitchen, laughing)

THE END

It's Mine

(A One-Act Play)
(1983)

CHARACTERS

Sunita Singh, A Freelance Photographer, About 28
Desmond Peters, A Schoolteacher, About 33

CAST

Nasreen Moosa
Essop Khan

CHARACTERS

Mrs. Singh, A Divorcee
Dan, Her Neighbour
Bommie, His Wife
Perry, Dan's Younger Brother
Runga, Dan's Friend
Gopal, Dan's Friend

1983 CAST

Nasreen Moosa
Mahomed Alli
Vishvani Naidu
Oliver Raman
Babs Pillay
Ajay Hurbans

Setting

The living-room/dining-room of Sunita's very modest little flat.

SCENE 1

SUNITA (Looking through newspapers at pictures she has taken) Hmmm ... The pictures are not bad. Not bad at all. Even if I do say so myself. (Turns over pages quickly) Where's the one with the woman and child. Damn, they didn't use it. My best picture. They didn't use it. How can they do that? I could kill them. I'll tackle them first thing in the morning. (A knock on the door) That damn editor, when it comes to anything real, he can barely make the effort to get interested. (Knocking continues) Coming. (Pages through paper) They didn't use it. I can't believe it. (Knocking becomes more insistent) Coming. (Takes a last glance at paper and then goes to answer door.) O hello, Des. Come in. (Goes back to paper)

DESMOND Hey, is that the best you can do? (Comes up to her and kisses her in the neck)

SUNITA (Picking up paper) Just look at this. What do you think of these people? I give them some good pictures of the people being moved for the new highway and they leave out the best one. It was really perfect, it showed a mother and child sheltering under sticks and paper and they didn't put it in. It's so maddening. Sometimes I wonder why I even bother with the papers.

DESMOND (Pulling her towards him) Forget all that now. I'm here.

SUNITA (Preoccupied with paper) You know that editor, the one that looks like he died yesterday, I know that it is an effort for him to listen to me. All the time I'm talking to him, he's mentally tearing up everything I say and consigning it to the waste paper basket.

DESMOND (Giving up) You really make me feel wanted.

SUNITA (Holding up negative) What? ... Now look at this. Isn't it perfect? And they didn't use it. (Brings negative to Desmond) I mean just look. Isn't this the best one? Doesn't it really tell the story? (Desmond doesn't look. She doesn't notice.) This one puts it all in a nutshell.

DESMOND Do you ever think about anything besides your photographs?

SUNITA (Back to pictures in paper) But these others are good. (Shows him paper) Don't you think so? I think my work is really getting good. You know, I think I'm going to work towards an exhibition. I'll have to go on free-lancing for the papers, but I really want to be an art photographer. There are countless stories out there. What better way to tell them than through pictures?

DESMOND Oh, shut up.

SUNITA (Suddenly aware of Desmond) What's the matter? (He doesn't answer. He pulls out a cigarette and smokes.) Aren't you going to offer me one?

DESMOND Buy your own bloody cigarettes.

SUNITA What's the matter? What's upset you? (No answer) Are you cross?

DESMOND (Sarcastically) Oh, no! I'm the happiest man in the world. Why shouldn't I be? I'm with the woman I love.

SUNITA What's the matter? Did you have a bad day at school?

DESMOND No, I didn't. (Shouts at her) I didn't. I had a wonderful day. Everything was perfect. I've been given a merit notch.

SUNITA Oh, congratulations.

DESMOND Thanks! Thanks! That's just what I expected from you.

SUNITA Is it? Then why are you shouting?

DESMOND I was having a marvellous day until I came here.

SUNITA Maybe you're hungry. Have you had supper?

DESMOND (Shouting) Ohhhhhhhh!

SUNITA Well, maybe you're not feeling well. Do you have a headache?

DESMOND Ohhhhhhhh!

SUNITA As bad as that: Let me see if I can find some aspirin.

DESMOND I don't have a headache, but you'll give me one in a minute!

SUNITA Well, I've run out of ideas. Can you give me a hint?

DESMOND Hint? What are you talking about?

SUNITA A hint – so I can guess what's worrying you.

DESMOND What are you doing? Playing twenty questions? Can't you be a normal woman?

SUNITA I give up. What's bothering you?

DESMOND Look at the time! Just look at the time.

SUNITA (Looks at her watch) It's a quarter to eight. ... So?

DESMOND (Exasperated) A quarter to eight!

SUNITA Were we supposed to go to the bioscope? Oh my goodness! And just look at me. Just give me five minutes. I'll be ready.

DESMOND No we were not supposed to go to the bioscope!

SUNITA Oh, thank goodness. I'd rather spend a nice quiet evening at home.

DESMOND Ohhhhhh!

SUNITA (Putting fingers in ears) That's not quite what I meant.

DESMOND Look at the time!

SUNITA (Mystified) I have. It's ... (Looks at watch again)

DESMOND Doesn't it mean anything to you?

SUNITA (Puzzled) I suppose so. (Confused) Time? Well, time is an artificial contrivance invented by man to give significance to his existence in a timeless universe ...

DESMOND OHHHHHH!

SUNITA If you go on saying 'Ohhh' like that, I shall have to call a doctor.

DESMOND (Very stern) Have you been pacing up and down in here?

SUNITA (Quite surprised) No. Why?

DESMOND Have you been worried? Have you been waiting for the telephone to ring?

SUNITA Well, no.

DESMOND Haven't you been cursing and hating me.

SUNITA Why?

DESMOND You didn't even look out of the window once ... for my car?

SUNITA No. Why should I? My car is running perfectly

DESMOND Ohhhhhh! (Sunita runs to look out of window) What are you doing?

SUNITA I'm looking out the window ... at your car.

DESMOND Why?

SUNITA I thought you wanted me to.

DESMOND What for?

SUNITA I don't know. (Laughs) I thought of something really wild. I thought ... maybe there's an SB's down there.

DESMOND What! Special Branch! You make me so mad.

SUNITA Desmond, please tell me what's going on.

DESMOND I'm late! I'm two hours late!

SUNITA Oh? Are you?

DESMOND Doesn't it bother you? I was supposed to have been here at six.

SUNITA (Astonished) You were?

DESMOND What's the use of keeping you waiting if you don't even notice it!

SUNITA Oh? You were keeping me waiting. I see. I mean, I don't see.

DESMOND I give up! I give up!

SUNITA Desmond, don't be angry. I'm sorry, I didn't know you were keeping me waiting. I'll try to be aware of it next time.

DESMOND But you never are!

SUNITA You mean you've been late before?

DESMOND Yes! I've been coming late for the last month or so. And you haven't noticed! Not even once. It's getting on my nerves.

SUNITA Well, if it upsets you to be late, why don't you come on time?

DESMOND So, it does bother you!

SUNITA What?

DESMOND That I've been coming late.

SUNITA (Puzzled) Oh no. (Desmond looks as if he is going to explode) I mean, yes, yes. Oh yes, it drives me crazy.

DESMOND Oh no! No, no, no!

SUNITA Please, Desmond, don't upset yourself like this. This is not school you know. You don't have to sign in and out. But if it would make you feel better, I'll set up a book and pencil on a table near the door.

DESMOND You're supposed to get upset. I keep you waiting all the time.

SUNITA Oh, but you don't, you know. I'm always busy. In fact, I wouldn't have noticed if you hadn't come at all.

DESMOND That's it. (Gets up) That's the last straw. Now I know you don't love me at all.

SUNITA Stop being so old-fashioned. (Kisses him) There.

DESMOND No you don't. You don't get out of it that easily. You think we can solve all our problems in bed.

SUNITA What are you talking about?

DESMOND All my other girl friends used to be terribly upset when I was late. One used to cry. Another used to throw things at me.

SUNITA How awful.

DESMOND It wasn't awful. It was wonderful.

SUNITA You mean you like having things thrown at you. Does that excite you? I didn't know. (Throws a cushion at him) There. Is that better?

DESMOND Don't be ridiculous. I don't want you to throw things at me. I want you to show me you care.

SUNITA What are you talking about?

DESMOND You don't care. You don't even miss me when I'm not here.

SUNITA That's not true. Sometimes I do.

DESMOND Sometimes! Sometimes! You're supposed to miss me all the time.

SUNITA But that's not humanly possible. For goodness sake, you don't expect me to miss you when I'm in my darkroom.

DESMOND But I miss you all the time.

SUNITA All the time? Even when you're busy in the classroom?

DESMOND I'm not aware of it then, but I know I miss you.

SUNITA Well, that's the way it is with me too. I miss you but I'm not aware of it.

DESMOND Yes, you certainly are not. I suppose it didn't worry you when I didn't pitch up last night.

SUNITA Were you supposed to come over last night?

DESMOND Yes, we were supposed to go to the bioscope.

SUNITA That's right. I knew there was something about the bioscope. You wanted to see *Body Heat*. Are you upset because you missed it?

DESMOND O, I didn't miss it.

SUNITA You went on your own. I'm so glad. You really wanted to see it.

DESMOND I didn't go on my own.

SUNITA That's even better. There's nothing I hate more than going to a show on my own.

DESMOND Don't you want to know who went with me?

SUNITA Oh ... Sure.

DESMOND I went with Cheryl.

SUNITA Cheryl? Cheryl? I don't think I know her.

DESMOND No you don't. She's a girl I met at church. (Sunita nods, looks interested.) She's very beautiful. She has the most luscious, curly black hair. And the largest black eyes.

SUNITA Go on. Go on. You're giving me an idea.

DESMOND What?

SUNITA Yes. God, it's a marvellous idea. A whole series of pictures on the religious affiliations of the Indian community. Do you think she'd pose for me? No ... no! You'd be better. You don't look Christian. Yes, we could take a picture of you, in your church, in front of the altar

DESMOND Wearing a turban and dhoti and holding a crucifix in my right hand.

SUNITA (Laughing) Well, yes. I want to stress contrasts but I wasn't thinking of going that far.

DESMOND Ohhhh! I'm getting out of here.

SUNITA But why?

DESMOND Doesn't it bother you? That I took Cheryl to the bioscope?

SUNITA Why? Was she a bore?

DESMOND No. She is a beautiful woman. It would be easy to fall in love with her. (Sunita smiles and nods) You're not jealous. If you loved me you would be jealous.

SUNITA I'm sorry. I know I'm a terrible disappointment to you. But I'm not jealous.

DESMOND You ought to be.

SUNITA Why? You don't belong to me.

DESMOND I know we're not married, but ...

SUNITA Come and sit down. I'll make some tea. Look at the paper. There's something in here about your Teachers' Society. Here look at this article while I'm in the kitchen. (Starts to move off)

DESMOND No, come and sit here next to me. (Pulls her down next to him and kisses her) For an intelligent woman you can be so silly. Here I want to make love to you and all you can do is go on and on about photographs and newspapers. (He kisses her again and strokes her hair) Such a lovely woman too. Such beautiful hair.

SUNITA As nice as Cheryl's?

DESMOND Ah, so you are jealous.

SUNITA No. Just curious.

DESMOND No, you're jealous. (Laughs) You were pretending all the time. And I fell for it. Your whole act. You can't fool me anymore. I understand your game. It's just your way of playing hard to get.

SUNITA Hard to get?

DESMOND Yes, you think that's the way to hook me.

You women are all alike.

SUNITA Why should I want to hook you?

DESMOND (Laughing) You can pretend you're different, but you're just like every other woman. You want security.

SUNITA What?

DESMOND And another little thing I've noticed. All my other girl friends always showered me with presents, but you don't.

SUNITA Good heavens, you've got my body, what more do you want?

DESMOND (With sudden realisation) Yes, I have, haven't I? My God, that's your way ... you're trying to trap me ...

SUNITA What! Is that what you think of me?

DESMOND My God! That's such an old trick. The oldest trick in the book. I didn't expect a modern woman like you, to stoop to that.

SUNITA You think I'm looking for a husband. Well you're quite wrong. I don't have room in my life for one.

DESMOND You wouldn't say that if you were pregnant.

SUNITA I am.

DESMOND (Laughing) That's a good one. You almost make me want to marry you. Nice try, darling, but it won't work.

SUNITA I told you. I don't need a husband in my life.

DESMOND Oh, rubbish. Then you can't be pregnant.

SUNITA Why? Don't you think you're man enough for the job?

DESMOND (Stares at her) You mean ...? (She nods) Are you really? (She nods) Oh god ... (He faints)

SUNITA

Oh goodness, Desmond. What are you having dizzy spells for? (Loosens his belt and tie and fans him. After a while he opens his eyes) There, are you feeling better? Just lie there. I'll get you some weak tea.

DESMOND (Sitting up) No. I'll be all right. (He suddenly puts his hand over his mouth and rushes to the bathroom.)

SUNITA Oh my goodness, even morning sickness. Desmond stop being silly. Don't you know that morning sickness is just an old wives' tale? Besides, it's not even morning.

DESMOND (Returning looking weak)
I'm sorry. It must be the shock. I feel hungry now.

SUNITA Don't tell me. You want pickles and ice cream. Look if you exercise properly, you won't have to change your diet. You should eat normally; only make sure you drink plenty of milk.

DESMOND What are you talking about?

SUNITA That's what they told me at the clinic. If you're going to be pregnant too, you may as well do it right.

DESMOND Oh god. You've got me. I didn't want this to happen. Now what am I going to do?

SUNITA Well, if you're not happy about it, you could always have an abortion.

DESMOND Stop it. Stop playing the fool. Unless this whole thing is a joke. It is a joke, isn't it? You've been pulling my leg.

SUNITA Your pregnancy certainly is a joke. I've heard of men having sympathetic pregnancies but yours is nothing short of miraculous – a kind of annunciation.

DESMOND Stop it. Only husbands go through that. Oh god, you've got me trapped. Did you say something about abortion just now? Are you thinking of ...?

SUNITA No. Besides it's too late for that.

DESMOND Too late. What do you mean? How long?

SUNITA Over three months.

DESMOND You've known for over three months and you didn't tell me! Oh, you are cunning. You knew I'd make you have an abortion, that's why you didn't tell me. Well I don't care. I'm not trapped.

SUNITA Of course you're not.

DESMOND (Working himself up into a rage) I'm not trapped because I won't marry you. Look, you knew what you were doing. You can't blame this on me. Now you can't force me to marry you.

SUNITA (Shrugs) I'm not.

DESMOND Then why did you become pregnant? If that's not coercion, what is? But I can't marry you. You're not even a Christian. My parents would be horrified if I brought home a heathen. And you wouldn't convert, would you?

SUNITA No.

DESMOND (Getting madder) You're so damn stubborn. You wouldn't even convert. You don't practise your religion. Why can't you convert?

SUNITA What is this all about? My becoming a Christian?

DESMOND Well it would make things easier.
SUNITA For whom?

DESMOND For me. For us.

SUNITA Not for me. I'm quite happy the way I am.

DESMOND Well then, you're just bringing this on yourself. Don't go round saying that I left you in the lurch. You won't convert, so you're making the problem.

SUNITA I don't see the problem.

DESMOND (Really angry) Well it's not a problem for you, is it? I'm the one who has to suffer. I'm the one who is being forced to give up my freedom. I'm the one who is being shackled with a wife and kid. I won't let you do this to me. I'm getting out now and I'm not looking back. (Sunita is sitting calmly watching him) Don't try to stop me. I know you're trying to stop me. You think if you sit there without saying anything, you'll make me feel ashamed and guilty. Well that reverse psychology doesn't work anymore. I'm not ashamed of anything. You're the one who should be ashamed. You're just a little whore and you deserve everything you get. (He storms out)

SUNITA (Going back to her work) Thank goodness he's gone. Now I can get on with some work.

SCENE TWO

(A month later. A knock on the door)

Sunita (Offstage, calling) Come in. It's open.

(Desmond enters with a bunch of flowers. He looks around and then calls out.)

DESMOND Hello, Sunita. Where are you?

SUNITA (Surprised) Who's there? ... Desmond?

DESMOND Yes.

SUNITA Oh. I thought it was ... What are you doing here?

DESMOND I've come to see you.

SUNITA I'll be out in a minute. I'm just changing. Help yourself to a coke or something.

DESMOND Thanks. (He paces about somewhat nervously. Looks through photographs on table)

SUNITA (Entering in a loose flowing dress) Hello Desmond. This is a surprise.

DESMOND (Staring at her outfit) Hello I. ... brought you some flowers.

SUNITA Oh, how nice. Thanks. Let me put them in water. (Goes off)

DESMOND (Looking through photos)
You have some good pictures here.

SUNITA (Re-entering) Oh, you like them. These are just experiments. I'm trying out new techniques, double exposures, different angles and things. I don't seem to be getting anywhere.

DESMOND I think they're good.

SUNITA That's sweet of you.

DESMOND (After an awkward pause)
How are you?

SUNITA I'm fine.

DESMOND And the baby?

SUNITA Growing. You know I can feel it growing inside me. It's quite marvellous to know I have someone else right here, inside of me, biding its time until it can come out and be a person. Meanwhile it trusts me to take care of it. It's a great privilege.

DESMOND Have you told – does anyone...?

SUNITA Oh, everybody knows. I'm too excited to keep it to myself.

DESMOND What about your parents?

SUNITA Oh, they know too. But they're a bit of a disappointment.

DESMOND Oh?

SUNITA Yes, they have it all wrong. Instead of being excited and happy – you'd expect that wouldn't you – I mean they've had children. Instead of being excited and happy, they seem to disapprove.

DESMOND Well, I can understand ...

SUNITA Understand! They said they were ashamed of me. How can they be ashamed? This is a new life – it's their grandchild – how can that be shameful?

DESMOND Yes, but you know how people will react.

SUNITA And I think it's disgusting. They don't care about my baby. They're not overjoyed at the miracle of life. All they can think about is, who did it? I mean you'd think a crime has been committed.

DESMOND They asked you who did it?

SUNITA Yes. I said it was obvious. The butler did it.

DESMOND You didn't tell them about me?

SUNITA No. Why should I? It's not important.

DESMOND You mean, because I said I wouldn't marry you?

SUNITA No. Because they have to accept this baby for itself.

DESMOND So your parents don't know about me.

SUNITA They know.

DESMOND But you said

SUNITA I didn't tell them, but people gossip.

DESMOND Do they want me to marry you?

SUNITA Yes. Isn't it ridiculous?

DESMOND Why? I am the father.

SUNITA Nonsense. They just want me to get married so the baby won't be a bastard. Can you imagine it? The little mite isn't even born yet and they're giving it a bad name.

DESMOND But what do you think of marriage?

SUNITA It's a stupid idea. An insult to the baby! They want me to get married just to make the baby legitimate. Have you ever heard such utter nonsense? What can be more legitimate than a baby?

DESMOND But you're not married.

SUNITA And they don't even care whom I marry. Oh, you know what they did when I told them that I wasn't going to marry you, they went and found an old bachelor and tried to arrange a marriage.

DESMOND What!

SUNITA Yes, it's shocking, isn't it? The lengths that people will go to.

DESMOND But it would make it easier for you if you were married.

SUNITA How?

DESMOND Well, people wouldn't look down upon you.

SUNITA I don't care what people think. I know I haven't done anything wrong.

DESMOND Don't be naive. You know everyone thinks it's wrong.

SUNITA Well that's their hang-up. Not mine. I don't see why I should lead a life of frustration to please other people.

DESMOND But you wouldn't if you were married.

SUNITA I'm single and I don't.

DESMOND Look, you don't seem to be getting my point.

SUNITA Oh yes I am. You think I should be ashamed to be having a baby because I'm not married.

DESMOND No, no. You don't understand what I mean. (Sunita raises her eyebrows) I'm trying to tell you that I love you.

SUNITA What! (Bursts out laughing. Stops short) Oh, you're serious.

DESMOND Perfectly serious.

SUNITA (Laughs) Oh Desmond, you can't be.

DESMOND Yes I am. (Takes her hand) I've missed you, you know.

SUNITA Good heavens.

DESMOND What's so surprising about that? Didn't you miss me? Have you found someone else?

SUNITA In this condition?

DESMOND You're even more beautiful now.

SUNITA That's what they tell all pregnant women. But you know, I really feel beautiful.

DESMOND And you are. (He comes close to her) I've missed you desperately. (He tries to kiss her. She holds him off)

SUNITA Hey, what's going on?

DESMOND Let me show you. (He pulls her to him)

SUNITA No Desmond. Stop it.

DESMOND I'm trying to show you that I love you. And since you don't believe me ... (Reaches for her)

SUNITA (Moving away) No. Don't be ridiculous.

DESMOND I can't stop myself.

SUNITA Yes you can. Go and take a cold shower

DESMOND Let's take one together.

SUNITA What's the matter with you? You say you love me. Next you'll be telling me you want to get married.

DESMOND I do

SUNITA What? (Laughs)

DESMOND You don't believe me. I'll prove it to you. (Brings out a ring case from his pocket) I bought this for you. Take it. Open it.

SUNITA (Opens box) It's beautiful.

DESMOND Yes. It's an engagement ring.

SUNITA But why?

DESMOND What do you mean, why? I'm the baby's father. I must accept my responsibility.

SUNITA Nonsense.

DESMOND I've been thinking about it. I feel I acted like a creep. Imagine walking out on you at a time like this. I feel very ashamed of myself.

SUNITA You'll get over it.

DESMOND No I won't.

SUNITA Oh go on. You're not the marrying type.

DESMOND Well, all that's changed now.

SUNITA So you want to marry me. Why me?

DESMOND But aren't you happy? This is the solution to your problem. Isn't this what you want?

SUNITA No, it's not.

DESMOND You're only saying that because I hurt you when I walked out of here a month ago. But really, I'm sorry. I said a lot of things in haste. Now I'm going to do the decent thing.

SUNITA I don't think it's decent. I think it's positively indecent.

DESMOND You still don't believe that I love you.

SUNITA I don't understand why you're so keen to get married all of sudden. Nobody's holding a shotgun to you. Your family isn't putting any pressure on you, are they?

DESMOND (Beginning to get angry)
What's the matter with you? You should be overjoyed. I could have left you in the lurch, you know. But I come here with a proposal of marriage and you act as though you'd be doing me a favour if you accept. I'm the one that's making the sacrifice.

SUNITA Ah. So you're making a sacrifice.

DESMOND No. That's not what I mean. I'm expressing myself badly.

SUNITA But truthfully.

DESMOND Look Sunita, I want to settle down. I'm tired of playing the field.

SUNITA Who are you kidding?

DESMOND Just think of it. We could get married and

build a nice house. I've even picked out a plot of land.

SUNITA (Surprised) When did that happen?

DESMOND It happened quite by chance actually. One of the teachers on our staff was going to build a house in Reservoir Hills. Then he got a promotion to Chatsworth, so now he's thinking of building in Silverglen. He's a good pal of mine and he offered me his plot in Reservoir Hills. I went out and had a look. It's a nice piece of land with a marvellous view.

SUNITA So you're going to build a house and you want to furnish it with a wife and child?

DESMOND All I have to do is apply for a housing subsidy and then get a loan from the building society. So what do you think?

SUNITA It's fine. If that's what you want. I don't see what it has to do with me.

DESMOND But it all depends on you.

SUNITA Me? How can that be?

DESMOND Well, don't you see? I can't get a housing subsidy unless I'm married.

SUNITA Oh, you want me so you can get a house?

DESMOND Why are you being so difficult?

SUNITA Look, if you want a house so badly why don't you ask some other woman who also wants that sort of thing.

DESMOND But you're the one who needs it. Just think how people are going to treat you now.

SUNITA I don't understand. You've got other women. Why pick on me?

DESMOND Pick on you! Pick on you! Is that how you look at it? I'm offering to share my life ... my worldly goods with you and you say I'm picking on you.

SUNITA Look, Desmond. Try to understand. I don't want to marry you, I've never wanted to marry you and I never will marry you.

DESMOND Is there someone else?

SUNITA I'm not interested in marriage with you or anyone else.

DESMOND Then what the hell are you having this baby for? You could have got rid of it.

SUNITA No, I could not.

DESMOND Are you really happy to have this baby? Isn't it going to cramp your style?

SUNITA No, not at all.

DESMOND How are you going to manage after it's born? Who's going to look after it when you go out to work?

SUNITA I am. It's no problem. I'll just strap my baby to my back and move. Besides I'm doing a lot of work at home now. So it's no problem.

DESMOND But you don't earn much. Babies are expensive. You'll need support. If we got married, you wouldn't have to worry about a job. I'd take care of you.

SUNITA But I take of myself.

DESMOND Sunita, don't you realise what I am offering you? I'm offering you an easy life. You'd have no financial problems. You'd be able to spend all your time with the baby. You'd like that, wouldn't you?

SUNITA I am going to spend all my time with my baby.

DESMOND You're being stupid now. You know you won't be able to do that. I'm offering you a comfortable and carefree life.

SUNITA I've already told you, I don't want to get married. Besides, have you forgotten I'm not a Christian? What happened to your principles? I thought you couldn't marry a heathen.

DESMOND Oh forget that. I was just shocked at the time.

SUNITA You mean you don't mind marrying a Hindu?

DESMOND No.

SUNITA You won't mind if I don't convert? (Desmond nods) But you'd be happy if I did?

DESMOND No. I don't want you to convert.

SUNITA Actually if I wanted to marry you, I wouldn't mind converting. It makes no difference to me. I'm not religious.

DESMOND But I don't want you to. (Sunita shrugs) I wouldn't let you.

SUNITA (Surprised at his vehemence)
Even if I wanted to with all my heart? (Desmond nods)
Well! Next you'll be telling me you're willing to become a Hindu.

DESMOND As a matter of fact, I am.

SUNITA What! (Stares and then bursts out laughing)
Look Desmond, I don't think you're feeling too well. I think you'd better go home.

DESMOND I'm not leaving until you promise to marry me.

SUNITA There's something strange going on here. You're even willing to give up your religion for me? Look here, Desmond, you know I come from a poor family, don't you? I don't have any rich relatives tucked away, just waiting to leave their fortunes to me. You know that, don't you?

DESMOND (Comes up and hugs her)
I love you. Can't you accept that? Now say you'll marry me.

SUNITA No.

DESMOND What the hell! What more must I do?

SUNITA Nothing. I'm just like you. I'm not the marrying kind.

DESMOND But you're going to have a child. My child.

SUNITA So?

DESMOND How can you do this to our child? He needs a secure home with a mother and a father.

SUNITA No. All it needs is love. And it will have lots of that.

DESMOND But it's my child, too. I have a right to protect him. I can't allow him to become insecure and unhappy.

SUNITA Why should it?

DESMOND Because people will point fingers at him and call him a bastard. And besides if he grows up without a father, he'll probably become a delinquent or a homosexual or something.

SUNITA (Laughs) Goodness, you've suddenly developed paternal instincts.

DESMOND You can't deny me the right to my own child. So you'd better make up your mind to marry me, you understand. I will take responsibility for my child.

SUNITA This child is not your responsibility.

DESMOND Yes it is. It is as much mine as it yours.

SUNITA No, it's not.

DESMOND What do you mean?

SUNITA It's not your child.

DESMOND What! Why you ... No, I don't believe you. You're just saying that to punish me for walking out on you. You're lying. You just want me to suffer.

SUNITA Desmond, I'm not trying to do anything to you. But it's not a lie.

DESMOND You mean it? This is not my child? (Shaking her) You little whore.

SUNITA Stop it. Stop it. The baby ...

DESMOND Why should I care about it? It's not my child. (Lets go of her) So you've been two-timing me all the time. I could kill you. (Bitterly) Who is he? Who is he? So, this lets you off the hook, doesn't it? I can't marry you now. Not a woman like you. People would laugh at me. My God, Sunita, I really wanted to marry you, you know.

SUNITA Yes, I don't understand.

DESMOND O, don't kid yourself. It's not because I'm crazy with love for you. It's just that it all would have worked out so nicely, that's all.

SUNITA What would have worked out?

DESMOND Everything. The housing subsidy, promotions, everything. I've been overlooked for promotion for so long, I have no hope of ever getting one. I thought if I married you, it would be easier.

SUNITA But how could I help you with promotion? Oh, you mean more married men get promotions.

DESMOND No man, through your connections.

SUNITA My connections? What are you talking about?

DESMOND Your uncle! The one at Indian affairs?

SUNITA But he's only a cleaner.

DESMOND No, not that one. You know the one I'm talking about. Your uncle, the politician, the SAIC man. (Sunita is mystified) Don't pretend. I found out all about him. I suppose you were afraid to mention him, in case I called you a sell-out, too.

SUNITA What are you talking about?

DESMOND Don't pretend. I found out all about him. Your uncle. The one on the SAIC, who's in charge of teachers' promotions. I thought if I married you, you could put in a word about the fact that I have been overlooked for the last twelve years. I'm sure he would have helped because you're his niece.

SUNITA So that's why you wanted to become Hindu?

DESMOND Now you've spoilt everything. I could have climbed the ladder of promotion. Who knows, maybe I could have become chief inspector, or director of Indian Education. Now I can see myself, stuck for the rest of my life as a teacher on the lowest rung of the ladder, going nowhere. Just getting old and frustrated like so many guys on our staff.

SUNITA But I don't have an uncle in the Indian Council, thank God! There are no traitors in my family.

DESMOND What about Harichand Singh? Isn't he your uncle?

SUNITA No. Thank God. Where did you get such a notion?

DESMOND Vinod, the teacher at my school, who wants to sell me his plot. He told me you were Harichand's niece.

SUNITA Well I'm not.

DESMOND But when I told him your name, Sunita Singh, he teased me about it. Said I was quick on the draw to have got hold of Harichand's niece at a time like this. He congratulated me, told me I was lucky I hadn't married early like him. Now I would shoot up like a rocket with promotions.

SUNITA He's obviously confusing me with some other Sunita Singh. I come from a family of Congressites. My father was on the NIC exec.

DESMOND Harichand Singh is not your uncle?

SUNITA Definitely, absolutely NOT!

DESMOND (Laughs with relief) So I've been barking up the wrong tree. Thank God, you didn't accept my proposal. I would have been saddled with a wife and kid, and no prospect of promotion. Well, well, well. What a joke. Anyway, it's all turned out for the best.

SUNITA You know Desmond, there's only one thing I regret.

DESMOND What?

SUNITA I regret that this child will have some of your characteristics.

DESMOND Why should it? I'm not the father.

SUNITA Unfortunately, you are.

DESMOND What are you trying to pull? You said it wasn't my child.

SUNITA That's true.

DESMOND How can I be the father, if it's not my child? Damn it, whose child is it?

SUNITA It's mine.

DESMOND What?

SUNITA It's my child. You fathered it, but I was the one who decided I wanted a child.

DESMOND You mean this wasn't an accident.

SUNITA No. I made up my mind to have a child. So you see it has nothing to do with you. You were the only accidental thing about it.

DESMOND But what the hell made you decide on a thing like that. What do you want a child for?

SUNITA I think motherhood is the highest thing a woman can aspire to. My child is a new life, a new hope for a better and more humane society. I feel honoured to be carrying it.

DESMOND That's a lot of romantic bullshit. Giving birth is an ordinary, everyday thing. If it makes you happy, that's your business. You can have it. I want nothing to do with it. Now that I know you're not Harichand's niece, I really don't care about you and your baby. I don't even care whose it is. Are you sure you know?

SUNITA Yes, it's mine now. One day, it will belong to itself. Goodbye, Desmond. I'm sorry things are not working out for you.

DESMOND Don't worry they will. You've given me new hope. I'll find this other Sunita, Harichand's niece, and after that, it will be plain sailing. Goodbye and thanks, thanks a million. (Sunita looks puzzled) For not agreeing to marry me. Goodbye. (He exits laughing)

SUNITA (Looks at her baby) That's your father my dear. I made a bad choice. You mustn't mind too much. Luckily, you won't be anything like him.

THE END

Shah Theatre to present 3 one-act plays

THE Shah Theatre Academy, producer of the smash-hit stage success, "The Lahnee's Pleasure", which is now well on its way to breaking all records, is busy working on three one-act plays to be presented sometime in November.

The production is called "Three For Tea" and features plays written and produced by Dr. Muthal Naidoo and Ronnie Govender, author of "The Lahnee's Pleasure".

In all three plays, the guests are offered tea in the best traditions of Indian households. In two plays the guests accept the offer, while in the third, the guest refuses. The first two written by Muthal are comedies while the third, written by Ronnie Govender, is a tragedy.

All the accomplished stars of "The Lahnee's Pleasure" will be taking the lead roles, with Bala Pillay, of "Stable

Graphic Reporter

expense" also featured in important roles. The others are newcomers Thara Singh, Kesi Govender, Shirley Sunichur and Mogie Pillay.

The plays would be staged at the Himalaya Hotel, which would be revamped to make it suitable for theatre, Mr. Govender told The Graphic this week.

Following its success at "The Lahnee's Pleasure" the management has agreed to improve the air conditioning and to build a special stage. We intend following up our efforts with several more productions at this venue, which has the advantage of being non-air conditioned."



SOLLY Pillay, one of the stars of "The Lahnee's Pleasure", has a difficult job on his hands in "Have Tea and Go", one of the three one-act plays presently being rehearsed by the Shah Theatre Academy. In the picture he does his best to persuade his cousin, played by attractive Shirley Sunichur, to accommodate the romantic notions of his bashful friend, played by another star from the Lahnee's Pleasure, Manu Padayachee.

14 ★ THE NATAL MERCURY, Thursday, February 23, 1978

CAMEOS ARE A FUN RECIPE

SOME human and humorous aspects of contemporary social attitudes are presented in this trio of plays by the Shah Theatre Academy. They portray particularly in the Indian community in Durban but like all successful conceptions, they also apply to all people.

The evening starts on a dramatic note with *Beyond Canals* written some years ago by Ronnie Govender. Although inclined to be dated and wordy, it still has impact, as it describes a young couple torn apart by

their different attitudes spawned by the fact that he is a Hindu and she a Catholic.

The next two plays are pure comedies in farcical mould from the pen of Muthal Naidoo, who has recently returned from 11 years in America where she obtained a theatre doctorate.

Have Tea And Go is a particularly bubbling fun piece about a shy, senior whose family undertakes all the negotiations.

Black Magic offers the

STAGE

Three For Tea:
A.P.S. Theatre

same fast-paced humour—and lifts at the male chauvinist—as it highlights the advances made in a recently divorced glamorous girl.

Impact comes from vibrant acting, especially from the men. Essop Khan is full of charm as the happy-go-lucky Hindu in the first and a goquish relative in the second. The combustion bearded Bala Pillay changes from a hilariously domineering father in the second to a would-be charmer in the third, while Solly Pillay and Manu Padayachee also show flair.

The accent is less on message and depth than fun—not a bad recipe for a change.

Janie Kelly

THEATRE



• MOHAMED ALI (left) and Kogi Govender play the leads in "Black Magic Woman".

THE DAILY NEWS TONIGHT
15-02-78

Three for Tea

TONIGHT Reporter

DURBAN'S Shah Theatre Academy celebrates its 13th anniversary next week with three short plays under the title "Three For Tea".

The plays, "Black Magic Woman", "Have Tea and Go", and "Beyond Calvary" will also celebrate the return of Dr Mubhal Naidoo who has spent the past 11 years in the United States.

Two of the plays were written by Dr Naidoo, and the third by Ronnie Govender who founded the Shah Theatre Academy. Dr Naidoo will also direct all three plays.

They will be staged at APS Hall in Carlisle Street nightly at 8 for a week from Wednesday, February 22.

A TRILOGY OF EMOTIONS

By
Marilynne
Holloway

THREE-FOR-TEA is a trilogy of plays which amuses but at times disturbs, while exploring the social problems of Indians in Natal (Shah Theatre Academy, APC Hall, Durban).

The problems of courtship between a Christian girl and a Hindu boy are spotlighted in Beyond Calvary, written and directed by Ronnie Govender. Prabhu is proud that his is the oldest religion in the world. Linda rejoins that it is the most antiquated.

"Since her mother was of a low caste, Hinduism has spurned her. Christianity gave her 'self respect and dignity,'" she says. Prabhu says that because of her skin colour she is barred from most Christian churches.

The problem deepens when the couple start discussing wedding plans (church or temple) and the religion of the children.

Esop Khan (excess Prabhu) with an audience which summons up instant

pictures of hearty young businessmen... out Thera Singh is a little too stilted in her manner to project successfully the forthright and later anguished Linda.

The play, first performed 13 years ago, still has relevance, since the problem of mixed religions still exists with all its cruel irony.

Have Tea and Go, written and directed by Mubhal Naidoo, who obtained his doctorate in drama in America, is in lighter vein. It recreates the visit of a painfully shy rural suitor to his blind- ed's house. He is accompanied by two of his stooges, Mr Pillay No 1 is without question one of the Pillays of Society, and Bala Pillay brings to the part the required importance.

Esop Khan as Mr Pillay No 2 provides one of the funniest scenes ever to grace a Durban stage. He grins broadly while nodding his head like one

of those dogs on a leash, and echoes everyone else's remarks in an excited falsetto. It takes great sensitivity to turn a caricature into a reality and Mr Khan proves quite wonderfully that he has the necessary panache.

Solly Pillay as Rajan and Mami Parayachar as the frightened young man Ahant also have some funny moments, particularly when Ahant rehearses by machine his declarations of passion to a bright yellow pillow.

The third play, Black Magic, illustrates the situation of the newly-divorced girl, suddenly surrounded by married admirers.

This sort of entertainment finds a sympathetic niche with audiences and so plays like these will keep theatre alive. Even more effective however is the handling in the entrance foyer, which is covered with lists of donors from R50 to R5,000 and over. Were some of our cultural groups to introduce a similar form of interior decoration their problems might be over.

SUNDAY TRIBUNE

FEBRUARY 26, 1978

Nobody's Hero

(1987)

Markteater bied twee eenbedrywe aan

NOBODY'S HERO en iKhayaletu is twee eenbedrywe wat in een speelvak in die Laager, Markteater, aangebied word.

Nobody's Hero is 'n toneelstuk oor 'n aangehoudene in eensame opsluiting wat sy greep op realiteit verloor en gefolter word deur die onsekerheid oor wat buite en binne die tronk gebeur het. Die stuk speel hom na sy dood af en die twee karakters wat ontmoet word, verteenwoordig dieselfde mens in verskillende tydperke in sy lewe.

Die ouer aangehoudene word gespeel deur Goodwill Mokoena en Davis Mokgathle speel die tiener.

Die tweede stuk, iKhayaletu, is oorspronklik in 1983 onder die titel Coming Home in die Hermot-teater in Durban opgevoer.

Die stuk speel hom af in die huis van 'n wit paartjie, David en Sally Kane, wat bekommerd is oor die toekoms van die land en hul plek daarin. Te midde van hul sielondersoek, klop 'n vreemdeling, S'hlobo aan die deur.

David en Sally Kane word gespeel deur Tom Swart en Marthy Watson. Goodwill Mokoena speel S'hlobo.

Die twee stukke open môre aand en opvoerings is weeksaande om 20h15 en na-weke om 18h15 en 21h15.

VADERLAND
24/8



THE SOWETAN 8.9.83

On road to the top

PLAYWRIGHT and director Muthal Naidoo believes that three boys acting in her two plays *Nobody's Hero* and *Ikhayaletu* could become top actors.

Goodwill Mokoena, Davis Mokoena and Ivor Chipkin, all aged 16, are in the two plays running at the Market Theatre in Johannesburg.

The three boys attend Naidoo's English lessons at Woodmead, a multi-racial school in Bryanston.

They are acting for the first time in a major production. They are all keen on acting and are even taking it up as a full-time career.



PLAYWRIGHT and director Muthal Naidoo.

Mokoena also draws, sculpts and plays tennis. He also tries his hand at writing poetry and short stories. "One day I may write a play," he said.

Ivor Chipkin, also the stage manager, says Mokoena played an important role during rehearsal for the plays. "He contributed a lot of ideas," Chipkin said.

Naidoo said that Mokoena was talented, committed and eager to learn.

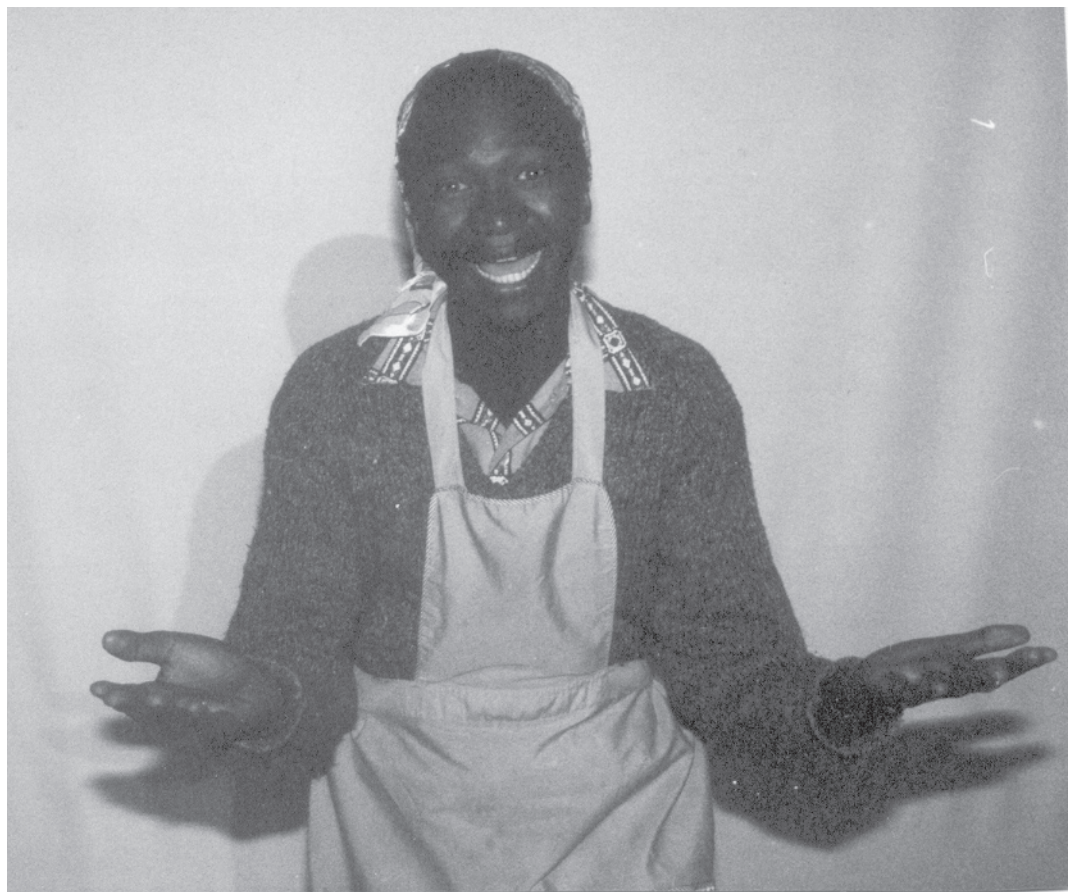
Chipkin portrays a policeman, a role he does not identify with, but he says it helps put *Nobody's Hero* in perspective.



GOODWILL Mokoena, who says he might write a play one day.



BUDDING actor Davis Mokoena.



Goodwill (Fana) Mokoena in one of his multiple roles in the play.

Nobody's Hero and Ikhaya lethu, formed a double bill and the first performance, sponsored by the Detainees' Parents' Support Committee of Johannesburg, was performed at the Laager, in the Market Theatre complex in 1987.

The play was revised in September 2000 and edited in 2008.

The action takes place in the minute after death and represents a moment in which past and present confront each other in the search for truth.

Matthew Mosimane, a political detainee, is unable to keep his hold on reality as a result of his experiences in detention. He is haunted by the thought that he has betrayed his comrades. He was detained during the Soweto Uprising of 1976 when he was sixteen and now again in 1987. In his mind both periods of detention are confused and he becomes split between his younger and his older selves. His two selves, alternating between accuser and accused, confront each other in the search for the truth about his role in the struggle. Mosimane, in trying to recall repressed memories, has imaginary encounters in his cell with individuals who had an impact on his life. Mosimane identifies with the jaguar in the poem The Jaguar by Ted Hughes.

CHARACTERS

Mosimane (Matthew Mosimane, Age 27)
Matthew (Matthew Mosimane, Age 16)
A White Policeman

CAST

Fana Mokoena
David Mokgatle
Ivor Chipkin

Setting

A prison cell.

(The lights come up very dimly on a prison cell. One can barely make out the shapes of a bed, sink, bucket. A body lies on the floor. The door to the cell opens and light floods in through it, outlining the figure of a policeman who is bringing food to the prisoner. The light reveals a body on the floor)

POLICEMAN Get up. I've brought your food. Hey, don't you hear me. (Pause) Get up, kaffir. What's the matter with you? (He waits, then puts down the mug and bread and approaches cautiously. He shoves the body with his foot and then kicks it over. He bends down and examines it for signs of life. There are none.) Damn! (He leaves, taking plate and mug and locks the door once more. Black out.)

(Lights come up. Matthew is seated on the bed. He is wearing a T shirt with the logo "Soweto 1976")

MATTHEW Well, well, well. So you've finally decided to give up the ghost. (Stands over body and waits.) Okay. You've made your point. Now get up. I said get up. Okay. Have it your way. I've got plenty of time. (Matthew wanders about the cell, whistling as he examines it.) No calendar, no game. No wonder he went crazy. (Looks at Mosimane.) So, you won't get up. This will wake you up. (Begins to toyi-toyi)

(Mosimane sits up suddenly and listens intently. Matthew stops toyi-toying.)

MOSIMANE (Jumping up and raving at the ceiling) Stop it! Stop it! Are you trying to drive me mad? Come down here and show your face. (He drops to his knees and covers his face.)

MATTHEW (Clapping) Whè, Mamè! What a performance!

MOSIMANE Tell them to leave me alone.

MATTHEW Who?

MOSIMANE Why are they doing this to me?

MATTHEW What?

MOSIMANE Listen. Can't you hear it? There's someone on the roof.

MATTHEW (Laughing) You still imagining things! How the hell can you hear anything on a roof twelve storeys high?

(Mosimane suddenly staring at Matthew. Mosimane feels his own face and then goes to feel Matthew's face.)

MATTHEW (Backing away) Hey, what's the matter with you? Keep your hands off.

MOSIMANE Who are you?

MATTHEW Don't pretend you don't know.

MOSIMANE (Jumping forward, grabbing Matthew by the neck) Who are you?

MATTHEW Hey, you're choking me.

MOSIMANE Who are you?

MATTHEW I'm Matthew Mosimane.

MOSIMANE (Letting go) Don't be ridiculous, I'm Matthew Mosimane.

MATTHEW I know.

MOSIMANE Then who are you?

MATTHEW Matthew Mosimane.

MOSIMANE You're me?

MATTHEW Don't be ridiculous. I'm me and you're you.

MOSIMANE Oh, we have the same name. Are we related?

MATTHEW No, we're the same person. Different incarnations.

MOSIMANE Different incarnations? What do you mean?

MATTHEW I'm the 1976 model. You're the 1987 version.

MOSIMANE That's not possible.

MATTHEW Anything is possible now.

MOSIMANE (Suspiciously) This is another trick – like the tap.

MATTHEW Tap?

MOSIMANE Go on open the tap.

MATTHEW What for?

MOSIMANE Just do it. (Matthew doesn't budge.) You scared, huh? Because you know ... you know it runs blood.

MATTHEW You're crazy.

MOSIMANE Sometimes they fill this cell with gas.

MATTHEW (Patronisingly) You don't have to go on with the act. You're dead now.

MOSIMANE I'm dead?

MATTHEW As a doornail.

MOSIMANE (Laughing) So, what's this? Life after death?

MATTHEW No. We are the walking dead.

MOSIMANE Stop joking. I don't know how you managed to make yourself look exactly like me when I was sixteen, but that doesn't make you me. I know I haven't been in my right mind in the last few weeks, but I know I'm not dead.

MATTHEW Believe me, you're dead.

MOSIMANE Then what am I still doing in this cell.

MATTHEW We can't leave until you confess.

MOSIMANE I knew it. Special Branch. This is a new trick to get information out of me.

MATTHEW I have nothing to do with the cops. I want to get out of here. I can't do that until you confess, impimpi.

MOSIMANE (Laughing) You cops will go to any lengths. (Trying to touch Matthew's face.) Did you have plastic surgery?

MATTHEW Stop that. Face the facts, you fool! You're dead. Why do you think that policeman panicked and ran off? You're dead. Now confess, so we can get out of here.

MOSIMANE You'll get nothing out of me. (Laughs) Nobody will believe me when I tell them about this. (Waving a finger between himself and Matthew)

MATTHEW Shut up, you crazy fool. You sold us out, admit it.

MOSIMANE You won't get anything out of me. Not a word. Not one word. (Paces) I am the jaguar.

MATTHEW Shit! Still hiding behind poetry. Jaguar? Rubbish. You're just a cornered animal.

MOSIMANE "Over the cage floor the horizons come ..."

MATTHEW (Grabbing hold of him) Look at your face; welts, bruises, cuts, swellings; you're an ugly old animal ... you stink of confinement.

MOSIMANE "Over the cage floor the horizons come ... Over the cage floor the horizons come"

MATTHEW (Contemptuously) What do you know about freedom – school teacher! You gave up your freedom for security.

MOSIMANE They got nothing out of me. You will get nothing out of me.

MATTHEW (Getting angry) Don't lie. You spilled your guts.

MOSIMANE (Growls) I am the jaguar.

MATTHEW (Viciously) Come on, jaguar, what did you tell them about Solomon?

MOSIMANE Solomon? Solomon? (Cringing with pain again) My head, oh my head!

MATTHEW Admit that you betrayed Solomon.

MOSIMANE Leave me alone. I didn't do anything.

MATTHEW You told the police where to find him. Admit it.

MOSIMANE (Breaks free, runs to door) Help me! Help me! Get me out of here!

MATTHEW (Contemptuously) Who are you calling? The police? See, you are an impimpi.

MOSIMANE No I'm not. I'm not. I am a political prisoner.

MATTHEW If you don't confess, you will have to appear before the People's Court.

MOSIMANE (Terrified) People's court! No, no. You want to necklace me.

MATTHEW The people are putting you on trial for the death of Solomon. I am to be your judge.

MOSIMANE You're only a kid.

MATTHEW I am a comrade. Besides I know you better than you know yourself.

MOSIMANE Leave me alone. I have not betrayed anyone. (Going through imaginary beating) Don't hit me anymore.

MATTHEW Concentrate, damn you!

MOSIMANE (Cowering, trying to hide his face) I already told you ... I know nothing ... Please, baas, I know nothing.

MATTHEW (Shaking him) I'm not the police.

MOSIMANE I've told you the truth, Baas. I swear it. (Screaming and scuttling away from Matthew) Please don't hit me, Baas.

MATTHEW (Approaching Mosimane who refuses to look at him and groans and moans) Look at me. Look at me you fool. I'm not the police. Damn! ... (Walks away from Mosimane)

MOSIMANE (Becomes quiet, then slowly begins to laugh) I didn't tell him anything. He didn't break me. I am the jaguar ... the world rolls ... (Suddenly stops, looks up at the ceiling, presses hands over ears, then jumps up) What do you want from me? Come on. You think I'm afraid of you. Show me your face, you coward. (Sinks to his knees again) Stop that. Why do you have to walk on the roof? Your footsteps pound in my brain.

MATTHEW Oh, man you've cracked up. (He puts on a UDF T-shirt and a cap)

MOSIMANE (Laughs quietly) They all give up. They are no match for me. I am ... the jaguar. "A jaguar hurrying" (He shambles across the cell) "through ... through prison darkness ... " the drills of his eyes" ... "drills of his eyes" ... "on a" ... "on a fuse" ... no that's not right ... "on a short ... on a short, fierce fuse"... That's it. "hurrying enraged ... the drills of his eyes on a short fierce fuse." (As he hobbles across the cell, he glares into the gloom and utters little growling sounds as he repeats several times) "jaguar hurrying enraged the drills of his eyes on a short fierce fuse."

(Matthew puts on a camouflage jacket, cap and backpack and becomes Solomon. He stands there listening to Mosimane struggling with the poem. Mosimane notices him and stops.)

MOSIMANE Solomon!

SOLOMON Quiet! (Lurches forward, grabs Mosimane and puts his hand over his mouth, whispering) The police are after me. Keep quiet. (He listens. Then gets up and moves cautiously to imaginary window and carefully lifts a portion of the curtain on the side of the window and peers out.) I think I lost them.

MOSIMANE The police! Why? What have you done?

SOLOMON What difference does it make? I'm black. That's a crime in this country. Didn't you know that? No, you wouldn't. If you sell out you can escape your colour.

MOSIMANE What have you done?

SOLOMON Quiet! (Comes back to Mosimane and grabs him by the throat, whispers) Are you trying to alert them? If they come here, I'll kill you.

MOSIMANE But Solomon, you are my little brother, my student.

SOLOMON (Laughs contemptuously) Don't call me brother, impimpi. (Returning to window and then coming back to Mosimane) I'm going to leave this here. I want you to hide it. (Indicating knapsack) And keep your mouth shut or you'll die.

MOSIMANE Why did you come here if you don't trust me?

SOLOMON Because the police don't trouble you, impimpi. Besides, if anything happens to me, the comrades will know where to come.

MOSIMANE Solomon, you are my little brother, I would never harm you.

SOLOMON So you say. (Looks through window again) Looks all right. I've got to go.

MOSIMANE Don't go. It's dangerous. What if they pick you up?

SOLOMON I'll be all right ... If they don't find this. (Takes backpack off and sets it down next to Mosimane) Hide it. If they get it, even you won't be spared.

MOSIMANE Why? What's in this bag? (Takes backpack and fumbles with fastenings. Matthew tries to stop him opening bag.)

SOLOMON Don't open that. (Matthew is too late. Mosimane sees what is in the bag. Matthew looks into Mosimane's eyes.)

MOSIMANE Explosives! Solomon what are you involved in?

SOLOMON It's better for you if you don't know.

MOSIMANE You are a poet, how can ...

SOLOMON I am a comrade. All that shit about poetry is your escape, not mine.

MOSIMANE No, you are a poet. You can inspire a nation.

SOLOMON You are right. I do inspire the nation. But I write my poems in flames now.

MOSIMANE You burned down our school? ... Why?

SOLOMON Because of you – cowardly teachers like you who force children to accept oppression.

MOSIMANE (Protesting) I was involved in the struggle.

SOLOMON You sold out. ... Why? What did they do to you in prison?

MOSIMANE Don't talk to me like that. I am your teacher ...

SOLOMON You can't teach me anything any more. Sell out. Impimpi.

MOSIMANE (Rushes at him) I'll teach you some respect.

SOLOMON (Knocking him down and pinning him to the floor) Confess, you bastard. Slave! You betrayed the comrades. Admit it!

MOSIMANE Help! Help!

SOLOMON Shut up, Slave! You are worse than the oppressor – turning our children into slaves. Teacher, confess your crimes!

MOSIMANE Please Baas, no more electric shocks. I don't know anything. (Screams)

SOLOMON (Gets up,) Zombi. (Throws a scrap of paper at Mosimane) I wrote this for you, when you were a freedom fighter. Now your freedom is in empty words. You are the walking dead. You will never join the ancestors. (Solomon toyi-toyi out)

MOSIMANE (Sits for a while, then picks up the scrap that Solomon flung at him and reads)

Spurts of blood
streak the sky
bringing fire
to bent backs
crooked with cold,
infusing life
in frozen limbs.

Born in blood
comrades rise
fierce warriors
eyes aflame
lighting a nation
to a new day. (He sobs)

MATTHEW (Who has doffed the guise of Solomon, stands over him) Why are you crying, coward?

MOSIMANE (Starts coughing) Gas, gas. Don't light a match. We'll be blown up.

MATTHEW You sicken me. Try to control your fears.

MOSIMANE Look, you can see it rolling in under the door. Why doesn't it affect you? Why? (Jumps at Matthew and goes for his throat.) You swine, you're responsible.

MATTHEW (Laughing, pushes him aside) You fool. Still lying to yourself.

MOSIMANE You're the liar. You filled Solomon with lies about me.

MATTHEW No, you did. But he's no fool. He saw right through you.

MOSIMANE Why did you turn him against me?

MATTHEW You did that yourself.

MOSIMANE Send him back here. I must speak with him.

MATTHEW Can't do that.

MOSIMANE I want to see him.

MATTHEW Stop pretending. You know he's dead.

MOSIMANE Dead?

MATTHEW He was executed this morning. Hanged for treason. And you're responsible.

MOSIMANE (Distraught) No, no. That's not possible.

MATTHEW
You betrayed him. You told the police where to find him.

MOSIMANE No, no. I didn't. I said nothing.

MATTHEW (Becoming hysterical) Don't lie to me coward. They hanged him because of you. You gave him up to

save your skin. You must pay for your crimes. You are responsible for his execution. For his hanging. (Calming down a little) You are indicted on several charges of subverting the people's struggle for liberation. How do you plead?

MOSIMANE This is a kangaroo court. You have convicted me already. You cannot judge me. I demand justice.

MATTHEW (Wildly) Justice! Justice! (Then pulling himself together.) Very well. You be the judge. The facts speak for themselves. Call the first witness. Call Solomon's mother. (He puts on apron and head scarf and becomes Solomon's Mother)

MOSIMANE She's like my own mother. She knows I am not a traitor.

SOLOMON'S MOTHER (Flies at him and beats him with her fists) You lied to me. You told me he was safe. But you put him in detention.

MOSIMANE (Defending himself) No. That's not true.

SOLOMON'S MOTHER You told me he was over the border. You lied. You lied. You gave him up to the police.

MOSIMANE I didn't lie to you. I hid him. They were looking for him that night. But I hid him. He got away and they took me instead.

SOLOMON'S MOTHER You didn't hide him. You hated him because he was a comrade. You called the police. Informer! Informer! Impimpi.

MOSIMANE No, I didn't inform on him. It's true I didn't want him to be involved but he was my little bother, my student. I couldn't let the police take him. I helped him.

SOLOMON'S MOTHER Liar!

MOSIMANE He was my little brother ...

SOLOMON'S MOTHER (Slapping him) And you killed him, like you killed your own little brother. Impimpi. (Sobs) He was my son. He was nothing to you.

(Matthew removes scarf and apron and becomes Matthew)

MOSIMANE Please listen to me.

MATTHEW Call the next witness.

MOSIMANE Wait. Your witnesses hate me. I want someone who will speak for me.

MATTHEW Very well. You name a witness. I'll call anyone you want. (Mosimane searches his memory) So, you can't think of anyone.

MOSIMANE Yes I can. Solomon knows the truth.

MATTHEW Solomon is dead. Hanged this morning – as a result of your betrayal.

MOSIMANE He knows the truth. I insist that you call him.

MATTHEW Call Solomon. (He puts on camouflage jacket and cap and becomes Solomon)

MOSIMANE Solomon, you know I did not betray you. Please tell the court.

SOLOMON Then tell us how they discovered the arms cache.

MOSIMANE What are you talking about? What arms cache?

SOLOMON It took us a long time to build it up. Secret trips to the border, hiding in the bushes, watching for dogs, police, soldiers, informers. We watched each other for signs of weakness or carelessness but you fooled us all.

MOSIMANE I don't know what you are talking about.

SOLOMON And the training sessions, learning how to work with explosives and weapons.

MOSIMANE I know nothing about weapons and explosives. I am a teacher.

SOLOMON My mother was solid as a rock. She let us work in the house and nobody knew we were there. They never would have found out, had it not been for you.

MOSIMANE No, I know nothing about that.

SOLOMON They took her away too. She died in detention. (Struggling with his emotions) What they must have done to her. But she didn't talk. (Turns on Mosimane in anger) Not like you, Impimpi. You had me completely fooled. I believed in you even after you were released. I still believed in you. (Contemptuously) Then you became a teacher. Now confess. Admit that you led the police to our hideout.

MOSIMANE No, no. I'm innocent.

SOLOMON Innocent? You! You killed my mother. You killed me and my comrades.

MOSIMANE No, how can you accuse me of such a thing.

SOLOMON They used your evidence at my trial. They didn't give your name but we knew.

MOSIMANE I helped you to escape. You escaped.

MATTHEW (Losing control, pulls off cap and jacket) You killed me. You killed my little brother.

MOSIMANE My little brother? ... Solomon?

MATTHEW No, no. My little brother. You killed my little brother.

MOSIMANE My little brother?

MATTHEW Did you see the look on his face when the first bullet struck him? Do you know what it is to die like that? (Grabs hold of Mosimane and pushes him down.) Shot like a dog on the street. The bullets searing your flesh. Blood spattering you, splattering me, draining like a dark stream into the road. (Begins to sob) Oh my brother, my little brother. (Matthew collapses over Mosimane who pushes Matthew off and stares at him)

MOSIMANE (Still staring at Matthew) You are not Solomon. Solomon is not dead. Solomon is not dead.

MATTHEW (Feeling pain in his head)
Solomon is dead.

MOSIMANE No, you don't know Solomon. He had nothing to do with you. He was my student ... He wasn't there in 1976. He had nothing to do with you ... (Slowly beginning to understand) This has nothing to do with Solomon.

MATTHEW (Clutching his temples)
My head. (Stares at ceiling) What is that noise? Who is walking up there?

MOSIMANE Solomon is not dead. Whose death are you talking about?

MATTHEW (Putting his hands to his head) Oh my head.

MOSIMANE You, you. I know you now. My God, this has nothing to do with Solomon. It's all about you. You. You've been blaming me. You were the one who betrayed your friends.

MATTHEW No, this is about Solomon. You told them where to find him.

MOSIMANE You've been blaming me. Playing on my feelings for Solomon. You are the coward.

MATTHEW (Cowering) Don't hit me. I know nothing.

MOSIMANE You don't want to remember what really happened, do you?

MATTHEW Please, my baas. I don't know anything.

MOSIMANE Eleven years ago, when you were a leader of the youth.

MATTHEW Oh my head.

MOSIMANE It was Victor, your little brother Victor. (Puts on little boy's cap and assumes identity of Victor. Runs up to Matthew.) I want to go with you.

MATTHEW Victor, what are you doing here?

VICTOR Please let me go with you.

MATTHEW Why did you follow me? I told you to stay at home. Now go away, go home.

VICTOR I'm a comrade too

MATTHEW You are too young.

VICTOR I want to fight for better education.

MATTHEW Don't argue with me. Get out of here now. (Victor moves off reluctantly. Matthew moves forward cautiously. Victor waits, then follows Matthew. Matthew stops suddenly, moves back quickly and bumps into Victor. Whispering) What are you doing here? I told you to go home.

VICTOR I'm a freedom fighter too.

MATTHEW (Pulls him down next to him) Shh!

VICTOR Look there's Tshepo and Vusi.

MATTHEW My god. They can't see the soldiers.

VICTOR They are going to fight the soldiers. Let's fight them too.

MATTHEW This is not a game. They will kill us. Come on, let's get out of here. Follow me. (He begins to creep away)

VICTOR Look! The soldiers are moving forward. They're going to catch Tshupo and Vusi. (Runs forward. Picks up stones, hurls them at the soldiers) Dogs. Get out of our township. (Gunfire. Victor falls.)

MATTHEW (Running to Victor) Victor! (Drops on his knees next to Victor's body, sobs hysterically) Victor! Victor! (Mosimane gets up and moves away from Matthew who remains sobbing over Victor.)

MOSIMANE (Gently) You see it was Victor who died – not Solomon. Stop blaming yourself. It wasn't your fault. After they killed Victor, they picked you up and brought you here. That's when it happened. (Mosimane puts on police cap and belt and turns to Matthew as a special branch agent.) Get up. (Kicks Matthew who rises slowly) Strip. (Matthew looks at him dazed) I said strip. Take your clothes off. Don't give me that look. Take them off. (Matthew takes off clothes) Everything. (Points at briefs) That too. (Matthew removes briefs) Why were you going to the church? (No answer. SB lashes him.) Why were you going to the church? Who were you going to meet there? (No answer. SB lashes him again.) Answer me. (No answer. SB lashes him again. Beats him till he goes down.) Get up! Who said you could lie down? You believe in standing up for your rights. So stand. (Prods Matthew's penis) Not much of a dingis, is it? Such a little thing. You can't be making the girls happy with that. Might as well cut it off. (Bashes him in the genitals. Matthew screams with pain and collapses. SB kicks him.) Get up. Get up, you black bastard. Get up. (Matthew does not move. SB kicks him over) Ag, man, the bloody fool has passed out. Throw some water over him.

MATTHEW (Stirring) Victor. Victor.

MOSIMANE Get up. You think this is a hotel. Get up. (Kicks Matthew) Stand there. (Walks round Matthew) Man you're ugly! What an ugly bastard! You remind me of a cockroach and I can squash you dead just like that. (Grinds his boot into the floor) We know all about you. We have witnesses who saw you making petrol bombs. You and your group went to Mother Hadebe's shebeen every night and worked there until the early hours of the morning. We know all about your operation. We were waiting for you tonight. We saw you creep out of your house. We saw your little brother following you. When you came to the church and saw the soldiers, you pushed that child into the open and made him throw a petrol bomb. Coward. Couldn't do your own dirty work, eh?

MATTHEW No, no. Oh, Victor!

MOSIMANE So you can speak, eh?

MATTHEW You dogs, why did you shoot a child?

MOSIMANE Why did you use a child to do your dirty work? ... We let your friends get away. They will lead us to the people who are supplying you with weapons. One of your comrades works for us, did you know that? He has given us names and places. We have a file this thick on you.

MATTHEW You know everything; what do you still want with me?

MOSIMANE So you admit it. You confess to your crimes?

MATTHEW No. I haven't committed any crimes.

MOSIMANE You burned down schools. You attacked the police with petrol bombs. You committed treason. You'll hang for that.

MATTHEW Then hang me.

MOSIMANE Not so quick. We need names. Your contacts in Umkonto.

MATTHEW I don't know what you're talking about.

MOSIMANE I want names and where they're operating.

MATTHEW Make it up! Like you made up everything else.

MOSIMANE You still full of cheek. (Hits him) Now tell me the name of your contact.

MATTHEW Leave me alone. (Mosimane hits him) Ask your man.

MOSIMANE Stupid kaffir.

MATTHEW You murderer. Coward. Shooting little children. You killed my little brother. Oh Victor ...

MOSIMANE I see I've been too kind to you. You are going to learn to respect me. (Attaches electrodes to Matthews nipples)

MATTHEW (Screams) No, no. Please Basie. Please.

MOSIMANE (Shows a photograph) Is this your contact?

MATTHEW I don't know what you're talking about.

MOSIMANE (Applies electrodes) What did you say?

MATTHEW God, let me die. Let me die.

MOSIMANE (Shoves photo in his face) Do you know this man?

MATTHEW No.

MOSIMANE Still full of cheek, eh? Let's apply this in the right place, then. (Applies shocks to genitals. Matthew screams.) Was this the man? (Shocking him again and again)

MATTHEW (Screaming) Yes, yes. Yes. That's him. That's him, Basie.

MOSIMANE You admit that you received arms from this man. That he instructed you in the use of arms and explosives. You admit it. (More shocks)

MATTHEW (Screaming) Yes, yes.

MOSIMANE Now sign this. (Takes Matthew's hand and makes him sign) Take him back to his cell.

(Mosimane takes off police cap and belt)

MOSIMANE You see. I didn't confess. It was you. All those years ago. You blamed me for being weak. But we couldn't help it. We only signed the confession because they tortured us. We felt like traitors so you turned on me, forced me to withdraw from everything. I became a teacher and gave up the struggle. Then Solomon came into our lives. He was little Victor all over again. He gave us a chance to redeem ourselves. Thank God, he got away. God go with you Solomon, wherever you are. (Helps Matthew up)

MATTHEW We saved Solomon?

MOSIMANE (Helping him to dress)
Yes. The police never got him. I organized his escape. They found out and brought me here. This time, they did not get a confession from me. Thanks to you.

MATTHEW Thanks to me?

MOSIMANE I knew what you went through eleven years ago and I was prepared.

MATTHEW I made you suffer all these years.

MOSIMANE I don't blame you. They killed Victor right in front of our eyes.

MATTHEW Oh Victor, Victor.

MOSIMANE Don't mourn him. He has joined the ancestors. And so will we. Come. We can go now. They are waiting.

(Mosimane lies down as at beginning of the play)

MATTHEW (Standing over Mosimane) "His stride is wilderness of freedom:/ The world rolls under the long thrust of his heel./ Over the cage floor the horizons come." (Matthew leaves.)

(The door opens and the policeman comes in.)

POLICEMAN They went too far again. How the hell am I going to make this one look like a suicide?

(He removes Mosimane's shirt, ties a sleeve around Mosimane's neck and then looks around for somewhere to attach the other sleeve. While he is thus preoccupied a voice is heard making the following announcement)

VOICE

A former school-teacher, Matthew Mosimane, detained under Section 29 of the Internal Security Act, was found dead in his cell this morning. He had hanged himself with his shirt. It is believed that he had been in a state of depression for some time. A suicide note was found on his bunk.

THE END

Black South African Women

An Anthology of Plays

Edited by **Kathy Perkins**, University of Illinois, USA

This is the first anthology to focus exclusively on the lives of Black South African women. It represents the work of national and international award-winning authors such as: Geina Mhlope, Fatima Dike, Duma Ndlovu, Swindie Magona and Maishe Maponya, alongside the work of notable emerging writers including Lueen Conning, Ismail Mahomed, Thulani Mtshali, Muthal Naidoo and Magi Williams.

The collection includes six full-length and four one-act plays, as well as interviews with the playwrights, who candidly discuss the theatrical and political situation in the new South Africa. It represents an array of men and women's voices, dramatising issues as diverse as:

- women's rights
- racial identity
- displacement from home
- the struggle to keep families together
- violence against women
- education in the old and new South Africa
- health care

Written before and after apartheid, the plays present varying approaches and theatrical styles from solo performances to collective creations.

Contents: Acknowledgements. Introduction - Kathy A. Perkins. The Plays: *A Coloured Place* - Lueen Conning, *So What's New?* - Fatima Dike, *House* - Hunting in Soweto - Sindiwe Magona, *Cheaper Than Roses* - Ismail Mahomed, *Umongikazi/The Nurse* - Maishe Maponya, *Have You Seen Zandile?* - Geina Mhlophe, *WEEMEN* - Thulani S. Mtshali, *Flight From the Mahabharath* - Muthal Naidoo, *Sheila's Day* - Duma Ndlovu, *Kwa-Landlady*, Magi Noninzi Williams. Bibliography.

December 1998: 246x174: 224pp: illus. 10 b+w photos

Hb: 0-415-18243-3: £50.00

Pb: 0-415-18244-1: £15.99



Flight From The Mahabharath

This is my last play. I wrote it when I was living in Pretoria and had no hope of ever being involved in theatre again. I wrote it sometime in the early 1990's. I don't remember exactly when.

It has never been performed but, as may be gathered from the copy of the leaflet above, it was published in an anthology entitled *Black South African Women: an Anthology of Plays* compiled by Dr Kathy Perkins of the University of Illinois.

Unfortunately, I had never edited the play. I have now revised and edited the play for this collection. Paula Richman, Professor of South Asian Religions, Oberlin College, made insightful observations that helped me improve the structure of the play.

I was inspired to write *Flight from the Mahabharath* after watching the serialised version of the *Mahabharata* on television. The form of my play was inspired by my love of Brecht's Epic Theatre and *Commedia dell' Arte* and my admiration for Mary Daly.

The play looks at the *Mahabharata* from a woman's point of view and the Epic becomes a metaphor for the patriarchal society in which women function mainly as adjuncts. The women fly from the Epic into a different genre, Drama. Their new home is the stage (as opposed to a book). On stage, they are involved in the process of giving form to their new reality, that is, the play. Two men, also wishing to escape the social conditioning that denies them their identities, join the women in creating the play.

CHARACTERS

Women:	Draupadi, Radha Subhadra, Kunthi, Hidimba, Urvasi Uttarai Ghandari Other Women
Men:	Brihannala Sikandi

Setting

The stage.

PROPS are mimed

SCENE ONE

(The women come running in, helter-skelter, through the audience. They are dressed in classical Indian style: tightly draped saris, loads of jewellery, and hair bound up. When they arrive on stage, they stand together, listening, alert, watching out for pursuers. Once they are certain that they have not been followed, they break the silence.)

DRAUPADI We did it! This is scene one of our new existence.

(There is a joyful outburst. The women laugh and hug one another.)

GANGA (Prancing around the stage)
This is our space.

RADHA Here I can speak. I have a voice. In the Epic, the Mahabharath, I was just a footnote. (The women laugh and some embrace her.)

DRAUPADI We can be ourselves. (She pulls down her tresses and then pulls off the wig that she is wearing to reveal a short, boyish hairstyle.)

KUNTHI Draupadi, your beautiful hair!

DRAUPADI You mean this wig. This is not who I am. I wore it in the Mahabharath. It was bound and decorated when I was a respectable woman, loose and flowing after I had been defiled. Now I am whole and my hair is short because that is the way I want it.

(All the women clap and begin throwing off the shackles of their previous existences in the Mahabharath)

GANGA I am so glad to be rid of this ridiculous crown and with it the crazy notion that I have to be divine in order to be a mother of a hero of the Mahabharath. Women, I want you to bear witness. I give up this crown and with it the enslaving tradition of motherhood! (She flings the crown away)

KUNTHI Have you never wanted to be a mother?

GANGA Never!

SUBHADRA Is that why you drowned seven of your babies right after they were born?

GANGA I didn't drown them. Vyasa did. He wrote the Epic. Give him his due; he is a very skilful writer. What an intriguing introduction to the epic: a woman, actually, a goddess, throwing her new born babies into the river year after year for seven years. Sensational! I was his

instrument. I had to kill off babies that I would never have had in the first place.

SUBHADRA But they weren't killed. By drowning the babies you released their souls into the hereafter and spared them the sinful life on earth.

GANGA You can believe that if you want. I am like a river, free flowing, creating my path here on Earth. (She pulls off her sari. Underneath is a free flowing garment. She dances around.)

(The other women pull off various items of clothing and are revealed in shorts, jeans and other non-restrictive forms of dress. Some women play musical instruments and others join in the dance with Ganga. While they are prancing about, Gandhari, blindfolded, struggles toward the stage, falling and feeling her way through the audience.)

GANDHARI (Calling out from the audience) Kunthi, my sister-in-law, where are you? Kunthi, can you hear me?

DRAUPADI What is she doing here?

SUBHADRA Poor woman! Look at her crawling. I will help her.

DRAUPADI (Stopping her) No she must help herself.

SUBHADRA But she is helpless!

DRAUPADI No, she is not. She chooses to wear that blindfold.

GANDHARI Kunthi, where are you?

KUNTHI (Coming to front of stage)
Here I am. (She touches Gandhari)

GANDHARI (Grabbing hold of her. Gandhari tries but is unable to enter the stage and stays in the audience for the duration of her scene) Why did you leave me?

KUNTHI But I explained it all to you. I asked you to come with us.

GANDHARI You know I cannot.

DRAUPADI How did she get here? How did she find us? Kunthi, did you tell her?

KUNTHI I had to tell her. After all, she is a woman.

DRAUPADI If she wants to join us, she will have to

remove that blindfold. (She reaches out and pulls on Gandhari's blindfold. Gandhari screams)

GANGA (Pulling Draupadi away) Stop this! Do you want to go back to the Epic? There you can force people to do what you want.

DRAUPADI I'm sorry, but that blindfold drives me mad. I look at it and see how she is wasting her life.

GANDHARI Wasting my life! What does she mean? How can she speak of me like that?

KUNTHI Draupadi is very impatient; you must forgive her.

GANDHARI But why does she say I am wasting my life? I have dedicated my whole existence to my husband and my sons. I put on this blindfold to join Dhritarashtra in his blindness so that he would understand that he had a true, faithful and obedient wife. I bore him a hundred sons.

DRAUPADI And what about you? What do you want for yourself?

GANDHARI But I've just told you. I want to be a good wife and mother.

DRAUPADI Then what do you want here? Go back to the Epic; your husband and sons are there.

GANDHARI Why is she speaking so harshly to me? What have I done?

KUNTHI Stop persecuting Gandhari!

SUBHADRA Aunt Gandhari, have you come to stay with us? Have you also decided to leave the Epic?

GANDHARI (Shocked) Leave the Epic? Have you left the Epic? Oh no! You can't do that. Kunthi, you must come back. Tell the others to come back too. Kunthi, I beg you, come back with me. (She clings to Kunthi) Kunthi, you must come back!

DRAUPADI She's here as an agent. Who sent you, Gandhari?

GANDHARI Sent me! No one sent me. I came on my own. I missed my dear Kunthi. I didn't know you had left the Epic. How can you do that? Don't you see the harm you are doing? You are destroying a great masterpiece.

DRAUPADI It demeans me as a woman! It needs to be destroyed!

GANGA, SUBHADRA, KUNTHI

If we are simply vessels for producing warriors, it needs to be destroyed.

HIDIMBA If I am to be a scapegoat to be sacrificed so that clans can keep their unity without resolving their real internal conflicts, then it needs to be destroyed.

GANDHARI (Drawing in her breath sharply) The witch! Is that the witch? Keep her away from me. I see it now. She has influenced you. How can you believe her? She is evil! She wants to destroy the proud heritage of a whole nation.

HIDIMBA We have no power to destroy the Epic. It exists in another time and space.

DRAUPADI So does she. (Indicating Gandhari) She doesn't belong here. Send her away!

GANDHARI I won't go without Kunthi. (She clings desperately to Kunthi)

KUNTHI I am sorry, Gandhari. I cannot go back with you.

GANDHARI But why do you want this? It cannot replace the Epic.

HIDIMBA We are not trying to replace the Epic. We are creating our own space.

KUNTHI I'm sorry, Gandhari, we have chosen what we want. You must do the same. Go back, if that's what you want, but try to make some changes. This blindfold, for instance.

GANDHARI Are you mad? Do you expect me to interfere with tradition?

GANGA Yes, we do! We have, by leaving the Epic. You must do what you can.

GANDHARI You are mad. You are all mad. What has happened to you? It's that witch or some god has cursed you.

(All the women burst out laughing)

KUNTHI Don't laugh. She lives by the old values. She does not understand. Gandhari, my dear sister-in-law, I am sorry but I cannot go back with you.

GANDHARI Oh Kunthi, this is terrible. Perhaps I can find a god or a rishi to come back and break the spell. I will go back. I understand my mission now. You are

quite right. I have to do something new. I have to find help for all of you. I am leaving but I will be back. (She stumbles out the way she entered.)

SUBHADRA What's will happen to us if she comes back with her hundred sons?

GANGA What if she does?

SUBHADRA They could take us back!

GANGA Do you want to go back?

SUBHADRA No, I couldn't be myself there. I was either Krishna's sister or Arjun's second wife or Abhimanyu's mother; but in myself, I was nobody. I don't ever want to go back.

GANGA Then you are quite safe.

URVASI But Subhadra is right! How can we withstand a hundred men?

KUNTHI We have already. We're here, aren't we?

SUBHADRA But how will we protect ourselves if they come?

DRAUPADI We don't have to. This is our space. We decide what happens here. Didn't you see that Gandhari couldn't enter here? She couldn't get in because she is still trapped in Epic traditions. She can't cut herself free.

GANGA We know who we are. We are out of their reach.

RADHA Come on Subhadra. Your fears belong in the Epic. This is a play, not an epic. They can't enter here.

DRAUPADI No, they can't. So let's get on with it. We have exciting times ahead of us.

(They pick up all the clothes and accessories that they discarded.)

URVASI What are we going to do with all these things? We don't need them any more.

UTTARAI Let's burn them. Make a huge bonfire.

RADHA No. We need to preserve them as reminders of the way in which we lived. They must go into a museum so that future generations of women can see them and never repeat the mistakes that we made.

GANGA (Laughing) Yes, that is a wonderful idea. As

long as we are alive, we can visit the museum and remind ourselves of the ghosts we used to be.

(The women hang their clothes on a rolling clothes rail.)

DRAUPADI We can end scene one here. What do you think? (The others nod) Lights out!

(Lights fade on the women hanging up their clothes)

SCENE TWO

(Lights come up as a couple of women are moving the clothes rail to the back of the stage)

DRAUPADI Right, we are ready for Scene Two. (The women gather around Draupadi) Now this is what ...

(Two men in the audience, running towards the stage, interrupt her. One is Brihannala, the persona adopted by Arjun when in hiding in Virata during the thirteenth year of the Pandava's banishment. Brihannala is dressed as a female dancer, wearing make-up, jewels, wig and dancer's bells. The other man is Sikandi, the male form of Amba in the Epic. The women gather together at the edge of the stage somewhat apprehensive)

URVASI (Fearfully) Look. They've come for us. Subhadra was right

RADHA Don't worry. They won't be able to get on the stage. They're in a different genre.

DRAUPADI It's my husband, Arjun, disguised as Brihannala.

UTTARAI Why is he disguised as a woman? Is it a trick? (The two men come to the edge of the stage and are about to enter)

RADHA Stop! What do you want here?

BRIHANNALA & SIKANDI We've come to join you.

RADHA (To Brihannala) So you dressed as a woman to gain entry here?

DRAUPADI Arjun, I know it is you. Why have you adopted that awful disguise again?

SUBHADRA Are you trying to pass yourself off as a woman so you can deceive us and take us back?

BRIHANNALA We haven't come to take you back. If you will allow us, we thought we could join you in creating a new reality.

RADHA Now this is unbelievable. You, Arjun, of all people, you had the freedom to create your reality in the Epic. You became the most renowned warrior. In addition, you became an accomplished dancer and musician. You were the darling of the gods. Krishna was your mentor and friend. What more did you want?

BRIHANNALA But I wasn't myself.

SIKANDI We were both victims, just as you were. Your roles made you uncomfortable; ours did as well.

RADHA But what will you do here? We have banned war. We do not have a place for warriors.

BRIHANNALA I left the Epic because I am sick of war. I am a dancer, musician and storyteller. I want to devote myself to these arts.

RADHA You, the greatest living warrior! You are prepared to give up glory, fame and reputation to be a dancer?

BRIHANNALA Yes.

RADHA Why didn't you fight for your rights in the Epic?

BRIHANNALA Because it was the Epic! I was trapped in the form. Like you, I couldn't get past the traditions and prejudices.

GANGA We are a group of women! Why do you want to join us?

SUBHADRA I can understand why Sikandi is here. Sikandi was Amba, a woman. Then Vyasa with a stroke of his pen turned her into this man, Sikandi.

HIDIMBA (To Sikandi) But if you've left the Epic, why have you retained your masculine form? You have the freedom to change back!

SIKANDI I am not Amba; I am Sikandi and I have apprenticed myself to Brihannala. I too wish to devote myself to the performing arts.

BRIHANNALA If you are not comfortable having us here, we will understand and move on.

SUBHADRA Back to the Epic?

BRIHANNALA No. We will create a Ballad or a Musical.

RADHA (Turning to all the women)
Well, what do you say?

DRAUPADI Let them join us. They can't do us any harm. We are in our own space.

SUBHADRA Yes, let them join us.

GANGA Arjun, as you can see, your two wives are eager to have you with us. (To the other women) What do the rest of you say?

URVASI With their artistic skills, they'll be useful in helping us with our play.

RADHA Look, if they are still chauvinists, they won't be able to enter here. That's the test. Let's see if they can get onto the stage.

GANGA Does everyone agree? (Chorus of yeses. Ganga turns to the two men.) Come onto the stage. (The two men enter the stage. All the women clap) Arjun and Sikandi you are welcome to join us.

BRIHANNALA Please, it's Brihannala.

(Draupadi rushes forward and throws her arms around Brihannala)

DRAUPADI Oh, Arjun, I am so glad you are here. I have missed you dreadfully. Now this place will be paradise.

BRIHANNALA (Extracting himself from her embrace) Please, I am Brihannala.

DRAUPADI (Laughing) Yes, I can see that. Well, go and change so that we can see my handsome warrior husband, Arjun.

(Brihannala, clearly uncomfortable, exits with Sikandi)

RADHA Draupadi, don't get carried away. Arjun was your husband in the Epic. This is not the Epic. You don't have a husband.

DRAUPADI (Dancing about) Yes, this is not the Epic. I am so glad. Arjun will be my husband, my only husband. I won't be saddled with his four brothers as well just to satisfy Vyasa's prurient imagination. I love Arjun. I love him. I love him. I love him.

RADHA (Shaking her head) That was in the Epic! Do you realise that are you still holding on to that life? (Turns to Subhadra) What about you Subhadra? He was your husband too.

SUBHADRA Who? Brihannala?

DRAUPADI Not Brihannala. That's only a disguise. Arjun! Arjun!

SUBHADRA No, he is Brihannala now. I don't love Brihannala. I don't know if I loved Arjun. My brother Krishna arranged my marriage. I never knew whether Krishna was doing it for himself or for me. He loved Arjun.

DRAUPADI (Brusquely) Well, let's forget all that now. Now that our cast is fully assembled, we can begin.

RADHA But where do we begin?

GANGA Certainly not with me drowning babies.

DRAUPADI We're not competing with Vyasa. We're not rewriting the Mahabharath. In the Epic, we were not real people; we were mythological characters created to fulfil other people's needs. Here, we have moved into a new genre – drama. We are creating ourselves and a new world that reflects us.

KUNTHI Yes. I want a real existence, one of which I am the author.

SUBHADRA How do we go about this?

DRAUPADI We start by telling our own stories.

SUBHADRA What good will that do? Our stories are tied to the Mahabharath.

DRAUPADI That was our birth and no can choose that. We begin there and then we change our stories to reveal our new identities. Where we colluded in our own oppression, we change the circumstances to meet our new needs.

RADHA Yes, our play will be life affirming. Not full of violence, war and victims.

HIDIMBA (Dryly) We hope.

GANGA I agree with Radha. We will celebrate life; we will be creative, exciting and full of joy.

SUBHADRA But the Epic is exciting because of violence and conflict. I don't see how we can make our play exciting if we exclude violence and conflict.

RADHA That is our great challenge.

SUBHADRA What if we fail?

DRAUPADI Screw your courage to the sticking place and we'll not fail.

SUBHADRA Lady Macbeth said that to incite her husband to violence. The killing of the king provided the excitement of the play.

RADHA We'll change that. We can learn from Vyasa in that. Look how he took Ganga's drowning of the babies and turned it into a good deed. And look how he justified the killing of the Kauravas in the Bhagavad Gita.

DRAUPADI No, no, no. We can't copy him. Through his crooked logic he justified violence. Besides, in his Epic, I had to have five husbands all at the same time. In our play I will have only one.

KUNTHI Draupadi is right. Vyasa made us accept desecration and violence.

RADHA So where do we begin?

GANGA Well, I have already begun. In my story, I will not marry and have any babies.

RADHA You will have to go much further. It's not what you don't do, it's what you do that has meaning.

DRAUPADI Let's begin with my story. It is also in part Kunthi's story, since she was my mother-in-law. Now that Arjun has joined us, there are three of us to make contributions. We can always come back to the other stories and decide how to fit them all together.

GANGA Well, women shall we begin with Draupadi's story?

(The women agree)

DRAUPADI (Running off) I'll call Arjun!

HIDIMBA (Shaking her head) She's chasing an illusion.

SUBHADRA Why do you say that?

HIDIMBA She's looking for Arjun. That is regression.

KUNTHI Well, he was her husband.

HIDIMBA Was. He isn't anymore. He doesn't exist here. Only Brihannala does.

(Draupadi comes back dragging in Brihannala who is in a karate outfit. Sikandi follows also in a karate outfit.)

DRAUPADI Come on, Arjun. We need you here.

BRINHANNALA But I told you – I am Brihannala.

DRAUPADI Don't make me laugh. You've taken off that foolish fancy dress.

RADHA Why are you wearing karate gear?

SIKANDI We've taken up karate. It's a martial art but used only in self-defence and it's good exercise. Do you want to see us perform a kata? It's like a dance but it's a fight with an imaginary opponent.

RADHA Let's see it. Perhaps we can use it in the play.

(Sikandi and Brihannala perform a kata. The women applaud.)

GANGA Now that we are on our own, we must all learn karate. We won't depend on others to defend us anymore.

RADHA Brihannala and Sikandi will you organise classes for us?

SIKANDI With the greatest pleasure. You see, Bri, we aren't out of place here.

(Brihannala looks sceptical)

DRAUPADI Let's begin my story. This will be scene three. Arjun ...

BRIHANNALA Please, I am Brihannala.

DRAUPADI (Impatiently) Yes. Yes. Brihannala, Partha, Dhananjaya; I know all your names Arjun. (Brihannala looks decidedly unhappy) Those who need to change, get into costume. (She puts on her wig and sari) Get ready for scene three. Lights!

(Lights fade as they go to the rail of costumes and change for the parts they are to play)

SCENE THREE

(Lights come up on everyone getting ready for their roles. Brihannala and Sikandi are helping Radha into her costume as Duryodhana)

SIKANDI (Eagerly) What part am I to play?

DRAUPADI (Shortly) You are not in this story. (Sikandi looks crestfallen.)

GANGA (Putting on mask) I am Drupada, Draupadi's father. Radha, where is your mask?

RADHA I've got it. (She puts on mask and jumps into the midst of the others and begins whirling around with her mace like a demon in a Kathakali drama. She laughs a loud, raucous laugh.) Where's Draupadi? I'm going to eat you alive. (She chases Draupadi around the stage and everyone laughs)

KUNTHI You really love playing Duryodhana, don't you?

RADHA (Taking off mask) It's all that pent-up energy I couldn't use in the Epic. (Puts on mask again and wields her mace and faces up to Brihannala. She speaks in a loud growl.) Come on, cousin. You think you are the greatest warrior on Earth. I'll show you. (She whirls her mace. Brihannala jumps over it, slides under it and then with a few karate movements catches her from behind and disarms her.)

BRIHANNALA Are we portraying violence in the play?

GANGA We were once victims of violence. We have to deal with that but we won't resort to new violence.

RADHA (Taking off mask) And we won't glorify violence. We are not going to have heroes and villains, force the audience to take sides, encourage them to adopt a punitive attitude and so stimulate a blood lust.

HIDIMBA But that's what excites them. (Pointing to audience) You can't change that.

RADHA It will take time but it can be done.

DRAUPADI Oh, come on. Let's get on with it. Who is going to be the storyteller?

SIKANDI (Eagerly) Let me! Let me! Bri has been teaching me. (He smiles at Brihannala who smiles back)

DRAUPADI (Annoyed) Well, I don't know.

GANGA Sikandi doesn't have any part right now. Let him do it.

(Draupadi looks annoyed)

GANGA Let's begin.

RADHA-DURYODHANA (To audience) I am Duryodhana, Prince of Hastinapura. You met my mother, Gandhari, earlier. You know, the one with the blindfold. I am the sworn enemy of my cousins, the Pandavas – Arjun and his brothers. (Laughs) So that makes me the arch villain of the Mahabharath.

SIKANDI-NARRATOR We begin our story of Draupadi on the day she chooses her husband. She has organised a huge music festival.

DRAUPADI No, no. It's my swayamvara. You see, Ganga, he doesn't know the story. And he's changing it to suit himself because he's a musician.

SIKANDI I thought we were creating our own story, not sticking to the Epic.

RADHA (Taking off mask) That's right. Go on, Sikandi. (Puts on mask again and moves about like a villain)

SIKANDI—NARRATOR As I was saying, Draupadi has organised a huge music festival. All the musicians, dancers and singers of the land are here to perform. People from all over the country are attending the festival.

(Women without specific roles become musicians, singers and dancers. They wear masks and perform. They mime to background music because we know that they are not real musicians)

RADHA-DURYODHANA What kind of foolishness is this? I came here thinking this would be Draupadi's swayamvara ... (Waits. Looks at Sikandi. Sikandi shrugs. Radha takes off mask.) Tell them (Pointing to audience) what a swayamvara is.

SIKANDI-NARRATOR Oh, right. A swayamvara is an occasion when a princess chooses her husband from an assembly of noble suitors. (Thumbs up sign to Radha)

RADHA-DURYODHANA (Resuming her mask) My brothers and I came here thinking this was Draupadi's swayamvara. That's what it was supposed to be. This Woodstock thing is not in the Epic. Be that as it may, swayamvara or not, I will get Draupadi. With the help of my brothers, I am going to carry her off before she can make her choice. You think that's boorish. No, it isn't. It's part of our tradition. Tradition allows an exceptional man simply to abduct a woman at her swayamvara and make her his bride. And as you can see, I am an exceptional man.

(The music and dancing become very lively and exhilarating. Brihannala, who has been watching, spontaneously joins in and dances with the group. Draupadi becomes very excited and applauds enthusiastically. When the dance is over, her father, King Drupada, awards prizes to the best performers. Then Draupadi moves forward, takes the garland from her neck and puts it around Brihannala. He takes it off and puts it back on her neck. She then puts the end of the garland around his neck and they are yoked together.)

GANGA-DRUPADA My daughter, what does this mean?

DRAUPADI Father, this is the man I want to marry.

RADHA-DURYODHANA (Whirls in between them with his mace) You cannot allow this. This is not a swayamvara. Besides, this man, my cousin, Arjun, is poor and lives a nomadic life in the forest. I am a prince in full standing; I claim your daughter as my prize.

GANGA-DRUPADA My daughter, you cannot marry a poor man. You are used to a life of luxury.

DRAUPADI If I cannot marry him, I will not marry at all.

RADHA—DURYODHANA (Grab-bing hold of her arm) You are mine. You will come with me.

GANGA-DRUPADA Let go of her. As you have already pointed out, this is not a swayamvara. If you try to abduct her, you will be committing a crime.

RADHA-DURYODHANA If this is not a swayamvara, she cannot choose a husband.

GANGA-DRUPADA Nevertheless, my daughter has made a choice.

RADHA-DURYODHANA You cannot ignore our customs. She will come with me.

(The women who have been musicians, doff their masks, and surround Duryodhana)

WOMEN If you cannot accept Draupadi's decision, leave this place. We will not allow you to commit any violence here.

RADHA-DURYODHANA (Laughs derisively) Are you women going to stop me?

(He wields his mace. The women take up karate stances. He comes to attack; they trip him and take away his mace)

WOMEN Now please leave.

(Radha-Duryodhana glowers at them and then begins to walk off. One of the women runs after him and gives him his mace. He takes it from her roughly)

WOMEN (Shaking hands with Bri and Sikandi) Thanks. The karate lessons really paid off. (They resume their masks as musicians)

GANGA-DRUPADA (Clearing throat to remind them that the scene is not over) Draupadi, are you certain that you want to marry this man?

DRAUPADI Oh yes, Father. I have never been more certain of anything in my life.

GANGA-DRUPADA Very well, I consent. Shall I make arrangements for the marriage or will you?

BRIHANNALA Wait a minute, don't I have a say in this?

GANGA-DRUPADA Sorry, do you want to arrange the wedding? Draupadi is such a good organiser ...

BRIHANNALA No, no. I don't want to get married.

(Everyone is surprised)

GANGA-DRUPADA You object?

BRIHANNALA Yes, I do.

(There is a bit of a stir among the musicians)

SIKANDI (Archly) Oh, come on Bri. This is only a play, you know. You're acting a part.

BRIHANNALA No, we are supposed to be creating a new reality here. But this is the same thing all over again. I may as well be in the Epic.

SUBHADRA It's not the same. This was not a swayamvara.

BRIHANNALA A minor detail.

DRAUPADI But it is different. You are my only husband. I am not marrying all your brothers as well. We two will be together all the time.

GANGA (Taking off mask) Yes, we have changed the story. Women are not ignored here.

(Bri is about to protest but Sikandi whispers in his ear and they move off, Bri still obviously agitated. Draupadi starts to go after them but is called back.)

GANGA Draupadi, you're the director. Where are you going? We have to prepare for the next scene.

DRAUPADI Oh, all right. I don't know what's wrong with Arjun. He doesn't seem to be himself.

SUBHADRA He's not Arjun.

DRAUPADI That's what I said. Well, I suppose this is a come down for him. He was the hero in the epic. Anyway, let's get on with the next scene. (She gives Subhadra a blindfold) Here put this on. You'll play Duryodhana's mother in the next scene.

SUBHADRA Gandhari! You want me to play Gandhari? We should have let her join us. Then she could have played this part.

HIDIMBA She couldn't join us. She loves her blindfold too much.

GANGA (Calling)

Sikandi! We need you to introduce the next scene. Radha, where's my mask. I am playing Dussasana now.

RADHA—DURYODHANA You're playing my brother, my extremely evil brother, who wants to, but cannot match my excesses.

GANGA Is that a challenge? Just watch me in the next scene; I'll outdo you. (Gets her mask on and roars. Radha swings her mace at her.)

SUBHADRA (Calls) Sikandi, where are you?

SIKANDI (Running in) Bri is going to narrate. He doesn't want a part in this scene.

GANGA Tell him to hurry.

SIKANDI He's coming. He's just getting his guitar. He thought he might sing parts of the narration.

(Bri comes running in with his guitar)

DRAUPADI Why don't you want to be in the scene?

BRIHANNALA For the same reason that you left the Epic.

DRAUPADI But this is different. There is freedom here.

BRIHANNALA Is there?

DRAUPADI Well, if you aren't in the scene, I won't be either. (She pulls off her sari and wig)

HIDIMBA Sikandi, you play Draupadi. Get dressed. Hurry up.

(Sikandi puts on Draupadi's sari and wig.)

DRAUPADI (Angrily to Hidimba) Why is he playing my part?

HIDIMBA You'll see. You'll see. (Draupadi scowls)
Everyone ready for Scene four. Lights!

(Lights fade)

SCENE FOUR

(Lights come up on Brihannala, strumming his guitar, as he introduces the next scene)

BRIHANNALA-NARRATOR Despite Draupadi's rejection of him, Duryodhana is determined to capture her. He and his brother Dussasana (A roar from Ganga-Dussasana) seize her while she is walking in the garden.

(Sikandi-Draupadi in Draupadi's sari, walks about humming. She is happy and does little pirouettes. Radha- Duryodhana and Ganga-Dussasana stalk her and suddenly spring on her. She struggles and tries to scream but Radha-Duryodhana knocks her out. He and his brother carry her off.)

BRIHANNALA-NARRATOR Duryodhana and Dussasana bring Draupadi to their mother, Gandhari.

RADHA-DURYODHANA (Laughing) Mother, look at the bhiksha we have brought.

GANGA-DUSSASANA (Laughing) That's a good one. The Pandavas couldn't have put it better!

SUBHADRA-GANDHARI Bhiksha? Alms? Why have you been begging for alms? You are not monks! At any rate, you know I can't see, so share it with your brothers.

RADHA-DURYODHANA (Guffawing) All my brothers?

SUBHADRA-GANDHARI Yes, of course.

RADHA-DURYODHANA Well, well, well Draupadi. This time you will have a hundred husbands, not just five. And I am the first.

KUNTHI (Entering the scene) What's going on here? What are you doing with my daughter-in-law?

RADHA-DURYODHANA She is not your daughter-in-law. She is my wife, our wife. Isn't that so Mother? You told us to share her, didn't you?

KUNTHI For goodness sake, can't you be original? Quoting straight out of the Mahabharath and not even your lines!

GANGA-DUSSASANA They should have been ours in the first place. We know how to satisfy a woman. Your sons (Puts hand up with a slack wrist) can't appreciate this tasty morsel. We'll show her a good time (To Sikandi) won't we darling?

RADHA-DURYODHANA Don't hide behind that sari. It won't protect you. (Radha-Duryodhana catches hold of one end of the sari and starts to pull it off.)

KUNTHI (Coming forward to intervene but Ganga-Dussasana wards her off)

Gandhari are you going to allow this disgrace to our family. Look at what is happening.

RADHA-DURYODHANA (Laughing)
My mother will never remove her blindfold.

KUNTHI Gandhari, your sons are attempting to violate my daughter-in-law.

SUBHADRA-GANDHARI Where is Krishna? He helped before.

HIDIMBA Gods and magic tricks! For goodness sake, this is not the Epic.

KUNTHI Come on, Gandhari, stop your sons!

SUBHADRA-GANDHARI How can I? I am blind.

(As Duryodhana comes to the end of the sari, he and Dussasana are full of glee. Sikandi hides his face with the long hair of the wig)

RADHA-DURYODHANA (Laughing uproariously) In the Epic, the sari never came to an end. (He pulls the end off Sikandi. Then walks around, showing off the sari. Sikandi whimpers) Behold Ladies and Gentlemen, one ordinary sari, WITH AN END. (Leers at audience) And now for the prize. (To Brihannala) Hey Arjun, this is my feast! You can have the scraps when I'm through!

GANGA-DUSSASANA (To Brihannala) No, when all of us are through. All hundred brothers. Five were never enough for her. (Laughs)

(Brihannala makes a dash for them. They grab hold of him and push him to the side.)

RADHA-DURYODHANA Stay out of this, Brihannala. You are the Narrator remember. (Advancing on Sikandi) You're much better off with me. That is no man! (He kneels on one knee before Sikandi) Now come and sit on my knee.

(Dussasana grabs hold of Sikandi by the hair, and as he plops her on Duryodhana's knee, the wig comes off. Duryodhana stares for a moment at Sikandi, pushes him off and jumps up in horror)

RADHA-DURYODHANA This is a man!

(Sikandi sidles up to Duryodhana who pushes him away. Everyone watching begins to laugh)

SIKANDI (Pursing his lips, pursues Duryodhana) Oh, baby, baby, baby. Come to me. I'm dying for you.

(Duryodhana and Dussasana flee from Sikandi in homophobic terror. The women capture them and hold them down.)

WOMEN (To Sikandi) Come on, Draupadi. Time for revenge. Don't you want these tasty morsels?

(Subadhra-Gandhari, who removed her blindfold when the excitement began to mount, comes forward laughing heartily. She embraces Sikandi, then finds Brihannala and embraces him too.)

SUBADHRA-GANDHARI (Holding Sikandi's and Bri's hands) My wonderful sons! What a sight for sore eyes you two are. What a trick to play on those dreadful boors. I am proud of you, Duryodhana and Dussasana.

RADHA-DURYODHANA Mother, you have removed your blindfold

SUBADHRA-GANDHARI I had to take it off. I couldn't miss all the fun. (She hugs Sikandi and Brihannala) My wonderful sons!

GANGA-DUSSASANA But Mother, they are not your sons! We are!

SUBADHRA-GANDHARI What? (To Sikandi and Bri) Is this true? (Sikandi and Bri nod. Gandhari walks slowly over to Duryodhana and Dussasana. She recoils sharply. Reaches out in a panic.) Where's my blindfold? My blindfold! My blindfold! (Someone gives it to her and she puts it on hastily and staggers off) I'm happy the way I was.

(Everyone laughs. Radha and Ganga take off masks.)

HIDIMBA You see Draupadi. With Sikandi in your role, we didn't have to resort to violence.

RADHA Sikandi, you were great.

GANGA I'm glad you joined us.

SIKANDI What did you think, Bri?

BRIHANNALA Over the top! You call that acting?

SIKANDI What? You jealous old cow!

(The two of them engage in a mock fight)

DRAUPADI That's enough now. Let's get on with the play.

URVASI Oh, come on Draupadi. Can't our play include a little fun?

DRAUPADI I don't think this is fun.

GANGA All right. What's our next scene?

DRAUPADI We should tackle your story.

GANGA My story! But I have no story now that I am just an ordinary woman who does not marry and have children.

RADHA Just listen to yourself. Are you saying that unless you become a wife and mother, you have no identity?

KUNTHI Are women nothing in themselves?

SUBHADRA Do women have to marry and have children?

GANGA No, it was that way in the Epic.

RADHA If you tell us you have no story, you are confirming the Epic.

HIDIMBA I told you we wouldn't change anything.

GANGA No. No. No. I do have a life of my own but if it does not involve a relationship can it be of interest to others?

RADHA In the Epic, you did have a relationship. That's where we begin.

SUBHADRA (Taking mask) Yes, Santanu was your husband. (Puts on mask) I will play Santanu

GANGA (Sighing) Very well.

DRAUPADI Everyone take your places for scene five.

(Lights fade as they get ready)

SCENE FIVE

(Lights come up on Brihannala)

BRIHANNALA-NARRATOR This is the story of Ganga, a very beautiful woman, who meets King Santanu on the banks of the Ganges. They fall madly, passionately in love.

SUBHADRA-SANTANU You are the most beautiful woman I have ever met. I cannot live without you. Please be my wife.

GANGA I love you too, but I cannot marry you.

SUBHADRA-SANTANU Why? Are you married?

GANGA No, I just don't want the responsibilities of marriage.

SUBHADRA-SANTANU How can you say such a thing? If you love me, you'll marry me.

GANGA Can't we just be lovers?

SUBHADRA-SANTANU My people would never accept that.

GANGA Then we must forget each other.

SUBHADRA—SANTANU I can't give you up.

GANGA I love you and I am willing to live with you but I will never marry you.

SUBHADRA-SANTANU But our children will be outcasts!

GANGA Children! I am not going to have any children!

SUBHADRA-SANTANU Don't you want children?

GANGA No!

SUBHADRA-SANTANU
But that is unnatural.

GANGA
Why?

SUBHADRA-SANTANU You are a woman. It is your function.

GANGA No, not unless I choose it. Tell me, why are you so desperate for children?

SUBHADRA-SANTANU Well, every man wants a son and heir.

GANGA To carry on your line?

SUBHADRA-SANTANU That's only natural. It's natural to get married and raise a family.

GANGA Well, you had better put children out of your mind. You are not destined to beget a long line. Look, it's not because I don't want children; that's the way it is in the Epic.

SUBHADRA—SANTANU What are you talking about?

GANGA I'm sorry to disappoint you but if you know the truth, perhaps you won't be so bound by tradition. (She signals for the family tree. The family tree could be a slide projection or a chart held by two women) This is from the Epic. There are some things we can't change.

SUBHADRA-SANTANU My family tree!

GANGA Yes. Do you see how abruptly your line ends? There are no grandchildren here.

SUBHADRA-SANTANU But the Epic begins with me. That means I am father to all that follows.

GANGA You were meant to think that. But it doesn't work out that way.

SUBHADRA-SANTANU (Examining the family tree.) But I have three sons.

GANGA One, my son, Bhishma, takes a vow of celibacy and never marries. The other two, sons of your second wife, Satyawati, die before they produce any heirs. Your line disappears completely.

SUBHADRA-SANTANU That is a lie! The main conflict in the Mahabharath is between the Pandavas and the Kauravas and both clans are descended from me.

GANGA Oh no! Vyasa wrote the story and decided that he should father the Kauravas and the Pandavas. It seems that he wanted authorship in every sense of the word. I guess he was just as obsessed with paternity as you are. Look at the tree. The real fathers of the Mahabharath are Parasar and his son, Vyasa, the father of Dhritarashtra, Pandu and Vidur. Dhritarashtra is father of the hundred Kaurava brothers and Pandu father of the five Pandavas.

SUBHADRA—SANTANU But why did Vyasa begin the Epic with me?

GANGA You have to admit it is a gripping opening. A mother drowning her newborn babies, a father

paralysed, unable to stop her. Vyasa knew how to capture attention.

SUBHADRA-SANTANU (Getting rid of the family tree) I don't believe this. All I know is that I want you. (Grabs hold of her) You will marry me.

BRIHANNALA-NARRATOR Ganga married Santanu. He was happy. Because they were passionately in love, he was confident that they would have children. But a year went by, then another and another. Ganga did not conceive. Now his mother wants him to end the marriage.

(Kunthi puts on mask of Santanu's mother and confronts Ganga)

KUNTHI-SANTANU'S MOTHER Get out of my house!

SUBHADRA-SANTANU Mother, what's the matter?

KUNTHI-SANTANU'S MOTHER Santanu, this woman you brought home from the banks of the Ganges; this woman without whom you could not live; this woman is barren.

(Sikandi in mask of Bhishma, son of Ganga, dashes in)

SIKANDI-BHISHMA No, she can't be. She has to give birth to me. I have a major role in the Epic.

KUNTHI-SANTANU'S MOTHER Who are you?

SIKANDI-BHISHMA I am Bhishma, the famous son of Ganga. Great hero, wise counsellor, brave warrior.

GANGA Go away, Bhishma, there's no place for you here.

SIKANDI-BHISHMA But Mother. I am a major character, the soul of integrity in the Epic.

GANGA (Laughs) You, the soul of integrity? Don't be ridiculous!

SIKANDI-BHISHMA Listen, Santanu ... Dad ... don't let her play games with you. I am your pledge of immortality.

GANGA How can you be? The line ends with you. You remain celibate all your life.

SIKANDI-BHISHMA Don't listen to her. Stand up for your rights as a man. She owes it to us to become a mother.

KUNTHI-SANTANU'S MOTHER I told you not to bring that woman into my house. She's just a whore. Tell her to get out!

SUBHADRA-SANTANU I can't mother. I love her!

KUNTHI-SANTANU'S MOTHER Love, love. What's all this rubbish about love? She's not a woman. Attending meetings all day long. Meetings, meetings, meetings! Bringing all kinds of funny people here. And all they do is plant trees. Plant trees! I ask you. Tell her to go.

SIKANDI-BHISHMA No, grandmother. Don't chase her away!

SUBHADRA-SANTANU Mother, you don't understand her.

KUNTHI-SANTANU'S MOTHER Understand! What's to understand? She can't have babies. Get rid of her.

SIKANDI-BHISHMA You can't get rid of her. If she goes, I won't be born. Your memory will die without me. Without me THERE IS NO EPIC!

GANGA (Suddenly delighted) You're right. If you're not born, there is no Epic. Splendid! I'm leaving.

KUNTHI-SANTANU'S MOTHER Good! Go away. We don't need you. We have enough trees.

SIKANDI-BHISHMA (Hanging on to Ganga) Santanu, Dad, stop her! Don't let her go

SUBHADRA-SANTANU Ganga, please don't go. I don't care about having children. I just need you by my side.

SIKANDI-BHISHMA Can't we compromise? You don't have to have eight babies; one is enough. ME!

GANGA I'm sorry Santanu. But my existence in the Epic is meaningless. I have to go where I can grow.

SIKANDI-BHISHMA No, no, no! What about me? If you go, I will be aborted!

GANGA If I stay, I will be. I'm sorry. I want my own life. (She leaves)

SIKANDI-BHISHMA (Screaming with pain) There should be laws against abortion. Help me! Help me! I am being torn from the womb. Arrrrg! (He dies)

SUBHADRA—SANTANU (Takes off Sikandi's mask and fondles it) I could have had a son but he was aborted.

SIKANDI (Sitting up) Rubbish. He wasn't even conceived in our play. Quite frankly, I am glad I helped to get rid of Bhishma.

BRIHANNALA But you gave such a moving performance. I mean ... you introduced the whole abortion angle.

SIKANDI Really, Bri. I am a Method actor, you know. I give myself completely to my roles.

SUBHADRA (Taking off her mask) I really believed you. I thought you were going to persuade Ganga with your abortion argument.

GANGA (Laughing) I wasn't going to fall for that. It was a matter of abort or be aborted. (Pointing to audience) They don't really know us, the women of the Mahabharath. If you ask them out there, they can only identify us as mother of, or wife of, or sister of, but not as individuals in our own right.

SIKANDI That's how they know me too, as an instrument; that is, if they know me at all. (Peers into audience.)

BRIHANNALA It's not just the women who are trapped. We are too. Just because we get the action does not make us any the less puppets.

DRAUPADI I don't know why you're complaining. Men control everything; what we do, think, and believe. You're a man; you can make choices.

BRIHANNALA That's not true. From the time you are little, people keep stuffing toy weapons into your hands and pushing you towards violence.

DRAUPADI No, no. It's different for men. You are not trapped by your gender.

BRIHANNALA Yes, I was.

DRAUPADI (Laughing sarcastically) The only time you were trapped was when you were forced to disguise yourself as Brihannala.

BRIHANNALA It was the only time I was not trapped.

DRAUPADI But you were in drag. You had to play the part of a gay musician.

BRIHANNALA I wasn't playing a part.

DRAUPADI (Becoming upset, stopping her ears and walking away) I don't want to hear this.

BRIHANNALA No, you want to keep me locked in

an image that is not of my making. This is not what I expected here. (He walks out)

SIKANDI Bri is right you know. With our customs and traditions, we keep building cages for ourselves, for both men and women.

DRAUPADI I don't want to hear your rubbish about cages.

SIKANDI But I was born in one. Let's examine my story.

DRAUPADI I am not interested in your story.

SIKANDI Why? Because I am a man?

DRAUPADI You eliminated Bhishma. Without Bhishma, you don't exist.

SIKANDI That was Ganga's story. I remained within her framework. I want us to examine my story.

DRAUPADI Your story is irrelevant!

HIDIMBA (To Sikandi) I warned you about cages, right from the beginning.

SUBHADRA Sikandi, you are a man; we came here to find freedom as women. You are confusing us.

SIKANDI No, not confusing; fusing! I am trying to fuse our stories. We have to break through barriers, all barriers.

GANGA Look Sikandi, we suffered long enough. Now we have taken charge of our lives, we cannot have a man come here and tell us what to do.

SIKANDI All right, go ahead and build your narrow world. It won't be any better than the one you left.

RADHA Wait a minute. I don't understand what's going on here. Why can't we include Sikandi's story. I don't know what's wrong with all of you. You know that Sikandi didn't begin life as a man.

SIKANDI No, wait!

KUNTHI That's right! Sikandi was forced to take on a man's role in order to defeat Bhishma in the great Kurukshetra war.

SIKANDI No, no!

RADHA Yes, Sikandi was born a woman, Amba.

SIKANDI But that's not my story.

RADHA I'm getting to it. Amba loved Bhishma and when he rejected her, she was reborn as a man so he could take revenge.

UTTARAI Well, why didn't someone say so in the first place? Come on, let's do Sikandi's story.

SIKANDI No, no! We can't do that story.

DRAUPADI Quite right! Let's have Radha's story.

HIDIMBA What's the matter Draupadi? Do you have something against Sikandi? Is it because of Sikandi and Bri ...

DRAUPADI (Shouting) Oh for goodness sake! Let's get on with it. I don't care whose story we do next.

GANGA Then let's get ready for the next scene. Someone call Brihannala.

SIKANDI Right. (About to dash off)

DRAUPADI (Stopping him) You get ready for the next scene. It is your tale, isn't it? (She leaves)

SIKANDI No, it isn't.

GANGA Don't take any notice of Draupadi.

SIKANDI It's not that ...

URVASI I am going to play your sister, Ambika

UTTARAI I will play your other sister, Ambalika.

SIKANDI (Protesting) I am sorry. I can't do this.

KUNTHI Don't be so modest. You're a wonderful actor.

HIDIMBA Everybody ready. Lights!

(Lights fade)

SCENE SIX

(Lights up on Urvasi-Ambika, Uttarai-Ambalika, Sikandi)

URVASI-AMBIKA & UTTARAI-AMBALIKA (To Sikandi) Dear sister, isn't it wonderful? We are all soon to be

married. (They hold hands, pull Sikandi into a ring and romp around, dragging the unwilling Sikandi with them)

SIKANDI (Breaking free) I can't play this role. (They pull him back)

KUNTHI We need someone to play Bhishma. He is the one who abducts Amba and her sisters.

SIKANDI I'll play Bhishma. I played him before.

GANGA Yes, and he was aborted. We can't have Bhishma in this scene.

(Draupadi re-enters)

DRAUPADI What's going on?

GANGA We need a Bhishma in this story but he was aborted before. So what do we do?

DRAUPADI I knew we'd have problems with this story.

RADHA Let's have Bhishma in this scene. We can find some way of justifying his reappearance later.

HIDIMBA Aha, now we resort to magic tricks, bringing the dead back to life!

RADHA Shut up Hidimba! Haven't you heard of poetic licence? We'll work it out later.

HIDIMBA (Sarcastically) As they do in soap operas.

UTTARAI We could just change his name.

URVASI

We can't. (Pointing to the audience) They know that Bhishma is involved in this story.

HIDIMBA (Cynically) If they have read the Mahabharath!

DRAUPADI (Irritated) Stop it, Hidimba.

HIDIMBA I beg your pardon. Don't take any notice of me. I'm not even here.

DRAUPADI Are we ready?

SIKANDI I can't play Amba. Please don't force me to play this role.

URVASI But it's your story. You are the obvious choice for the role.

GANGA Who's playing Bhishma? Here's his mask.

BRIHANNALA I'll play Bhishma. (Puts on mask)

SIKANDI Bri, you traitor!

BRIHANNALA Have you forgotten? This is a play. You're only acting a part.

GANGA Draupadi, you'll have to narrate.

DRAUPADI-NARRATOR (Sullenly) This is the story of a woman, Amba, whose life was ruined by Bhishma and against whom she swore revenge ...

SIKANDI I'm sorry to interrupt. That's not my story. That's how it happened in the Epic.

DRAUPADI (Viciously) Do you want to narrate and play the main role as well?

GANGA Draupadi, you play King Salwa. I'll narrate. (Hands Draupadi her mask.) This is the story of Amba.

SIKANDI Right. It's not my story. I'm out of it.

GANGA Stop interrupting! This is the story of Amba, the woman who became a man in order to control her own destiny. We begin with the scene of the swayamvara of Amba, Ambika and Ambalika, the three daughters of King Kasi who are to choose their husbands from a crowd of suitors.

(The others as suitors enter a great hall and stand in two long lines on either side of the throne. Urvasi and Uttara enter dragging in Sikandi who is protesting, This is not my story! This is not my story! They take their places next to the throne. King Kasi makes a grand entrance and takes his place on the throne. King Kasi is about to explain the proceedings when Bhishma jumps into the midst of the assembly)

BRIHANNALA-BHISHMA (Loud, authoritarian and challenging) "Of all the ways of choosing a bride, the sages have mentioned, the noblest is that in which a maiden is acquired by force from amidst a valiant gathering such as this." (Taking off mask and changing tone, he addresses audience) That was a direct quote from RK Narayan's book, *The Mahabharath*, London, 1978, p. 4. (Puts on mask)

SUBHADRA-KING KASI What do you mean by this un-called for behaviour?

BRIHANNALA-BHISHMA This is what I mean.

(He dashes forward, grabs the three young women. All the princes go after him and he demolishes the lot of them with his sword, karate kicks, etc. Bodies fall all over the place. He grabs hold of the girls again)

SIKANDI (Struggling with Bri) Let me go, Bri. You know this not my story. Let me go, man!

BRIHANNALA (Taking off mask) Oh come off it, Sikandi. Co-operate will you. We have to tell this story first so when we tell yours, people will see that it was Vyasa who invented trans-sexuality. You've got to give him credit for that!

SIKANDI No, he didn't. What about Ardhanaishwara?

BRIHANNALA That's not trans-sexuality, that's bi-sexuality!

SIKANDI (Begrudgingly) Oh, all right!

(Brihannala puts on the Bhishma mask again)

SIKANDI-AMBA (Pointing to all the dead bodies lying around them) You've killed them all. Monster!

UTTARAI-AMBALIKA (Swooning over Bhishma) Monster? Oh, no. My hero. So handsome, so brave.

URVASI-AMBIKA (Also swooning) So strong, so forthright!

SIKANDI-AMBA Take them. Let go of me!

UTTARAI-AMBALIKA
& URVASI-AMBIKA (Clinging to Bhishma) Our hero. We are the luckiest women alive.

SIKANDI-AMBA Are you mad? Abduction is barbarous.

UTTARAI-AMBALIKA
& URVASI-AMBIKA Don't listen to her. She's in love with King Salwa. She wants to be with him.

(Bhishma carries off the girls. Ambika and Ambalika go willingly and help him to control Amba who is kicking and screaming)

HIDIMBA (One of those killed by Bhishma, sits up and takes off mask) I don't believe this! Abduction! To prove himself a man among men. To hell with the women!

GANGA You understand now, why I didn't want to be his mother, don't you.

RADHA (Another one of those killed by Bhishma, sits up and takes off mask) Did you hear what he said? Taking women by force was the noblest way to do it?

KUNTHI (Another one of those killed by Bhishma, sits up and takes off mask)
Glorifying rape! That's what he was doing!

RADHA We are going to have to think seriously about including Bhishma in the play.

KUNTHI Unfortunately, rape is such a common problem, I'm afraid we have to.

DRAUPADI Can we get on with the scene? I'd like to be done with this story.

GANGA-NARRATOR Bhishma brings the princesses to Hastinapura as brides for his stepbrother, King Vichitravirya.

(Sikandi is struggling to get away)

SIKANDI-AMBA Why did you bring me here? I want nothing to do with you. I want to go back. I will never marry you.

UTTARAI—AMBALIKA
& URVASI—AMBIKA But we will. You don't need her. We'll make you forget about her.

URVASI-AMBIKA You are so strong and brave. You vanquished all those other princes.

UTTARAI-AMBALIKA And you did that, just for us. Such a great prince! You wanted us! We are so grateful.

SIKANDI-AMBA Rubbish! He was just proving his manhood. We were incidental to the deed!

UTTARAI—AMBALIKA
& URVASI—AMBIKA It will be an honour to be your wife! (They touch his feet)

SIKANDI-AMBA I will never marry you. I will kill myself first.

(Enter Subhadra as Satyavati, Bhishma's stepmother)

SUBHADRA-SATYAVATI (In a melodramatic manner) Oh, my dear Bhishma, you have brought three brides. You are so noble and pure of heart.

BRIHANNALA-BHISHMA (Equally melodramatic) Mother, I gave you my word that the Kuru clan would never die out.

SIKANDI Talk about over the top!

SUBHADRA-SATYAVATI
My dear child. (Coming forward to embrace Amba) I know how grateful you are. This is such a wonderful opportunity for you.

SIKANDI-AMBA I will never marry this barbarian.

UTTARAI-AMBALIKA
& URVASI-AMBIKA But we will. He is our knight in shining armour. (They stand on either side of Bhishma)

SUBHADRA-SATYAVATI Oh my dears, this is not your husband to be. He has taken a vow of celibacy. He brought you here as brides for my son, the King of Hastinapura.

SIKANDI-AMBA There you have it! He has no interest in us!

UTTARAI-AMBALIKA
& URVASI—AMBIKA Oh, Amba isn't it wonderful! We are going to be queens. Surely you must consent now.

SIKANDI-AMBA Never! Let me go! I want nothing to do with any of you. I made my own choice long ago. I will marry King Salwa and no one else.

SUBHADRA-SATYAVATI Oh, dear Bhishma. What an unpleasant creature. Are you sure this is a princess? Sister of these two?

BRINHANNALA-BHISHMA She's the real prize, Mother. The kind of woman who will produce brave, strong, noble sons. Ah, if only I hadn't been so rash in my vows.

SUBHADRA-SATYAVATI Well, I don't think she will do at all. Besides, I don't know if I can trust you.

BRINHANNALA-BHISHMA Oh Mother! I am pained. I gave my word. I am called "Bhishma, One of firm vow." (Changing tone and addressing audience) Ibid. p. 4.

SUBHADRA-SATYAVATI I do trust you my dear boy, but I fear she will not make my son a good wife. (Aside to audience.) She'll scare him to death. (To Bhishma) I expected you to bring only one girl. One is hard enough for my son to cope with; two will make him very nervous; three will kill him. Especially one like her. (Indicates Amba) I think we should send her back.

BRINHANNALA-BHISHMA Mother, your wish is my command (Turning to Amba) Well, Princess, it would not be right to keep you here against your will. (Amba

laughs cynically) You will be sent to King Salwa as you request.

(Draupadi puts on Salwa's mask, Kunthi puts on mask of Salwa's Counsellor, and Radha puts on mask of Salwa's messenger)

GANGA—NARRATOR (To Draupadi) We're going to scene seven right?

(Lights Fade)

SCENE SEVEN

(Lights come up on the court of King Salwa.)

GANGA-NARRATOR This is the court of King Salwa. A huge celebration is going on in the background. A messenger brings King Salwa news of Bhishma's arrival.

RADHA-MESSENGER Your Majesty, we have an entourage from the court of Hastinapura.

DRAUPADI-SALWA Who leads the group?

RADHA-MESSENGER Bhishma, Sire.

DRAUPADI-SALWA Bhishma himself. Well, well, well. Is this diplomacy or audacity? What do you think Counsellor?

KUNTHI-COUNSELLOR One could hardly call him diplomatic after he snatched Amba and her sisters from their swayamvara.

DRAUPADI-SALWA He was perfectly within the law. (To Messenger) Show them in. (Messenger leaves) Perfectly within the law! A masterstroke of diplomacy! He took the most difficult and manly route. I must say I was lost in admiration.

KUNTHI-COUNSELLOR Then his attendance here must be more evidence of diplomacy.

(The messenger leads in Brihannala-Bhishma, Sikandi-Amba and entourage.)

DRAUPADI-SALWA (Startled at the sight of Amba) Greetings Honoured Prince Bhishma.

SIKANDI-AMBA (Trying to push past Bhishma) Salwa, Salwa, I am so happy to see you.

BRIHANNALA-BHISHMA Greetings, Your Majesty. Greetings, Honourable Lord Counsellor. I am most

grateful to you for receiving us. I have come on a very delicate mission.

DRAUPADI-SALWA I see you have brought your wife with you. I must say Bhishma, you swept those girls off in style. I envied you. So you have finally given up that foolish vow of celibacy?

SIKANDI-AMBA I am not his wife. How could you think such a thing?

DRAUPADI-SALWA My dear Bhishma, I am a little confused. Your delegation seems to be in some disarray. You and your wife do not seem to be in agreement.

SIKANDI-AMBA I am not his wife. Why do you keep saying that?

BRINHANNALA-BHISHMA Your Majesty, Princess Amba is not my wife.

DRAUPADI-SALWA You sly old dog, you! Well, my estimation of you goes up even more. Panache, that's what it is. I'm afraid I lead a less colourful life.

SIKANDI-AMBA (Breaking free and confronting Salwa) You admire this man for abducting me?

DRAUPADI-SALWA What he did was courageous beyond words.

SIKANDI-AMBA Other Princes challenged him. Why didn't you? You should have been in the forefront. If you loved me, you wouldn't have let him get away with it.

DRAUPADI-SALWA But this is Bhishma.

SIKANDI-AMBA Were you afraid of him? Or did you fall in love with him at the swayamvara?

DRAUPADI-SALWA How dare you speak to me like this? (To Bhishma) Get your woman away from me.

BRINHANNALA-BHISHMA I apologise your Majesty. I thought you two had an understanding.

DRAUPADI-SALWA What if we did? You have won her and your claim supersedes mine.

SIKANDI-AMBA He assaulted my rights as a human being. How can you respect that?

DRAUPADI-SALWA What he did was sublime. A tradition of the bravest of the brave. If we don't respect traditions, we cannot have a civilized society.

SIKANDI-AMBA You call that sublime! A tradition that allows me to be violated? You call that civilized? I don't believe this. You are in love with him.

DRAUPADI-SALWA There is no doubt that I have the greatest admiration for him.

SIKANDI-AMBA Your admiration for him is much stronger than your love for me.

DRAUPADI-SALWA (Turning away from Amba) Bhishma, what has brought you here today? It is a very auspicious occasion and I am honoured to have you as my guest.

BRINHANNALA-BHISHMA Your Majesty, I am at a loss. I came to return the Princess Amba to you, her rightful husband. She had fixed her choice on you at the swayamvara.

DRAUPADI-SALWA She obviously does not understand our traditions. I have no claim on her whatsoever. You won her, fair and square.

BRINHANNALA-BHISHMA But your Majesty, I have taken a vow of celibacy. I cannot marry her.

DRAUPADI-SALWA That is not my problem. She belongs to you.

BRINHANNALA-BHISHMA She has chosen you for a husband. I think that is a stronger claim.

SIKANDI-AMBA Stop! Don't trouble yourselves further. What happens to me is no longer any concern of yours. I don't need either one of you. (She turns on her heel and walks out)

DRAUPADI-SALWA Poor confused woman. If only she knew her place, she would save herself so much trouble.

BRINHANNALA-BHISHMA This is quite embarrassing.

DRAUPADI-SALWA Oh, let's put it behind us. As it happens, you have arrived on my wedding day. I would be honoured if you would attend the ceremony.

BRINHANNALA-BHISHMA Thank you, you are very gracious. I had no idea it was your wedding day. Please forgive my unceremonious intrusion.

DRAUPADI-SALWA No, no. You must forgive me. I am the one who has been discourteous. I should have informed you of the wedding and invited you to attend.

(They move off together, each trying to outdo the other in courteousness. Actors remove their masks and resume their original characters.)

SUBHADRA You see, Draupadi, there was no harm in exploring Sikandi's story. It's perfectly relevant.

DRAUPADI Yes, I quite enjoyed it.

SIKANDI But that isn't my story.

GANGA What do you mean? Of course it's your story!

SIKANDI No. That was Amba's story.

GANGA And you are Amba. You became a man so that you could destroy Bhishma.

SIKANDI That's the nonsense in the epic. I am not Amba. I look exactly like her, but I am not Amba. I am her grandson.

RADHA Her grandson!

SUBHADRA No, that can't be. Vyasa turns Amba into a man, you, Sikandi, and puts you in front of Arjun in his chariot during the war. Bhishma will not attack because he sees in you Amba, the woman.

GANGA Another stroke of Vyasa's genius! A very clever twist in the story.

HIDIMBA No it's not. It's just another one of Vyasa's magic tricks.

SIKANDI And it wipes out my existence! Amba and I are not one. I am a separate individual. Let me tell my story. You owe it to me.

KUNTHI But it's not in the Epic. We don't know it.

HIDIMBA Well, that's why he should tell it.

GANGA Very well. Shall I continue to narrate?

SUBHADRA No, I will. You play one of the roles.

GANGA Shall I be the shaman? No, I'll be Sikandi's aunt.

RADHA I'll be his mother and Bri can be his friend. Right. Next scene.

(Lights fade)

SCENE SEVEN

(Lights up on Subhadra-Narrator)

SUBHADRA-NARRATOR This is the story of Sikandi, grandson of Amba. When Amba realised that she couldn't live with Bhishma or Salwa, she went to live in the forest. She eventually married a man, who, like her, wanted more freedom than customs and traditions would allow. Their son was the father of Sikandi.

(Sikandi is playing a musical instrument and singing)

RADHA-SIKANDI'S MOTHER Sikandi, what are you doing? You have to get ready for the tournament. You are the best stick fighter in the village.

SIKANDI (Protesting) But Mother ...

RADHA-SIKANDI'S MOTHER You will be the champion after today's competition. (She leaves)

(Sikandi picks up the skin he is to wear, the shield and stick. He looks around and sees other clothes. He drops what he has picked up and goes to examine other clothes – women's clothes. He fondles and plays with these and then begins to put them on. He puts on make-up, looks at himself in a mirror, laughs and then prances around. His friend enters.)

BRIHANNALA-FRIEND (Dressed in traditional stick fighting gear) Hey, Sikandi, are you ready? I am going to beat the daylight out of you today. (Stops and stares at Sikandi)

SIKANDI (Whirling around Friend) Well, what do you think?

(Friend is tongue-tied)

SIKANDI (Stops dancing around) Oh, all right. I'll change. I'll get ready for the stick fight.

BRIHANNALA-FRIEND No. Don't. (Sikandi is puzzled.) You ... you look beautiful.

SIKANDI (Laughing) Are you smitten?

BRIHANNALA—FRIEND (Confused) You are so beautiful.

SIKANDI Come dance with me.

(They begin to dance, and the dance clearly develops into an expression of love. Sikandi's Mother and Aunt enter.)

RADHA-SIKANDI'S MOTHER What's going on here? Stop this at once.

GANGA-SIKANDI'S AUNT (Staring in shock) It is your mother-in-law, Amba, returned from the dead.

RADHA-SIKANDI'S MOTHER Don't be ridiculous. This foolish boy is always getting up to this kind of nonsense. (She rubs the make-up off Sikandi's face.) Why do you keep on doing this? Haven't I told you, I don't want you dressing up in women's clothes? (Turning on Friend) And what are you doing? Encouraging him in this sick fantasy?

GANGA-SIKANDI'S AUNT (Still awe-struck) The boy is possessed! His grandmother, Amba, has taken over his body!

RADHA-SIKANDI'S MOTHER Rubbish. He looks like her, that's all. Why he couldn't take after my side of the family, I don't know. His father was like this too.

GANGA-SIKANDI'S AUNT He's haunted!

RADHA-SIKANDI'S MOTHER Stop it! You're talking nonsense!

SIKANDI Mother, I'm sorry. I'll get dressed for the stick fight. (Starts to change into stick fight gear)

BRIHANNALA-FRIEND I'll go on ahead of you. See you at the grounds. (He leaves hastily)

GANGA-SIKANDI'S AUNT Oh, sister! I have seen this before. There was a girl in the village. She rode a motorbike, then she began to dress like a boy. She was haunted too. They had to beat it out of her. Only after she was exorcised did she come right.

RADHA-SIKANDI'S MOTHER Exorcised! But these are just naughty pranks. He'll get over it.

GANGA-SIKANDI'S AUNT No, no. It's Amba. He must be exorcised. I'll call the shaman. (She leaves.)

SIKANDI Mother, I'm sorry. I was just fooling around. I'm going to the grounds. I'll be late for the competition.

RADHA-SIKANDI'S MOTHER No, you stay right here.

SIKANDI But Mother, I can be champion. I know it. Don't you want that?

(Enter Urvasi as Shaman with Sikandi's Aunt. Sikandi's Mother goes through the payment routine and then they proceed with the ceremony throughout which

Sikandi protests and thus brings down harsher and harsher treatment on himself. At the end, Sikandi is left lying exhausted and unhappy. The shaman leaves.)

RADHA-SIKANDI'S MOTHER (Showing the muti she has obtained from the Shaman) I have to mix this with Sikandi's food everyday and he should be all right after a few weeks.

GANGA-SIKANDI'S AUNT You've done the right thing. I will go and see the other boy's parents. I think he is possessed too. (She leaves eagerly)

RADHA-SIKANDI'S MOTHER
(Kneeling next to her son) My poor boy. (She strokes him) You have the same delusions as your father. But you will be better now. There, there. Sleep. I'll be back in a little while. (She leaves)

(Sikandi gets up slowly, looks for the women's clothes, puts them on, puts on make-up. He spreads the clothes he has taken off in the place where he lay and then runs away. His mother enters with food.)

RADHA-SIKANDI'S MOTHER
Sikandi, sit up and eat a little. It will give you strength. Sikandi, where are you? (She sees his clothes spread out to assume his shape) What's this? Oh, my god, what's happened here? (She stares at the clothes.) He's been transported. Utterly transported. The spirits have claimed him as one of theirs. (She stands up stoically) Perhaps it is for the best. In his confused state, his life would have been nothing but misery.

SUBHADRA-NARRATOR Sikandi never returned to his family. He joined various groups of actors and performed in female roles all over the country. Then he met Brihannala and teamed up with him.

(All the women re-enter)

DRAUPADI That's ridiculous! Brihannala is not a real person. This was just an identity that Arjun assumed when he was in hiding in the thirteenth year of our banishment.

BRINHANNALA Look, are we reliving the Mahabharath or are we creating a new, authentic existence here?

SIKANDI Arjun belongs in the Epic. This is Brihannala.

DRAUPADI We have our roots in the Epic.

GANGA All right. We cannot entirely escape our origins but here we make our own lives.

DRAUPADI (Confronting Brihannala)
Do you deny that you are Arjun?

BRINHANNALA Yes. I choose to be Brihannala.

DRAUPADI But why? Arjun is noble, kind, sensitive, courageous, an intrepid warrior.

BRINHANNALA I am not a warrior. Arjun was brought up to be a warrior. Trained in the martial arts, he was taught to kill. That's not who I am.

DRAUPADI You are the bravest and most devastating fighter. Noble, handsome, the soul of propriety, forerunner of the Knights of the Round Table.

BRINHANNALA Look at me. Do I look like a knight?

DRAUPADI This is your disguise. And it's a wonderful disguise. Nobody would suspect that the great, noble warrior, Arjun, would be hidden in this form. Even I found it distasteful.

SIKANDI I think he's beautiful. He wasn't turned into a woman. He was just outed. It was an imaginative, dramatic and titillating ploy of the author to resolve a difficult situation and make his story exciting.

GANGA Vyasa had a wonderful imagination. Or was he just influenced by the Harihara stories?

SUBHADRA Admit it Draupadi, you too were used for your sex appeal. You, with five husbands all at the same time.

DRAUPADI But I wanted only one. (She looks at Brihannala)

KUNTHI Look at it this way. It was for the best. After all Brihannala ...

DRAUPADI (Interrupting frantically)
I love Arjun. (She looks at Brihannala) He is Arjun! I love Arjun!

SUBHADRA And look where that landed you. At the end you could not enter heaven because you loved Arjun too much. And since Arjun didn't exist, what a waste! I mean Brihannala is ...

DRAUPADI Stop! Stop! I don't want to hear this!

BRINHANNALA You love Arjun and I am not Arjun. I am a gay musician and dancer. (Draupadi screams.)

SIKANDI Brihannala is a man made in his own image.

DRAUPADI (Hysterical) No, no, no. Give up this perversity and be your real self. My Arjun. My husband. I am your wife. You are my husband! You should be ashamed to call yourself Brihannala. Brihannala isn't a man. You are Arjun!

BRIHANNALA (Gently raising her)
I'm sorry. I am not Arjun.

DRAUPADI (Furious turns on Sikandi and attacks him)
It's all your fault, you pervert!

RADHA (Shocked) Draupadi!

(The women pull Draupadi away from Sikandi)

DRAUPADI This is no good. This experiment does not work. We are women. We were born to be wives and mothers. That is what is in the Epic. That is our birthright and we should be proud of it.

RADHA Calm down, Draupadi. You don't know what you are saying.

DRAUPADI No, this is no life. This is no place for any of us. This life is unnatural. We must go back to the Epic. (Gasps of horror from all the other women) I won't stay here. I am going back to find my husband, to find my Arjun. (She dashes off the stage and out through the audience. The others stare after her in shock.)

URVASI She gave us the courage to leave and now she's gone back.

UTTARAI How sad! To go back to this! (Holding out the clothes Draupadi wore in the Epic)

HIDIMBA (Holding out blindfold)
And this.

(Lights fade)

SCENE EIGHT

(Lights up on Women sitting around despondently)

RADHA Now that Draupadi's gone, I suppose I shall have to take over as director.

UTTARAI How could she go back? Here she was director.

KUNTHI (Sighing) She can't give Arjun up.

HIDIMBA Arjun was your son. Have you given him up?

KUNTHI (Putting her arm around Brihannala) This is my son.

BRIHANNALA (Embracing her)
Thank you, Mother.

RADHA Well, now that I am director, it's time for a different kind of story. We've only dealt with stories of the privileged classes so far. Let us tell the story of a peasant woman like me.

SUBADHRA I didn't know you had a story.

HIDIMBA (Laughing) Radha, the eternal optimist. Think you can change the world. You haven't even changed attitudes here.

RADHA Everyone has a story, Subadhra. Depends on the author whose story gets told. You've been reading too many his-story books.

HIDIMBA Poor little Subadhra. Doesn't want to go slumming, eh?

SUBADHRA Hidimba, you don't have to gloat. Anyone can make a mistake. I apologise Radha. I should have known better. I was thinking in Epic terms again. I wish I could stop doing that.

RADHA I understand. We are all still tied to the Epic in many ways, but we will overcome.

(Hidimba hums mockingly, 'We shall overcome.')

RADHA You can laugh all you want, Hidimba, but we will overcome.

GANGA Come on, let's begin Radha's story.

RADHA It's Hidimba's story as well as mine.

HIDIMBA I'm being conscripted here. My participation is under protest.

KUNTHI So what's new? Come on, Radha, let's hear your story.

(Lights fade)

SCENE NINE

(Lights come up on Uttaraï-Narrator)

UTTARAI—NARRATOR We are in Radha's village, the day after lightning has destroyed the hut of one of the families. Two children, trapped inside, were burned to death. The incensed villagers believe that Hidimba, the witch, is responsible. As the scene opens, we see the villagers chasing Hidimba.

HIDIMBA Leave me alone. Get away from me. (She picks up a twig and shakes it at her pursuers. They come to a sharp halt)

SUBHADRA-VILLAGER Careful, she's using that stick to cast a spell.

(Subhadra picks up a stone and aims it at Hidimba. Then many stones go flying at Hidimba. She screams and falls to her knees. The group surrounds her. They accuse her, pick up stones and begin to stone her. Radha jumps into their midst and shields Hidimba from them.)

VILLAGERS

Get out of there, Radha!

Radha, don't interfere!

That woman is evil!

We must kill her!

How can you touch the vile creature!

Radha, what's wrong with you?

RADHA You have no right to persecute this woman.

VILLAGERS

What do you mean, woman!

Hidimba is not a woman!

She is a witch, an evil demon.

KUNTHI-VILLAGER She killed two children last night: burned them to death while they were sleeping!

RADHA Rubbish that was lightning. Everything is so dry around here. The hut easily caught alight.

SIKANDI-VILLAGER Yes, that's another thing: this drought. Her wickedness has caused it.

RADHA You don't believe that!

KUNTHI-VILLAGER She's a witch. She can do anything.

BRIHANNALA-VILLAGER Look in her bag. You'll see the proof in there.

SUBHADRA-VILLAGER It's full of body parts.

GANGA-VILLAGER Ask her what she's doing with body parts.

SUBHADRA-VILLAGER She's been stealing children and cutting them up to make magic! She deserves to die!

(She throws a stone. The others pick up stones too. Radha picks up bag. The others move away in horror. Radha puts her hand in the bag pulls out some of its contents and throws them at villagers who run around in panic.)

RADHA (Holding out a handful of herbs) What a bunch of superstitious ninnies!

(The villagers stop and stare at the herbs in Radha's hand)

SUBHADRA-VILLAGER How did she do it?

RADHA Do what?

SUBHADRA-VILLAGER Change the body parts into plants.

BRIHANNALA—VILLAGER It's that witch! Kill her! Kill her!

(They pick up stones again and are about to pelt her. Radha flings herbs and roots at the crowd.)

RADHA There! Take these body parts and leave this woman alone.

(The villagers scatter to avoid contact with the plants)

VILLAGERS Radha, Hidimba has bewitched you. You will die! (They run off)

RADHA (Helping Hidimba up) Are you all right? Did they hurt you?

HIDIMBA I'm all right, thanks to you. I think I should move away from this village.

RADHA It won't help. They'll just find another scapegoat. (She gathers up the herbs and roots and puts them back in the bag)

HIDIMBA If I were a witch, I would put an end to this persecution with magic. Don't they see that? But you can't reason with these people.

RADHA We have to find a way. We can't go on like this. It's destroying us all.

HIDIMBA You'll never change them. They are tied to their superstitions. They turn everything they don't

understand into symbols. And symbols are difficult to demystify. I am a symbol of evil because I live alone, don't have children and make medicines.

RADHA That's it. The symbols. They blind them to reason and rationalise their fears and insecurity. We have to explode the symbols.

HIDIMBA Are you going to explode me? That will save them the trouble of murdering me.

RADHA Don't joke about it. We have to make them understand. I won't give up.

(Radha and Hidimba leave. The villagers come back cautiously)

KUNTHI-VILLAGER There she goes. She has taken Radha with her. The poor woman is bewitched. See, she's walking like a zombie.

GANGA-VILLAGER We must get rid of Hidimba. She has brought a curse upon our land.

BRIHANNALA-VILLAGER It hasn't rained for years. All our cattle are dying and our crops have failed.

SIKANDI-VILLAGER The river is dry and the water holes empty.

KUNTHI-VILLAGER The shaman must tell us what to do.

(Enter Urvasi-Shaman dancing)

KUNTHI-VILLAGER (Greeting the shaman in the traditional way) Oh Great Seer, we have come to you because we are in trouble and need your wisdom and advice.

URVASI-SHAMAN What do you desire of me?

KUNTHI-VILLAGER It is the terrible drought. We are dying. Please help us.

(The Shaman throws the bones. All the Villagers participate in the ceremony)

URVASI-SHAMAN The ancestors are angry. You are harbouring an evil witch in your midst. She has brought the drought. The men of this village must bring her to the place of sacrifice just before sundown. Women stay away; you are not allowed in the sacrificial clearing. I will cleanse the witch, her blood will cleanse the land, (Looks at sky) and then it will rain. (The Shaman leaves)

(The Villagers begin hypnotic song and dance, which prepares them for the acts they are about to commit. They exit dancing. Enter Hidimba looking for herbs. Radha comes rushing in.)

HIDIMBA Radha, what's the matter?

RADHA The men are coming for you. You have to hide. I think they mean to kill you.

HIDIMBA Here's your chance to explode a myth.

RADHA This no time for jokes. Come on. Let's get away from here. They want to take you to the sacrificial place; they are to kill you at sundown.

HIDIMBA Is that what the Shaman told them to do?

RADHA Yes, come on now. We must hurry.

HIDIMBA Did he say it would rain after the sacrifice?

RADHA Yes. But we haven't time for this now.

HIDIMBA That's a wily old bird. Look at the sky.

RADHA Hidimba, are you mad! The men are coming. Can't you hear them? You're in danger.

HIDIMBA My dear Radha, you have lived here all your life, surely you have learned to read the sky. Look and tell me what you see.

RADHA (Quite frustrated) Yes, yes. I see the clouds, but they mean nothing. They don't produce rain.

HIDIMBA Do you see where the clouds are coming from?

RADHA Over the mountain. Over the mountain! That means it is going to rain. Wonderful! (The singing of the villagers becomes louder.) We've got to get out of here and hide. After it rains, we will come out again.

HIDIMBA And miss all the fun! No, let's join them

RADHA Are you mad?

HIDIMBA I sincerely hope so. Here. (Hands Radha a villager mask and puts one on herself) They won't find us. We'll become invisible in the crowd.

(The men, singing and dancing, enter and begin to look for Hidimba. Hidimba and Radha join in the search.)

KUNTHI-VILLAGER She's not here.

GANGA-VILLAGER Radha must have warned her.

URVASI-SHAMAN She must be found. The ritual must be performed as the sun goes down or the ancestors will be very angry and we will all be destroyed. (He closes his eyes and performs ritualised movements) She is close by. I can feel her presence. Search for her. (The men spread out. Their search takes the form of a dance that becomes quite frenzied. They eventually fall into positions of supplication before the shaman. The shaman goes into a trance and speaks in tongues.) I have consulted with the ancestors. They say that if we cannot find the witch, there is another amongst us who is evil. (He looks around the group. Everyone trembles with fear. Then he points to Sikandi who is not wearing a mask.) That is the one. Take him to the sacrificial place and prepare him.

(The Villagers grab hold of Sikandi)

SIKANDI No, no. Stop!

BRIHANNALA (Also not in a mask) No, stop! He is not the evil one.

GANGA-VILLAGER The ancestors have chosen him. He will be our sacrifice.

(They carry him into the forest. Brihannala fights to free Sikandi. The villagers overpower Brihannala. Radha and Hidimba hold him prisoner as the procession moves towards the sacrificial spot.)

URVASI-SHAMAN Get him ready (He looks at the sky) or it will be too late.

(Some villagers pull off some of Sikandi's clothing. The shaman chants and performs some rites and then asks the villagers to hold Sikandi in a horizontal position so he can be stabbed through the heart. During this process, Brihannala has been struggling and shouting. As the Shaman raises his knife and is about to plunge it into Sikandi, Radha and Hidimba let go of Brihannala who runs forward and stops the shaman. Some of the villagers grab hold of Brihannala and threaten to kill him. Radha and Hidimba fight off the villagers holding Sikandi and pull him to safety. Then they unmask and reveal themselves.)

HIDIMBA Stop! You wanted me for the sacrifice. Well, here I am.

VILLAGERS Hidimba!

URVASI-SHAMAN Seize the woman! We will not have time to prepare her. The hour of the sacrifice has almost passed. (He raises his knife.)

BRIHANNALA (Grabs the knife and throws it aside.) You don't know what you're doing. First you wanted to sacrifice Hidimba, then Sikandi, now it's Hidimba again. It doesn't seem to matter who you kill.

RADHA (To Villagers) No, it doesn't. He just needs to kill someone to make you believe in his power. But look the time has come and gone. The hour of the sacrifice is over.

VILLAGERS (Wailing) We have lost our chance for rain. We are all going to perish. And it's all your fault. (Some point at Hidimba, some at Radha, some at Sikandi, some at Brihannala)

URVASI-SHAMAN (Pointing at Hidimba and Radha) Seize those women. They must be punished for entering the sacred place. They have defiled the sacred grounds.

(Villagers grab hold of Radha and Hidimba just as it begins to rain)

BRIHANNALA Stop! Can't you feel the rain?

SIKANDI It's raining! It's raining! You don't have to kill for rain.

VILLAGERS (Feeling the rain on their bodies) I feel the raindrops. It's raining! It's raining! (They revel in the rain for a few moments)

RADHA (Turning to Shaman) You knew it was going to rain and you wanted us to believe that you had the power to make it rain. You blamed Hidimba for the drought.

HIDIMBA I don't have any power to control nature. Neither do you. But we both know how to read the sky.

RADHA That is something we can all learn. Instead of being victims of our fears, we can learn to understand and take control of our lives. Then we will be free.

KUNTHI-VILLAGER I am glad it is raining. I don't know why the ancestors took pity on us ...

GANGA-VILLAGER It was because our Shaman was threatened. They did it to save his life.

RADHA No, that's not true. It had nothing to do with ancestors and shamans and magic.

(Kunthi begins a chant in praise of the ancestors and the shaman. The villagers carry him off on their shoulders in triumph. Radha stands gaping incredulously.)

HIDIMBA (Laughing) There you are. You have exploded the myth. (She puts an arm around Radha) Oh, give up Radha. You can't change everything.

RADHA Yes, I can and I will. I believe that we can turn this world into an Eden again and I am going to work for that.

SIKANDI Radha, you are right. I will help you.

BRIHANNALA So will I.

HIDIMBA She's not asking for much. She just wants to change the world.

BRIHANNALA
Hidimba, I understand why you are cynical. We talk about freedom and yet we are full of prejudices. I was actually willing to believe you were a witch. Please forgive me.

HIDIMBA Nothing to forgive. Actually, I am a witch. (The others laugh) I am you know. I don't live in cages the way you do. That's why people pick on me. They envy me my freedom.

RADHA But then you're all alone.

HIDIMBA And free. (Exits laughing and singing, I have overcome)

RADHA (Shouting after her) Not if you're alone.

SIKANDI (Looking out over audience)
Someone is coming. Is it another escapee from the Epic?

BRIHANNALA It's Draupadi.

RADHA (Running forward) She's come back. I'm delighted. This calls for a celebration. I'll round up the others. (Exits)

BRIHANNALA (Coming forward to greet Draupadi)
Have you come back to stay?

DRAUPADI (Wearily) Yes.

SIKANDI I'm glad.

DRAUPADI You're glad! I thought I was in your way.

SIKANDI No. We need you here.

BRIHANNALA I felt very guilty when you went away. I thought it was my fault.

DRAUPADI No, it was my fault. I didn't really understand. I was no better than Vyasa and the characters from the Epic.

BRIHANNALA Why do you say that?

DRAUPADI Because of how I feel about you.

SIKANDI I think I'll go and help Radha.

DRAUPADI No, please stay. This concerns you too. I was jealous of you.

BRIHANNALA We didn't blame you.

DRAUPADI But I blamed you. I felt you betrayed me. What I didn't realise was that I had blamed you even in the Epic. I never admitted it, even to myself. I was deeply wounded when you insisted on sharing me with your brothers. Even after your mother admitted that she had spoken impulsively and in ignorance, you made us all adhere to her words.

BRIHANNALA But I didn't have a choice.

DRAUPADI I understand that now. You were bound by the structure of the Epic and so was I. That is why I kept silent.

SIKANDI Did you speak up when you went back now?

DRAUPADI I still couldn't. I was back in that structure, locked into that pattern again. But this time I was aware of it. I found I was standing outside of myself, watching myself going through the motions. I couldn't get involved. I could see that we were all in cages of customs and traditions.

BRIHANNALA But we need customs and traditions.

DRAUPADI Not dead ones. When they lose their meaning and become magical rites that we perform out of superstitious fear, they distort and deform us.

SIKANDI What about the others in the Epic? Don't they question?

DRAUPADI I don't know. Perhaps they feel alienated but they don't question. I looked at Gandhari and I thought she was right to wear a blindfold. That way she could close her eyes to her oppression. (Uncertainly) But perhaps she was wearing the blindfold because she was grateful to have her life structured for her.

SIKANDI Whatever her reason, she cannot be herself.

DRAUPADI I am glad that even in the Epic, I was not a

subservient woman like her. I wouldn't be here now, if I had been.

BRIHANNALA I wouldn't be here either if I had been straight throughout the Epic.

DRAUPADI That is the way I wanted you. (Brihannala moves away from her slightly.) When I went back to the Epic, I realised that I had been programmed to want you: a romantic ideal, Arjun, hero, protector, lover, destroyer in one. An illusion. Was my love an illusion too? As long as I am confused about that, I do not feel I have genuine love to offer. I have to work my way out of illusion. So I still have a long way to go.

BRIHANNALA (Taking her hand)
Draupadi, I love you ... you are my beloved sister, my friend, my mentor.

DRAUPADI (Taking Sikandi's hand and placing it over Brihannala's) And I will learn to love you both as friends and brothers. I am happy that you have found yourselves and each other.

(All the other players rush in)

KUNTHI (Rushing to embrace Draupadi) Draupadi, I am so glad you have come back.

GANGA (Embracing Draupadi) My dear sister, we missed you dreadfully.

HIDIMBA So you flew the coop again.

SUBHADRA (Embracing Draupadi)
I am so happy to see you. If you hadn't come back, I think I would have weakened and gone back too.

RADHA Rubbish, you've been having too much fun here. (Embracing Draupadi) I'm glad the old sergeant major has returned.

DRAUPADI (Laughs) When I went back, I kept looking for you. I missed your wisdom and advice. It was hard to know that I could never speak to you because you were only a footnote.

RADHA
So you came back for me. And here I thought you were pining for Brihannala.

DRAUPADI I missed you all and most of all, I missed myself. (She flings off sari and wig) Burn these. I never want to see them again.

KUNTHI No, no, they go back into the museum.

DRAUPADI And this time they'll stay there.

HIDIMBA I thought this was a celebration. Where's the music?

RADHA Hidimba, of all people, going for a stereotyped ending! What's happening here?
(They sing and dance)

THE END

UDF Revues

1983

Introduction to UDF Revues

In the 1960s, the Apartheid Government established the National Indian Council (1964) and the Coloured Representative Council (1968), advisory bodies to which it appointed members. Though there were demonstrations against these structures, opportunists, willing to collaborate with the Apartheid Government, accepted appointment to the councils. About fifteen years later, the government to demonstrate its commitment to democracy to a world that had imposed sanctions on South Africa, announced that the Indian community would be allowed to choose the members of the council and there would be elections to this structure. As the Council was part of the government's separate development scheme with no real power, the Indian Congresses mounted a campaign to educate people about this dummy body and at mass meetings exhorted people to boycott the elections. In 1981, when there were sufficient candidates to make it worthwhile, elections were held and only about 2% of the people voted. Though the boycott campaign had been a great success, people had been elected and there was now a South African Indian Council (SAIC).

Immediately after the SAIC elections, still determined to convince the world that separate development is democratic, the Government announced its plan for a new constitution in the President's Council's (PC) Proposals. A Tri-Cameral Parliament, would be established with three separate chambers, one for Whites, one for Coloureds and one for Indians and matters specific to each race group would be discussed in these separate racial chambers. Matters that required joint discussions would be discussed in the President's Council to which the President appointed twenty-five (White) members, the White Parliament elected twenty members, the Coloured Parliament, ten, and the Indian Parliament, five. In effect, there could be no opposition from Coloureds and Indians as they could always be outvoted. Africans were left out of the PC Proposals, as the government believed that it had catered adequately for African people in providing Town Councils and Homelands that were under its control. This system of separate development was meant to demonstrate to the international community that South Africa was a democracy with universal suffrage.

The Rev Allan Boesak and the Indian Congresses rejected the proposals and began a massive boycott campaign that united all activists, Black, White, Coloured and Indian. The Work-in-Progress (WIP) Theatre Company became involved in the campaign and from April 1983 put on performances of *The Masterplan*, a revue that depicted the onerous Section 10 regulations and the fraudulent nature of the PC Proposals. In August 1983, the United Democratic Front (UDF) was launched and formally brought all organisations opposed to apartheid under one umbrella. WIP Theatre Company joined the UDF.

The Masterplan, written at the request of the Natal Indian Congress (NIC), was first performed at a celebration in April 1983 to welcome back Terror Lekota, who had been released from prison. After this initial performance, the revue was performed at NIC mass meetings. In September 1983, it was banned a week before a fund-raising function and *Chicken Licken* was written to take its place. In response to a request, Alan's Coon Carnival was written for the Coloured community. Finally, I was asked to devise a show for a group of youngsters from Lamontville and together we improvised a revue entitled *Freedom Train*. As this was not a scripted piece, it did not survive.

The revues were based on Sheena Duncan's papers on Section 10 provisions, influx control regulations and the homelands policy – the attempts to turn South Africa into a White homeland by denying African people citizenship

Muthal Naidoo
2008

The Masterplan

(1983)

The Masterplan is a didactic piece. Critics tended to label all work by black theatre artists as agit prop, protest theatre, didactic. I do not believe that most of my plays were protest plays. With the exceptions of **We 3 Kings**, which is a satire based on the South African Indian Council elections of 1981, and **Luci's Dilemma**, a farce that lampoons apartheid, my plays examine the influence of apartheid on people's understanding of who they are, how they relate to others, what they believe and how they act.

The UDF Revues written at the time of the President's Council's (PC) Proposals for a Tri-Cameral Parliament, were clearly didactic in intent. The first of the revues, **The Masterplan**, was written at the request of The Natal Indian Congress¹, which had just been involved in an Anti-SAIC campaign calling for a boycott of elections to the South African Indian Council, and was embarking on a campaign to oppose the PC proposals. The WIP Theatre Company² performed the revue at mass meetings. It was intended to make people aware of the fraudulent nature of the PC proposals and to dissuade them from voting.

When **The Masterplan** was banned, I wrote **Chicken Licken** to replace it but focused on the opportunism of people who chose to collaborate with the apartheid government by standing for election to the Tri-Cameral parliament. Alan's Coon Carnival, about collaboration in the Coloured community followed **Chicken Licken**. The fourth revue, **Freedom Train**, improvised with a group of youngsters from Lamontville, was also performed at a UDF function. It was a revue that included incidents from the lives of Luthuli and Mandela and revisited the process by which the Freedom Charter was drawn up.

I am not sure that **The Masterplan** will make much sense to people today. Reading the background material obtained from Sheena Duncan of the Black Sash may help.

Muthal Naidoo
2008

¹ A key organisation in the formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF)

² WIP joined the UDF

Natal Indian Congress

(Founded by Mahatma Gandhi in 1894)

Phones:

(President) C. SEWPERSHAD - 0322 - 329
(Gen. Secretary) R. RAMESAR - 61981 - 286981
(Treasurer) DR. F.M. MEER - 66667 - 284775

P.O. BOX 48117
QUALBERT
DURBAN

26th April

19.83

Dr. Muthal Naidoo.

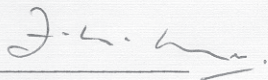
Dear Muthal,

The Natal Indian Congress would like to sincerely thank you for acceding to our request to show your play "Master Plan" at our Fund Raising Dinner. The play was thoroughly enjoyed by all members of the Executive and our feed back from members of the audience would indicate that it was very well received by them as well.

It is the hope of the Executive that your play be shown as widely as possible so that the message of "Master Plan" reaches as many of our people as possible.

The N.I.C. is willing to assist, in this regard.

Yours sincerely,

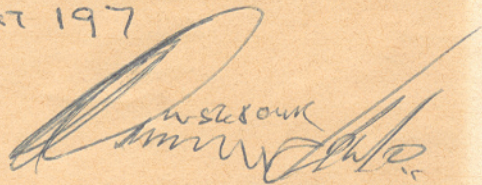


Dr. F.M. Meer.

DURBAN.

83-05-27.

IN TERMS OF SECTION 17
OF ACT 42/1974 ONE COPY OF
SCRIPT OF PLAY ^{THE} "MASTER PLAN"
TAKEN FROM DR MUTUAL NABOO.
FOR DECISION BY A COMMITTEE
REFERRED TO IN SEC 4 OF
THE PUBLICATIONS ACT, BY
D/W/O ORMOND, S.A. POLICE
S.A.N.A.B, C.R. SWART SQUARE,
STANGER ST, DURBAN.
TEL 322322 EXT 197


D.W.O. ORMOND

**COMMITTEE
OF CONCERN
(VERULAM)
PRESENTS
An Evening of
Entertainment**

PROGRAMME:

WELCOME

MUSIC

GUEST SPEAKER

MASTERPLAN

Front page of programme

WHAT ARE

In 1982 the President's Council proposed a new constitution for South Africa. These proposals are explained in the diagram. The Indian people will have to vote for an Indian parliament, the Coloured people for a Coloured parliament and the same for the Whites. There is no provision for African people in the proposals.

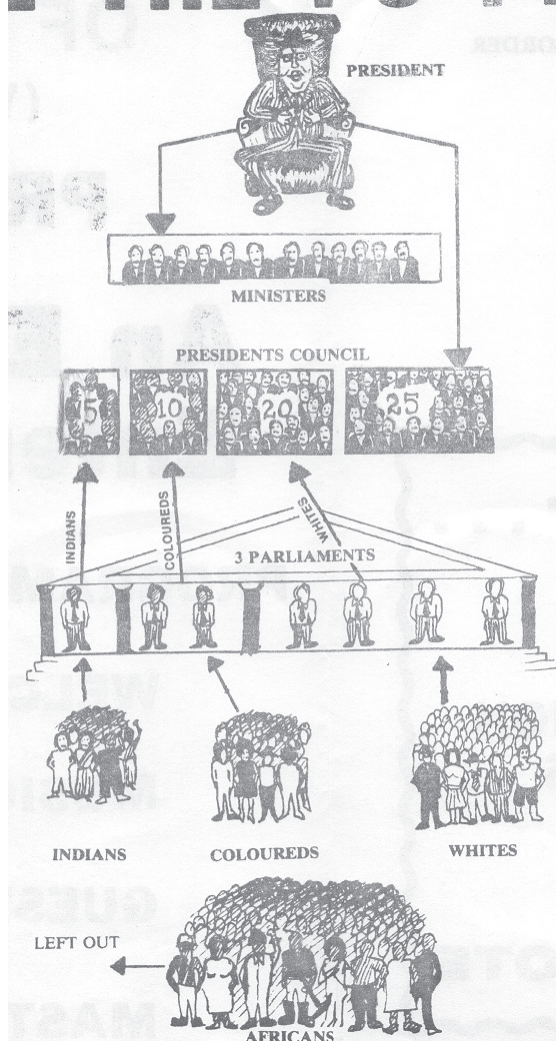
There will be 3 separate parliaments but they will be different in size. As the drawing shows, for every 4 whites in parliament there will be only 2 Coloureds and 1 Indian. This means that Whites will have more votes than Indian and Coloureds put together.

Each Parliament will discuss things of interest to themselves only e.g. the Indian Parliament will discuss Indian Education, Indian Welfare, Indian Culture etc. They have no power to discuss things of national importance like budget, defence etc. These will be discussed by the 3 parliaments together, where the Whites are in the majority. Thus real power still lies in the hands of Whites



LEFT

THE PC PROPOSALS?



The next part of the plan shows the President, the Ministers and the Presidents Council. The President will be chosen by the Parliaments. Because whites have more votes, the President will most likely be white. He will have a lot of power. He will hand pick all the Ministers, e.g. Minister of Health, Minister of Community Development and others.

The President's Council, which will help the President run the country consists of 60 people, 25 of whom will be chosen by the President, there will be 20 Whites and only 10 Coloureds and 5 Indians. This means 45 Whites against 15 Coloureds and Indians put together.

This plan shows clearly how the Government is trying to divide us by bringing in the Coloureds and Indians, but leaving out the Africans people. So we find we are brought into Government, but it is planned in such a way that we still don't have any say.

Inside of programme

WITH THE PC PROPOSALS:

YOUR CHILD MAY HAVE TO GO TO THE BORDER

(COMPULSORY MILITARY TRAINING)

**YOU WILL HAVE THE VOTE
BUT**

YOU WILL BE FORCED TO PAY , . .

HIGHER RATES

HIGHER RENTS

HIGH TRANSPORT COSTS

A VOTE WITHOUT . . .

MORE FOOD

BETTER JOBS

EQUAL EDUCATION

DECENT HOUSES

LOW RENTS

EQUAL RIGHTS

. . . IS A SHAM VOTE

Back page of programme

From Sheena Duncan. The Masterplan makes reference to this case.

The Masterplan

Cast: Five Actors and a Guitarist. Each actor plays many parts.

The original cast consisted of three women and two men. Roles were allocated without reference to gender.

Actor One

Baas, Bendawhile, Policeman, Urban Black, Black person

Actor Two

Minister of Group Development, Black person, Florence Dilemma

Actor Three

Broeder, Black person, Zimbabwean, Charles Fortune, Coloured MP Turncoat

Actor Four

Broeder, Black person, Toby, Work-seeker

Actor Five

Black person, Dr D, Broeder, President of Puppetswana, Urban Black, Indian MP Applesamy

Props

Hats (made of cardboard) indicate change of character:

Baas – white top hat

Broeders – white hats

President of Puppetswana – black top hat

ApplesamyNaidoo, Indian MP – black and white hat with some cloth tied around to suggest a turban-hat

Turncoat, Coloured MP – brown hat

Toby – a black cap with his name on it

A white mortarboard for Professor Florence Dilemma

Special black caps for Urban Blacks

White police caps for policemen

6 chairs, a pie, hats, grass skirts

At the beginning, the six chairs are placed upstage centre, the two middle chairs face the audience, the remaining four face the back of the stage.

The actors sit with their backs to the audience when 'off-stage.' The two chairs facing the audience are used as a platform when needed; they are used to give Baas prominence. The chairs are moved about as required in the scenes.

All other props are mimed

Music: Provided by a guitarist on stage. Appropriate popular tunes accompany the lyrics of the songs.

Lighting: Stage and auditorium lights remain on during the entire performance

ACTOR ONE (Seated in auditorium, jumps up and turns to people around him) Hey, stop talking nonsense here. We want one man, one vote.

TWO, THREE, FOUR, FIVE (Entering from back of the hall, join 1 and march about auditorium haranguing members of the audience) We want one man, one vote. We want one man, one vote.

(ONE goes on stage and puts on Baas's hat and becomes Baas)

BAAS Hey, what's going on here? Looks like the circus is back in town.

TWO, THREE, FOUR, FIVE We want one man, one vote.

BAAS Hey, there's a woman here too. Hey, meisietjie, kom hier, you're a woman. You also want one man, one vote.

TWO We want universal suffrage!

BAAS (Laughing) But that's what we've given you. Universal suffering!

TWO He who laughs last, will still be alive.

TWO, THREE, FOUR, FIVE (Marching onto stage) We will never give up the struggle for human rights!

(2,3,4,5, go 'off-stage' to put on white hats as Broeders)

THREE (Running in) Baas! Bad news!

BAAS Hey? Wat makeer?

THREE The rugby tour is off!

BAAS What! Why?

THREE They say we discriminate against blacks.

BAAS What business is it of theirs?

TWO (Running in) Baas! Bad news!

BAAS What now?

TWO The cricket tour is off!

FOUR (Running in) Baas! Bad news! All cultural and sporting ties with South Africa have been broken!

BAAS (In a frenzy) But why? Why? Why? What have

we done? What have we done that they haven't already done overseas? Why must they pick on us? Why can't they mind their own business?

THREE They say we must have one man, one vote in South Africa.

BAAS

How can they do that to us? What are we going to do?

TWO Let's give them one man, one vote.

(The others clobber 2)

TREE, FOUR (Beating 2) You fool! You've gone completely bonkers!

BAAS (After knocking 2 out) Now what were we saying?

THREE We want our rugby tours!

FOUR Cricket, tennis!

THREE Re-establish cultural and sporting ties.

FOUR Give us back our sporting life, our cultural life.

THREE, FOUR We want rugby, we want cricket, we want tennis, or we won't vote for you!

BAAS Now what am I going to do?

(Enter 5 as Dr D)

DR D I've got it! Eureka! I've got it!

TWO, THREE, FOUR (Kneel before Dr D and raise their arms in salute) Dr D!

BAAS (Excited) You have! Well, tell me! Tell me! What's the plan?

DR D Let's have mixed sport!

TWO, THREE, FOUR (Jump up menacingly) What!

DR D Yes, mixed sport. That will show we don't discriminate.

TWO, THREE, FOUR (Advancing on DR D) Mixed sport! That's treason!

DR D It's the only way out.

TWO, THREE, FOUR (Darkly) The only way?

DR D Don't worry. I've got it organised. We will choose only men who can make the grade. Make the grade! Get it?

TWO, THREE, FOUR (Suddenly get it and burst out laughing) Blacks don't make the grade!

(4 goes off to put on Toby hat)

DR D Besides Blacks will refuse anyway.

TWO, THREE Why?

DR D They're in on this boycott business.

TWO But if we don't have mixed teams, how can we prove we don't discriminate?

DR D We can say that we don't discriminate; the Blacks are discriminating against us. Racism in reverse!

BAAS Excellent Dr D. Organise the tours. We'll break this damn boycott.

FOUR (As Toby, comes forward) Baas, I heard about the new move to integrate sport. I'm here to sign up.

TWO, THREE What! (To Dr D) We thought you had it organised!

DR D Gentlemen, I am just as surprised as you. The damn Blacks can't unite about anything, not even the boycott!

TOBY Well, what do you say? Do I get a place on the team?

DR D (Shortly) Of course. Of course. You can play right back. Right back. (Winks at the others) Let's get the TV reporters here. We must show the world that we have mixed sport.

(One, Two, Three don white hats become TV crew. 3 is the interviewer.)

INTERVIEWER Well Toby, how do you feel about getting your Springbok colours?

(Dr D hands Toby a sheet from which he has to read the answers)

TOBY (Reading) Thank you, Baas. I am so grateful for the opportunity.

INTERVIEWER What do you think of the lies being spread overseas that our sport is not integrated?

TOBY (Reading) When they see me, they will know it is just communist propaganda.

INTERVIEWER And what position do you play, Toby?

TOBY (Not reading) Right back. Riiiiight Back.

INTERVIEWER How do you feel about your coming trip overseas?

TOBY I shall carry the flag proudly, (improvising) and I'll shoot every bloody bast ...

INTERVIEWER (Hastily) Thank you. Thank you. It's wonderful to see such a wonderful patriotic spirit. (Turns to camera) Well, we have just heard from Toby, and we can see that the country is moving along on a tidal wave of change, breaking down the barriers erected by the British ... (He is distracted by Toby who has raised his arms high over his head and is struggling to free his wrists. Interviewer whispers) Will someone get those handcuffs off Toby. (Interviewer gets in front of Toby and continues quickly) ... and establishing the kind of links only the Afrikaner is capable of.

(Dr D removes handcuffs and actors put on caps ready for a cricket match)

DR D (Moving forward) We have a special treat for our viewers. You are going to see Toby in action. We turn our cameras to the match being played at Kingsmead at this very moment.

(He exchanges his hat for a cap and takes up his position as bowler and the match begins)

THREE (As Charles Fortune, cricket commentator) It is a beautiful day here at Kingsmead. Not a cloud in the sky. The scene before me is a feast of vibrant colours. Padlock has just been dismissed for forty-four. And here comes Toby, to entertain us while we're waiting for the next batsman.

(Toby jumps in to do a magic trick. Music in the background. Toby shows empty hands, then covers one hand with imaginary handkerchief, uncovers hand and reveals an imaginary ball which he holds up high)

ONE, FIVE (Laugh and clap) The new ball!

(Toby throws ball to Captain Bend- awhile (One) and runs off waving to the crowd.)

CHARLES FORTUNE Toby has just handed the new ball to the captain and there he goes, back to the pavilion, waving to the crowd. What a hero! (Two comes in to

bat and Five bowls him out) Another batsman out. (Toby jumps in again) Ha, ha, ha, here comes Toby again. I wonder what little miracle he has up his sleeve this time.

(Toby again shows empty hands, then jumps up, grabs a cricket bat out of the air and positions himself in front of the wicket)

TOBY (Shouts) Bowl!

(FIVE turns to Captain Bendawhile in shock. Bendawhile comes up to Toby. A serious argument begins)

CHARLES FORTUNE Good heaven! Toby wants to bat. Captain Bendawhile has gone over to ask him to leave the field. Things have taken a nasty turn. I'll get in closer to hear what is happening. (He takes up a position between the Capt and Toby, holding the mike alternately to each.)

TOBY I want to play. I'm tired of sitting around

BENDAWHILE Look Toby, you've been a very good boy, why start trouble now?

TOBY I want to play. I'm the ace batsman in Bobbejaanskloof!

BENDAWHILE Aren't you forgetting something, old chap? What position do you play in this team? (Toby hangs his head.) Well?

TOBY Right back. Right back.

BENDAWHILE Will you kindly take up your position please?

(Toby angry hits out at Bendawhile and a fight begins. The other cricketers come in and throw Toby out)

CHARLES FORTUNE And now for an action replay of the highlights of the game.

(Toby and the others run in backwards and go through the fight again in slow motion)

CHARLES FORTUNE Bendawhile is really a most competent captain. Well, with that problem neatly solved, we return you to the studios.

(ONE puts on Baas's top hat, FIVE puts on DR D hat. TWO, THREE, FOUR put on white hats and march around the stage)

TWO, THREE, FOUR (Marching) Hooray for mixed sport! Hooray for mixed sport!

(Baas and Dr D come in together)

BAAS Right Dr D. Organise the tours

DR D Yes sir! (FOUR puts imaginary telephone in front of Dr D. He dials) Hello Britain, Europe, America, Australia, I am proud to announce that we now have mixed sport in South Africa. So its okay for you guys to come out here...What! I see...Okay, then we'll come out there....What do you mean?...You sons of b..b.. baboons. (Bangs phone down) What do you think of them – bringing politics into sport!

BAAS I don't understand. We're giving them integrated sport. What more do they want?

DR D They say, we don't have one man, one vote. I'm going off to figure a way out of this. Daai bliksem, Toby, het niks gehelp nie. (Marches out)

TWO, THREE, FOUR (Crying)
We want rugby, tennis, cricket. Boo hoo, boo hoo, boo hoo.

BAAS Be reasonable. I'm trying. What more do you expect?

TWO, THREE, FOUR Give us back our rugby, tennis, cricket ...

BAAS Now what do I do?

TWO Give the Blacks one man, one vote.

(They all jump on 2 and knock 2 out again, then move into position for blue Moon. Baas, lead singer. THREE, FOUR, FIVE back up singers)

Blue moon
Wo,wo,wo,wo
You saw me standing alone
Wo, wo, wo, wo
Without a dream in my heart
Wo, wo, wo, wo
Without a hope of my own
Do, be, do, wa, wa, wa wa-ah
Blue Moon
Wo, wo, wo, wo
You knew just what I was there
for
Wo, wo, wo, wo
You heard me saying a prayer
for
Wo, wo, wo, wo
the only policy I care for
Wo, wo, wo, wo

TWO (Springing up suddenly and putting on Minister's hat)

And suddenly

Doob, doob, doob, doob

Appeared before me

Doob, doob, doob, doob

The only policy my heart

Doob, doob, doob, doob

Could ever adopt

Doob, doob, doob, doob

Then as I whispered

Doob, doob, doob, doob

Please believe me

Doob, doob, doob, doob

And when I looked

Doob, doob, doob, doob

The moon turned to green and gold

Wo, wo, wo, wo

BAAS AND MINISTER

Blue moon

Wo, wo, wo, wo

Now we're no longer alone

Wo, wo, wo, wo

Without a plan in our minds

Wo, wo, wo, wo

Without a scheme of our own

Wo, wo, wo, wo

(When the song ends THREE, FOUR, FIVE rush to sit before Baas and 2)

THREE, FOR, FIVE What's the plan? What's the plan?

MINISTER Now just be calm everyone. You know everyone is demanding one man, one vote...

THREE, FOR, FIVE And you want to give the Blacks the vote (They advance on 2)

MINISTER Wait, before you clobber me again, listen! I have a plan. Just listen to the policy statement and you'll know that I am still a loyal member of the party. Asseblief tog, gee my a kansie.

BAAS (Pushing Thre, Four, Five back) Give him a chance!

MINISTER Here, Baas, the policy statement. Would you do it for us?

BAAS (Singing, doing an imitation of Elvis Presley)

If you're white, you're all right

If you're brown, stick around

If you're black, git back, git back

(Baas and Chorus)

If you're white, you're all right

If you're brown,

stick around

If you're black, git back, git back

BAAS (Congratulating 2) Brilliant. An elegant statement of our policy.

THREE Ja, but there's things I don't like. What's this, if you're brown, stick around?

BAAS Don't complain, man. Just listen to this part. It's my favourite. (Sings) If you're Black, git back, git back. Lekker, nè?

THREE But what about the browns. Wat die duiwel must they stick around for?

FOUR Ja, come on explain yourself.

BAAS I don't care about the browns. I like this (Sings) 'git back, git back.'

MINISTER Why are you worrying about the browns? Die bruin gevaar is niks nie. We must worry about the big danger, die swart gevaar.

FIVE You mean die rooi gevaar.

THREE Die swart gevaar

FIVE Rooi gevaar.

THREE Swart gevaar.

BAAS (Intervening) Swart gevaar, rooi gevaar, what's the difference? They mean the same to us anyhow.

MINISTER Anyway, I've got a plan for the browns but that is not urgent. We must deal with the blacks first. Come here. Let me explain.

(They get into a rugby scrum and Two explains the plan. They break out of it laughing, hugging, kissing and slapping each other on the back)

THREE, FOUR, FIVE You are quite right. That's what we must do. Give them one man, one vote. Share power. Then we'll get back our rugby, tennis and cricket, our cultural and sporting ties with the rest of the world.

MINISTER We'll have to explain the new policy to the rest of the mothers ...(Three, Four, Five frown and harrumph) ... I mean, brothers.

BAAS Right. Call for a party convention.

(The actors set up for a meeting. Three, Four, Five go into audience)

BAAS Ladies and gentlemen, we have been severely criticised for not caring about the welfare of our black people. We have been criticised in the International Press but we know how much we have done for them. Have we not given them their own areas? Have we not given them their own tribal identities? Have we not shared with them the fruits of civilization? Yet we are accused of oppression and exploitation. To put an end to these vicious lies once and for all, we have a new plan. I give you, our Minister of Group Development, who will explain the new policy.

MINISTER Yes, we have devised a new Homelands Policy. This will give the black people a say in their own government. They will have the right to decide their own destinies. They will have the vote and they will be free and independent.

THREE, FOUR, FIVE (In the audience) You're mad! You're crazy! (They advance on 2)

BAAS (Motioning them to stop) No, no. It's all right. Alles sal reg kom. We must endorse change. Change is the name of the game.

MINISTER

Ja, don't you see how we've changed things. We've changed from apartheid, to separate development, to homelands, to sovereign states, to an Afrikaner Empire in South Africa – apartheid.

THREE, FOUR FIVE Yay. Hooray for change. We're all for change, as long as nothing changes.

(They march off with Two to get ready for Independence Day celebrations in Puppetswana. Baas moves forward to make an announcement to the audience.)

BAAS Now ladies and gentlemen, to show you how the Homelands Policy works, let us transport you to the Independence Day celebrations of a new sovereign state for the Blacks. Today, Puppetswana becomes independent.

(Actors in grass skirts, line up and sing the Puppetswana national anthem, holding a burning match to represent the flame of freedom.)

Puppetswana National Anthem
I love to go a wandering
In Puppetswana land
I live so free in my homeland
No work, no job, no food.

Puppetswaan, Puppetswaan, Puppetswaan
Puppetswahahahahahana'
This is our freedom day.

(The actors do a tribal dance to the following chant, 'Puppetswana, Puppetswana, (faster) Puppetswana, Puppetswana (triumphantly) PUPPETSWANA!)

ACTORS (Run off shouting) 'The Baas is here! The Baas is here!)

(One becomes Baas, Five becomes The President of Puppetswana. Two, Three, Four, form a guard of honour and sing Die Stem. When the Baas takes up his position, Three, four, Five jump up and down, cheering and waving at Baas)

TWO, THREE, FOUR, Hooray, Baas! (They drop down on hands and knees before Baas)

PRESIDENT (Sidles up to the Baas whilst Two, Three, and Four have their heads down) Did you bring it? (Baas pays him, he counts money and pockets it.) Now my people of Puppetswana (Two, Three, Four sit up to listen), we are very proud this day for we are now a sovereign independent state. Sê dankie vir die Baas.

TWO, THREE, FOUR (Kowtowing)

Dankie Baas! Dankie Baas! Dankie Baas!

THREE (Suddenly jumps up) What are we thanking him for? I still don't have a job. Nothing has changed.

PRESIDENT Get him. Get him. (Two, Four grab hold of Three) He's a terrorist. Come to spread communist lies! Shoot him!

TWO But we don't have a gun.

(Baas shoots 3, pretending it was an accident. 2,4 stare at 3 lying on the ground)

PRESIDENT Continue with the celebration. (Two, Four still shocked) Come on, look happy. This is a joyful occasion. Go on, you'll be on TV.

(Two, Three, Four, Five form a line singing Puppetswana Anthem. They stand in front of Baas who stands over them controlling them like a puppeteer. They do the puppet dance as they chant the following)

Puppet Chant
Puppetswana, Puppetswana
As you can see
We are now free
Puppetswana, Puppetswana

As you can see
We are now free

(Baas comes forward to address audience as Two, Three, Four, Five put on white police caps and stand to attention.)

BAAS Now that Puppetswana has become independent, we can get those Puppetswanians who are residing in South Africa and send them back to their sovereign state. Go out there and get your man.

(Two, Three, Four, Five salute Baas, storm into the audience and fire the following questions at different people)

TWO, THREE, FOUR, FIVE You there. You speak Tswana. Ha, you're from Puppetswana! Where's your passport? Hey, you! What are you doing in this area? You work here? Where's your reference book? No reference book. Go back to Puppetswana.
You there. Reference book! Hmm! You have Section 10 (1) a. all right. Get along now.
Hey you. Puppetswanian, where's your passport? You don't belong here.

(They return to the stage. Four removes white police cap and becomes Piet. Two, Three, Five are off-stage. Piet walks around the stage, he is walking to work. One puts on Policeman's cap)

ONE (Policeman) Hey, you there. Stop. What are you doing here?

PIET I work here

POLICEMAN Let me see your reference book. Where were you born?

PIET Here.

POLICEMAN And your father?

PIET Here

POLICEMAN And your grandfather?

PIET Here

POLICEMAN What language do you speak?

PIET Tswana

POLICEMAN Then you're from Puppetswana

PIET No, I'm from here.

POLICEMAN If you speak Tswana, you're from Puppetswana. This reference book is no good.

PIET There is nothing wrong with my dompass. I'm registered at the Administration Board.

POLICEMAN Yes, but you can't have a reference book. You are a Puppet-swanian. You must have a passport. Go to Puppetswana and get a passport.

PIET But I'm from here. I have never been to Puppetswana. I don't know anyone there.

POLICEMAN Get along now before I arrest you as an illegal alien. (Exit)

(Enter 3 as Andries)

PIET This is bad. What am I going to do?

ANDRIES You think you got troubles. Yours is nothing compared to mine.

PIET Yours can't be worse than mine. I have live here all my life, now they tell me I don't belong here. Because this Puppetswana is independent, they're kicking me out of Soweto.

ANDRIES At least you can go to Puppetswana. Where can I go? I too was born in Soweto, but because my father was born in Zimbabwe, they tell me I must get a passport from Zimbabwe.

PIET So we're in the same boat.

ANDRIES No man, we're not. I'm in no boat. I can't stay here and I can't get over there.
(He sings)

I was born in South Africa
But I'm a citizen of Zimbabwe
Never left South Africa
But I'm a citizen of Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe they don't know
That I am one of them
In South Africa they tell me
That I am one of them (Jerks thumb over his shoulder)

So I'm going to Zimbabwe
But nobody knows me there
I'm going for a passport
So I can come back here

But I can't get over there
I haven't got a passport

To get me over there
I need a bloody passport.

ANDRIES (Speaking over music)
And I can't get a passport
Because I'm living here
But I must get over there
Because I need a passport
So I can come back here.

(All actors sing)

I was born in South Africa
But I'm a citizen of Zimbabwe
Never left South Africa
But I'm a citizen of Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe they don't know
That I am one of them
In South Africa they tell me
That I am one of them (Jerk thumbs over shoulders)

ANDRIES So that makes me a boy on the border.
(Lunges forward like a soldier holding a rifle) And I'm
going out there to get those other boys on the border.
(He fires on audience)

(All the actors now rush about on the stage)

FIVE as DANIE Now that Transkei is independent, my
doppass is no good anymore. I have become an illegal
alien. I have to get to Transkei to get a passport. I am a
foreigner in South Africa.

THREE as WILLEM
Now that Boputhatswana is independent, my doppass
is no good anymore. I have become an illegal alien. I
have to get to Boputhatswana to get a passport. I am a
foreigner in South Africa.

TWO as FANIE
Now that Venda is independent, my doppass is no good
anymore. I have become an illegal alien. I have to get to
Venda to get a passport. I am a foreigner in South Africa.

ONE, FOUR But where were you born?

TWO, THREE, FIVE Right here in Soweto

ONE, FOUR So were we.

TWO, THREE, FIVE
Then how did we become foreigners?

FOUR It happened when Puppetswana became
independent.

FIVE When Transkei became independent.

THREE
When Boputhatswana became independent.

TWO When Venda became independent.

(One puts on Baas's hat. Two, Three, Four, Five line up
opposite Baas for Dompas song)

Dompas Song
I say passport
We say doppass
I say foreigner
We say Xhosa
I say homelands
We say dumplands
I say passport
We say doppass

Let's call the whole thing off
Let's call the whole thing off

I say privileges
We say human rights
I say communism We say brotherhood
I say terrorist
We say freedom fighter
I say privileges We say human rights

Let's call the whole thing off
Let's call the whole thing off
Before the bombs go off!

TWO, THREE, FOUR, FIVE
(To audience) If all the homelands become independent,
there won't be any Africans left in South Africa. We'll all
be foreigners. We'll never have the right to vote. We'll
never have power.

BAAS Of course you will. In your own homelands!

TWO, THREE, FOUR, FIVE
Liar

TWO You have robbed us of our birthright

THREE You have made slaves of us.

FOUR The homelands are ghettos; they will never be
free.

FIVE
They are so poor that they will always be dependent on
you.

(Two puts on white hat and becomes Minister of Group Development. Three, Four, Five attack Baas who takes submachine gun and shoots them down.)

MINISTER Why did you shoot them down?

BAAS They were terrorists, foreigners. They have no rights in our country.

MINISTER But what if their governments object?

BAAS They need my permission for that.

MINISTER The President of Puppetswana is waiting outside.

BAAS What for?

MINISTER He has to convince the other homeland chiefs of the advantages of Independence.

BAAS Right. Bring him in. Okay, TV crew set up for the Puppetswana President's message.

(Five puts on black top hat and becomes Puppetswana President. Three, Four put on white hats and become TV crew.)

BAAS Okay President, go ahead.

PRESIDENT Aren't you forgetting something?

BAAS Oh, yes. (Hands over cash) Go ahead.

PRESIDENT Now that Puppetswana is a free and independent state, opportunities for the people have increased. Money is pouring in from all over the world to develop industries. We are now a free and happy people. I urge all you chiefs of Bantustans not to hesitate in making your territory independent. Take the plunge. You too can have a Moon City like ours.

BAAS Right, you can go now.

PRESIDENT (Counting money) I am happy to oblige anytime.

(Three, Four, Five form train. Five puts on white hat.)

BAAS Minister, that Moon City idea of yours was first class. We must get more black artists to appear there. That will break the cultural boycott.

MINISTER I'll attend to it. Now we must get the Blacks to move into their Homelands.

BAAS Yes. The squatter problem is becoming serious.

MINISTER Don't worry. I've got a plan for that. (The train moves up) We'll move them into their homelands in an orderly fashion.

(The train – Three, Four, Five – now goes to different members of the audience)

FIVE Where's your passport? No, not your dompass! No passport! Get on this train. You speak Venda, you're going to Venda. I don't care if you were born and brought up in the Free State, you're a Venda, you're going to Venda. Get on the train.

(Train moves to another part of audience. Five gives white hat to Four)

FOUR Do you have a job? Do you have accommodation? You speak Xhosa, right? Get on this train, you're going to Transkei. I don't care if you were born in Clermont. Get on the train.

(Train moves to another part of audience. Four gives white hat to Three)

THREE You speak Tswana. No Section 10 rights! You don't have a place to stay; you don't have a job. You're going back to Puppetswana. Get on the train. Go on, move!

THREE, FOUR, FIVE Right move along now. Move, move.

(They pretend to whip audience into train as they move along to join 1,2 on stage where they form a line of slaves chained together. They sing Swing Low Sweet Chariot)

Swing low sweet chariot
Coming for to carry me home
Swing low sweet chariot
Coming for to carry me home
I looked over Jordan
And what did I see
Coming for to carry me home
A band of angels
Coming after me
Coming for to carry me home.

ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR, FIVE As sure as hell, I'm gonna die when I get to this homeland.

(Actors get into position for next scene. One is off. Two puts on white hat for Official. Three, Five line up one side, Four on opposite side)

OFFICIAL Right, register here to work in the city. (Exit)

(Three, Five wait in line. They tire and sit down. In the background, music, 'Looking for a job in the city.')

FOUR (Comes up to 5) Hey, is this the place to register for a job in the city? (Five nods) Hey, I'm going to get a job in the city.

FIVE Well sit down and wait.

FOUR No, I want to be ready. The Baas is coming to register us and take us to the city.

FIVE Sit down and wait.

FOUR No, he will come soon.

FIVE I'm waiting too.

FOUR How long you been waiting?

FIVE Two months.

FOUR Two months! I can't wait that long. My family is starving.

FIVE They don't want us now.

FOUR I don't know why they brought me here, to this homeland. It's not my homeland. If I were still in the city, I could get a job.

FIVE They don't want us in the city.

FOUR I'm not going to wait. I'm going to the city to get a job.

FIVE Don't waste you time.

FOUR My family will die if I don't get a job.

(Four walks around the stage, he is walking to the city. Three holds white hat, positions himself with his back to the audience to represent a door.)

FOUR (Knocks on door. Three turns around opening door, and puts on white hat) Have you got a job for me?

THREE Are you registered?

FOUR No, but if you give me a job, I will get registered.

THREE Sorry. I can't take a chance. I'll be fined.

FOUR Please, my family is starving. I must get a job.

THREE And where must I get R5000 if they catch you here? Besides, you don't look hungry. (Slams door)

(Three moves off to opposite side of stage to become white person hiring black workers. Five in line in front of Three)

FOUR I must get a job. (Sees Three and Five and rushes over.) Are there jobs here?

FIVE Yes. But I came first. Get to the back.

FOUR Okay. I'll wait.

THREE Right, I need some men today. (Five presents reference book and Three waves him along. Four presents identity documents) This is not a reference book. This is a passport. You are not registered to work here.

FOUR Give me a job and I will get registered.

THREE (Giving Four a slip of paper) Okay, now go and get registered. (Three goes off.)

FOUR Thank you, baas. (Four goes to get registered. Two comes back as Official and takes up position as at registry office.)

FOUR (Approaching Two2) I got a job. I want to be registered.

OFFICIAL Your reference book. (Four hands over book) This is not a dompass. You are a foreigner. You can't be registered here. Go back to your homeland and get registered there.

FOUR But I got a job!

OFFICIAL If you are not out of here in seventy-two hours, you will be locked up and then deported to your homeland. (Exit)

FOUR (Running and shouting after 2) But I got a job. I can't go back to the homeland. There are no jobs there. I must earn some money.

(Meanwhile Three, Five have arranged themselves in another scene with Two as a white employer looking for workers. Three, Five standing in line. Four joins the line behind Five)

EMPLOYER Right. Who's got 10(1) (a) marked in their reference books. Step this way. You others go home. I don't want you.

FOUR (Calling to Five) Hey, what's this 10 (1) (a)?

FIVE It means me. I have Section 10 (1) (a) rights. I'm an urban black. I don't have to register. I can work anywhere in the city. You don't have section 10 (1) rights? You from the country? (Laughs) I don't have to worry about a job. I can buy a house. I have privileges. I'm different.

FOUR But aren't you my brother?

FIVE Not if you don't have 10 (1). Goodbye mister. (Leaves)

FOUR I must get this 10 (1) (a).

(Two enters as Official)

OFFICIAL You really want a job bad, eh? How much have you got?

FOUR R10

OFFICIAL R10? You must be joking. A reference book costs much more than that.

FOUR You can give me a reference book with 10 (1) (a)?

OFFICIAL It depends. (Makes the money sign with his fingers)

FOUR How much? (Official whispers in 4's ear. 4 is startled. He has a moment of frustration) Okay. I'll get it. Then you're quite sure I'll get a reference book with 10 (1)? 10 (1) a? (Official nodding, leaves) Then I too will be an Urban Black. A sophisticated Urban Black.

(He and 5 put on black caps and sing the Urban Black song)

Urban Black Song

Oh my, I am an urban black
So sleek, so smooth, a cracker jack
I know that I can get a job
Because I'm not a country slob

I know that I can make my way
I qualify for ten one a
Registrations not my scene
That's why I am so cool and mean

I own a little business too
The capital from you know who
And now I am the middle class
That's what it says in my dompass

A city slicker's what I am
Ten one a, a ten one ham
Sophisticated Urban Black
That's me, that's me, that's me
That's US

(All actors don white hats. Baas (One) and Minister (Two) move forward.)

BAAS Well, have we got them all to their own homelands yet?

MINISTER We've started moving them. It'll take a while but it all follows the plan.

BAAS The Masterplan.

(All actors sing the Master Race song)

The Master Race Song
We are the master race
We have the master plan
To make this a safe place
For the whites only clan

We're doing it the right way
Giving blacks freedom
Now all have their say
In their native kingdoms

(Baas speaks the next two lines)
Wasn't it a clever stroke
To make them free and independent folk?

(All the actors sing)
Now this is our land
And only our land
They have their own lands
And those are the homelands

This is now our country
Lily white and pest free.

BAAS This is going to work out fine

MINISTER Now we can move on to Phase two. The new constitutional proposals.

THREE, FOUR, FIVE What's that?

BAAS It's a very clever plan.

MINISTER And for Phase two, I have a new policy statement. It explains the changes we are making. It spells reform. Here Baas, would you like to do it for us.

(Three, Four, Five cheer wildly)

BAAS (Sings)

If you're white, you're all right
If you're brown, stick around.

(Four, Five applaud wildly)

THREE (Frowning) What's this, 'If you're brown, stick around'?

MINISTER That's just it. We exclude the browns by including them.

THREE, FOUR, FIVE We don't understand. Please explain.

MINISTER It's simple. We elect them to parliament.

THREE, FOUR, FIVE (Make a rush for him) What! You're mad!

MINISTER (Struggling) No, calm down. Let me explain.

(The actors form another rugby scrum during which Minister explains the new proposals. They break away laughing, kissing, hugging, slapping each other on the back.)

FOUR (Laughing) Exclude them by including them, ha,ha,ha. Elect them to parliament, ha,ha,ha

(Two puts on Florence Dilemma hat, goes into audience and interviews people. She asks the following questions.)

FLORENCE Well sir/madam, what do you think of the President's Council's Proposals?

Thank you very much. I knew you would say that.

Ah sir/madam, what do you think of Indians and Coloureds having representation in parliament? Yes, very good.

(Florence returns to stage. Three is now an Indian woman.)

FLORENCE (Addressing Three) Well madam, what do you think of the President's Council Proposals.

INDIAN WOMAN (Frowning, very puzzled) Who's getting proposed?

FLORENCE No, no. The President's Council ...

THREE Aw. Council. City Council. Good thing that. They giving us mixed beaches.

FLORENCE Thank you. (Turns to Five, Indian man) Now you, sir. What is your name?

INDIAN MAN Why you want to know my name?

FLORENCE What do you think of the President's Council's Proposals?

INDIAN MAN President who?

FLORENCE

Thank you. (Turning to Four, now Indian Woman 2) Now madam ...

FOUR (Performing for TV camera, waves to someone in audience) Hey Bommie Ucka, I'm on TV.

FLORENCE Now madam, what do you think of having the vote?

INDIAN WOMAN 2 (Staring into camera) Eh, naw, I don't want boat. I want car.

FLORENCE Madam, what do you think of PW ...

INDIAN WOMAN 2 Naw, naw. I don't want VW. I want Mercedes.

FLORENCE (Turning to One, a layabout) Now sir, what do you think of the new constitutional proposals?

LAYABOUT You wanna smoke? Have a pull.

FLORENCE No, no. What do you think ...

LAYABOUT You wanna buy? Grass? No? Reds? Greens? What you want? Barry Whites?

FLORENCE Thank you. Thank you.

(One, Three, Four, Five put on white hats, resume roles as Broeders and gather to receive report from Prof Florence Dilemma.)

FLORENCE Well, gentlemen. I have completed my surveys and I have very good news for you. The Indians and Coloureds are in favour of the new constitutional reforms. 62% of Coloureds and 68% of Indians support the new constitutional proposals.

FIVE How many people did you ask?

FLORENCE I asked Sammy, the butcher, Sammy the gardener, Sammy, the waiter and the leader of the Americans, the leader of the Mafia, the leader of Bad Boys.

FOUR (Coming forward to congratulate Florence) Congratulations, Professor Dilemma. Your surveys are always accurate.

(Three, Five put on their Coloured and Indian MP hats)

BAAS (Comes forward to make an announcement) Ladies and Gentlemen because of the tremendous support from the Indian and Coloured communities, we have now been able to implement our constitutional reforms. Won't you watch with us, the opening of our new three-chamber parliament.

(Actors line up, Baas in front followed by Two, Four, then Three, then Five. They process up an imaginary aisle to the tune of die Stem. When the procession halts and everyone takes his place, Baas speaks.)

BAAS This is an historic occasion.

FIVE (Indian MP ApplesamyNaidoo) I know. The wife already prepared the biryani.

BAAS (Gives ApplesamyNaidoo a stern look) As I was saying, this is an historic occasion. We now have a three-chamber parliament with new chambers for our Coloured and Indian members. Now without further ado, let us take our places in our separate chambers to discuss common issues.

(Baas, Two, Four sit on stage. Three sits in the wings offstage right, Five sits offstage left. Three, Five are not seen)

BAAS Finance first. (Broeders bring pie) This is the financial pie; this is how we divide it. This is for the Coloureds. (Cuts a minute piece which Two takes to Coloured member off stage.) This is for the Indians. (Cuts another minute piece which Four takes to Indian member offstage) And the rest is for the Whites. All in favour say aye.

TWO, FOUR Aye.

BAAS The ayes have it. Now we come to Commerce and Industry. I say leave it in the hands of the whites. All in favour say aye.

TWO, FOUR Aye

BAAS The ayes have it. I think we can deal with all other common issues in the same manner. All in favour say aye.

TWO, FOUR Aye.

BAAS The ayes have it again. Isn't it wonderful how democracy works?

(Coloured MP, Mr Turncoat, and Indian MP, Mr Applesamy, enter from their respective sides)

TURNCOAT When do we engage in parliamentary debate?

BAAS Why right now of course. Let's see what shall we discuss? (Two as Minister, whispers in Baas's ear) Ah yes, let's discuss the question of Black participation in the government.

APPLESAMYNaidoo But I thought we already decided that one.

BAAS Of course we have, privately, that is.

TURNCOAT But is the question relevant. I am a member of the Coloured Chamber.

APPLESAMYNaidoo And I'm a member of the Indian Chamber.

TURNCOAT I am quite happy with the decision we made privately. What more is there to discuss?

APPLESAMYNaidoo Wait, maybe the Baas got one idea.

BAAS Well, don't you see, you are here under protest. You didn't want these reforms if Blacks were not included.

APPLESAMYNaidoo We didn't?

TURNCOAT I was for these reforms all the way. That is why I tried to get my people to understand that we had to say yes now.

APPLESAMYNaidoo I didn't care about my people. As long as I was in, that's all that mattered.

BAAS (Frustrated) You don't understand. You're not supposed to be happy about the exclusion of Blacks.

APPLESAMYNaidoo But I'm very happy. Every other day, I come on TV.

TURNCOAT I am a man of integrity. You don't expect me to lie about this, do you?

BAAS But it doesn't look good. You are deserting your Black brothers. (Whispers to Minister)

MINISTER You're right, Baas. Very slow thinking processes.

BAAS On the other hand, we could have programmed them too thoroughly. What are we going to do?

MINISTER Well, let me have another go at them.

BAAS Right. Meanwhile the rest of us will go and try some of that biryani our honourable member was talking about. (Leaves)

APPLESAMYNADOO (Following Baas) Wait, Baas. I'll come and dish for y'all.

BAAS No, no. Thank you. You are needed here.

APPLESAMYNADOO (Calling after Baas) Anyway, my wife is there. Anything y'all want, just ask her. Enjoy the food. Don't leave anything. Tomorrow, I'm bringing prawns curry.

MINISTER Don't worry about them. Sit down. We have work to do.

APPLESAMYNADOO What we gonna do?

MINISTER You mustn't be so ready to agree with everything we say.

APPLESAMYNADOO (Appalled)
But I agree. I always agree. You want me to be one liar now? (He sings the following song to an Indian tune)
I agree, I always agree
So I can go on one spending spree
When I'm agree to what them saying
The more I'm finding they is paying

And what I care for what they gonna do
As long as I'm okay, bugger you
I know that I'm just a stooge
So what, I'm a very rich stooge

What you got to show for all your fights?
Did you ever getting equal rights?
But I got equality just for me
Still I can't use the same lavat'ry

But I'm better off than you
And I'm a leader now, not you
So you can sit and boycott there
It mean I'm get a bigger share

So I'm agree, I'm always agree
I know that I'm just a stooge
So what, I'm a very rich stooge

TURNCOAT I am one hundred per cent behind every move we make.

MINISTER But you're going too far

APPLESAMYNADOO You going too far. I'm going to call the Baas. Somebody got to put you right. (Leaves)

MINISTER No, no, sit down.

TURNCOAT (Following Applesamy out) I do believe we need clarification on this matter.

MINISTER (Calling out after them)
But I am acting on the Prime Minister's instructions.

(Re-enter ApplesamyNaidoo, Turncoat and Baas)

BAAS What's going on here? I want some water. I'm burning at both ends. (ApplesamyNaidoo gives him a glass of water which he drinks) Why have you brought me here?

APPLESAMYNADOO I want to reporting this man. I think he's a spy for the communists. He say we mustn't agree with everything you say.

BAAS I see what the problem is. You must trust my brother here. He knows what he is doing.

APPLESAMYNADOO Baas, do I have to disagree? I can't stand the thought of it. (Pointing to Turncoat) Let him disagree. I want to be faithful to you.

BAAS I see you don't trust me.

APPLESAMYNADOO I do. I do.

BAAS Then do as I say.

APPLESAMYNADOO (Jumping to attention) Yes Baas.

BAAS Now get on with it and don't interrupt me again. I've got to hurry back. I hope there's still some of that biryani left. (Rushes off)

MINISTER Gentlemen, take your places please. We will have a trial discussion on whether Blacks should be included in the new government. (ApplesamyNaidoo whistles absently) Would you like to begin Mr ApplesamyNaidoo?

APPLESAMYNADOO No

MINISTER Mr Turncoat?

TURNCOAT No

MINISTER All right. Let me start with stated Government policy. Clause one: If you're white, you're all right.

TURNCOAT No argument there.

APPLESAMYNADOO I agree

MINISTER Clause two: If you're brown, stick around.

TURNCOAT No problem there

APPLESAMYNADOO I'm sticking like glue.

MINISTER Now for clause three: If you're black, git back, git back. Now what do you say to that?

APPLESAMYNADOO I'm getting hungry. (To Turncoat) You hungry? I'll go see if they left any biryani for us.

MINISTER Sit down, Mr Applesamy-Naidoo. The Baas expects you to co-operate.

APPLESAMYNADOO I'll corporate better if my stomach is full.

TURNCOAT Please be seated, Mr Applesamy. Let's get this thing over and done with.

(ApplesamyNaidoo sits down again)

MINISTER Now what do you say to clause 3.

(ApplesamyNaidoo starts singing softly, 'I agree')

MINISTER Mr ApplesamyNaidoo, do you object?

APPLESAMYNADOO No.

MINISTER Mr Turncoat?

TURNCOAT I can't say that I do.

MINISTER You fools, you idiots. You have to. Don't you understand? We have to have real opposition or people will think that you are stooges. You have to act as though you have minds of your own. Now do as the Baas has ordered, object! Be disloyal to the Baas!

APPLESAMYNADOO (Crying)
I don't know how? Please help me.

TURNCOAT I must confess that I too am at a loss.

MINISTER Okay. When I say, 'Do you object to Clause 3,'

jump up and say, 'I want Clause 3 struck off the statute books.' Got it.

APPLESAMYNADOO & TURNCOAT Yes

MINISTER Now, do you object to clause 3, if you're Black, git back, git back?

APPLESAMYNADOO & TURNCOAT (With tiny hops and feebly) I want Clause 3 struck off the statute books.

MINISTER No, no, no! Not like that. Jump higher and shout. Now try again. Do you want Clause 3?

APPLESAMYNADOO & TURNCOAT (Jumping and shouting)
We want Clause 3 struck off the statute books.

APPLESAMYNADOO That was fun. Can we do it again?

MINISTER No, we have a lot more to do. Now why do you object to Clause 3?

APPLESAMYNADOO (Brightly) You told us to.

MINISTER No, no, no. You have to explain why Blacks must not be left out.

APPLESAMYNADOO (Tentatively)
Because of the 1949 riots?

MINISTER (Shouting) No, no, no!

APPLESAMYNADOO You don't have to shout. I don't know what you want me to say.

MINISTER Say that this is the country of their birth and they are in the majority. They must have a say in the government.

APPLESAMYNADOO Hey, you want me to sound like one of those Congress chaps? I'm not doing this. Just now you'll have me talking about human rights.

MINISTER That's it exactly. I want you to sound like on of those Congress chaps.

APPLESAMYNADOO But they communists!

MINISTER That does not matter. Come on. I know you can do it.

APPLESAMYNADOO I don't know.

MINISTER You don't want to disappoint Baas do you?

APPLESAMYNADOO Okay. I'll give it a try. But you must watch me. Tell me if I'm going too far.

MINISTER Go as far as you can. You can't go too far.

APPLESAMYNADOO

Okay. Here goes. (Clears throat) We can't have Clause 3. It is one insult to human dignity. Clause 3 pushes the Blacks into Homelands which are waste lands. And these wastelands, representing only 14% of the land in South Africa, have to house twenty million people, while the rest of South Africa is occupied by a mere five million. Is this just? No it is inhuman and un-Christian. We cannot allow the continued oppression of our Black brothers. We have always been part of the Black struggle and shall continue to be. (Minister motions to Applesamy to make the power sign) Do I have to?

MINISTER Yes, man. You are doing a wonderful job. That will be the cherry on the top.

APPLESAMYNADOO Okay, if you say so. (Very feebly, hardly raising a fist) Amandla, ngawethu.

MINISTER No man, with feeling.

APPLESAMYNADOO (Boldly) Amandla, ngawethu.

MINISTER That's the spirit. Right, you're okay. Now for you, Mr Turncoat.

TURNCOAT I get the drift. Just watch me. (Sings to the tune of Daar Kom die Alabama and does a klopse dance)

I am the Coloured Member
The Coloured member
In on the government game
I am the Coloured member
The Coloured member
Who can't accept all the same.

The Black are here
The Blacks are here
Let them in I say
If you won't let them in today
Then I don't want to play

The Coloured Member (3)
But only in name
The Coloured Member (3)
I'm part of the game.

I am the Coloured Member
Who has never accepted his seat
I am the Coloured Member
Who has never accepted his seat

I will take that seat today
But I won't sit on it
I'd rather stand the live-long day
Holding on to it.

That way you will always know
That it is really mine
But if the Blacks aren't in with us
I've got to stand and fuss.

The Coloured Member (3)
But only in name
The Coloured Member (3)
I'm part of the game.

MINISTER That's wonderful. Baas will be very proud of you. You are now an effective opposition.

APPLESAMYNADOO But what if the people believing what we say?

MINISTER Don't let that trouble you.

TURNCOAT But what if we influence the other members of parliament?

MINISTER Don't worry, you will never influence us. Anyway, we can always outvote you.

APPLESAMYNADOO Thank goodness.

MINISTER After listening to you, Mr Applesamy, I think it would be a good idea if we could actually influence some of the Congress men to stand for election. That way we would have real opposition, rendered totally ineffective. I think I must put that to the Baas right away. (Rushes off)

APPLESAMYNADOO (Rushing after him) Wait. You can't do this to me. I'll oppose you; I'll do it. I'll bring you fish curry, samoosas, aaloo bienies, baji, a whole sheep every week ... (Exit)

TURNCOAT In this we are a step of the Indians (Exit)

(Three puts on white hat becomes a Broeder again and enters with Baas, Minister and Four)

BAAS Well, it's wonderful. We now have democracy in South Africa. I think it is time for our sing-along.

(Five as Dr D rushes in)

DR D Wait a minute. Have you forgotten what all this was in aid of?

BAAS You mean we still haven't ended the sporting and cultural boycott?

DR D Not yet. But it'll be easy now that we have one man, one vote. I'll get on the 'phone, Hello England, Australia, France etc ... Hold on, here we come with out tours. We have one man, one vote now ... What! (Turns to Baas) They don't buy it.

BAAS If they don't buy it, why don't we buy them?

DR D How much are we prepared to pay?

BAAS The sky's the limit.

DR D You mean it? (Into phone) Hello, what about a few private tours? We'll make it worth your while ... Yes ...Yes ...Yes ... You're arriving next week. Wonderful. (Puts phone down) Baas, you're brilliant. We've broken the sports boycott, unofficially of course.

(While the others congratulate Baas, Minister goes into a fit of depression)

MINISTER Why didn't I think of that? We wouldn't have had to go through the whole Homeland's policy and the New Constitutional Reforms. If only I had thought of buying them off in the first place. I'm a failure. (Weeps)

BAAS Don't be upset. Come on. Let's have our sing-along to cheer up our brother here.

(They sing Sarie Marais, Marching to Pretoria and We are the Master Race. During the course of the singing, they manage to cheer up Minister who joins in the singing.)

(The actors then throw off their white hats and stand fists raised singing We Shall Overcome)

FIVE Amandla!

ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR Ngawethu!

THE END

Chicken Licken was written practically overnight. It had to replace **The Masterplan**, which was banned in September 1983, just about a week before an important United Democratic Front fundraiser for which tickets had been sold. I sat down immediately to put together a new revue to cover the same material, the Koornhof Bills, which restricted the movement of African people into urban areas and attempted to confine them to Homelands, and the President's Council's (PC) Proposals for a new constitution. The PC proposals represented the culmination of the apartheid government's attempts to create separate governing bodies for all the black people of South Africa.

These attempts had begun in the early sixties immediately after group areas removals had divided the population into clearly demarcated racial areas. African people were to be governed by ethnic Homeland Governments in rural areas, and by town councils in urban townships. For Coloureds and Indians, the government appointed advisory bodies, known as the Coloured Representative Council and the National Indian Council (later the South African Indian Council), which were to advise the government on issues concerning these minority groups. These structures that were foisted on black people – homelands and town councils for African people, and advisory councils for Coloureds and Indians, were all under close control of the white central government. Though there were huge protests against these attempts to hoodwink the communities, the country and the international community with a form of government masquerading as democracy, a small minority in each community chose to collaborate and give credibility to apartheid separate development.

That was all that was needed to spur the government on in its determination to retain white supremacy under the guise of separate development. The government moved from 'self-governing' homelands to 'independent' homelands for Africans. After Transkei (1976), Bophuthatswana (1977) and Venda (1979) accepted 'independence' and became 'Sovereign' States, the government turned to the question of Coloured and Indian 'self-determination.' It decided not to continue to appoint the Indian Council and decreed that elections be held. The Indian Congresses immediately launched Anti-SAIC (Anti-South African Indian Council) campaigns to educate people and lead a boycott of the elections. After many postponements of the election date, elections were eventually held on 4 November 1981. Despite the almost total boycott of the sham elections, the government, with the co-operation of collaborators, proceeded as though the Councils had received mandates from their communities and after the elections, established the President's Council, which was to draw up a new constitution.

The President's Council, which included a few Coloured and Indian appointees, drew up proposals for a new constitution that would cater for Coloureds and Indians in a Tri-cameral Parliament: three separate parliaments – the existing parliament for whites, plus two new chambers, one for Coloureds and one for Indians for which elections would be held. The white parliament would deal with issues concerning the whole country; the Coloured and Indian Parliaments would be allocated certain limited areas to administer in their own ethnic communities.

Organisations that repudiated the PC Proposals came together as The United Democratic Front (UDF), to make people aware that the vote meant collusion in their own oppression. The Work-in-Progress (WIP) Theatre Company, as an organisation in the UDF, became involved in disseminating information about the PC Proposals. **The Masterplan**, a revue performed at UDF meetings, depicted the meaning of the Koornhof Bills and the President's Council's Proposals for a Tri-Cameral Parliament. **Chicken Licken**, a quick substitution for the banned **The Masterplan**, focused very strongly on the opportunism of collaborators.

Muthal Naidoo
March 2008

Chicken Licken is presented in the same style as **The Masterplan**.

Five Actors in black play all the parts. They use appropriate accessories such as hats, caps, scarves, etc to indicate changes in character. They interact freely with the audience. Stage and auditorium lights remain on during the whole performance. Dialogue is interspersed with song and dance.

(Actor 1 is on the stage. The others are seated in the audience)

ONE Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Tonight we bring you the original, uncut, uncensored version of that sexational suspense thriller – CHICKEN LICKEN!

THREE, FOUR, FIVE (From their places in the audience) Boo! We don't want fairy tales.

TWO (Standing up holding sign: Board of Censors which the actor shows to audience) I'm sorry but under the new constitution, Indians and Coloureds are only allowed to have fairy tales.

THREE, FOUR, FIVE We don't accept the new constitution. We don't want fairy tales.

TWO That's all you're getting. Take it or leave it.

ONE Well, you see how it is. So let's proceed with – CHICKEN LICKEN!

THREE If we have to have a fairy tale, can't we have something better than that?

FOUR Yes, how about Cinderella?

TWO (Holding up sign) Sorry, that one is banned.

FOUR What! You're crazy. Why?

TWO Communism. It depicts the rise of the working class.

FIVE How about Goldilocks?

TWO Sorry. Also banned.

FIVE Goldilocks too?

TWO Yes, it presents a warped view of capitalism. It shows the rich robbing the poor.

FIVE How about Red Riding Hood?

TWO Communism, again.

THREE And Black Beauty?

TWO Banned under the Immorality Act.

THREE So we have no choice?

TWO Under the new constitution, you will never again have a choice.

ONE So Ladies and Gentlemen, it's – CHICKEN LICKEN!

TWO (Now wearing a policeman's cap) Just a minute.

ONE Now what?

TWO (Singing Dayo comes dancing onto stage. He is accompanied by 3,4,5 as policemen) Allow me to introduce myself. I am Sergeant Calypso of the liquor and drugs squad. Now what's going on here?

ONE Sergeant Calypso?

CALYPSO Yes. (Sings a calypso number, 'Mary Anne')

ONE Have you come to audition?

CALYPSO No man, I want to know about this new show. What is it about?

ONE It's a children's story.

CALYPSO Don't lie to me. I want to see a script.

ONE But there is no script. Everyone knows the story.

CALYPSO What's the story about?

ONE Surely you know the story.

CALYPSO I want to hear it from you in your own words. Remember everything you say will be taken down and used in evidence against you.

ONE Are you going to arrest Father Christmas and Mother Goose too?

CALYPSO You getting funny with me, eh? I'm just doing my job you know. Now tell me the story of Chicken Licken, I've got to check it out to see whether it is undesirable.

ONE Undesirable? What do you mean by that?

CALYPSO (Whipping out sheet and reading) In terms of the Publications Act, No 42 of '74, Section 47, 2(e), undesirable means that it is pre ... prej ...

ONE (Peeking over 2's shoulder) Prejudicial

CALYPSO Ja, preja... whatever, to the safety of the State, to the general welfare or the peace and good order. Well actually, what it means is that you are not allowed to criticise the government.

ONE I see

CALYPSO Right. Now tell me the story.

ONE

Once upon a time, a chicken...

CALYPSO

Ag nee, man! It's not one of those 'once upon a time' stories...

ONE Do you want to hear it?

CALYPSO All right. Let's hear it.

ONE Once upon a time, (Calypso groans) a chicken went walking in the forest and an acorn fell on his head...

CALYPSO (Yawning) And he thought it was a piece of the sky...

THREE, FOUR, FIVE (Yawning) And he went around telling everyone the sky is falling.

(They sing a song, 'There's a hole in the sky, dear Liza')

ONE

So, you do know the story.

CALYPSO Ja. I studied it in kindergarten. It's very boring. I'm going home. (To the audience) I advise you to do the same. Me, I'm glad I'm white; I still have Snow White and (He winks) Sleeping Beauty.

ONE Don't you want to watch the show?

CALYPSO I'm going home to watch Dallas. (Sings Dayo and goes dancing offstage with Three, Four, Five)

ONE Ladies and Gentlemen, I apologise for these interruptions, but that is how it is when you are a Black theatre company. Right. Now let's get on with it. Ladies and Gentlemen, without further ado, I bring you the story of the most confused man in our history, a man who couldn't make up his mind...

(Actors Two, Four, Five come forward and stare into the sky. Actor Three gets ready to be Chicken Licken)

TWO What is it?

FOUR It's a plane!

FIVE It's a bird

ONE,TWO, FOUR, FIVE It's CHICKEN LICKEN!

THREE (Chicken Licken)

(Doing an Indian dance and singing Happy, happy to the tune of Gori Gori, advances to front of stage)

Happy, happy

Once I was happy

Now I just donno what I must do.

Shall I say yes

Shall I say no?

What must I say to the new PC plans?

Congress wallahs

Call me sell-out

But I'm the voice of the Indian majority

Happy, happy

Once I was happy

Now I just donno what I must do.

(Five comes forward and drops booklet on Chicken Licken's head)

CHICKEN (Running around) Help! The sky is falling! The sky is falling! I must go tell the Baas. Help! The sky is falling!

ONE,TWO,FOUR,FIVE (pick up book and stand behind Chicken) No, Chicken. (Five holds book high as they sing)

It's the P.C. proposals

A system of disposals

Of all the country's blacks

All the country's blacks.

Sweep Indians and Coloureds

Right under the carpets

Tie Africans up in a sack

And throw them to the back.

CHICKEN What I'm gonna do? (Looks into audience) There's a lot of people out there. Maybe they can help me. (To 1,2,4,5) Hey, go find out from those people what I must do.

(One, Two, Four, Five go into audience and ask people)

ONE,TWO,FOUR,FIVE (Returning to stage) They say no.

CHICKEN All of them?

ONE,TWO,FOUR,FIVE Yes

CHICKEN I don't believe you.

ONE,TWO,FOUR,FIVE (To audience) What do you all say? (To Chicken) See?

CHICKEN What you want to ask all those people for? What they know? They're not grateful for anything the Government gives us. Even if the government is giving us something good, they won't take it.

ONE,TWO,FOUR,FIVE Like the Group Areas Act.

CHICKEN No man, the new constitution.

ONE,TWO,FOUR,FIVE Which is based on Group Areas.

CHICKEN Y'all just talking rubbish.

FIVE No, we're not. How can you have a separate Indian chamber in parliament if you don't have a separate group area for Indians?

CHICKEN Shut up and get out of here!

(One,Two,Four,Five go offstage and Four gets ready to come on as Themba)

CHICKEN (To audience) They don't know nothing about it. Y'all too don't know nothing. I'll ask the whites. They always know best.

FOUR-THEMBA
Hey, baas. The police say my dompass is no good.

CHICKEN Go away. I'm busy.

THEMBA But Baas, they want me to go to Puppetswana.

CHICKEN Why?

THEMBA They say Puppetswana is my Homeland and now that it is independent, I must go there and get a passport.

CHICKEN So go and get a passport.

THEMBA But Baas, I was born here. I have never been to Puppetswana.

CHICKEN Then why are they sending you to Puppetswana?

THEMBA Because I speak Tswana.

CHICKEN You should have told them you also speak English. Then they would have sent you to England. (Laughs)

THEMBA But what am I going to do? They tell me I can only stay here three days. Then they will deport me to Puppetswana.

CHICKEN So you get a free trip.

THEMBA But Baas, please, can't you help me? I don't want to go to Puppetswana.

CHICKEN Hey, stop worrying me. (Enter 1 as Mrs Licken)

ONE-MRS LICKEN
See how this boy is? When I asked him to bring me a sheep from the cooler room and he's still hanging around here. Come on. Get to work. We're not paying you for nothing.

THEMBA But what about my dompass?

MRS LICKEN Hey, I'm tired of the dompass story. Get on with your work or I won't pay you. (Themba goes off grumbling) I don't know what he's grumbling about. I registered him myself.

CHICKEN All right, all right. That's enough.

MRS LICKEN Wait. I want to know if I can go to India. I want to buy new saris.

CHICKEN Hey, I'm not in the sari business; I'm in the butcher business. Besides, you have enough saris.

MRS LICKEN But when you become the Indian Prime Minister, I won't be able to wear these old ones.

CHICKEN Who said I'm going to be the Indian Prime Minister? I didn't say I'm accepting the new proposals.

MRS LICKEN But you told me.

CHICKEN What! When did I tell you?

MRS LICKEN Last night. In bed.

CHICKEN I must have been talking in my sleep.

MRS LICKEN No, you wasn't sleeping. It was when ...

CHICKEN Shhh!

MRS LICKEN Anyway, I don't know why you're making such a fuss. You going to accept. Like you accepted the Indian Council.

CHICKEN (To audience) I represent the people. I will do what the people want.

MRS LICKEN Hey, what you talking about? My mother, father all voted for you to be on the Indian Council.

That's how you became Chairman. Now you got to do what I want. Can I go to India?

CHICKEN Hey, don't worry me now, I want to talk to the people. (Chicken turns to audience) Hey, I'm asking y'all nicely. Y'all know how much I done for y'all. I got Mayfair, Pageview and Cato Manor for the Indians. I got you brides from India. I got you flim shows on Sundays. Now tell me, y'all want me to accept the President's Council's Proposals. (Waits for response) Y'all not saying nothing. Oh, I get it: silence means consent. Of course, the silent majority! Y'all keeping quite because y'all want me to accept.

(sings)

Happy, happy

Now I am happy

At last I know what y'all want.

MRS LICKEN Thank goodness. Calling the press, photographers. My husband is about to accept his rightful place as King of the Indians.

(Enter Two, Five as pressmen)

FIVE What do you say to people who call you a sell-out?

TWO What do you say to those who say you do not represent the Indian community?

FIVE How do you account for the low percentage polls in the 1981 Indian Council elections?

TWO Why have you decided to accept the new proposals?

CHICKEN Who said I was accepting them? Did I say I was accepting them?

(Enter Four as Themba.)

THEMBA Hey baas, my dompass problem is getting worse.

(Mrs Licken, annoyed, leaves)

CHICKEN (Grabbing hold of Themba) Take a picture of us together. You see, I can't say yes to the new proposals because Blacks are left out. How can I accept, when my dear brother (Themba looks astonished) here is left out?

THEMBA But brother, I am not left out. I am being kicked out. I was born here, but they tell me I don't belong here.

(Sings)

I was born in South Africa

But I'm a foreigner in this land
Never left South Africa
But I'm a foreigner in this land
In the homeland they don't know
That I am one of them
In South Africa they tell
That I am one of them

So I'm going to the Homeland
But nobody knows me there
I'm going for a passport
So I can come back here.

CHICKEN

He was born in South Africa
But he's a foreigner in this land
Never left South Africa
But he's a foreigner in this land.

THEMBA I was born here. So South Africa is my Homeland.

CHICKEN That's what I say. Thank you, gentlemen.
(Pressmen leave)

THEMBA Thank you, brother. I thought you didn't care, but now I know you are my brother, I know you will help me with this dompass business.

CHICKEN Hey, who said I'm your brother? Get out and do some work.

THEMBA But baas, with all your connections in government, can't you do something for me?

CHICKEN Don't be stupid, man. I get paid to keep my mouth shut.

THEMBA But I see you talking on Television all the time.

CHICKEN Ya, they tell me what to say.

THEMBA Baas, what must I do? Must I go to Puppetswana for a passport?

CHICKEN If that's what they say?

THEMBA But what about my job? Will you keep it open till I get back?

CHICKEN We'll see.

THEMBA I have a family. I must look after them. Will you keep my job for me?

CHICKEN We'll see.

(Themba goes off grumbling. Enter Mrs Licken in a new sari)

MRS LICKEN That Themba is getting to be a problem. I'm fed up with him and his dompass. (She pulls out a card showing the number 1 and parades for him like an entrant in a beauty competition.) Well, what do you think? Is this good enough for a maharani?

CHICKEN What are you doing? Why are you buying these new saris?

MRS LICKEN I'm preparing myself. I'm going to the First Indian Lady.

CHICKEN You mean the Indian First Lady.

MRS LICKEN That's what I said. The First Indian Lady.

CHICKEN But who said you are going to be the First, I mean, the Indian First Lady?

MRS LICKEN My husband, the Prime Minister of the Indians.

CHICKEN I didn't say I'm going to accept.

MRS LICKEN I don't know why you're fussing. You know you will accept. You have to accept, you the Chairman of the SAIC. You want to lose that job what?

CHICKEN Shut up. Go back to your kitchen.

MRS LICKEN No, I am going next door. That Mrs Govender just came back from India with a whole lot of saris. I am going to buy the lot. (She leaves)

CHICKEN Hey, wait. (Walks about sadly) I don't know what to do.

(Sings)

If only I could fly away

But I flap, flap, flap

And can't take off

Flap, flap, flap

Can't take off

I think I am

A sitting duck

If I don't make up my mind

I'll end up Pee Wee's pot luck.

(Enter 2 as Pee Wee. He clears his throat loudly. Chicken jumps round and falls on his knees)

CHICKEN Baas!

PEE WEE Hey, what's going on here? What's all this I don't know business? If you don't want the job, I can find others. People who have no doubts. People who really need the money. So, you don't believe that Indians and Coloureds are getting a better deal under the new constitution? Getting to be like those Congress communists, I see?

CHICKEN No, Baas. No, no, no.

PEE WEE So you don't believe that Blacks are well catered for in the Homelands.

CHICKEN No, Baas. I believe. I believe.

PEE WEE I see that you don't believe that if you accept now you will have peaceful change.

CHICKEN No, Baas. I believe. I believe.

PEE WEE I see you want me to tear up this contract for the butcher shops. I see you don't want a chain of butcher shops in all the Indian townships in South Africa. You're happy to be in poor position on the Indian Council. You don't want the butcher shop monopoly.

CHICKEN Baas, Baas. That is my dream. I want. I want.

PEE WEE If you say yes, it will be yours. He who hesitates is lost.

CHICKEN But I'm tired of people calling me names. If I say yes, they'll call me a sell-out and a stooge.

PEE WEE You should be used to that by now. Anyway, they'll stop once you're the King of Butcheries. They'll have to respect you.

CHICKEN Otherwise I'll cut off their meat supply.

PEE WEE If you don't accept, I'll cut off yours. (Pee Wee leaves)

CHICKEN No, no, no, Baas.

(Enter Five as Henny Penny dancing and singing Daar kom die Alabama)

5- HENNY PENNY Hello, Chicken. What's this I hear, you too chicken to make up your mind? Not like me, eh? I made up my mind a long time ago.

CHICKEN Aren't you worried about people calling you a sell-out?

HENNY PENNY They can't do that, not after they gave

me a mandate. I went all the way to Eshowe and that's where I got it. You still don't have your people's mandate, eh? Well I'm fortunate, I have my people's mandate.

CHICKEN I have the people's mandate. (Turns to audience) All these people here back me. You have given me a mandate, haven't you? (Turns to Henny Penny) You see?

HENNY PENNY But they are silent!

CHICKEN Exactly! Silence means consent! I am leader of the National Party of the People.

HENNY PENNY You mean you're the leader of the Nats? (Laughs as Chicken glowers at him) Just joking.

CHICKEN Tell me, why did you say yes?

HENNY PENNY I am going into Parliament to get change. I am going to fight from the inside.

(Enter Two, Four as pressmen)

TWO Mr Henny Penny and Mr Chicken Licken, is this a conference?

FOUR Will you make a statement?

TWO Mr Henny Penny have you come to help Mr Licken make up his mind?

HENNY PENNY I was just explaining to Mr Licken here, that we have a chance to change things and we should take it.

TWO But you won't be able change things. The votes will be loaded against you.

FOUR The quota of Indians and Coloureds in Parliament is too small to be significant.

HENNY PENNY It's a beginning.

FOUR But you won't be able to change things. You will be in separate chambers.

TWO What about Africans? They have been excluded.

HENNY PENNY I haven't forgotten about my Black brothers. Once I'm in, I'll demand the same privileges for my Black brothers.

FOUR Why are you talking about privileges? Shouldn't you be talking about rights?

HENNY PENNY I want peaceful change. This is the only way to do it.

TWO But you won't get any change.

HENNY PENNY (Laughs) You keep the change. I want the big money.

FOUR Mr Licken, we hear that in addition to your butcher shops, you are planning to open a chain of bottle stores in the Indian townships.

CHICKEN Eh, who told y'all. Hey, get out of here. I didn't invite y'all. Now go. (to Henny) They sit on my doorstep like vultures. They just waiting to hear what I am going to do.

HENNY PENNY And that's easy. You are going to say yes and mean no. Like the proposals! The tri-cameral parliament is saying yes and no at the same time, right? Yes, come in. Be in parliament. No, keep out. Sit in your own separate chambers. So you do the same. That's what I did, said yes but I mean no, (Aside to audience) even though I really mean yes.

CHICKEN But the President can kick you out and get other people.

HENNY PENNY No, he can't. Anyway, if you don't want the moola, you're a bigger fool than you look. (He leaves dancing and singing Daar Kom die Alabama)

(Enter 4—Themba)

THEMBA Baas, the Administration Board Police are waiting outside. They gonna take me. What must I do about this passport business?

CHICKEN Get out of here. I don't want them to fine me. I can't afford to waste R500.

THEMBA But they are going to deport me and my family.

CHICKEN It's not so bad. You'll be with your own people. You won't lose your cultural identity.

THEMBA What do you mean my own people? I have never been to Puppetswana. They're sending me to die. There are no jobs there.

CHICKEN That's not my problem.

THEMBA But is it right? I am being condemned to death so that you can live in luxury.

CHICKEN Look, I didn't make the laws.

THEMBA Aren't you a politician? Then you do make the laws. You're chasing all African people to the Homelands and turning us all into foreigners in our own country.

CHICKEN I've got nothing to do with it.

THEMBA Yes you have. You are going to rule with the white man. You want to keep my people down.

CHICKEN I'm not ruling with the white man.

THEMBA You are going to accept the new constitution. That means you will force all my people out of the cities. I will never forgive you for that. (The police, 2 & 5, come in and take Themba away. He shouts as he is being hauled out) I will come back and when I do, you better look out. (Exit)

(Enter Mrs Licken)

MRS LICKEN Such a nuisance, they took Themba away. Now where I'm going to find another nice boy like him?

CHICKEN Things are getting bad. You heard how he threatened me?

MRS LICKEN Ah, what you worried? He can't come back.

CHICKEN I don't think I can accept the new constitution.

MRS LICKEN All right, don't accept it. Other are people are going to accept. Then you'll be sorry you missed your chance.

CHICKEN I don't know what to do.

MRS LICKEN Why you don't discuss it with your SAIC?

CHICKEN Those fullas are stupid. I got to tell them what to think.

MRS LICKEN Well, tell them to accept. Then you can always say, they said it, not you.

CHICKEN Okay, maybe that's a good idea. I'm calling a Council meeting. (Calls out) Members of the South African Indian Council come to a meeting.

(Mrs Licken leaves. 1,2,4,5 bring chairs forward and sit.)

ONE,TWO.FOUR FIVE

Here we are for the meeting. (Chicken sits at the head)

ONE Hey, what happened to the tea? Tea is late today.

TWO What we got to go with tea? Any bhajias?

FOUR Hey Chicken, you didn't bring samoosas today?

FIVE He don't bring for us, man. That's reserved for the wit-ous. He sends them to Pee Wee.

CHICKEN I didn't call y'all here for a party.

ONE Aw, today is different what?

CHICKEN We have something serious to discuss.

ONE If I knew that, I wouldn't have come. I was watching video at home. You saw that new Amitabh Bachchan flim.

CHICKEN Hey, listen. We got to make up our mind about the new constitution. The Tri-Cameral Parliament.

ONE We must accept of course. I'm standing for election.

CHICKEN Why?

FOUR The pay is more. The Government is giving. So we must take.

TWO Besides, it don't matter what we say. They going to decide.

FIVE They always decide. Why you worrying about it?

CHICKEN ... because they asking us to say yes or no.

ONE Say yes! They depending on us. We the SAIC.

FIVE No! We can't say yes.

CHICKEN What! Why not?

FIVE Because they left the Africans out.

TWO Good thing too. They have to make the Indians and Coloureds equal with whites. Why they must bring the Africans in?

FIVE Fool! You forgot what happened in the 1949 riots? You say yes, they'll come and burn your house.

TWO They can't do that. I got government protection now.

FIVE One day the country is going to be in the hands of the Africans, then what you gonna do?

TWO I won't be alive to see that day.

FIVE What about your children and grandchildren?

TWO Ag, you don't know what you talking about. I say stick with the white man. He's doing a good job. Look at what happened in Uganda.

FIVE All right, don't say I didn't warn you. Hey Chicken, the answer is no. Tell the Baas it's no.

ONE Hey, we got democracy here. The majority counts. Let's put it to the vote.

CHICKEN All right. All right. Those who say yes, put your hands up. (1,2,4 raise hands) Three votes for. Those who say no? (5 raises his hand)

FIVE What about you Chicken?

ONE Never mind about him. We got the majority. It's yes. I'm going to get some tea and samoosas. (Goes off to become pressman)

FIVE Well I don't agree with the decision. I am going to make a public statement.

CHICKEN Hey, the decision was fair. What you trying to do?

FIVE Y'all made the wrong decision.

(Enter 1 as pressman)

PRESS Ah, I believe you are ready to make a press statement.

FIVE I am saying NO to the new Tri-cameral system. (The others protest)

PRESS This is a surprise. Why did the Indian Council decide to reject the President's Council's proposals?

TWO, FOUR We didn't reject it. We said YES. He doesn't know what he's talking about.

PRESS (Yawning) And I thought we had something sensational here. Well, Mr Licken, now that you have decided ...

CHICKEN The decision isn't official.

TWO, FOUR Hey, we voted. The majority counts. Just because you chicken ...

CHICKEN We can't take a decision now. If we say yes before the white referendum and they say no, we will look like bloody fools. If we say no before the white referendum and they say yes, then we will have wasted our time.

PRESS Yes, but don't you any feelings about the matter?

TWO, FOUR I say yes

FIVE I say no

CHICKEN I don't know

TWO, FOUR Yes

FIVE No

CHICKEN I don't know.

(And so they continue until Press gives up)

PRESS So much for consensus politics. (Leaves)

CHICKEN Hey, quiet!

TWO, FOUR What you mean by telling that fulla our decision was not official?

CHICKEN We can't give a definite answer.

FIVE I'm giving a definite answer. I'm saying no. I don't know about y'all, but I'm voting for the Blacks, not the whites.

TWO, FOUR Do like Henny Penny, say we got to get in so that we can make place for them, they will understand. Go and talk to the Chief.

CHICKEN Ya, that's good idea. If the Chief agrees, there will be no problem.

TWO He must agree. He already accepted the Bantustan, so he's already inside. So why should he be mad if we also go inside.

CHICKEN Right, I'm off. (He walks on his journey to the Chief while others get ready to be Chief and his Warriors.)

5—CHIEF Bring that man to me. (2,4 grab hold of Chicken and propel him forward, to prostrate himself before the Chief)

CHICKEN Most High Excellency, I have come to ask you ...

CHIEF (Seated surrounded by 1,2,4)
 I know what you have come about.
 (Sings)
 It's the PC Proposals
 In the heart of South Africa
 Coming up from Pee Wee
 Flush it down the lavat'ry
 No, no, no
 No, no, no
 No, no, no
 No, no, no
 I say no!

CHICKEN Chief, you see, I thought ...

CHIEF AND CHORUS (Sing)
 No, no, no.

CHICKEN Chief, it's the same as you ...

CHIEF AND CHORUS (Sing)
 No, no, no.

CHICKEN But Chief ...

CHIEF AND CHORUS (Sing)
 No, no, no.

CHICKEN What if I accept by mistake?

CHIEF Chicken, you must remember that some chicken
 (Licks fingers) is finger-licking good!

(Chicken almost faints in fear as Chief and his men
 leave)

CHICKEN (Singing)
 Ayo yo
 What I'm going to do
 Ayo yo
 What I'm going to do
 Cucurucuru (2)

(Actors now prepare for UDF scene. They walk to front
 of stage, looking about, greeting each other.)

Comrade, where are you from?
 I'm from Bloemfontein.
 And you?
 From East London.
 Isn't this wonderful comrade, to see so many people
 here?
 I'm from Johannesburg.
 I'm from Durban. There are people here from all over
 the country.
 I think the birth of the UDF is the greatest thing that

could have happened.
 I am glad I am here at this launch.
 Hey, we had better take our places.
 We'll never get a place in this hall. It's too crowded.
 Come on. Let's squeeze in.

(1,2,3,4 join the audience while 5 stands on stage with
 Declaration)

FIVE Today we launch the United Democratic Front, a
 Front of many diverse organisations, dedicated to one
 thing and one thing only and that is to oppose with
 all our strength and will the evil Koornhof Bills and the
 New Constitution. We will never accept apartheid, and
 this is our Declaration.

(Reads)

We, the freedom loving people of South Africa say with
 one voice to the whole world that:

we cherish the vision of a united, democratic
 South Africa based on the will of the people

we will strive for the unity of our people
 through united action against the evils of apartheid,
 economic and all other forms of exploitation

in the march to a free and just South Africa,
 we are guided by these noble ideals:

i) We stand for the creation of a true democracy
 in which all South Africans participate in the government
 of our country.

ii) We stand for a single, non-racial, unfragmented
 South Africa, a South Africa free of Bantustans and
 Group Areas.

iii) We say all forms of oppression and exploitation
 must end.

In accordance with these noble ideals, and, on the 20th
 day of August 1983, at Rocklands Civic Centre, Mitchell's
 Plain, we join hands as community, women's, students,
 religious, sporting and other organisations and trade
 unions to say NO to apartheid.

We say NO to the Republic of South Africa Constitution
 Bill – a Bill which will create yet another undemocratic
 constitution in the country of our birth.

We say NO to the Koornhof Bills, which will deprive
 more African people of their birthright.

We say YES to the birth of the United Democratic Front
 on this historic day.

(Actors join 5 and sing)

UDF what's that in your hand?
 A rejection of the Pee Wee plan
 And did I hear you say
 That we gather here today
 To unite all the people of the land

(As they march off singing, 3 goes off to become Chicken
 again)

CHICKEN (Rushing on) The sky is falling. The sky is falling. I got to tell the Baas. Baas, where are you?

(Enter 2 as Pee Wee)

2-PEE WEE Loop, man. Ek is besig.

CHICKEN Do you see what is happening? Have you heard about this United Democratic Front? They are a bunch of terrorists!

PEE WEE I know all about it. I have my men in there. Now go away. I have important business to take care of. The White Referendum Championship will be on TV tonight and I am the referee. Now get out of here. I want to get ready for the weigh-in. (Chicken leaves) Send the contenders in. (2 and 4 come in as boxers. 1 comes in as Press for pictures and notes)

TWO (Snarling and growling wearing a CP hat, dances about shadow boxing) I'm gonna murder da guy. I float like a buffalo, and sting like a horse.

FOUR (Also shadow boxing) You have no chance against me. You get this (Shows fist) on your chin and it will splinter like glass.

PEE WEE Will you please be seated so we can begin the weigh-in?

(Chairs are brought in and they sit. The weigh-in takes place while they hurl comments at each other.)

TWO Moenie 'n fout make nie; Die Referendum Title is myne. I have it sewn up with a no-vote.

FOUR You knave. You've been spying on my training sessions, eh? You stole my secret strategy. I am also using the no-vote.

TWO Sies, dis nie jou strategy nie. Ek was altyd teen die proposals. Jy is die een wat van integration praat. Jy will die Swartes binne bring. Your no-vote is useless against mine.

FOUR Man, you believe in apartheid, baaskap, the Homelands policy; you don't have a chance against my no-vote.

TWO Don't talk now man. Let's see you in the ring.

FOUR You won't see me, man. Before you know it, I'll have you on the mat.

TWO We'll see about that.

(The weighing is over)

PEE WEE Well, gentlemen, you both weight-in at exactly the same weight. It seems that I am the heaviest of the lot. Now let's get the TV cameras rolling. We're about to begin.

(Boxers and Pee Wee in the ring, freeze in position)

CHICKEN (Setting up a chair to watch) I got to watch this boxing match. (Switches on set, nothing happens) Hey what's wrong with this TV? Hey, Goosey Lucy, what's wrong with the TV. Aw, never mind, it's not plugged in. (He plugs it in) Just in time

PEE WEE Ladies and Gentlemen, we bring you the White Referendum Championship of South Africa. On my right, CP present holder of the featherbrain championship of South Africa. On my left, PFP, present holder of the Forked Tongue Title. I am your referee, undefeated Champion of Apartheid.

CP You want to bring Coloureds and Indians in, eh? Well, with this (Shows fist) I'm sending them to their own homelands.

PFP (Showing fist) And with this, I'm not only going to bring in Coloureds and Indians, but Africans too.

CP You haven't got a chance!

PEE WEE Right, gentlemen. To your corners and come out fighting.

(2 and 4 head for the same corner)

CP Hey, this is my corner.

PFP Get out of here. It's mine.

PEE WEE What's the problem?

CP This is my corner. Tell him to go to his.

PFP This is my corner. I have the Vote-No corner.

CP It's mine. Get out of here. I am the Vote-No candidate.

PEE WEE Okay, Okay. I can solve this easy. Bring another chair. You can both use the same corner. Right! Are you ready? (The gong sounds) Round One.

(2,4 both spring out of the corner together and go for Pee Wee who runs away from them.)

PEE WEE (Yelling) You're supposed to fight each other, not me. I'm the referee.

CP But you want to give the Coloureds and Indians a place in the new constitution.

PFP You want Coloureds and Indians to come in on the quota system to be useless baggage. We won't pay for that!

(Pee Wee manages to get behind them and turns them to face each other)

CP Lafaard, waar steek jy jou weg? Kom hierso, man, ek het iets vir jou!

PFP Where's the bastard. He's hiding. He's afraid of me.
(They see each other)

CP Nou sien ek jou.

PFP Ahh, there you are.

(They pummel each other, then go into a clinch)

CP I suppose you want to marry a Black.

PFP I suppose you want violent revolution.

PEE WEE Break. (Gong sounds) End of round one. Back to your corner. (They go to the same corner and Pee Wee acts as second to both. To 2) Look here, do you want to win this fight? Well, it's easy. I've got a special glove here. A yes-vote glove. Use it.

CP You shit. You want me to go for a Yes-vote. You fool. You think I want to let the Blacks in like you. I say send them all to Homelands. Send the Indians and Coloured to Homelands too. I won't have them in parliament, not even in separate chambers.

PFP Why, you're cheating! You're helping CP. You're supposed to be an impartial referee.

(Both 2 and 4 go for Pee Wee who knocks them both out)

PEE WEE (Clasping both hands above his head and dancing about)
Ladies and Gentlemen, the Referendum Champion of South Africa, by a knockout in the break just after the first round.

(Press comes round)

PRESS Congratulations, champ. You made short work of your opponents. Did you expect the fight to end so soon? That was really sensational. A knock-out before the second round.

PEE WEE Well, I put in a lot of work, you know. A lot of road work. I really built up my strength. I am very grateful to my fans all over South Africa who had such faith in me. I'm glad I didn't let them down.

CHICKEN (Rushing on) Baas, that was wonderful. Now that you have won the White Referendum championship, I know that if I join you, I'm on the winning side. So I have a great announcement, I accept the new constitutional proposals.

PEE WEE Well, it really makes no difference what you think. But if it makes you happy to say so, go right ahead.

CHICKEN I can't do better than follow in your footsteps. I am going to stage an Indian Referendum Championship.

PEE WEE (Looks him up and down)
You haven't got a chance. You're in no condition.

CHICKEN I'll train, just like you. I'll go on the road.

PEE WEE I'm telling you, you have no chance. Now shut up and listen.

CHICKEN Yes, Baas.

PEE WEE You had better go in for a scientific survey. At least my people can fix that. On your own, you're a disaster.

CHICKEN Who is going to help me, Baas?

PEE WEE I have just the person for you.

(One comes forward as Florence Dilemma)

1-FLORENCE Yes, here I am. Professor Florence Dilemma at your service.

(Pee Wee leaves and the others come in as people on the street.)

CHICKEN All right, everybody. We are now having a scientific survey.

(Florence goes into audience and questions people.)

FLORENCE Good evening, sir, what do you think of the

new constitutional proposals...Yes, very good. I knew you would say that.

Good evening, madam, what do you think of getting the vote...

Yes excellent.

Happy, happy, oh, we are happy
We are dancing on one string.

THE END

(Florence goes back on stage)

CHICKEN (Coming to Florence) Well, what's the news?

FLORENCE I congratulate you, Mr Chicken. According to my survey, 99.9% of the Indians are in favour of the new constitution. So go ahead, call for elections. (She leaves)

CHICKEN (Addressing audience) Now that I know that you want the new constitution, I am very happy to announce that we are calling for elections to the separate parliament for Indians, the Indian House of Delegates.

(1,2,4,5 run into the audience with ballot papers, get them to vote and run back to stage)

CHICKEN (Addresses audience) Ladies and gentlemen, I want to thank you all for making me the first Indian Prime Minister of the Indians and this is my acceptance speech. I promise to serve you faithfully. And now that I am your elected Prime Minister, I won't change. I'm still the same humble butcher. I will always be there to meet you. If you can't find me at any of my butcheries, you can always try my bottle stores. Remember my doors are always open to you. Now I am going to take you right into the Indian Parliament, the House of Delegates, that's what they calling our separate chamber. I am taking you to see how we conduct business there.

(2 as Pee Wee stands on a chair over the other actors who are his puppets. He pulls them into a puppet dance.)

ONE, THREE, FOUR, FIVE (Mechanically as they dance)
As you can see, we are in control. As you can see, we are in control.

(They sing as they dance)

Happy, happy, oh, we are happy

We are dancing on one string

First we going up

Then we coming down

In the House of Delegates

When we going up

We Indian Delegates

When we coming down

We Indian apostates.

Alan's Coon Carnival (A Revue)

This revue like **The Masterplan** and **Chicken Licken**, was performed with a cast of five actors and a guitarist. Each actor played multiple roles. Props, hats, clothing items easily donned and doffed, hand props, etc, indicated changes in roles. Auditorium and stage lights remained on for the entire performance.

Unlike **The Masterplan** and **Chicken Licken**, this revue is set in the future, two years after the Tri-Cameral elections for the Coloured and Indian Houses of Parliament. The revue presents the second anniversary celebration of the establishment of The Coloured House of Representatives in a variety programme on the Coloured People's TV Show.

(The actors come dancing in through the audience like a klopse (minstrels) group singing, Daar kom die Alabama).

1-ANNOUNCER Good afternoon, viewers. Welcome to the weekly broadcast of the Coloured People's TV Show. Today, 20th September 1986, marks the second anniversary of the establishment of the Coloured House of Representatives and this week's programme is devoted to a celebration of the event. Today we present – Alan's Coon Carnival, starring L.P. Alan and his Coons.

(Actors rush off stage, whooping, dancing and singing and come back carrying Alan. Meanwhile Announcer is holding up APPLAUD sign for audience. When actors have deposited Alan on stage, they sing 'Daar kom die Alabama' and dance; Alan is the lead singer/dancer)

ANNOUNCER And now ladies and gentlemen, Alan's hit single, Pee Wee saved my life.

ALAN (Sings to tune of The Holy City)
Long time I lay in turmoil
My soul in dread and rage
I stood in Mitchell's Plain
Beside the gangsters there
I heard the people wailing
And ever as they wailed
Methought the voice of comrades
From below in answer hailed

Come join with us! Come join with us!
Lift up your fist and sing.
Democracy and freedom
Democracy we bring.

And then methought the scene was changed
The streets ran red with blood
Hushed were the cries of democracy
The comrades voices blocked
The sun grew black with oppression
The morn was cold and chill
As the shadow of a sjambok rose
Above my crouching will.

Come follow me! Come follow me!
Lift up your head and see.
Democracy I bring to you
Democracy from Pee Wee.

And once again the scene was changed
New hope there seemed to be
I saw the new democracy
Inside the chamber pot
The hand of Pee Wee stretched out to me
The back door was open wide

And all who would might enter
Who put their arms outside.
No need of guns or bombs by night
Or sanctions from abroad
It was the new democracy
And I'd participate
It was the new democracy
And I'd participate

Democracy! Democracy!
Separate unequally!
Oh Pee Wee in the highest!
Oh Pee Wee forevermore!

(Announcer holds up APPLAUD sign)

ALAN Folks, this number has a very special meaning for me. I can hardly sing it without feeling a lump in my pocket. I hope you will forgive me if I'm a little self-indulgent tonight. I am going to take you on a little trip down memory lane. I want to show you my humble beginnings. I wasn't always the top of the pops, you know. Incidentally, my friends in Eshowe, I know that my single sold out up there, but don't worry, my agent is rushing in new stocks right away. Yes, Ladies and Gentlemen, I owe it all to one man – Pee Wee. Let me begin my story at the beginning. I hand you over to the Announcer.

(Alan musses his hair and tries to look wild)

ANNOUNCER You may not believe it but Alan was once a wild young delinquent. Here you see him as he was before Pee Wee saved him.

ALAN (Marching and shouting) Down with apartheid.
We will never participate in a system that is so unjust.
We, the Black people of this country will unite! We will
rid the country of this blight upon our land.

(Enter Pee Wee, a revivalist preacher)

PEE WEE (To audience) That young man needs me. He is a lost soul. I shall save him. (Pee Wee chases Alan around stage, catches him, puts a dog collar on him and takes the leash) Come on boy, walkies. (Alan doesn't co-operate) Come on, boy. (Tickles him under the chin) Look what I have for you. (Alan wags his tail) That's it boy. Come on now, walkies. (Alan walks around with him) Good boy. Now sit up and beg. (Shows him reward) Sit up and beg. That's a good boy. I think I've tamed him. (Takes off collar) Well, I don't think we need this anymore. I think we're ready for the next step. (Paints puppet mouth on him, holds his neck from behind, and manipulates his head) Left, right. Good, good. Now the mouth. (Pulls his jaw down and pushes

it up) Open, close. Good. Now we're ready for a few words. Say hello.

ALAN (Pee Wee mouthing) Hel-lo.

PEE WEE This is fun.

ALAN (Pee Wee mouthing) This - is - fun.

ANNOUNCER What you have just seen is the Pinnochio Process, guaranteed to turn any malicious human being into a wooden, I mean, lovable doll. After Alan's reformation, Pee Wee took him on as part of his act. Pee Wee as you know is a master ventriloquist. They did a tour of all the major circuits and then one day, Pee Wee decided that Alan was ready to go on his own. It happened right in the middle of a nationwide TV show. Pee Wee and Alan had just begun their act.

(Music, Jan Pierewit, to introduce Pee Wee and Alan. Pee Wee sits down with Alan on his lap.)

PEE WEE Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, dames en here. Alan, say good evening to all your fans out there.

ALAN Good evening, good evening. Wowee! Do you see what I see? (Gawks at women in audience)

PEE WEE Now, now, Alan. None of that.

ALAN 36,24,36 (Whistles) I'll see you after the show. O my goodness 42,18,32...I'll see you before that!

PEE WEE Behave yourself Alan. That's no way for a man of the cloth to talk.

ALAN A man of the cloth, me? Are you kidding?

PEE WEE Then what's this collar around your neck?

ALAN Have you put a dog collar on me again? Why, you ...

PEE WEE Don't get upset. It's just a joke. Come on, Alan. Cheer up. I've got good news for you.

ALAN Goody, goody. I'm getting a raise.

PEE WEE No, we're going to appear at an International festival.

ALAN You and I together?

PEE WEE We have to think of something sensational.

ALAN Sensational? Think you can pull it off. You aren't at all creative, you keep coming up with the same act all the time.

PEE WEE What do you mean?

ALAN Oh, go on. You know. You're always trying to make out that I can do what I want; that you don't control me. You don't change the game, only the name.

PEE WEE But each time we change the name, the money goes up. Don't tell me you don't like that?

ALAN That's the only reason I stick with you.

PEE WEE Well, let me tell you my sensational idea.

ALAN (Yawning) I'm sure it's the same stuff.

PEE WEE Okay, listen to this. I am not going to appear with you any more.

ALAN What! You want me to go it alone. That's crazy!

PEE WEE It'll be sensational. A dummy that acts and moves on its own!

ALAN I knew it! Just another one of your crazy schemes to make it look like I'm free and independent!

PEE WEE But you will be.

ALAN How will I? I can't speak without you.

PEE WEE I've organised it all. I'll have this tape recorder inserted into you. It's programmed to deal with any situation. I shall operate it by remote control.

ALAN You crafty devil. So that's how you're going to do it.

PEE WEE You didn't think I'd disappear from the scene altogether, did you? Well, what do you think of it, eh? You'll be separate and independent. Let's try it out now.

ALAN I'm scared. I haven't used my legs for a long time.

PEE WEE Come on, try them.

(Alan gets off and tries to walk, almost falls, then gets the feel of it. Alan tries to talk but can't. He becomes distressed and runs around, pointing at his wide open mouth)

PEEWEE Sorry Alan. I forgot to turn the tape on. Okay, here you go.

ALAN I can walk and talk on my own. Whee, this is wonderful! I can walk and talk on my own. I can walk ... (He freezes, mouth open)

PEEWEE (Laughs)
Don't want you to get carried away. Anyway, I don't think you need me anymore. You can operate on your own. I'm going to leave you to run your own affairs. (Leaves)

ALAN My own affairs! (Stepping forward) And that ladies and gentlemen is how I came to have my very own programme. Now perhaps you understand the depth of my gratitude to my friend and benefactor, Pee Wee.

ANNOUNCER Thank you, Alan. That was a touching story, and I'm sure our viewers found it fascinating. But now as we turn away from sombre memories, we lighten the mood. Alan will introduce our special guest.

ALAN My dear brothers and sisters, I have the greatest pleasure in introducing to you, one who captures the spirit of the Coloured people, one who is a symbol of our aspirations, a national cultural figure ... I give you ... none other than ... GAMAT!

(Chorus comes in dancing and singing Januarie, Februarie, Maart etc. Gamat follows, crying)

ONE Hey, look Gamat is crying.

TWO Must be a new gag. Haai, wat maker, Gammatjie? Waarom huil jy?

(Gamat cries louder)

ONE I bet this is going to be good.

TWO Yes, this ou is a scream.

(Gamat goes on crying)

ALAN Hey, why so sad? Wat Gamat, makeer jong? (Gamat cries more) Gamat, don't you know me? (Cries louder) Ag broe, where are your jokes, man? You're supposed to make people laugh (Cries louder) But Gamat, this is not the way it's supposed to be. You're a funny man, remember?

GAMAT Djoo a blerry traitor!

ALAN Gamat, what are you saying? I've done my best for you. Didn't I promise you that you would become the Coloured Representative of Comedy if you participate in this show?

GAMAT But it's no good.

ALAN No good! Think of the money, man, thirty thousand a year!

GAMAT But what's the djoose of that? What's the djoose of 30,000 a year? What's the djoose of being the Coloured Representative of Comedy? What's the djoose, if you won't let me do my job? I've got my pride you know.

ALAN But Gamat, I don't understand. Here you are! The stand-up comedian of the show!

GAMAT Don't lie to me man.

ALAN But Gamat this is your spot ...

GAMAT Voertsek, man. You've blerry stolen my identity. You the blerry joke of the show. (He goes off crying) I don't know why I agreed to participate. This is not a yob; it's pretending to have a yob. (Exit)

ALAN Well, I can't say that I'm sorry. He does represent the old school and we are here on a reform platform.

ONE Yes, he couldn't really change. No doubt about it LP, when it comes to a laugh, nobody can beat you!

ALAN Let's get on with the show. Next we come to our cookery section and continuing with our theme of reform, we are going to show you how to cook using a microwave oven and a pot in which you bake, stew, roast, fry and cook your goose. Get rid of your old-fashioned stoves and pots. Change, change to the LP way. Show them how its done Mrs Althea Johnson. Come with me folks, as we visit Mrs Johnson in her kitchen.

(Music)

ALAN Good day Mrs Johnson and what are we cooking today.

MRS JOHNSON Hello Alan. I know you wanted us to cook your goose, but we did that the first day we participated in this programme, six years ago.

ALAN So what's on the menu? I hope you have not forgotten our theme, reform and change.

MRS JOHNSON No, I haven't. I have a real surprise for you. Today I'm going to show our viewers how to cook bobotie.

ALAN Bobotie, but that's ...

MRS JOHNSON I know. But you see when I showed Pee Wee ...

ALAN But why did you go to Pee Wee?

MRS JOHNSON He is the producer. Everything has to go to him. Anyway, when I showed him the French menu that I was preparing, he said I couldn't do it.

ALAN Why not?

MRS JOHNSON He said it wasn't our own affair. He said I had better cook bobotie.

ALAN But what about reform and change? How can we reform things ...?

MRS JOHNSON Only in our own affairs. So I thought about that and I changed and reformed the bobotie recipe. With this new recipe, nobody will even know it's bobotie.

ALAN Wonderful! That's the spirit! We must have change. Tell me about the new recipe.

MRS JOHNSON (As she starts the process) You take four rooinek tomatoes ...

ALAN Must they be rooinek?

MRS JOHNSON Oh absolutely! Then you take two yellow onions and one brown potato. Now you must be very careful about the proportions. You must always make certain that you have four rooineks, to two onions and one potato. If you tamper with the 4:2:1 ratio, you will have a merry mix up, and we have to avoid that at all costs. No mixing.

ALAN Yes, I'll remember that. Now what's next?

MRS JOHNSON (Chopping up vegetables) You chop everything fine, then you get three pots, preferably chamber pots, and you cook the ingredients separately. You just pop them in the microwave for two minutes. When they're done, you serve them on separate plates to separate people.

ALAN But aren't you supposed to mix the ingredients when you cook. Isn't it the combination of ingredients that turns them into a dish?

MRS JOHNSON Yes, that's usually true, but Alan, don't you see? This is what makes my bobotie so special; you NEVER mix the ingredients! Don't you see, they remain separate and pure. There is far more nutritional value in this method. This is the change, the reform that I have introduced in our own affairs.

ALAN But where's the bobotie? All I can see are tomatoes, onions and a potato cooked in separate chamber pots.

MRS JOHNSON Isn't it wonderful? They haven't lost their separate identities. Well Alan, wouldn't you like to sample the new three-chamber bobotie?

ALAN I don't think so.

MRS JOHNSON Come on Alan, this is the kind of fare that you have opted for, you know. This is what will be served up in the separate chambers. Come on now, taste. (Pushes a spoonful of onion at him)

ALAN (Eyeing contents with distaste) Hey, wait a minute; I can't eat this. It is just plain onion.

MRS JOHNSON Open up. (Tickles him to make him open his mouth)

ALAN I'd rather have the tomato ...

MRS JOHNSON Oh no! That's for the White House of Assembly ...

ALAN Some potato then ...

MRS JOHNSON Oh no! That's for the Indian House of Delegates. Open up. That's it.

ALAN (Swallowing in disgust) Why did we get the onions? You should have given that to the Indians. They like onions. (Rushing into audience) I have to get some water ...

MRS JOHNSON (Rushing after him) Wait Alan, you haven't finished ... Alan, come back ...

ANNOUNCER (Laughing) That Alan, he's a card. Imagine pretending he doesn't like the new bobotie when it's his favourite dish. What a clown! Now ladies and gentlemen, stand by for our new game show – The Money or the Box! Before I ask for contestants from the audience, let me explain the rules. To qualify to play the game, you have to answer a simple question. Right. Let's get started. (To audience) Which of you ladies and gentlemen out there would like to participate? Ah, I see a gentleman coming forward. Welcome sir, and what is your name?

DICKIE Dickie.

ANNOUNCER Ah, Dickie. And where are you from Dickie?

DICKIE From the University. You see, when I was kicked out of the Party, I had nowhere to go, so I went to the University.

ANNOUNCER You were kicked out?

DICKIE Ja, at that time no one wanted to participate.

ANNOUNCER So you see this as your way to get back in! I'll bring you your question? (Announcer walks over to get envelope swaying like the glamour girl on TV) Now Dickie, open the envelope and read out the question.

DICKIE (Opens envelope and reads) DID YOU VOTE IN THE TRI- CAMERAL ELECTIONS HELD IN 1984? DID YOU VOTE FOR COLOURED PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE NEW PARLIAMENT WITH ITS SEPARATE CHAMBERS?

ANNOUNCER Well, what is your answer?

DICKIE (Looking confused) Well, I'm not sure. The last time I said yes, I was kicked out ...

ANNOUNCER Come on, Dickie, what is your answer to the question? You want a chance to go for the money or the box don't you?

DICKIE (Hesitantly) I don't think ...

ANNOUNCER Come on now, Dickie, I can't give you any clues, but you are heading in the wrong direction.

DICKIE Well, I could say no ...

ANNOUNCER (Coughs) Try the other one.

DICKIE (Boldly) Yes! I voted in the Tri-Cameral Elections!

ANNOUNCER Wonderful! And we don't doubt that he did? Right ...

DICKIE (Laughing) It's wonderful how things have changed. And to think I was kicked out of the Party for saying we should participate before.

Announcer

Right. Now Dickie, choose a box from ALAN'S COON CARNIVAL. What shall it be?

DICKIE I'd like the A

ANNOUNCER Which one? The first, second, third or fourth?

DICKIE Can I have all four?

ANNOUNCER I'm afraid not.

DICKIE Give me the first A in CARNIVAL.

ANNOUNCER Now for the big moment. Dickie, are you ready? Do you want this box?

DICKIE I want the BOX.

ANNOUNCER I'll give you thirty cents for the box. The MONEY or the BOX!

DICKIE The BOX!

ANNOUNCER Fifty rand!

DICKIE The BOX!

ANNOUNCER Six hundred and fifty rand!

(Actors in audience shout: MONEY, BOX)

DICKIE The BOX!

ANNOUNCER Are you sure, Dickie?

DICKIE Is that your final offer?

ANNOUNCER (Laughs) He wants to know if that's my final offer? All right, Dickie, I'll give you R1000 for the BOX. Take it or leave it.

(Actors in audience shout, TAKE THE MONEY, TAKE THE BOX)

ANNOUNCER Well Dickie?

DICKIE I ... er ... I ... think ... I'll take the money!

ANNOUNCER Are you sure? There could be a valuable prize in this box!

DICKIE All right, THE BOX!

ANNOUNCER On the other hand, it could be a booby prize!

DICKIE Okay, the money! (Actors in audience shout, TAKE THE MONEY, TAKE THE BOX) No, the box ... no, the money ... no, the box ...

ANNOUNCER Right, the BOX. Here you are Dickie!

DICKIE But, but, but, I didn't ... Okay. I came with nothing, so what the heck. (Opens box, reads card) YOU HAVE WON THE VOTE! The vote! The vote! That's a damn booby prize. It's not a real vote. It will never be.

ANNOUNCER Sorry, Dickie.

(Dickie rushes at the Announcer but is dragged away by the next contestant)

ARENDSE (Pushing Dickie off)
Get out. It's my turn. You got the booby prize. That's how the game is. Be a sport.

ANNOUNCER Ah, our next contestant! Your name?

ARENDSE Arendse.

ANNOUNCER And where do you come from Mr Arendse?

ARENDSE I come from Education. I also got kicked out, like Dickie. I wanted to negotiate. They wouldn't let me so I had to do it in private. When they found out, they kicked me out of the Party. So now I'm in Education.

ANNOUNCER Yes, I see.

ARENDSE Now bring the envelope! What are we waiting for? (Announcer fetches envelope) Is there something wrong with you?

ANNOUNCER I beg your pardon?

ARENDSE Why do you walk like that?

ANNOUNCER Well that's the way it's done on TV ONE. I know the announcer doesn't fetch the envelope, but they have two people on their show. We can't afford two people, so I have to play both parts.

ARENDSE Now did I ask you for the whole history of the thing? Give me the envelope. (He tears it open) IS THE COLOURED HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES A FREE AND INDEPENDENT GOVERNING BODY?

ANNOUNCER Well, what is your answer?

ARENDSE Well, I ... I ... No.

ANNOUNCER Are you sure? Think again Mr Arendse, your answer is not quite what we're looking for.

ARENDSE I say NO!

ANNOUNCER Mr Arendse, don't be so impatient. Think carefully before you answer.

ARENDSE NO!

ANNOUNCER In that case, I'm sorry, you don't qualify to play MONEY or the BOX!

ARENDSE What? No listen here, man.

ANNOUNCER I'm sorry, Mr Arendse, I tried to help you ...

ARENDSE When I said YES the last time, they kicked me out. That's why I said NO. I didn't mean it. I would have said YES, because that is what Pee Wee told me, but I thought you wanted me to say NO!

ANNOUNCER Take him away.

(Dickie comes in and carries him off)

ARENDSE (Shouting as he is carried off) You can't do this to me. I'm a retired man. I need the money. Give me the money!

ANNOUNCER Poor man, very confused. Now who is next? Ah, I see our next contestant coming up. Good evening, sir. Would you like to tell us your name?

SONNY Yes, my name is Sonny. Some people call me the Lion of the North.

ANNOUNCER How interesting? Does it have any significance?

SONNY Sonny Well, it's because I'm a hunter. I have always hunted with the hounds and run with the hares.

ANNOUNCER Well, let me get your envelope. There you are.

SONNY (Opens envelope and reads)
SHOULD COLOURED PEOPLE HAVE ACCEPTED NOMINATION TO THE PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL? It's very strange, I got kicked out last time for saying yes. Well, I haven't changed my mind, I still say YES!

ANNOUNCER Well done, Sonny. You qualify to play MONEY or the BOX! Choose a letter from ALAN'S COON CARNIVAL.

SONNY I'll take the C in Carnival.

ANNOUNCER (Brings box) Now Sonny, do you want the BOX?

SONNY No, I want the money.

ANNOUNCER But I haven't offered you any money yet. Very well, I'll give you two hundred rand for the box.

SONNY Is that all?

ANNOUNCER Two hundred and twenty.

SONNY If you only go up in twenties, it's not worthwhile is it?

ANNOUNCER All right, Sonny, how about One thousand, five hundred and sixty?

SONNY That's more like it. The BOX!

ANNOUNCER Eighteen hundred!

SONNY The BOX!

ANNOUNCER Are you sure you want the box? It may contain a bo ...

SONNY I don't care what's in the box. If this is your last offer, I'll take the money.

ANNOUNCER But the box ...

SONNY Cut out the bullshit and give me the money!

ANNOUNCER Okay Sonny. Now tell us what you would have won if you had taken the BOX!

SONNY (Opens box, takes out card and reads) NOMINATION TO THE COLOURED HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IN THE NEW CONSTITUTION! Oh no! I blew it. I could have had thirty thousand a year, now all I have is this measly eighteen hundred. (Goes off in despair)

ANNOUNCER And now, ALAN, come up and choose a letter!

ALAN I want the C in Coon. (Announcer brings box)

ANNOUNCER I'll give you thirteen thousand rand for this box!

ALAN I want the BOX!

ANNOUNCER But what if it's a booby prize?

ALAN I want the BOX!

ANNOUNCER All right, you have the box. Tell us what you have won.

ALAN (Opening box, removing card and reading) YOU HAVE WON CONSCRIPTION FOR ALL COLOURED YOUTH. Isn't that wonderful. Now we'll have our own boys on the border.

(Enter Gamat)

GAMAT That's a blerry booby prize. You got he biggest BOOBY PRIZE IN THE SHOW. See, I tole you. You stole my blerry job. You the blerry clown of this show.

ALAN Aw, come on. Forget all this. Let me buy you a drink.

GAMAT Jou bliksem! You want to buy me off, eh? I'm not for sale, not like you. Ek gaan jou moer. (Chases Alan off)

ANNOUNCER Well, wasn't that fun? Now for a musical interlude, I hand you over to the Cape Corps. Very appropriate, I think, considering that Alan has just won conscription for the Coloured youth.

(The band comes on playing and singing 'Here comes the Corps')

LEADER OF THE BAND Though we are from the army, we are not out recruiting; we're just having fun. The army is fun, you know. It's given us a wonderful opportunity to travel all over the country. We've visited most of the Coloured schools and we've inspired many youngsters to join us because they can see for themselves what wonderful opportunities there are in the army. Of course, we're not trying to get people to join up. No, we're just here to entertain you. Now we are going to play our favourite number. (They play and sing 'We are marching to Pretoria')

(Gamat runs in and addresses audience)

GAMAT Djoo see what this Alan is doing? He wants to turn each one of you into a corpse. Do you want to become a corpse?

LEADER OF THE BAND Hey Gamat, it's not corpse, man, it's corps.

GAMAT There's a difference?

LEADER OF THE BAND Join us, man. We need a comedian in our outfit.

GAMAT Nay man! I've been disposed. Vra die nuwe King of Comedy.

LEADER OF THE BAND Come on, Gamat.

GAMAT Voertsek, man. You want me to go to the border to die for apartheid. I'm going to donder you. (Gets into fighting stance)

LEADER OF THE BAND Okay boys, you know the routine. Grab the terrorist! (They grab hold of Gamat, blindfold him, tie him up, gag him, then form a firing squad and shoot him with their musical instruments.) Ready! Aim, FIRE! (Gamat falls dead and the Corps marches out playing 'We are marching to Pretoria')

(Announcer comes back on stage, stumbles over body of Gamat and starts in shock. Announcer runs off and gets board which he holds up to audience PROBLEMS. PLEASE BE PATIENT.)

ANNOUNCER (Calling) Alan!

ALAN What's the matter? I'm getting ready for the next act ...

ANNOUNCER (Pointing to Gamat) Just look at this. That bloody Corps of yours has made a bloody mess of things!

ALAN (Looking at Gamat) Don't get excited. We'll get rid of him.

ANNOUNCER I really don't understand. Here we've been given a chance to prove ourselves, to show the whites that we know how to act and then we have this. Gang warfare is okay in the townships, but we can't have it here. What will they think of us?

ALAN Okay, okay! Don't get uptight. I'll take care of it.

ANNOUNCER Then get rid of that.

(Alan grabs hold of Gamat. Gamat jumps up)

GAMAT Laat my staan, man! What are you doing?

ALAN Gamat! You're not dead!

GAMAT I wasn't born yesterday, man. You think I was going to let those butchers get me. When I saw they was going to fire, me, I yus jumped down under the bullets and lay dead.

ANNOUNCER Get out of here now. (Puts away PROBLEMS Board and turns with a sweet smile to the audience.) We apologise for the break in transmission. We return you to our scheduled programme. I hand you over to Meraai Popcorns for the four o'clock news.

MERAAI Howzit brazzos. You're ready for the news; well look out, hier kom hy. I got two reports: one on crime and the other on unemployment. Ja, I know, it's stale news. Anyway, here goes. Unemployment first. Unemployment figures have been rising at a dizzying rate. (In a confidential tone) In fact, the News staff here has been taking bets on how soon it will reach 75%. What do you predict – by December? June next year? Next December? Right now the odds on favourite is next June. Ek sê, if you okes want a piece of the action, you can send your bets to us at SABC-TV, The Coloured People's Programme.

(Resuming news tone) Now what's next? O ja, crime. Police report that the streets in most Coloured townships have become totally unsafe. Since the handing over of Coloured Townships to the Coloured Local Authorities, street lighting has been reduced owing to a lack of funds. The condition of the streets has deteriorated; also owing to a lack of funds. At night, hundreds of young gangsters roam about vandalising cars and homes, assaulting passers-by and engaging in the most vicious fights amongst themselves. Every morning, the sun rises on streets covered in blood. (Meraai yawns) The police, afraid for their lives, no longer patrol the streets. The Chief Minister of the Coloured House of Representatives, LP Alan, has appealed to the President to call in the army. But the President regrets that the matter is an own affair and he cannot interfere in Coloured townships. Matters involving the army, however, are general affairs. So Alan's appeal was referred to the three separate chambers. The White House of Assembly voted against sending in the army but the Indian and Coloured chambers voted for it. The matter was referred to the President's Council, which upheld the White House of Assembly's decision not to send in the army. So the Coloured townships will have to find their own solution to this problem.

Ek sê, me, I've solved the problem for myself. Ja, I don't move from the studio. You never catch me going outside. In fact, nobody moves from here, not Alan, not anybody. You know when they told us we were going to get a House of Representatives, I thought like the Houses of Parliament but for us, it is just a house, a home, we live here. If we go out there, those thugs will get us. I don't know why, but they blame us for the mess things are in. Anyway that was just by the by.

Our next news bulletin will be brought to you next Thursday afternoon. But I wouldn't hold my breath, ek sê, the news never changes.

Now I hand you back to our continuity announcer for the rest of this afternoon's programmes. Check you.

ANNOUNCER (a Woman this time)

The rest of our programme this afternoon is devoted to the debate in the House of Representatives. (The

actors are standing in groups in serious discussion) Ah, look ladies and gentlemen, various Members of the House caucusing. I wonder what they are discussing so earnestly. There you see two members of the majority Labour Party and there Opposition members of CORE. Let us listen to the Labour Party caucus. (Takes mike and holds it up to their conversation)

ALAN No man, I think you will be making a terrible mistake if you do that!

TWO But I have inside information!

ALAN You've had inside information before, but it's always cost us.

TWO
But this time, I tell you, I've got a sure thing!

ALAN (Taking out race card) Look, just check the form. Is there anything to beat Turncoat? I'm putting all my money on Turncoat.

TWO Okay. I know that Turncoat won the Winter Handicap and Tabak Stakes, but he's carrying too much weight this time, and he can't stay the distance.

ALAN Rubbish man, he likes the extra length, besides this is the Representative Stakes; he's a natural for it.

ANNOUNCER Let us hear what the opposition is discussing.

THREE I'm telling you, I had this dream man. It was so clear. I am lying on the ground and suddenly I feel something cold on my belly. I open my eyes and I see this snake coiled on my navel. I'm lying there saying to myself, wake up, wake up, before the snake strikes. Jislaaik, but I can't wake up, and I'm thinking if this snake kills me in my dream, I'm a goner. Then the snake lifts its head, and I see it has Alan's face and I get even more scared. I think, hell, I'm done for. Then suddenly the snake smiles, it smiles, it actually smiles at me. Jur, I didn't know what to expect.

FOUR And then, what happened?

THREE Ag man, just my bloody luck, I woke up.

FOUR You think Alan is going to offer you a portfolio? You not thinking of joining up with Labour?

THREE Don't be stupid, man. The dream was important. It wasn't meant for things like that.

FOUR Then what is it for?

THREE (Takes out book) Fahfee, man. Snake is 12, 32, 36, right? I'm gonna win. Look you want to take the same fahfee numbers? The Chinaman is coming today.

FOUR Nah, I don't think the Chinman is coming back.

THREE Why?

FOUR Things are really rough out there. We don't know because we're safe in here. We haven't been outside since we were elected two years ago. Last time the Chinaman came, his nose, ears and fingers had all been sliced off. If he's been sliced up anymore, I don't think there's anything left of him.

THREE Nah, he'll come. I didn't have this dream for nothing.

ANNOUNCER Well, after that preliminary discussion, I think, they'll be moving into session. Yes, they're all sitting down. I believe Alan is about to address the House.

ALAN Honourable Members, we have very serious matters on the agenda today. As elected Representatives of the Coloured Community, we hold a big responsibility in our hands. It is our duty to see to it that we make every effort to improve conditions. We know that the most critical problems are housing and unemployment. Today, we dedicate ourselves to finding solutions to these problems. (3 makes signs for Alan to end the broadcast.) And that brings the Coloured Programme to an end for this week. Tune in again next Tuesday afternoon.

THREE Right! Let's get down to business.

ANNOUNCER You can't end the transmission now. We still have plenty of broadcast time. Let people hear the deliberations.

TWO Hey, who's this? A new announcer? What happened to the other one?

FOUR This kid doesn't have a clue.

ANNOUNCER What are you going to tackle first? Housing? Unemployment?

(They ignore her)

THREE Okay. Let's get on with the game. (Brings out cards and starts shuffling) I'll deal.

ALAN No, I'll deal.

THREE No, I'll deal. I don't trust you.

ALAN Will you please remember that I am the Chief Minister? You are only Leader of the Opposition. I DEAL!

THREE Look here, you bloody crook. I wanna deal.

ALAN Let's see you try. Go on, try!

TWO Shut up, both of you. Let's start the game. Why must you guys always go into this act?

FOUR Ja, give it up, will you? Let's play poker. Come on, man. Let him deal, man. Let him deal!
(Alan deals. They play cards, then fight when someone is accused of cheating.)

ANNOUNCER (Trying to stop them)
Gentlemen, stop, I beg you. (They continue to fight. Announcer sings 'Die Stem' and they all stop and stand to attention) An important communiqué has come down from the President. (They stare at Announcer)

ALAN Where were we? Right. (Goes back into scuffle)

ANNOUNCER (Struggling to be heard) There is some new legislation for you to consider. (They go on fighting. Announcer grabs hold of Alan.) Gentlemen, stop.

ALAN (About to sock Announcer, gets socked by someone else) You see what you did? (Chases Announcer. The others stop fighting and take bets on whether he will catch her. Alan catches her)

FOUR Pay up! I won fair and square. You owe me a hundred bucks.

THREE You tripped her. I saw you.

FOUR Don't squeal, man, pay up!

THREE That bloody snake! It's brought me bad luck. I should have known. It had Alan's face.

ALAN (Holding Announcer by the scruff of her neck) What do you mean by interrupting the business of this house? What shall I do with her boys?

THREE Hey, come on man, let's get back to the game. I gotta win back my hundred.

ALAN I'm going to teach you a lesson, you'll never forget.

ANNOUNCER Please, I didn't mean ...

ALAN The next time ... (Announcer switches on mike and holds it up for Alan) The next time you interfere, I'll ... squawk, splutter, bleeck ... What the hell is going on? What's happening to my words?

ANNOUNCER New mikes, Alan, they have built in censorship filters.

ALAN Hell, a guy can't have fun anymore. Now what the hell did you interrupt me for?

ANNOUNCER This new bill! It was sent down by the President for all of you to discuss.

Alan (Takes it, folds it into paper plane and gets ready to aim) Okay, we'll file it with the rest. (Shies it into waste paper basket)

ANNOUNCER Aren't you going to read it?

ALAN What for?

ANNOUNCER But this is shocking. Is this what we elected you to Parliament for? To ignore law making processes?

(Everybody laughs at Announcer)

ALAN You hit the nail on the head.

ANNOUNCER But this is a betrayal of the people's trust.

(They laugh even louder)

ALAN Wake up, woman. (To the others) Hey bras, this is the one, the original one. The one definitely born yesterday!

ANNOUNCER I am going to expose you to the Coloured people. Let them know that you are doing nothing for them.

ALAN Somebody explain to this kid.

THREE Look, we don't bother to read these Bills because it doesn't matter what we think. If the White House of Assembly says it's okay, it passes; if they say it's no good, it's dropped.

ANNOUNCER Then you are useless.

ALAN Listen girl, come down to earth; we all knew it was going to be like this.

ANNOUNCER Then why did you accept?

(Everybody laughs)

ALAN It's a comfortable life. Now stop being so prudish and have a game with us ... or maybe (Looks her up and down) maybe you'd like to go upstairs with me, eh?

ANNOUNCER (Shocked) But ... but what about the Africans? You said once you got in, you'd fight to get them in.

(Everybody laughs)

ALAN (Moving closer to her)
Haven't you heard of OWN affairs, baby? Well, that's not OUR affair.

ANNOUNCER How can you be so dishonest?

ALAN Oh, we tried, didn't we boys?

OTHERS Sure did.

ALAN The President told us we couldn't discuss anything concerning Africans; we had to mind our own Coloured affairs. Now come here, baby, and let's mind our own affairs. (He tries to pull her near him but she runs off. He laughs. Everyone laughs.) Okay everybody, sundowner time. Bring in the wine.

(Everyone drinks and then they sing and dance as they exit.. Enter Gamat)

GAMAT What a mess. If only we could go back to before the new constitutional proposals. We still had a chance then. (Pulls out Magician's wand) Abracadabra, give us a chance to say NO. Hey it's working. We're going back in time. (Gamat moves backwards as though propelled by an abstract force, goes off-stage and re-enters with the other actors all wearing UDF T-shirts)

Thank goodness we're back to now, before sham elections for the Coloured House of Representatives. What you have been witnessing, folks, was a nightmare. Thank god, we still have the chance to say NO. I don't know about you, but I'm sick of this Alan. I'm going to find the other Alan and join him.

(Actors stand, fists raised, singing 'We Shall Overcome.')

THE END.

Most of the background material used for The Masterplan and other revues came from Sheena Duncan of the Black Sash.

Here follow some of her papers on Section 10 qualifications for residence and employment in urban areas that give clear indication of the rigid and onerous controls placed on the movement of African people.

SECTION 10

Section 10(1)(A).

People who have lived continuously in one town since they were born. Only absences allowed are for schooling purposes, medical treatment and domestic reasons such as looking after aged grandparents for a short time. Proof required is a birth certificate and usually on house or lodger's permit and registered employment. People who have had no permits need very good proofs to get 10(1)(a).

Section 10(1)(B).

People who have been in registered employment with one employer in one town for ten years – does not apply to those who have been registered on annual contracts OR people who have lived legally with permits in one town for 15 full years. 10(1)(b) is taken away from any person who is sentenced to more than 6 months in prison or to a fine of more than R500. They have to start counting the 10 or 15 years again from the time they get registered after being discharged from prison.

Section 10(1)(C).

This is a right which the wives, unmarried daughters, sons under the age of 18 years of a man or woman who is 10(1)(a) or 10(1)(b) acquire after their names have been put on the house or lodger's permit with their husband or parent.

Section 10(1)(D).

This is not a legal right. It is merely permission to work in an area. Some people are given this permission fairly easily because they can prove they have been living and working there for many years. Other people are only registered on one year contracts. These people are not allowed to register in new jobs if they leave their work when the contract expires. They are supposed to go back home and wait to be recruited again.

If they leave a job in the middle of a contract they may be allowed to register in new work for the period of the contract.

- Sheena Duncan

(The Urban Areas Consolidation Act, Act No. 25 of 1945, established Section 10 regulations.

Section 10 reflects the intention from the very beginning of the establishment of towns to keep African people out of urban areas and confine them to rural areas. This intent led eventually to the Homelands Policy (1970) and then to the Independent Homelands Policy (from 1976 when Transkei became an Independent Homeland). The establishment of Independent Homelands, limited African people to citizenship in the Homelands, denied them citizenship in the country of their birth and for a period of over twenty years declared them to be foreigners in South Africa.)

The Myth Of Reform (1981)

This paper attempts to analyse what is actually happening in South Africa, to cut through the rhetoric about change and to look at actions which have been taken by Government since 1976 and legislation which has been introduced. It will argue that, far from being intent on reform or change to the policy of Apartheid Government is in fact accelerating the rate of progress towards Apartheid's final consummation.

The policy remains, as it has always been, one of exclusion, exclusion of all black people from access to political power and the exclusion of all but those who are necessary to the development of the "white" economy from access to a share in the economic wealth of the white core. The majority are excluded from access to the land as well as from participation in industrial and commercial development.

1. The Urban Scene - exclusion in disguise

Section 10(1) – "No Black shall remain for more than seventy-two hours in a prescribed area unless..."

The only legal rights of residence enjoyed by Black people in the urban areas (the group abhorrently referred to as "the urban black") are those contained in Section 10 of the Urban Areas Act. This confers upon those who have lived continuously in one town since they were born (10 (1)(a) and those who have lived lawfully in one town for 15 years or who have worked continuously in one town for one employer for 10 years (10 (1)(b) rights to be in town. The wives and children of these qualified people acquire a right in terms of Section 10 (1) (c) to remain in town with their husbands and parents once they have taken up residence with them. All other black people may only remain in a town for more than 72 hours if they are given a permit to work.

:

The National Party Government has always maintained that Section 10 confers privileges and not legal rights but the Courts have taken a different view. There is a long history of attempts by Government to limit Section 10 rights.

In 1964 the terms of 10 (1)(c) were tightened and the amendments made succeeded in excluding the wives and children of qualified people from coming to town legally to live in family conditions for 16 years until the Appeal Court handed down the Komani judgement in August 1980. This judgement means in effect that the wife, son under the age of 18 and the unmarried daughter of a person with 10 (1) (a) or (b) qualifications has **a legal right** to be with the husband or parent in town as long as they are residing together in a black township.

¹ Throughout this paper the term "Black" refers only to the African people because the legislation discussed applies only to them.

This judgement is currently being frustrated by officials of the Administration Boards and of the Department of Co-Operation and Development who insist that the judgement applied to Mr and Mrs Komani only. Other families are being denied the right to live together and only when legal action is threatened in each individual case are their legal rights recognised.

In 1968 the Government promulgated Regulations for labour Bureaux in the bantustans which introduced the one year contract system for migrant workers. Prior to 1968 if a man came to town from a rural area to work and was registered in his job the registration remained valid until he left his job. If he stayed in the Job for 10 years he acquired 10 (1)(b) rights. This was the path by which many people became urbanised.

The 1968 Regulations mean that a worker from a rural area may only attest a contract with his employer for one year at a time. At the end of the year the employer is compelled to discharge the worker and to return him to his home area. If he is to come back to the same job a new contract must be attested for another year. These Regulations were designed to prevent further urbanisation and to deny people the chance of qualifying as 10 (1)(b). The bureaucracy maintains that even when a person remains in the same job for 10 years and more the employment is not continuous because it is broken and has to be renewed each year. Likewise a person is said not to be continuously resident in a town for 15 years if he has returned annually to his place of origin to attest another contract as he is obliged to do by law.

Some people have recently succeeded in getting their 10(1)(b) rights by claiming that, although certain administrative procedures have had to be complied with annually, the agreement between them and their employers, has never been interrupted. However, this recognition of legal rights is acknowledged only when an individual threatens legal action. As with 10 (1)(c) rights the bureaucrats are succeeding in severely restricting the number of people who acquire these rights.

In 1969/70 the Government attempted to remove Section 10 altogether in the draft Bill which introduced the Administration Board. There was an outcry from employers who have regarded the provisions of Section 10 as a means of ensuring the stability of the skilled labour force. As a result of the protest Section 10 remained intact.

In 1978 Section 12 of the Urban Areas Act was amended. This amendment which is dealt with in the Citizenship section below means that Section 10 rights will eventually wither away altogether if the Government succeeds in persuading all the Bantustans to take independence.

In 1980 Dr. Koornhof published the Black Community Development Bill which again attempted to remove Section 10 rights and was withdrawn following protests. Had this Bill become law only those black people who had been able to buy a house in an urban area or who were the registered tenants of a rented house would eventually have had any semblance of security whatsoever.

It remains to be seen what the final form of this legislation will be but whatever the next attempt at removing "hurtful discrimination" turns out to be it is only question of time before all black people in South Africa become "prohibited immigrants" or "alien guest workers" in terms of existing legislation. Dr. Koornhof's proposals would only have speeded up the process.

At the same time as Section 10 rights continue to be whittled away the events of 1976 and the years since have made it necessary for Government to respond to the threat of urban instability. Hence all the talk about improving the "quality of life" for black people in white areas. To this end they have been accorded certain privileges such as the chance to buy a house under the 99 year leasehold scheme (See below under citizenship) if they can afford it. Only people who have Section 10 (1)(a) or (b) rights are eligible to buy or rent a house but there is no legal right to demand housing. The opportunity to be housed is dependent upon the will of the Government to make land and housing available and the Government is not responsible to the needs and desires of the voteless black majority.

In Johannesburg we are told that no land is available for black housing. There is an officially acknowledged waiting list of over 34 000 families in Soweto, a list that goes back to 1969 and represents only those who qualify for acceptance on the waiting list. It does not reflect the real need for accommodation. People who now apply to buy a house are told that there are no houses for sale. In 1980 not one single house was built in Soweto by the West Rand Administration Board.

Another privilege being accorded to Section 10 people is the preferential allocation of jobs. In June 1980 amendments to the Black labour Regulations were published. These allow Section 10 qualified people to work without being registered in their employment provided that the job lies within the Administration Board area in which they hold the qualification. Qualified people may also move to another Administration Board area provided that they have a job and accommodation to go to. This follows on a recommendation of the Riekert Commission and serves to draw impenetrable boundaries between urban and rural people. Those who are not already legally established in town increasingly find it impossible to obtain work. Employers must draw on the pool of urban "qualified" labour before they will be allowed to recruit workers from rural areas.

Already in the Black Sash Johannesburg Advice Office we have been faced with people who want "my qualification" because they say employers are demanding a Section 10 qualification, even for those who are legally registered to seek work, and that they will only offer jobs to qualified people. It is obviously much easier for an employer to take on a worker who does not have to go through the whole administrative hassle involved in registration.

The Star last year carried a story about a new computer system which is to be installed which will link all Administration Boards. Once this system is in operation it will be easy for employers to identify workers with Section 10 qualifications in small towns and all the indications are that Labour Bureaux will insist on offers of jobs being given to those workers on a preferential basis before recruitment from the bantustans will be allowed. Such people are already in the so-called "white" areas and their enhanced mobility will not increase the overall number of black people who are permitted to be in the "white" areas.

This follows the pattern we have seen before; job reservation gave white workers preferential access to work opportunities; in Coloured labour preference areas so-called coloured workers are given preference over black workers; the recent trend outlined above gives preference to urban- people to the exclusion of the rural poor.

The privileges which are now being granted to urban people do not give them political rights. They are totally excluded from participation in Government on a national level and the legitimacy of the demand for universal adult franchise is, undermined by the Citizenship legislation as outlined below.

The introduction of local government powers through Community Councils, Town or Village Councils, or whatever the new name is to be, serves to entrench the exclusion of black residents from political participation at municipal level. When Soweto was administered by the Johannesburg City Council, black people had no representation on the Council but there was a degree of economic sharing in that money generated in the City Centre was used for the development of Soweto, however inequitable the distribution of revenue may have been.

The introduction of the Administration Boards in 1971 did away with even this limited degree of participation. Now as local government powers are granted to black townships so they completely forfeit their claim to a just share in the total revenue from the metropolitan area in spite of the fact that a large percentage of this revenue comes as a result of the high rate of black consumer spending in the central business districts.

Far from moving any kind of power sharing the legislation is all directed towards the permanent exclusion of black people. It cannot be stressed too strongly that these laws are not a hang over from the past which is hampering the present government in its desire for change. Everything which has been done in the last five years is entirely consistent with all that has gone before.

2. The Citizenship Policy – exclusion from political participation

In 1970 the Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act was promulgated. This Act says that every Black person in South Africa is a citizen of one homeland or another. It makes no difference if a person has no knowledge of his imputed homeland and no connection whatsoever with any region now set aside as bantustan.

A person is a citizen of a particular homeland if he was born there or is domiciled there or if he speaks the language of a part of the population of that homeland or if he is culturally or otherwise identified with any person who is part of the population of that homeland. The terms of the Act are all embracing and there is no escape.

The Act made little practical difference in the years between 1970 and 1976 because people's rights as South African citizens were not affected by the provisions. All that happened was that birth certificates were issued with the citizenship of the child shown as "Kwa Zulu", or "Qwa Qwa", "Gazankulu", etc.

But in 1976 when Transkei became independent the Status of Transkei Act, contained a clause which meant that all those people who were citizens of Transkei in terms of any other law ceased to be South African citizens on the day of independence.

In 1977 and 1979 when Bophuthatswana and Venda respectively became independent the Status Acts contained the same provision.

The three Status Acts have deprived all Tswana-speaking, all Venda-speaking, and all Xhosa-speaking people who cannot prove that they belong to Ciskei rather than Transkei, of their South African citizenship. 6,75 million people were turned into foreigners in just over three years and at the end of this year another 1,25 million people will probably lose their citizenship when Ciskei becomes independent.

The newly created foreigners retain their Section 10 rights, if they have them, and influx control and the pass laws apply to them in exactly the same way as they do to other black people. They are no longer issued with Reference Books but must apply to their own governments for a travel document which is used in exactly the same way as a Reference Book and remains a dompas. The only difference is that instead of an endorsement out stamp reading, "ordered to leave the prescribed area of ... within 72 hours" it reads "ordered to report to the Magistrate at for residence before" Some of these new foreigners get two years instead of one year contracts to work in the so-called white area.

Section 10 rights do not, of course, override a deportation order made by the Minister of the Interior. People who are foreign can always be declared "prohibited immigrants" or "undesirable aliens" and be deported to their "country of origin" – even if they have never been there in their lives. This could obviously be a very effective control over political activists or trade union leaders who were considered to be becoming too effective and popular.

However, for most urban people life goes on as before and the effects of being foreign are only realised when a teenager goes to apply for an identity document and is issued with a foreign travel document or when a person wishes to travel outside South Africa's borders and is refused a South African passport. This has caused some embarrassment to the South African government because several important Black spokesmen who have been invited to Europe or America have refused to acknowledge their foreign status by applying for a passport from their Bantustan Government and have therefore been unable to travel. There is also the problem that the Independent homelands are not internationally recognised. In response there is now an arrangement whereby a person will be issued with a South African passport for international travel if his own government agrees. It seems likely that all the talk about differentiating between "citizenship" and "nationality" for citizens of the Ciskei will prove to be nothing more meaningful than this arrangement.

The 1978 amendment in Section 12 – Section 12 is the section in the Urban Areas Act which deals with foreigners. It excludes the provisions of Section 10 and no foreigner may acquire Section 10 rights however long he may have lived lawfully in one place. This section used to say that no black person who was not born in South Africa could enter, be or remain in any prescribed area without written permission of the Secretary.

This permission can be withdrawn at any time without reason being given. In 1978 the words "not born in" were changed to "who is not a South African citizen, or who is not a former South African citizen who is a citizen of a state the territory or part of the territory of which formerly formed part of the Republic". This complicated wording means that any child who is born after the date of independence of his parents' home-land can never have Section 10 rights. He is not a South African citizen or a former South African citizen. He must be dealt with in terms of Section 12 which allows for permits not legal rights. He will only be allowed to be in an urban area if he is given a permit which permit can be cancelled at any time. He will have no recourse to the courts for protection against deportation because he has no rights of residence.

1978 was also the year in which the widely acclaimed **99 year leasehold system** was introduced and welcomed as being recognition of the permanence of the urban black".

A person born after the date of the independence of his father's homeland has the right to inherit the house

bequeathed to him by his father but he has no right to occupy the house. His ability to do so will depend on whether or not he is given a Section 12 permit to be in the area where the house stands.

If all the bantustans take independence, and there are great pressures upon them to do so, there will be no black South Africans and in a couple of generations there will be no black people with any rights of residence in South Africa outside the bantustans. They will all be "alien guest workers" subject to deportation if they are not wanted or if their labour is not required by the white economy.

3. Inside the bantustans – exclusion from economic participation

Even if some do resist the many pressures put upon them to take independence and do remain part of South Africa the condition of the people who live inside the non-independent bantustans is not much affected by their South African status. They might as well be foreigners as far as their exclusion from access to economic participation in the common society is concerned.

RESETTLEMENT:

It has been estimated that over 2 million black people have been relocated into the bantustans in the pursuance of Apartheid. Another 1 million are due to be and are currently being moved in terms of the 1975 Consolidation proposals. The bantustans, independent and non-independent, together constitute less than 14% of the total land area of South Africa. Their de facto black population was estimated by Benso to be almost 9 million in 1978 with 0,75 million people of other race groups also resident in those regions. The total population of the rest of South Africa outside the bantustans in the same year was estimated to be 18 million. Of these, 10 ½ million were black people who, it should be noted, form part of that curious South African statistic "the de jure population" of the homelands. They are resident in so-called white South Africa but are deemed to be part of the population of the bantustans. No black person may purchase land outside the bantustans for residential, agricultural or any other purpose.

Many of the relocated people have been moved from urban or peri-urban situations into new "towns" in the bantustans. Their problems are manifold, not the least being that families are put asunder as the breadwinners return to their jobs as migrants while the families must remain in the homeland settlements, but this paper is concerned mainly with the hundreds of thousands of people who have been rendered landless by their relocation.

The history of the white occupation of South Africa could be described as being a history of the theft of the land from black people. The present relocation programme is part of a much longer and more gradual process of dispossession.

It is extremely difficult to obtain accurate figures for the total numbers of rural people who have been relocated but the following taken from the Institute of Race Relations Surveys and from their publication "African Population Relocation in South Africa" by Gerry Maré gave some indication.

1948 – 1973:	People removed from Black spots –	258 632
1960 – 1970:	People removed from white farms –	340 000
	as a result of the abolition of labour tenancy	
1960 – 1970:	People removed as a result of laws –	656 000
	preventing "squatters" living on white farms	

In March 1981 Dr. Koornhof presented the National Party election manifesto which claimed that 317 000 people had been removed into the homelands between 1970 and 1980. This would appear to be a conservative estimate. Gerry Maré quotes a figure of 400 000 people representing labour tenants and their families relocated between 1971 and 1974 and it has been established that the removal of labour tenants and squatters has continued steadily since 1974, especially in Natal.

These hundreds of thousands of people had previously enjoyed the use of land for growing crops and grazing livestock. They paid rent for this land either with their labour or, in the case of registered squatters and sub-tenants in Black spots, in cash to the landowner. But the rule on relocation is that only those who own 17 hectares (20 morgen) of land are resettled to compensatory agricultural land. The vast majority do not own the land on which they have been living and they are dumped into closer settlements where they are given small plots, 0,33 to 0,5 acres, on which they may be provided with a tent or with "temporary" tin or wood slat houses. They must sell all their livestock before they move. They are thus deprived of that agricultural subsistence base which has enabled them to survive, however inadequately and are rendered landless and entirely dependent on obtaining a job in order to be able to eat.

The only way in which people in the bantustans can legally obtain employment in the so-called white area is if they are recruited through the Labour Bureaux in the bantustans. They are not permitted to leave the bantustans to seek work. (We are not concerned here with those who live in homeland towns such as Kwa Mashu, Umlazi,

Ga Rankuwa, Mdantsane, etc., which are the "locations" for neighbouring white towns. Their inhabitants are able to register in the city concerned provided that they are lawfully resident in the location but, as they have no Section 10 rights because they live in a bantustan, they are excluded from the new privilege of being allowed to move to other centres (See urban section above)

If home1and dwellers do come to town on their own initiative to seek work and if they find a job they are not permitted to work in it and are endorsed out when they try to register.

If they are recruited from the home area to a job, in town they will, be registered for one year only. The employer is compelled by law to discharge them and return them to the bantustan at the end of the year. A new contract can be attested if they are to return to the same job for another year.

As set out in the Riekert Commission report there is now a cut back on recruitment from the bantustans. Riekert found that employers were "choosy" about whom they would employ and that they preferred to employ migrants. This was undoubtedly so -migrants were cheaper and more controllable. Riekert said that this choosiness must be combated and that employers must use local, i.e. urban qualified labour, before requisitions for rural workers would be accepted. Now an employer must show that there is no urban black labour available before he can employ rural people. Hence the computer linking Administration Boards, the closing down of decentralised tribal labour bureaux and their concentration at assembly points inside or just outside the bantustans, and the cut back on recruitment.

An effectiveness limitation on recruitment is the lack of accommodation. Even where no local labour is available employers cannot recruit rural workers because the authorities have failed to provide sufficient accommodation or have not made land available on which employers can build accommodation. This control has been vividly illustrated in recent weeks by the extensive pass law raids on construction sites on the East Rand in which illegal workers were dragged from hiding places and arrested while their employers were charged with the unlawful employment of unregistered black workers.

However, in spite of this example, the needs of industry and commerce are increasingly for fewer, more skilled and stable workers rather than for large numbers of unskilled labourers. It is this coincidence of the demands of the economic sector with the demands of the Apartheid ideology which makes the present structures of oppression so very strong.

For people living in the bantustans these trends spell total disaster. There has always been serious unemployment in these regions. Now it has reached crisis proportions. The indications are that whole communities are entirely dependent on the pensions of the old people, and there is much evidence that thousands of old black people never receive the pensions to which they are entitled.

The way out of this disaster for many people has been illegal employment in the white areas. Thousands of people have come to town without permits in the past and have been able to find unregistered work. They were, of course, often grossly exploited but it meant the difference between survival and starvation. Dr. Jan Lange of UNISA published a table a couple of years ago which showed among other things, that a worker from Ciskei who worked illegally for 9 months in Pietermaritzburg and went to prison for 3 months as a consequence improved his standard of living by 702%.

In July 1979 the Government increased the fine which can be imposed on the employer of an unregistered black worker from R100 to R500. There was an immediate panic and hundreds of people were threatened with the loss of their jobs. The following week Dr. Koornhof announced a moratorium which allowed illegal workers who had been in the same job for one year, or in several different jobs in the same town for three years to be registered. This moratorium lasted for three months and defused situation temporarily.

Now, 18 months later, the full effect of the higher fines is being felt. People still come from the bantustans. The pressures forcing them to do so are irresistible but when they get to town and find work employers insist that they must be registered. Registration is refused and they lose the job. This severe penalty on employers is a much more effective tool of influx control than anything which has gone before.

Rural people are quite literally being crushed between these forces. Relocation pushes them away from survival into the bantustans. Poverty and landlessness pushes them towards the towns. Influx control and the measures to concentrate the "privilege" of being allowed to work in the urban population pushes them out again.

As this vice tightens total social disorganisation and disintegration become more and more apparent. In the bantustans crime, violence, war between landowners and the landless, between the haves and the have-nots, corruption, ruthless and uncontrolled oppression as well as hunger and starvation are the marks of many communities. Everywhere there is a vast, rootless, shifting population of displaced people living from hand to mouth, begging or stealing and fighting for tonight's shelter and tomorrow's bread.

SHEENA DUNCAN
Home and Family Life Division
SACC
Khotso House
42 De Villiers Street
JOHANNESBURG
2001

To All Advice Office Workers

1. You will all have seen the press reports of Mr Justice Goldstone's remarks in the Supreme Court last week when he asked that his "displeasure" be conveyed to Dr Koornhof and WRAB (West Rand Administration Board) that a woman should have to approach the Court for recognition of her 10(1)(c) right to be with her husband in Johannesburg. This was one of our cases which we referred to the Legal Resources Centre. When all administrative procedures had failed.

It is now important that the wives and children of a 10(1)(a) or(b) husband or parent be given their legal rights without intervention from us.

In all such cases proceed as follows until further notice.

1. Open a file
2. Establish that the person is the legal wife of a man who has his 10(1)(a) or (b) in his Reference Book, or that he is the son under 18 years of age of a mother or father who has 10(1)(a) or (b), or that she is the unmarried daughter of a 10(1)(a) or (b) mother or father.
3. Establish that the wife, son or daughter is living with the qualified husband or parent in a black township in lodgings or in a house rented or owned by the family. It is not necessary that the husband or parent has a lodger's permit but it must be proper accommodation – i.e. shacks in Kliptown or backyards are not good enough, nor is residence together in White suburbs.
4. Explain the position to the applicant. Ask them to go to New Canada with he husband or parent and the marriage certificate to ask for the 10(1)(c).

Do Not Make Any Affidavits.

5. Ask the PLEASE to come and tell us exactly what happens whether the answer is "yes" or "no" and whatever instructions they have been given.
Write "No. 1 in queue" on their file cards, so that they do not have to wait to make a report.
If the 10(1)(c) has been refused, they must be referred to Legal Resources by ELIZABETH, BEULAH or myself.
6. Refer every one of these files to me without exception after every visit. Do this by giving the file to MARGARET to hand to me.
I shall be on leave from 10th to 24th August.
In my absence see that ELIZABETH or BEULAH gets the files. They will keep a summary of what happens to give to me on my return.
It has taken us 17 years to get this far. Section 10(1)(c) was put into its present form in 1964!
We are elated by Judge Goldstone's remarks and the effect they have had but we must be mindful of what a total nonsense the whole thing is and of those thousands of wives and children for whom the judgment is meaningless because the husband or parent has no qualification.

2. The 10(1)(B) Test Case On The Issue Of Whether A Contract Worker Has Been In One Job For Ten Full Years Is Entitled To 10(1)(B)

We are still waiting for this to reach Supreme Court. The difficulty has been that officials have chosen to settle when court action is threatened so give the 10(1)(b) to one individual which makes no difference to the whole group. Once case on the East Rand is progressing towards a Court hearing now with Legal Resources as Lawyers. Another is being brought in the West Rand with Raymond Tucker as attorney.

Meanwhile we have won one small acknowledgement of rights. If a person was registered in the 10 years of employment before March 1968 he will be given the 10(1)(b) because that is the date when the one year contract system was introduced and if he was registered before that date he should not have been put on to annual contracts at all.

Remember that such a person must have remained in the prescribed area concerned since the ten year period expired and must not have been sentenced to more than six months imprisonment or to a fine of more than R500 either during or since the relative period.

Sheena Duncan 1981

To establish whether a black person has a legal right to reside and to work in an urban area:

10(1)(a) Where was he/she born?

Where has he/she lived since he/she was born?

If a person has lived in one town (prescribed area) since the time of his/her birth he has a legal right to remain in that area in terms of Section 10(1)(a) of Act No. 25 of 1945 (the Urban Areas Consolidation Act)

Proof required. A birth certificate and documentary proof of continuous residence –i.e. his name on a residential permit or lodger's permit in a black township for all or most of his life. Failing this Affidavits need to be produced stating in detail his life-long residence from the people with whom he has lived e.g., mother's employers, relatives in black townships, school letters from his Church Minister etc.,

NOTE: Absences from an area for schooling/university/training/hospitalisation do not cancel a 10(1)(a) right, but the person must be able to prove that he always returned to his home town for school holidays and that he returned to his home town immediately upon leaving school.

10(1)(b) Has he worked in registered employment in one town for one employer for 10 full years and/or Has he lived legally in one town for 15 continuous years?

If so he is entitled to a Section 10(1)(b) right provided he has not been sentenced to a fine of more than R500 or to imprisonment for more than six months and provided that he is not at the time of asking for the 10(1)(b) employed in another area.

People who are registered on one year contracts and who fulfil the above conditions should also claim Section 10(1)(b) rights. If refused they should be referred to the Black Sash who will obtain legal assistance for them to demand the right.

Proof required. Because the 10 years employment or 15 years residence must have been lawful the proof is in the official records of the Administration Board concerned but it is helpful if employers furnish the person with a letter requesting the 10(1)(b) and stating the grounds on which it is claimed.

10(1)(c) Is she living in a black township with a husband who is 10(1)(a) or (b)?

Is she unmarried and living in a black township with a father or mother who is 10(1)(a) or (b)?

Is he under the age of 18 years and living in a black township with a father or mother who is 10(1)(a) or (b)?

If so she or he is entitled to a 10(1)(c) right.

Proof required. For a wife – a marriage certificate and the husband's Reference Book showing his 10(1)(a) or (b) qualification.

For an unmarried daughter or son under 18 years – the parents' Reference Book showing 10(1)(a) or (b) qualification and an affidavit from the parent stating that he/she is the parent of the claimant.

Officials may be referred to the Komani judgment handed down by the Appeal Court in August 1980.

If the 10(1)(c) is refused, refer the person concerned to the Black Sash.

The above Section 10(1)(a), (b) or (c)

In order to obtain a birth certificate:-

FOR A BABY the mother is usually given a form when the baby is born by the hospital, clinic or mid-wife who attends her. If she takes this form to the Commissioner soon a birth certificate will be issued free of charge. It is important that she takes the Reference Book of her husband and her marriage certificate with her so that the baby's particulars are correctly entered.

A woman must never register her baby's birth in the name of her boyfriend. If she is not married the baby's correct surname is her own surname.

FOR OLDER CHILDREN AND ADULTS

Late registration of birth costs R2.00. If the person was born in a hospital or clinic he should know the exact date and the name his mother was using at the time.

If the hospital record cannot be traced or he was born at home without a midwife in attendance two witnesses of the birth are needed to make Affidavits giving the address and the date of birth. These witnesses should be women if possible (one must be a woman).

If the person requiring a late registration is over 16 years he/she must have a reference book first. It is important that the Affidavits proving the birth are submitted to the Commissioner when application for a reference book is made because the place and date of birth are filled in on the application form and it is very difficult to correct them if they are wrong.

IDENTITY DOCUMENTS

Every black person – male or female – has to be in possession of an identity document when they are 16 years old.

Every black person is classified as being a citizen of one homeland or another even if they have been in urban areas always and even if their family has been in town for many generations and does not know where they came from in the first place.

² Bantu Commissioner, in charge of official documents for African people.

XHOSA SPEAKING PEOPLE : If the parents are married with a certificate the children take the homeland citizenship of the father. If the parents are not married or are married by custom it is the citizenship of the mother.

Most Xhosa-Speaking people in the towns are refused issue of a reference book and are told to take a Transkei Passport. The only way out of this is for them to prove that the family originally belonged to Ciskei or to go the Ciskei Government Office to apply for Ciskei Citizenship.

Xhosa people who can prove they belong to Ciskei are still South African Citizens and will be given a reference book.

TSWANA & VENDA PEOPLE : Every person who speaks Tswana or Venda as their home language and every person whose mother or father is Tswana or Venda is now a citizen of Bophuthatswana or Venda and it makes no difference if the parents are married or not. These people are made to take passports instead of Reference Books.

If the mother is Tswana or Venda but is legally married to a man who belongs to a non-independent homeland there is a chance for the children to remain South African citizens if the mother applies for citizenship of her husband's homeland and of South Africa and if her application is granted. Such cases should be referred to the Black Sash

until you are more experienced because they are a bit complicated.

SOUTH SOTHO PEOPLE : Be careful about these. Some Swazis are South Africans and are citizens of the homeland Ka-Ngwane but if you find a Swazi person applying for a first reference book whose parents were born in Swaziland refer them to the Black Sash.

ZULU, SHANGAAN & NORTH SOTHO PEOPLE : are clear cases and belong to Kwa-Zulu, Gazankulu and Lebowa respectively. They normally do not have problems about being recognised as South Africans and obtaining Reference Books.

TRANSKEI, BOPHUTHATSWANA AND VENDA PASSPORTS are used in exactly the same way as reference books. People who carry them can still have their Section 10 rights and register in work in exactly the same way as before. It is only the children who are born after the date of independence of the parent's homeland who have no Section 10 rights and will be dealt with in terms of Section 12 when they grow up and begin to work.

ALL REAL FOREIGNERS FROM RHODESIA, MALAWI, MOZAMBIQUE, ZAMBIA, SWAZILAND, LESOTHO, BOTSWANA etc. have no legal rights to be in South Africa. They can only remain if they are given permission to work or, in the case of a wife, if she is given permission to stay here with her husband. You can do nothing to help them. They can only collect as many proof as they can of their residence in South Africa and ask for permission to work in the area.

HOUSING :

Only a person who is 10(1)(a) or (b) and who has dependants legally living in the area can get a house. Qualified 10(1)(a) and (b) women with minor children are now being accepted on the waiting lists again.

The waiting lists are very long. The quickest way to get a house is to buy. The family income needs to be at least R190 per month to make this possible but people who ear less should keep asking if there are no site and service or self-help schemes they can go into.

Kroonstad has such a scheme but as far as I know there is nothing like it on the East or West Rand.

If a qualified man buys a house the Minister has promised that his wife and children will be given permission to live with him even if they come from homelands and rural areas.

A qualified woman cannot buy a house if she is married in community of property. The marriage certificate shows whether the marriage is in or out of community. She can buy if she is married out of community, if she is divorced or widowed or unmarried but she must have 10(1)(a) or (b).

If a person rents a house he can be given 7 days notice to vacate if he fails to pay rent.

If he is to be evicted for any other reason he must be given 30 days notice in writing. The most common reason for this notice being given is because his wife and children have left him and the house. If he wants to appeal he can do so within 7 days but there is little hope of the appeal being granted if he does not have his minor children living with him in the house or if he cannot persuade his wife to come back to him. If he is not alone in the house or if he claims he is evicted without written notice or if he says the Superintendent is wrong in the reason he has given for the notice do not delay. Send the man at once to the Legal Aid Bureau, 209 Arop House or to the Black Sash if in doubt.

In rent cases check the receipt carefully. If they seem to be in order send him to Legal Aid Bureau at once.

If you are worried about a housing case and do not know what is right or wrong phone me at Black Sash, 37-2435, 37-2436 or at home 42-9713.

Accommodation is now important. No one will be registered unless he/she has somewhere where he can legally live.

ENDORSEMENT OUT

Anyone except proper foreigners who gets a stamp in his/her identity document saying "Ordered to leave within 72 hours" or "ordered to report to the Magistrate at before for residence" or who is refused registration in work is entitled to appeal. The appeal must be made within 7 days and must be made in an Affidavit and must be taken to the Commissioner's office of the town concerned.

THE EAST RAND BOARD is not as difficult as W.R.A.B (West Rand Administration Board) and does not demand Affidavits for everything. Please keep a careful record in your day book of every case you see, what the complaint is and what you advised. Post the papers to me every two weeks and I will check them and write to you with any suggestions. Once a month it will be a good idea if you come to the office so we can keep in close touch.

STATE PENSIONS

A man must be 65 years old and unemployed.

A woman must be 60 years old and unemployed, or they must have a district Surgeon's certificate saying they are disabled and unfit for work. An ordinary doctor's letter is not enough. A district surgeon has an office in any main state hospital.

People applying for a pension must have a permit in a house or a lodger's permit.

A man will not be given a pension if his wife is working unless she is earning very little.

A person must apply at the Commissioner's office for a pension. There is usually a 6 months delay from the time the pension application is accepted until it is paid out. It is then paid out every two months.

DISABILITY PENSIONS are sometimes cancelled. The person must then go immediately to get a new district surgeon's certificate and take it back to the Commissioner.

FIRM'S PENSIONS. The conditions of these pensions are different according to the firm or the industry. People often have a little book setting out the conditions and need this to be read and explained to them. Otherwise help them to write a letter to the firm asking for an explanation in writing as to how the pension scheme works and when they will be able to receive payments. If the pension is less than the State pension (it has just gone up and I will let you know the new amount. It is approximately R25 per month) the person can apply to the Commissioner for a State Pension as well. They will receive an amount to make the total income from both pensions the same as the state pension.

INSURANCE AND COMPENSATION ARISING FROM MOTOR ACCIDENTS.

There are many dishonest lawyers and claims consultants who have touts in hospital who get people to sign forms asking them to act in claiming insurance payments after a road accident. These people sometimes take a huge amount of the money awarded as fees. In cases like this refer them to the Legal Aid Bureau.

If someone has no lawyer in these cases they can go to the Legal Aid Officer at the Regional Magistrate's Court and ask to be referred to a lawyer.

USEFUL OFFICES

INDUSTRIAL AID SOCIETY, 305 Sacta House, 277 Bree Street Corner Claim Street, Jhbg. NOT for domestic workers but any other workers can go to complain about pay, leave pay, overtime, long service bonus, conditions at work.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR 180 Bree Street, Jhbg.

Workers can complain to them if employers have not given them the 'blue card' when they leave the job (not domestic workers) or if the employee refuses to fill the card in correctly or if they are not being correctly paid out at the Commissioner's office.

LEGAL AID BOARD. A person needing a lawyer to defend him in court on a criminal charge, or help with a divorce, or a civil action against someone but who cannot afford to pay a lawyer can apply to the Legal Aid Board. He can either go to any lawyer he chooses and on the first visit say he cannot pay and ask the Lawyer to apply to the board OR he can go to the Regional Magistrate's Court and ask to see the Legal Aid.

LEGAL AID BUREAU 209 Arop House, Von Brandis Street opposite G.P.O. in Johannesburg, will give free legal advice to anyone who cannot afford to pay on any subject. All race classification cases should be sent to them and they are very good on housing.

LEGAL RESOURCES CENTRE – HOEK STREET CLINIC - Cnr Hoek Street and De Villiers Street near Park Station, Johannesburg.

Free legal help for domestic workers who have a case against their employers, any legal service and especially problems about hire purchase, consumer problems, Funeral Societies etc.

CHILD WELFARE 168 Fox Street, Johannesburg.

NICRO – People who have been in prison, Eplow House, President Street, Jhbg.

SANTA – families where a member of the family has T.B. They are supposed to give welfare help and there is a whole list of telephone numbers under SANTA in the Witwatersrand book. Choose one nearest to where the person lives and phone. I find them unsympathetic so if you do not get satisfaction, phone head office at 21/6137.

WELFARE. Each administration board has social workers and a welfare department. They will only deal with people who have permits.

It is very difficult to get Welfare help for people without permits. Try the Church they belong to first and if that fails, Quaker Service Fund, Merlon House, Cnr Pritchard and Simmonds Streets – Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays only early in the morning because their queues are long.

BURSARIES AND SCHOLARSHIPS AND EDUCATIONAL ADVICE. Education Advisory Centre, Institute of Race Relations, Auden House, 68 de Korte Street, Braamfontein.

Anyone who is angry and has any complaint which has not been sorted out by the Administration Board or the Bantu Commissioner is entitled to write to complain or to ask for help to Dr Koornhof.

The Minister of Co-operation and Development,
P.O. Box 384
PRETORIA
0001

(from SHEENA DUNCAN)

ZIMBABWE CITIZENSHIP.

We have a case at the moment of a young man born in the East Rand in 1961 and lawfully resident there since birth who has the E.R.A.B (East Rand Administration Board) form for his Reference Book showing him as 10(1)(a). He was given a Temporary Identification Certificate initially but later was told that he must have a Zimbabwe passport because his father was born in Zimbabwe. His father is lawfully in South Africa and has been in the same job since 1950.

When the son went to apply for a Zimbabwe passport the Zimbabwe office refused to register him as a citizen. I phoned them and the Zimbabwe law is as follows:-

If a child is born outside of Zimbabwe he is not a Zimbabwe citizen unless his birth is registered at a Zimbabwe office within one year of his birth.

Applications made after the first year can be granted or refused by the Zimbabwe government at their discretion. In our case the application was refused which suits the young man concerned as he does not want Zimbabwe citizenship.

The only way in which he can obtain Zimbabwe citizenship in the future if he wants it is to go there and apply for a residence permit. After two years residence in Zimbabwe he would be eligible to apply for citizenship. The problem, of course, is that he could not go to Zimbabwe even if he wanted to, without a travel document which S.A. will not issue to him.

His position is now this:

He is not a South African citizen in terms of S.A. law.

He is not a Zimbabwe citizen in terms of Zimbabwe. law.

He cannot apply for citizenship on an Independent Homeland because they require five years residence before citizenship can be applied for for those who are not of the language group of the territory.

He is therefore a stateless person.

The Bantu Commissioner is threatening to deport him. If they try ZIMBABWE will refuse to let him across the Border, because a country cannot dump a person in another country of which he is not a citizen.

Please refer all such cases to me until we can feel our way through them.

-Sheena Duncan

(This case is used in The Masterplan)

Taken from the programme of the Committee of Concern (Verulam) which presented An Evening of Entertainment

the Committee of Concern (Verulam)

An Evening of Entertainment (a UDF event)

Programme: ***Welcome***
 Music
 Guest Speaker
 Masterplan

WHAT ARE

In 1982 the President's Council proposed a new constitution for South Africa. These proposals are explained in the diagram. The Indian people will have to vote for an Indian parliament, the Coloured people for a Coloured parliament and the same for the Whites. There is no provision for African people in the proposals.

There will be 3 separate parliaments but they will be different in size. As the drawing shows, for every 4 whites in parliament there will be only 2 Coloureds and 1 Indian. This means that Whites will have more votes than Indian and Coloureds put together.

Each Parliament will discuss things of interest to themselves only e.g. the Indian Parliament will discuss Indian Education, Indian Welfare, Indian Culture etc. They have no power to discuss things of national importance like budget, defence etc. These will be discussed by the 3 parliaments together, where the Whites are in the majority. Thus real power still lies in the hands of Whites

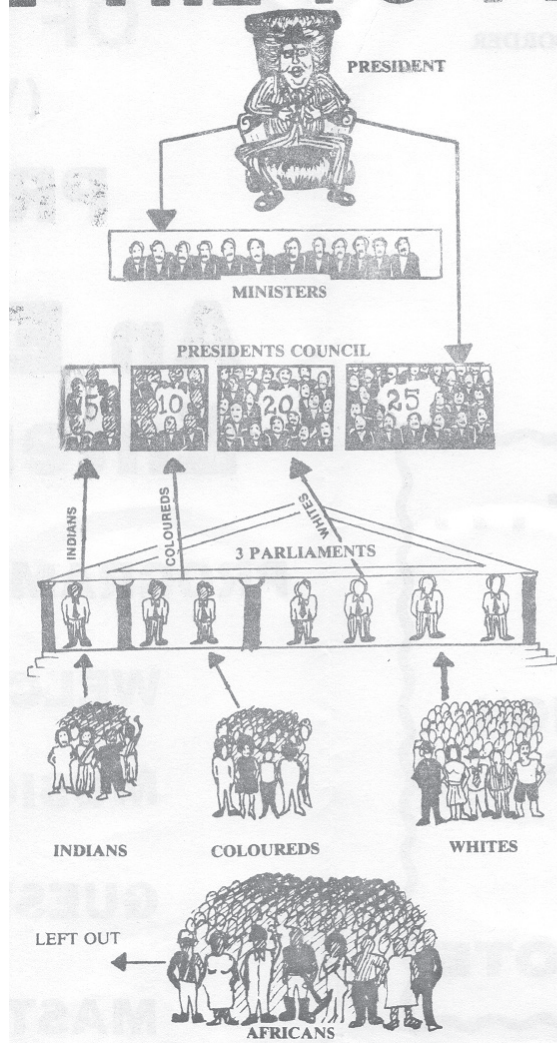
INDIANS



INI

LEFT

THE PC PROPOSALS?



The next part of the plan shows the President, the Ministers and the Presidents Council. The President will be chosen by the Parliaments. Because whites have more votes, the President will most likely be white. He will have a lot of power. He will hand pick all the Ministers, e.g. Minister of Health, Minister of Community Development and others.

The President's Council, which will help the President run the country consists of 60 people, 25 of whom will be chosen by the President, there will be 20 Whites and only 10 Coloureds and 5 Indians. This means 45 Whites against 15 Coloureds and Indians put together.

This plan shows clearly how the Government is trying to divide us by bringing in the Coloureds and Indians, but leaving out the Africans people. So we find we are brought into Government, but it is planned in such a way that we still don't have any say.



WORK IN PROGRESS

WIP (Work-in-Progress) Theatre Company 1983

With the exceptions of *Nobody's Hero* and *Flight from the Mahabarth*, the plays in this collection were written between 1981 and 1983, a time of great political oppression and violence. It was a time when the apartheid government was attempting to put the finishing touches to the separate development structures that it had created for the country. Having established ethnic homelands for African people, the government turned to the Coloured and Indian communities and created ethnic councils with limited powers to administer Coloured and Indian Affairs. They attempted to legitimise these ethnic councils with ethnic elections. The majority of Coloureds and Indians rejected these efforts, but an opportunistic minority in each group gave credence to the sham Councils and colluded in apartheid oppression. *We 3 Kings* and the *UDF Revues* are satires based on these developments.

Most of the other plays deal with the struggles of individuals in an ethos of oppression.