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SF PERUSALS

Les Blancs

by Lorraine Hansberry

A Drama in Two Acts

Final Text Adapted by
Robert Nemiroff

Script Associate
Charlotte Zaltzberg

A Samuel French Acting Edition



SAMUEL FRENCH
FOUNDED 1830

New York Hollywood London Toronto
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"If there is no struggle there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom and yet deprecate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground, they want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters.

"This struggle may be a moral one, or it may be a physical one, and it may be both moral and physical, but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will. Find out just what any people will quietly submit to and you have found out the exact measure of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them, and these will continue till they are resisted with either words or blows, or with both. . . . Men may not get all they pay for in this world, but they must certainly pay for all they get. If we ever get free from the oppressions and wrongs heaped upon us, we must pay for their removal. We must do that by labor, by suffering, by sacrifice, and if needs be, by our lives and the lives of others."

—Frederick Douglass

"But what exactly is a black?
First of all, what's his color?"

—Jean Genet

To *Angela Davis,*
George Jackson
and *the Men of Attica,*
whose spirit is in these pages

And to *Mili*

LES BLANCS was first presented by Konrad Matthaei at the Longacre Theatre, New York City, on November 15, 1970, with the following cast:

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(In Order of Appearance)

DRUMMERS* . . . . . *Ladji Camara, Charles Payne*
THE WOMAN . . . . . *Joan Derby*
AFRICAN VILLAGERS (AND WARRIORS) . . . *Dennis Tate, George Fairley, Bill Ware, Joan Derby, Charles Moore*
DR. MARTA GOTTERLING . . . . . *Marie Andrews*
AFRICAN CHILD . . . . . *Gregory Beyer*
PETER . . . . . *Clebert Ford*
CHARLIE MORRIS . . . . . *Cameron Mitchell*
DR. WILLY DEKOVEN . . . . . *Humbert Allen Astredo*
MAJOR GEORGE RICE . . . . . *Ralph Purdom*
SOLDIERS . . . . . *Garry Mitchell, Gwyllum Evans*
PRISONER . . . . . *Bill Ware*
MADAME NEILSEN . . . . . *Lili Darvas*
ERIC . . . . . *Harold Scott*
TSHEMBE MATOSEH . . . . . *James Earl Jones*
ABIOSEH MATOSEH . . . . . *Earle Hyman*
NGAGO . . . . . *George Fairley*

Final Text Adapted by Robert Nemiroff

Directed by John Berry

Scenery Designed by Peter Larkin

* In the production there were two drummers in contrast with the three recommended herein

Costumes Designed by Jane Greenwood

Lighting Designed by Neil Peter Jampolis

Ritual Dances Created by Louis Johnson

Sound Created by Jack Shearing

Script Associate Charlotte Zaltzberg

Production Stage Manager Martin Gold

General Manager Paul B. Berkowsky

* * * * *

The action of the play is set in and about a Mission compound in Africa and the hut of a tribal elder. The time is yesterday, today, tomorrow—but not very long after that.

PRODUCTION NOTES

"The setting, like the characters of the play, is entirely out of the author's imagination. No such people as the 'Kwi' exist on the African or any other continent. Similarly, the 'Europeans' are meant to be precisely that ambiguous, even though their accents, in most cases, may suggest more particularly the northern countries."

With these words, Lorraine Hansberry began her notes on LES BLANCS. The history of the play and how she came to write it, as well as of the Broadway production and how it was received, are discussed at some length in LES BLANCS: THE COLLECTED LAST PLAYS OF LORRAINE HANSBERRY (Random House), which also contains an excellent interpretive introduction by Julius Lester.

I. *APPROACH TO PRODUCTION*

Miss Hansberry's notes for the physical production were quite explicit, her discussions of the play, however, made clear that these were not intended as other than a general guide. She was at pains to emphasize one point above all that the production should not be approached or conceived in terms of strict naturalism, but in broad symbolic planes that would allow maximum freedom to the imagination An approach and style, in other words, closer to the heightened realism of Shakespeare and the Greeks than to 20th Century literalism The qualities she called for in the set were to be suggested rather than executed in elaborate detail Her concern was with essences, not surface verisimilitude

II *THE SET*

A. The Author's Notes

The basic settings of the action are a Mission hospital compound in a mythical African country and the great

hut of a tribal elder. "Buildings," as Miss Hansberry saw the overall scene, "cluster at right and left." On one side are "those of the Mission, a portion of whose parlor and veranda are seen in cutaway." On the other are "huts which fringe an African village."

The huts, in her notes, are "classically circular and thatched" and the Mission is "only slightly less crude having been fashioned out of whatever has been provided from the jungle and very little else: we should feel that its crudity has been somehow built deliberately into the design of the architecture, as if whoever conceived it was steadfastly determined to impress upon all who come here the nature of his ordeal, the profundity of his sense of contradiction in ever dreaming of building 'against the jungle.' Bamboo or grass strippings have been used to lash the place together rather than nails. There is no electricity—oil lamps are everywhere—and the furnishings reflect the same persistent inclination toward exaggerated modesty: a simple jungle-hewn chair or two, a serviceable sofa, a table, etc. There are no plants, paintings, curtains or bric-a-brac, no touches of home in the least."

B. The Original Broadway Set

In keeping with the spirit of the author's conception, Peter Larkin's set for Broadway was a largely open, raked stage—overhung, at the rear, by a great scrim cyclorama of netted hemp in the shape of an African shield The Woman was to appear first on a raised platform behind this shield, and later descend (out of sight) to make an upstage entrance up some stairs onto the stage proper. There was no curtain.

To the left, the Mission parlor and veranda rose up, as needed, out of the floor, to be matched by a ceiling which descended from above, while the furniture moved on in tracks and hanging ceiling lanterns dropped through the ceiling.

To the right, an oval shape flipped up out of the raked

stage to become the floor of the Matoseh hut. At its center was a small cut-out which lifted off to reveal the glow of fire (heated by coils) from which the actors, kneeling, could light a cigarette or firebrand. The hut contained no furniture—one sat upon the floor itself or upon the downstage edge of the oval—and there was no suggestion of walls or an entrance. From the right wing a little upstage of the oval, a unit of three spreading wrought-iron spear shapes folded out, upon which were hung the African costumes, a shield and spears; all other implements used in the hut were kept offstage and brought on by the actors, either preceding a scene or during it.

The great virtue of this set, apart from its sheer physical beauty, was its openness, suggestive of the space and depth of Africa, while from a practical viewpoint it permitted continuous movement between scenes and allowed the areas opposite the Mission and the hut, as the case might be, to become the surroundings of the one or the other. In sum, it was a stunning, evocative, almost classical set, and not surprisingly it won a number of awards as the best scenic design of the season.

At the same time it presented some very real problems from which subsequent productions can benefit—limitations which derived not from any failure on the designer's part, but out of the complex, evolving needs of the play that became apparent in the final weeks of rehearsal. The almost total openness of the set, as it turned out, did not facilitate adequate definition of the Mission itself or of the constant intense activity that goes on within and without it. A too pure—almost antiseptic—atmosphere resulted which made it difficult to convey the feeling of the world in which the play is grounded: the misery, poverty and deprivation of colonial Africa And, finally, the physical mechanics of the cyclorama and platform prevented a swift transition from THE WOMAN in the sky to the dancer who must appear on stage effortlessly,

almost magically, as an extension of the protagonist's mind.

C. Suggested Guidelines

For these reasons—and because of the expensive hydraulic apparatus, beyond the means of most companies, that the original set required—I have not included the design in this edition Instead I thought it might be more helpful to pose objectives and general considerations that should be borne in mind in conceiving your own production design:

1 The basic problem of the set is how to keep the stage open and spacious enough to permit dance and movement and easy transition between locations, while at the same time suggesting the crowded, cluttered atmosphere of a Mission hospital in tropical—colonial—Africa It is a "hospital" unlike any with which the viewer is likely to be familiar, a place not of antiseptic corridors, scrubbed surfaces and white-sheeted beds, but something more, as John Gunther wrote of Albert Schweitzer's Lambarene, in the nature of "a frontier camp " A place of hard and continuous work with primitive, hand-hewn implements; of sweat and blood and dreadful disfiguring diseases, of leprosy and yaws. A place swarming with humanity—and not only humanity: goats, chickens, monkeys are everywhere, dropping their dung, mosquitoes and bugs infest the air These things cannot, obviously, appear on stage literally. Yet it would be to the production's enormous advantage if *somehow* they can be suggested, for they are the indispensible background to the play, the fruit and logic of the system of which the Mission is a part, and therefore the motivation and explication of the action. they make real the desperation of the blacks and, at the same time, provide the rationale for the whites—the ability to feel, quite genuinely, that they are "sacrificing" themselves merely by "being here "

2 For details of the setting (and costumes) it would be helpful to refer to illustrated volumes available on Africa, the land and culture, and on Missions like the

Schweitzer hospital at Lambarene. And I would also call the director's especial attention to John Gunther's immensely revealing chapter, "A Visit to Dr. Albert Schweitzer," in *Inside Africa.*

3. The scenes at the Mission take place in the parlor and on the veranda—which, since the place is so crowded, has been set up during working hours as, in effect, an out-patient clinic. Although the rest of the Missionhouse and the wards are off-stage, it would be important to somehow suggest the wards and the activities that go on in and around them if possible: whether by projection, blow-ups or painted drops, in realistic scale or superimposed single images, in the background, foreground or wherever.

4. *The Porch and Veranda:* In the original production these were indistinguishably one. Since, however, the action of the play tends to alternate back and forth between the Mission and the Matoseh hut, a certain predictability can result and it would therefore be advantageous if the parlor and veranda could be treated as distinct, though adjoining areas. Each might, for example, be visible from the other but, perhaps, shift its angle or location downstage, so that a particular scene could be set in one or the other. Thus, in effect, there would be three basic settings, not two. Against this possibility I have left the specifications and exact locations for furniture in the script deliberately vague. Similarly, the veranda might have a downstage railing—an excellent structure for the actors to sit and lean upon—*if* this did not permanently encumber the stage.

5. *The great hut:* Here again an authentic feeling should be conveyed, however sparely. Whether or not walls, an entrance or doorflap, are actually shown and to what extent there are African furnishings is up to the director.

6. *The curtainless stage, the cyclorama, the raised platfrom on which* THE WOMAN *appears:* These are suggestions only. Coupled with a stereophonic audience-

encompassing sound system, they can work to great effect But given another setting, other equally imaginative and effective approaches can be found. And it is possible, for example, to open simply with the DRUMMERS and to have THE WOMAN appear directly on stage.

7. *The clearing in the jungle:* This can be staged almost anywhere: it requires only space, lighting, drums—and a small pre-set cavity in the stage floor containing a handful of dust or sand for NGAGO's climax.

8. Similiarly Act Two, Scene I can be located anywhere in the compound—including, if necessary, on the veranda.

III. *SOUND*

An elaborate, audience-enveloping sound system is not indispensable to effective production, although it will enhance it, making real and immediate the sense of Africa Where budgets are limited, an onstage speaker system may be used and some cues dropped. But what is important at the minimum are certain sound effects to which the action is keyed, and these should emanate, if possible, from different sides of the stage as desired: the funeral chant, the varying drum effects, the helicopter in 2:7, the destruction and burning of the Mission, etc. Since recorded shots seldom achieve jolting immediacy, real blanks and guns should be used onstage and off.

IV. *THE DRUMMERS*

If skilled drummers are available, they can become an interesting part of the production concept. The director should feel free to use them selectively, onstage or off, to provide a frame of authenticity, to heighten the excitement of the production or enhance the mythic dimension. They might, for example, be a part of the NGAGO scene. They might have a regular position on stage. Or appear at key moments unseen by the characters. Or appear only to augur and augment THE WOMAN. And of course they can be used offstage to cover scene changes and build the tension and pitch of the drama. (Dressed in other

clothing, the DRUMMERS like the WOMAN DANCER, can also be used as VILLAGERS or WARRIORS.)

V. *SIZE OF THE CAST*

As conceived here, the size of the cast was restricted by the economics of Broadway. Freed from these limitations, the director might consider the possible uses of extras to underscore the character of the Mission as described above. It is even possible, for example, to conceive of a production in which the Blacks themselves become a principal—perhaps *the* principal—element of the setting: ever present in shifting tableaux of activity, against which, through which and over which the Whites, oblivious, carry on their dialogues. (This could enhance, but of course it would also greatly complicate the problems of production. The danger would be distraction, and the trick to find a means to use the Blacks as background, yet freeze them in the scenes themselves. It should not be considered unless you have a highly skilled director and ample time for experiment.)

VI. *BLOCKING, STAGING, INTERPRETATION*

In the present script I have generally followed the blocking of the original production insofar as entrances and exits are concerned, the uses of S. R. and L. and U. and D., and the positioning of the actors in relation to each other. But I have left it deliberately vague as regards exact locations, which will vary according to the production design.

The staging and interpretive directions are a composite of Miss Hansberry's own directions and others which emerged in the process of adaptation and production. Charlotte Zaltzberg (who collaborated with me on the stagescript and this edition) and I have tried to make them as complete as possible so that future productions may benefit from the invaluable contributions of directors Sidney Walters and John Berry and the company who created the roles.

July, 1972 Robert Nemiroff

For the Lorraine Hansberry archives, I should appreciate receiving reviews of LES BLANCS from your local newspapers, programs, posters, and any relevant comments you may have concerning your production. Please mail these to me c/o the William Morris Agency, 1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N. Y. 10019.

R.N.

Les Blancs

ACT ONE

Prologue

*Five minutes before curtain time the sounds of the African bush are heard stereophonically around the audience from the sides and rear. They begin quite softly, sounds of crickets, frogs and "bush-babies" The occasional cry of a bird or the laughter of a hyena is also heard. The stage is open and a cyclorama, enveloping the entire stage, is seen emanating a grey-green glow which is African twilight. During the next five minutes the cyc will gradually change to deep blue black with an occasional star.**

The sounds of the bush grow louder and, after about three minutes, we hear drums, at first sporadic, from speakers on the sides being answered by drums on the other sides They get louder and just before curtain, as the houselights go to black, they reach a crescendo which moves up through the audience with a rush to the speakers on the stage

In the darkness a spot picks up a DRUMMER, *in ritual garb and headdress, his face painted, then a second* DRUMMER, *and a third. On "talking" drums of varying size and timbre they engage in a brief, powerful exchange which echoes back and forth between them and builds to a climax.*

Suddenly there is silence In the sky above them—on an

* See "Production Notes," p 12, for an alternate opening

unseen platform behind the cyc—a WOMAN DANCER *appears in a characteristic African dance pose. Black-skinned and imposing, cheeks painted for war, her wiry hair rounded by a colorful band, she wears only a leather skirt and, about her waist, a girdle of hammered silver. Before her, planted in the earth, rests a spear.*

The WOMAN *begins to dance in place to slowly mounting staccato drumbeats, her focus on the spear. At the climax, she plucks it from the earth with great strength and raises it high.*

BLACKOUT

ACT ONE

SCENE 1

In the darkness the sound of a riverboat whistle is heard several times in the distance and—abruptly—brilliant, almost blinding sunlight envelops the stage; the sky turns intense blue and the sounds of the bush reassert themselves. It is mid-afternoon at a Mission compound in Africa.

On the veranda, down left, DR. MARTA GOTTERLING *is examining a small black* BOY. *She is a handsome, blond self-assured woman in her mid-thirties, in surgical gown, white headcloth and stethoscope. Down right, several African* VILLAGERS *squat in the dust awaiting their turn.*

PETER *enters from over a rise, up right, followed by* CHARLIE MORRIS. PETER, *an African porter in shorts and undershirt, is a man of middle years, with greying hair and a profoundly subservient manner. He*

is barefoot, bareheaded and carries two heavy valises. CHARLIE *is an American in his late forties. He wears a pith helmet and carries a battered portable typewriter and attaché case.*

As they come on, CHARLIE *hangs back the least bit, as if to fix the scene in memory.* PETER *goes directly up the Mission steps at center and sets the valises down with relief.*

PETER. (*Sing-songy.*) You wait here, Bwana. You sit, make self cool. Doctor be with you soon.

(CHARLIE *notes the* MAN'S *excessive subservience with disapproval and hauls out a couple of coins.*)

CHARLIE. All right, thanks . . . er—?

PETER. —Peter, Bwana.

CHARLIE. Thanks, Peter.

MARTA. (*Calling out—she is listening to the* BOY'S *chest.*) Mr. Morris? I shall be with you in a moment.

PETER. You sit, be cool. (CHARLIE *pays him and he backs away, out the door and down the steps.*) Thank you, thank you, Bwana! Doctor be with you soon. Soon, Bwana. Thank you.

CHARLIE. Yes, I'm sure. Thank you. Thank you. (*As the* MAN *disappears.*) Peter, old man, you have seen one "Bwana" movie too many. (*He crosses* D. L. *onto the veranda.*)

MARTA. (*Looking up.*) Well, hello there. We've been expecting you. I'm Doctor Gotterling. Marta Gotterling. Welcome to the Mission. (*To* BOY—*examining eyes, ears, throat during the following.*) Open up.

CHARLIE. (*Smiling, admiringly.*) All the comforts of the Mayo Clinic.

MARTA. (*Not without warmth; with pride*) We manage.

CHARLIE. What's wrong with the boy?

MARTA. Just a little tonsillitis. (*Prepares a hypodermic needle.*)

CHARLIE. That all? Don't know why I'm surprised. I suppose I was expecting a rare tropical disease!

MARTA. (*Smiling*) Rare tropical diseases are also rare in the tropics. I'm sorry Reverend Neilsen isn't here to greet you. He had to go cross river (*Gives the* BOY *an injection and a comforting pat*)

CHARLIE. Oh? Too bad. Well, I'll be here for a while. I want to really get to know this place before I start putting words on paper. What's happening cross river?

MARTA Among other things, a wedding, a funeral, twelve baptisms . . .

CHARLIE Twelve!—that's rather a handful even for the Reverend, isn't it?

MARTA. (*Smiles*) They are done *one* at a time, Mr. Morris! (*Leads* BOY *across to one of the* D. L. AFRICANS *and holds up a vial of pills*) Give this three times a day. (*Indicating with fingers.*) Three—day. Any first impressions, Mr Morris? (*She motions the next* PATIENT *to follow her.*)

CHARLIE (*He hesitates*) Well, yes. Isn't the—lack of sanitation here somewhat of a problem?

MARTA (*Smiling matter-of-factly.*) "Sanitation," Mr. Morris? You mean the dung—goat dung? (*She takes the* PATIENT'S *pulse.*) Actually it's less of a problem than too *much* sanitation. Here we have to give up some things for others The African feels much more at home with goats and chickens wandering about the wards. It's the only way they'd come. (CHARLIE *looks at her oddly She responds with disarming directness*) I know what you are thinking, but we have had to get rid of prior notions. We cannot romanticize the African. There is too much work for that (*To* PATIENT.) Breathe in. Out (PATIENT *doesn't understand, she demonstrates and he follows suit —grinning and making a great show of it.*) Please help yourself to a drink, Mr Morris It's right there.

CHARLIE. Thanks, I can use it. (*He pours one and looks about uncertainly.*)

MARTA. Sorry, no ice.

CHARLIE. (*Remembering.*) Of course. No refrigeration . . .

MARTA. (*With curious pride.*) That's right, Mr. Morris. No electricity, no phones, no television, no cinema . . .

CHARLIE. (*He drinks a good one and, closing his eyes, leans his head back and savors.*) When you've been travelling a day and a half without a drink, there's nothing as good as scotch—without ice!

(*An* AFRICAN *runs on from* R., *whispers to the* AFRICAN *being examined, and both suddenly run off* R. *followed by the* OTHERS)

MARTA. Wait! (*Rises looking helplessly after them.*)

CHARLIE. What was that?

MARTA. (*Shrugs.*) Mr. Morris, I've been here five years and I'm afraid I still have a great deal to learn. (*Picks up tray with medical equipment and returns it to parlor cabinet.*)

CHARLIE. Well, you've got the best possible teacher. It's been my impression—in fact, the world's impression —that Reverend Neilsen is practically one of the natives himself by now.

MARTA. (*Smiling.*) Not really one of them. More like their father. Like our father, too. We are *all* his children.

CHARLIE. What's he like, Doctor?

MARTA What's he like? He's a good man (*With unconcealed admiration.*) When Reverend Neilsen came here forty years ago, he came with a particular great idea and it is the idea which remains important here the native should feel that the hospital and the church are a part of the jungle, an extension of his own villages If you are open-minded, you will learn what he has done here—and be deeply rewarded. I can promise you that

CHARLIE. Doctor, you give me the extraordinary impression of being a happy woman.

MARTA. (*Lightly.*) Yes. Something went "wrong" in my life, Mr. Morris: it has been unutterably satisfying!

CHARLIE. (*Smiling knowingly*) I've come a long—long way to hear those words. (*Moving about, absorbing the scene.*) What makes some men do it, Doctor? What makes some men do what the rest of us spend our lives thinking we should do and don't? Do you know what this place is? (*She is listening with a mixture of appreciation and amusement at his "discovery."*) It's a temple: a way station in the darkness. Nobody really believes that such things even exist anymore. And you know something? Until I came paddling down that river I didn't even know that I had stopped believing it also (*Quizzically, softly.*) But you people *are* here, aren't you? You really are . . .

(DR. WILLY DEKOVEN *enters quickly from* D. L., *preoccupied—a slight, deeply browned man in surgical dress, without pith helmet.*)

DEKOVEN. Marta—

MARTA. Oh, Willy, good. (*She pronounces the "W" in middle-European fashion—with a "V" sound.*) This is Mr. Morris from the United States. Dr. DeKoven.

DEKOVEN. How do you do? Would you have a look at Keito, Marta? I would like your opinion.

MARTA. (*Starting out and* D. L. *that quickly.*) Of course. (*To* CHARLIE, *charmingly a hostess as much as a surgeon.*) Excuse me. I know you don't believe it, but we really will send someone sooner or later to show you to your room.

(*Without warning there are several loud rifle shots offstage They spin around*)

CHARLIE What the hell was that?

DEKOVEN (*Sharply, taking several steps in the shots' direction He steps out into the compound.*) That was no more than a hundred yards away—

(MARTA *stiffens and closes her eyes and as promptly regains composure.*)

MARTA. I'll see to Keito. (*She exits* D. L.)

(MAJOR RICE *enters hurriedly over the rise* U. R.—*a Colonial Reserve Officer in his fifties.*)

DEKOVEN. What were those shots, Major?

RICE (*To* CHARLIE.) Who are you?

DEKOVEN. Major Rice of the Colonial Reserve. Mr. Morris, from the United States.

RICE. (*Immediately warming at recognition of the name.*) Oh, Mr. *Morris.* I have been looking forward to this How do you do, sir? (*Extending his hand They shake.*)

CHARLIE. How do you do? (*Looking about.*) What's going on, Major?

RICE. (*Ignoring the question*) Come to do a piece on our "New World" eh? No place on earth like it.

CHARLIE. I'm beginning to believe that What's happening here?

RICE. (*Ignoring him. To* DEKOVEN.) Is the Reverend about?

DEKOVEN. No, he went cross river. What were those shots, Major?

RICE. We flushed out a couple of terrorists in the bush I think one used to work around here (*Crosses* D. L. *to check the flare signal wire*)

CHARLIE. (*Incredulous*) Terrorists—*here?* We've had no news—

DI KOVEN. (*Drily*) The authorities think it helps for some reason if the world doesn't hear about it.

CHARLIE. It's not just—well—an outbreak of banditry or something?

RICE. (*Cutting it short.*) One tends to think not, Mr. Morris, if nothing is stolen. And nothing is. Except whatever guns there are. (SOLDIERS *enter, over the rise* U. R., *leading a* PRISONER *by a long rope about the neck—mouth gagged, face bloodied—whom they jerk to his knees at* C.) I'd appreciate your help in this, Doctor.

DEKOVEN. (*With sudden sharpness.*) I'm sure you would. (*They are confronting each other.*)

RICE. This one— (*Pulling the* PRISONER'S *head around.*) I believe he's worked here, isn't that right?

DEKOVEN. I really couldn't say.

RICE. Or wouldn't?

DEKOVEN. (*Evenly.*) I don't know the man, Major.

RICE. (*In kind—controlling himself with effort.*) I hope that we don't all have the enormously illuminating experience of being butchered in our beds thanks to those like you, Dr. DeKoven! (*He motions to the* SOLDIERS *and they take the* MAN *off.* U. R.) As you can see, Mr. Morris, we've got a bit of an emergency going here. May I ask that you let me have a look at any dispatches you send out? You understand, I'm sure. (*He turns to follow.*)

CHARLIE. No, I'm afraid I don't.

RICE. (*Turning back.*) All the same: would you mind?

CHARLIE. Yes, I would mind.

RICE. (*Eyeing him. A beat.*) Well—I hope you enjoy your visit. (*He exits.*)

CHARLIE. (*Looking after him.*) What will they do to him?

DEKOVEN. (*A meaningful shrug: the implication is not pretty.* CHARLIE, *who is about to drink stops in mid-motion and regards him.*) Mr. Morris, there is a *war* going on here. Everyone else that you talk to will call it a bit of an emergency, pacification, a police action—I'm sure your country is familiar with such phrases?—but I assure you that what we have here is a war. (*He sits.*)

CHARLIE. And what about Kumalo?

DEKOVEN. (*Enigmatically.*) Kumalo? (*Agitated, he gets up again, his mind on the prisoner.*)

CHARLIE. (*With an edge of impatience.*) Kumalo—the leader of the independence movement . . . (DEKOVEN *says nothing. Offstage the jeep starts up and roars off.*) Well, it's been my impression that the West was using its head for a change—here. I mean Amos Kumalo *is* still in Europe? They are talking?

DEKOVEN. (*Rather wearily.*) Oh, yes. They are talking.

CHARLIE Then why—just when some hope for progress—

DEKOVEN. (*Ironic half-smile*) Progress, Mr. Morris? For *whom?* The settlers are outraged because the Foreign Office is talking at all—and the blacks, because talk is no longer enough Kumalo— (*They are interrupted as an* OLD WOMAN *in antiquated European dress, leaning heavily on a cane enters from behind the Mission up left. Visibly agitated, she is fragile in appearance, genteel in manner, underneath there is sharp intelligence.*)

MADAME Willy? Where are you? (DEKOVEN *rises and crosses* U. *and holds out an arm which she takes in the manner of the badly-sighted—as* MARTA *enters* D L.) Ah, yes, it is you Who do you suppose has been butchered today, Willy?

MARTA. We have a guest, Madame (*Crossing to her.*)

MADAME (*Her face lighting.*) Oh, so? Where indeed is the guest?

MARTA (*Gestures for* CHARLIE *to come nearer.*) Mr. Morris is going to visit with us for a while

CHARLIE It's a great honor, Madame Neilsen.

MADAME Mr. Morris—Mr. *Charles* Morris. I know your work well Now I shall come to know you. How nice How very nice (*She squints at him deeply pleased.*) Marta darling, I must sit

(MARTA *helps her to her chair, a simple armchair Congo drums of basso intensity start up offstage*)

CHARLIE. What's that—?

DEKOVEN. (*Smiling.*) *All* drums are not war drums . . . not yet.

MADAME. (*To herself.*) No, not war drums at all . . . Marta, you and Willy can get back to your work. Mr. Morris and I will be able to entertain each other nicely, I am sure.

MARTA Very well. (*To* CHARLIE, *looking about.*) Sooner or later Eric will finally be here to see to you (*She turns to go, followed by* DEKOVEN)

MADAME. (*Half to herself, with painful irony.*) Yes, first will come the liquor fumes and then will come Eric.

DEKOVEN. (*Abruptly halting.*) The boy can't help it! Why must you pick after him about it!

MADAME. (*A statement of fact.*) No, he can't help it any more than you can help giving it to him, can he!

MARTA. (*Plaintively.*) Madame! (*It hangs. Then·*)

DEKOVEN. I'm sorry. (*He exits* D. L. *and* MARTA *follows.*)

MADAME. (*Oddly—almost an apology to a slightly baffled* CHARLIE.) It is wrong of me to taunt Willy He is a good man Willy DeKoven is among the best of men, Mr. Morris.

CHARLIE. (*He sets down his glass.*) But I take it, he has a weakness for slipping a little liquor to the natives? (*Crossing down to sit with her.*)

MADAME. Well—he doesn't give it to the natives—he gives it to Eric, which is something of a different matter. (CHARLIE *is quiet, understanding none of it.*) Well, Mr. Morris, I am so sorry that you had to come at such an unhappy time. And now, the drums announce a funeral. Someone important has died.

CHARLIE Oh, you can read the drums?

MADAME. Oh, mercy yes! (*Settling into an intimate talk*) In the old days, I used to spend most of my hours with the women of this village. With Aquah in particular Yes, Aquah. She was the dearest friend that I have had in Africa. It was she who taught me the drums and to

speak the language of the Kwi people. I taught her a little English in return and a smattering of French. We were just getting on to Norwegian when she died. Dear Aquah! (*She saddens and then lightens again.*) We used to go for long walks in the woods.

CHARLIE. (*Smiling incredulously.*) You went strolling in that jungle out there with only a native woman?

MADAME. Heavens yes. We used to pick herbs and berries—Aquah taught me how to make quinine. Do you know how to make quinine, Mr. Morris? It is a wonderful thing to be able to know how to do. Of course I taught her a few things too. (*Leaning over and whispering a little devilishly.*) Certain matters concerning feminine hygiene, you know . . . And then the change came.

CHARLIE. What change?

MADAME. The change. Some cold wind blew in over our people here and chilled their hearts to us. It is the times, you know. I'm afraid he'll never understand it—the Reverend And what hurt him most was that old Abioseh was the first to change— (CHARLIE *looks at her quizzically; she explains.*) Abioseh, the husband of Aquah, my friend—a truly remarkable man of the most progressive sort First Abioseh—and after him the village—then the tribe. (CHARLIE *is about to interrupt—she anticipates his question.*) Oh they still come to the clinic, some of them. But to this day virtually no Kwi attend Reverend Neilsen's services. In almost seven years I have not set foot in a hut in this village. (*Sadly.*) And today someone important has died and no one has come to tell me. For a few years Aquah's children came. But they have grown up and gone away and now—no one comes. (*A* YOUTH *appears behind the Mission up left and looks quickly about to make certain he is unobserved. Fair-skinned and in the late teens, he is sodden and miserable-looking in filthy shorts, undershirt and sneakers and—incongruously—a clean white pith helmet. A musette bag hangs from his shoulder* MADAME *stiffens and stares straight ahead.*) Now, sir— (*Enunciating the*

word with cruel deliberateness.) "Caliban" is almost upon us. He has turned on the generator and the river breeze tells me— (*He crosses swiftly to a tree stump down right*) he is crossing the compound to make certain— (*He looks about, stoops and reaches into the tree stump.*) —that Dr. DeKoven has left him a bottle (*He comes up with the bottle, drinks, puts it back, and heads for the Mission.*) This, sir, is Eric.

ERIC. (*At the door*) I am here, Madame.

MADAME. (*Without turning her head*) Eric, show Mr Morris to his room

CHARLIE. Hello, Eric.

ERIC. Mr Morris.

(*Manipulating pith helmet under his arm, he picks up the American's bags and exits left.* CHARLIE *looks after him—his "journalist's mind" trying to put together* MADAME'S *prior comments He is, actually, surprised by* ERIC'S *appearance; he had expected a Kwi with a Christian name*)

CHARLIE Madame Neilsen—

MADAME. I shall think you an exceedingly poor journalist, Mr Morris, if you allow me to believe that you are in the least confounded by either the name or the complexion of our Eric. (*Settling back with finality*) Now I have said enough Now I shall sit on the veranda and merely be quiet and old and invalid, and leave the world to its deceptions. (CHARLIE *looks at her, hesitates —and is about to speak, when*·) I'm sure your room is ready, Mr. Morris. (CHARLIE *exits. The* OLD LADY *sits staring dead ahead*)

DIMOUT

ACT ONE

SCENE 2

Dusk. The Matoseh hut.

As the lights slowly darken in the parlor, they come up on a Kwi hut down right, the great house of an elder. ERIC *enters, drops his musette bag, pokes the fire at hut center sits and produces a bottle. He drinks a good one, adjusts his pith helmet and, whistling an African tune, takes out a hand mirror and studies himself. Offstage the drums are constant.*

Over the rise up left, against the sunset, comes TSHEMBE MATOSEH, *a handsome young African in worn and rumpled city clothes, his tie loosened, jacket slung over his shoulder, a traveling bag in one hand. At center, he sets it down, wipes his brow, then hearing* ERIC'S *whistle comes up behind him and joins in the tune.*

ERIC. (*Looking up startled; then with joy.*) Tshembe! You came!

(TSHEMBE *throws his arms together straight out over his head as if he were about to dive and claps three times in the Kwi "sign" of greeting.* ERIC *reciprocates and the* TWO BROTHERS *embrace.*)

TSHEMBE. Where is my father?

ERIC. He died last night.

TSHEMBE. (*With great sadness.*) So I missed the last goodbyes. (*He crosses away.*)

ERIC. (*Slipping the mirror out of sight.*) Each day for a month I told him you would come and then last night he no longer believed.

TSHEMBE. (*Voice breaking with emotion as he recalls the Kwi proverb.*) "Sons, sons: hurry, hurry. Do not dawdle—or you will miss your last goodbyes."

ERIC. When I wrote you—I didn't think that you would come at all.

TSHEMBE. As the whites say: There are ties that bind. There are ties that bind. (*A beat.*) Where is our brother Abioseh?

ERIC. (*Slightly petulant.*) After you went away, he went off to St. Cyprian's. We never see him anymore.

TSHEMBE Did you send word to him of our father?

ERIC. (*Still persisting in resentment.*) Yes, but I don't think Abioseh will come.

TSHEMBE. You also didn't think that *I* would come. (*Brightening, he claps a hand on the* BOY'S *shoulder and looks into his eyes*) Eric, you've become a man.

ERIC. It's been five years . . . !

TSHEMBE. You smoke? (ERIC *nods He kneels, opens his bag and tosses the* BOY *a few packs of cigarettes and some newspapers.*)

ERIC. American cigarettes! (*Eagerly breaking a pack. Inadvertently.*) Willy almost never has American cigarettes.

TSHEMBE. Willy—? (*Crosses* U., *gets a basin and raffia.*) Dr. DeKoven? (*He regards* ERIC, *the pith helmet, filthy clothes and whiskey bottle; the other averts his eyes.*) He gives you things—

ERIC. (*Defensively.*) Yes.

TSHEMBE. Cigarettes? (ERIC *nods.* TSHEMBE *picks up the bottle.*) Whiskey even? (*Drinks*)

ERIC. (*Frightened of the way things are going: partly to divert, partly out of interest.*) Tell me about Europe, Tshembe. About your life there . . .

TSHEMBE. (*Softening. He smiles.*) Well—you are an uncle. I had a son just before I left. (*Fist in the air for proud emphasis*) Eight pounds of son!

ERIC. (*Clasping his hands with delight.*) You got some girl in trouble!

TSHEMBE. (*Amused.*) I have a wife, Eric, and we have a son.

ERIC. (*Wide-eyed.*) You are married?

TSHEMBE. (*Dryly—playing it.*) Yes, people are doing it everywhere.

ERIC. You have her picture? (TSHEMBE *tosses his wallet, gets up, and fills the basin to wash.*) She—she is European!

TSHEMBE. Very.

ERIC. How old is she—? (*He is studying the photo critically.*)

TSHEMBE. (*Amused—at both* ERIC *and the custom.*) That is something one is not supposed to ask.

ERIC. Why?

TSHEMBE. (*Taking off his shirt.*) It is a custom among her people not to.

ERIC. Why?

TSHEMBE. (*Absurdly.*) Because it is.

ERIC. She's not very handsome.

TSHEMBE. (*Playing it, taking the photo back.*) It is also not the custom to say such things about other people's wives!

ERIC. She looks older than you do.

TSHEMBE. She isn't. Europeans—wrinkle faster. (*Looking at the photo.*) She is handsome. And she has eyes that talk (*He kisses the picture fondly and puts it away.*)

ERIC. What color are they?

TSHEMBE. Gray.

ERIC. Ugh. Like Reverend Neilsen's.

TSHEMBE. (*Kneels at the basin.*) And like your own. What is wrong with gray eyes?

ERIC. It is no color at all

TSHEMBE. Gray eyes are all colors and hers have a lot of green in them and they are very, very beautiful. (*He washes.*)

ERIC. What color is her hair?

TSHEMBE. Red like the sunset.

ERIC. It sounds ugly.

TSHEMBE. It is striking

ERIC. Can you see her veins?

TSHEMBE. (*Shaking water from his head.*) Her what?

ERIC. Her veins. When you stand close to Dr. Gotterling—you can see her veins through her skin. Like a chicken.

TSHEMBE. (*Looking at him, amused.*) You don't think Dr. Gotterling is strange-looking, do you?

ERIC. No, why should I? She is very—serious for a woman—but she is handsome

TSHEMBE. Blue eyes, yellow hair, veins and all? (*Rises.*)

ERIC. (*Puzzled*) Yes.

TSHEMBE. (*Delighted at the universal absurdity of it.*) What we *know*—is what we accept. (*He laughs and boxes the* BOY'S *head*) It is like that everywhere! (*Reaching for the raffia he begins to beat his body dry.*)

ERIC. Wouldn't you like a towel?

TSHEMBE (*With gusto*) Raffia works up the blood better!

ERIC. (*Shrugs and opens the newspaper.*) They say that Kumalo is coming home To Zatembe

TSHEMBE. (*Sighing*) Yes. Kumalo is coming home.

ERIC. What will he do in Zatembe?

TSHEMBE What did he do in Europe? *Talk!* Talk, talk, talk! That is what the African does in Europe. (ERIC *replaces the basin and sits to the* R. *of* TSHEMBE.) He wanders around in the cold in his thin suits and he *talks* You would like that part, Eric. There is a great deal of pomp. In Europe, the European is— (*Playing it.*) *very* civilized. (*Taking off his shoes.*) When our delegations are ushered in, and our people have said what they came to say, the Europeans have a way of looking very hurt as if they have never heard of these things before . . . and presently, we sit there feeling almost as if it is *we* who have been unreasonable. And then they stand up —it is always the Europeans who stand up first— (*Getting up*) and they say· (*With exaggeratedly clipped*

Oxford accent and the dignity of a mock minuet.) "Well. There are undoubtedly some valid things in what you have had to say . . but we mustn't forget, must we, there are some valid things in what the settlers say? Therefore, we will write a report, which will be forwarded to the Foreign Secretary, who will forward it to the Prime Minister, who will approve it for forwarding to the settler government in Zatembe—" (*Abruptly sobering*) who will laugh and not even read it! (*Taking off his trousers*) *That* is what Kumalo has been doing in Europe *That* is what he will do in Zatembe (TSHEMBE *proceeds to change into native garb, a skirt of handsome leather.*)

ERIC. Are they really sending him home for that?

TSHEMBE. The government in Europe has persuaded the government here to talk to him and he agreed to come

ERIC What will happen?

TSHEMBE Talk!

ERIC Will he support the terrorists?

TSHEMBE. When did you become interested in politics, boy? Does your doctor whisper politics over whiskey and soda?

ERIC (*Bitterly, lifting his head above it.*) *He* discusses many things with me

TSHEMBE. How should I know what Kumalo will do? And don't call them terrorists, that's for the settlers Call them rebels—or revolutionaries— (*Looking off with his own sad irony*) Or fools But never terrorists (*A beat He changes the subject*) Tell me about my father in his last hours Of what things did he speak?

ERIC (*Curtly—to hurt in return*) Only of his ancestors, what else?

TSHEMBE Why do you say it like that, Eric?

ERIC Because it's true He was just an old savage who went to his death rubbing lizard powder on his breast and chanting out his kula or some damn thing!

TSHEMBE (*Grabbing the* BOY *violently*) So did our

mother! Do you despise her memory too! Have they finally turned the world upside down in your head, boy? (*They stare hard at one another.* ERIC *averts his face.* TSHEMBE *releases him.*) Does Madame Neilsen know about my father?

ERIC. (*Shaking his head.*) I thought that you would want to tell her. (*During this a* THIRD MAN, *unnoticed, has approached the hut. taller, older, wrapped in a great African blanket. He stands drinking in the scene for a moment, then—*)

ABIOSEH. You are as our mother said you would be, Tshembe—lean, handsome, with the face of a thinker! (*The* BROTHERS *turn with astonishment.*) So were you named, so have you come to be. Greeting! (*He raises his arms in the "sign" of greeting and* TSHEMBE *returns it with great gusto and joy.*)

TSHEMBE. Abioseh! (*It is a shout of joy as the* Two *rush together and embrace fully, then stand back and look at each other.*)

ABIOSEH. (*Turning at last to* ERIC.) And you, Eric. Are you well? (*They embrace.*)

ERIC. (*Blurting it out inadvertently*) Tshembe has a wife with gray eyes and red hair and they have a son eight pounds . . . !

TSHEMBE. (*Saluting* ERIC, *amused.*) Thank you! (*The* BROTHERS *laugh heartily.*)

ABIOSEH. Is it so?

TSHEMBE. It is so. Ah, Abioseh, Abioseh! It is a long time. I have seen both Europe and America since last we met.

ABIOSEH. (*Smiling fondly.*) The Wanderer, my brother called Tshembe, who is Ishmael. Tell me of you doings.

TSHEMBE. Well—I worked in the mines on the coast for a while. (*He offers his* BROTHER *a cigarette but* ABIOSEH *declines.*) And then I got a job on a newspaper. But when the resistance began the government closed it down. Poof!

ABIOSEH. (*Looks at him curiously.*) "Resistance," Tshembe?

TSHEMBE. (*Ignoring or not noticing.*) So I scraped together some cash and went off to Europe. At first I roomed with Titswali Okele. (*Tousling the younger's hair fondly.*) You'd approve of Okele, Eric. He got *two* girls in a fix: one European and one black American. And sent them both to an East Indian abortionist. (*He laughs and sits beside* ERIC.)

ABIOSEH. "Resistance," Tshembe? You mean the terror. (*With obvious concern sits beside* TSHEMBE.) You are not involved in this trouble—are you?

TSHEMBE. (*Carelessly, an assumption.*) All Africa is involved in this trouble, brother. (*He picks up the bottle and drinks.* ERIC *takes it from him and drinks.*)

ABIOSEH. (*Smiling.*) I can see that you have learned the philosophical reply.

ERIC (*Wanting to share in the talk.*) He talks funny now.

TSHEMBE. (*Reaching for the bottle.*) I think funny now! (*Drinks and offers it to* ABIOSEH, *who declines.*)

ABIOSEH. (*Thoughtfully.*) You are different than when you went away, Tshembe.

TSHEMBE. (*Clowning to deny the reality and avoid too much talk.*) Inside and out! (*Bending his head over.*) How do you like my part? Something, huh?

ABIOSEH. (*Ruffles his* BROTHER'S *hair fondly. Then, searching his eyes.*) I hope you have not been swallowed up in the fanaticism. It is everywhere. The killing. You have heard?

TSHEMBE. (*Embraces him reassuringly.*) I have heard.

ABIOSEH. (*With great enthusiasm—and genuine hope.*) Tshembe, these are new times. There are those in London —some even in Zatembe—who recognize that this is our country too. We have had feelers—

TSHEMBE. (*Bristling inwardly—guardedly.*) "Feelers"?

ABIOSEH. Nothing official, you understand—

TSHEMBE. "We"?

ABIOSEH (*Rapidly, eagerly.*) We have a group—responsible, educated, enterprising. Men like ourselves who want to build—not destroy. (*He pauses to note* TSHEMBE'S *response.* TSHEMBE *says nothing.*) But the settlers won't budge, of course, while fanatics give them the least excuse—

TSHEMBE (*Rises and crosses* D. C) I don't recall that the settlers ever needed excuses. (*Signals to* ERIC *to lay out the funeral robes Then, as he notices* ABIOSEH'S *agitation*) Oh, dear brother, what does it matter! I worried about such things for years and then, one day, sitting on a bench in Hyde Park—watching the pigeons, naturally—it came to me as it must come to all men. I won't come this way again Enough time will pass and it will be over for me on this little planet, so I'd better do the things I mean to do. And so I got up from that bench and went to meet the girl I had been wanting to marry but had not, you see, because of— (*On his fingers, deliberately mocking the words*) —the Liberation! the Movement! "AH-FREEKA!"—and all the rest of it. Well, I was, as Camus would have it . . . (*Ironically, with a small introspective laugh, for he does not in his gut feel the "freedom" he boasts about. Quite the contrary: he is a man "protesting too much"*) "a free man" in that moment because I "chose" freely. *I chose.* And so, you see, it is all over with me and history. This particular atom has discovered himself. In any case, we should get ready for the funeral ceremony. (*He produces a pot of ceremonial paint and crosses* R. *to* ERIC; ABIOSEH *watches with disbelief.*)

ABIOSEH. (*Half-smiling*) And what do you propose we do at the ceremony, my disenchanted, world-traveled young intellectual? (ABIOSEH *rises and stands very tall, still holding the blanket about him*) Should we also paint our cheeks?

TSHEMBE. (*Holding the pot of paint out to him. Soberly, matter-of-factly.*) Yes

ABIOSEH. (*Staring hard at him.*) And dance?

TSHEMBE. (*Somewhat surprised by the quizzing.*) Of course.

ABIOSEH. (*Mockingly.*) With yellow ochre on our cheeks and the rattle in our hands?

TSHEMBE. (*Still an effort at evenness—although he is aware of strong undercurrents.*) We should.

ABIOSEH. (*His voice rising with derision.*) To chase away the "spirits of evil" that have taken our father away? (TSHEMBE *shrugs and starts to paint his own face.*)

TSHEMBE. (*Genuinely· he wants to know.*) Why do you ask these things, Abioseh?

ABIOSEH. (*Superior.*) Do you believe in any of it?

TSHEMBE. (*His voice reflecting the absurdity of the question*) Of course I don't believe in it!

ABIOSEH. Then why?!

TSHEMBE. We are our father's sons. Our people expect it. (*Almost a challenge, but not with rancor.*) What great harm is there in lizard powder, Abioseh? (ERIC *hands him the ceremonial robe, a great imposing garment of animal skins, and he advances, holding it out to* ABIOSEH) It is your place to wear the robe now . . . (*He reaches out and pulls the blanket from his* BROTHER *—who stands revealed in the cassock and crucifix of the Roman Catholic Church.* ERIC *gasps.* TSHEMBE *stares in silence.*)

ABIOSEH. I take the final vows in the Spring.

TSHEMBE. And what will be your name then, my brother?

ABIOSEH Father Paul Augustus. (TSHEMBE *and* ERIC *exchange looks*) I thought to tell you of this in a different way.

(*The* TWO *are confronting each other;* ONE *clutching the mystical robes of ancient and contemporary Africa—the* OTHER *in the mystical robes of medievel and contemporary Europe.* TSHEMBE *laughs.*)

TSHEMBE. I see. Such is the market place of Empire!

You, the son of a proud elder of the Kwi, are now pleased to change your ancient name for that of a Roman Emperor! (*No longer amused.*) You came home not to pay respects to your father but to rail against a few pots of innocent powder!

ABIOSEH. Some day, Tshembe—

TSHEMBE. You have found Reason in a bit of dirty ash— (*Hotly, in a single motion, he reaches into the ashes of the fire, then makes a cross on* ABIOSEH'S *forehead.*) —and Humiliation in the rattles and feathers of your ancestors!

ABIOSEH. (*Conciliatory.*) Some day a black man will be Archbishop of this Diocese. Think what that will mean!

TSHEMBE. (*Searing.*) It will mean only the swinging jeweled kettle of incense of another cult—which kept the watchfires of our oppressors for three centuries! (*Gesturing impatiently to* ERIC.) Eric, get dressed! (*He puts the robe on.* ERIC *crosses* U. S. *to get his*)

ABIOSEH. You were raised by Christians, Eric!

TSHEMBE (*Simply, without passion.*) And maimed by them!

ABIOSEH. (*Softly, with genuine concern.*) Some dreadful thing has happened to you, Tshembe. (*Coming towards him with hand outstretched*) But it is not too late—

TSHEMBE. (*Drawing violently away. Crosses* D. R) The sale, dear brother, has been completed and you are wearing the receipts!

ABIOSEH. (*With determined gentleness, coming after him.*) Ah, Tshembe, Tshembe . . . you dare to equate my faith, my acceptance of the supreme morality of humankind—with purchase?

TSHEMBE. (*Reaching out and taking the silver crucifix in his hands.*) I know the value of this silver, Abioseh! It is far more holy than you know. I have collapsed with fatigue next to those who dug it out of our earth! I have lain in the dark of those barracks where we were locked

like animals at night and listened to them cough and cry and swear and vent the aching needs of their bodies on one another I have seen them die! And I think your Jesus would have loved those men—

ABIOSEH I see that you remember at least *part* of your teachings—

TSHEMBE. —but I think He would have cared nothing for those who gave you this! (*He flings the cross back at him and* ABIOSEH *passionately falls to his knees.*)

ABIOSEH. (*With quiet intensity.*) You are ravaged by devils that will destroy you, Tshembe!

TSHEMBE (*Quietly, evenly.*) I am ravaged. (*He crosses* U S *for his headpiece: a great imposing affair of furs and animal horns*)

ABIOSEH. (*Clutching the crucifix to his lips.*) Tshembe, come and kneel and pray with me!

TSHEMBE. (*At the door, rattle and headpiece in hand*) Abioseh, I know the tale of Jesus. But I think now if there was such a man he must have been what all men are the son of man who died the death of men. And if the legend is true at all, that he was a good man, then he must have despised the priests of the temples of complicity! (*With finality.*) I am going out to our people. (*Looking from one* BROTHER *to the* OTHER, *he dons the headpiece.*)

ABIOSEH You are condemning yourself to hell, Tshembe Matoseh!

(TSHEMBE *throws back the door flap and a sudden shaft of yellow light glints on the silver crucifix as* ABIOSEH *raises it above his head and intones a prayer in ringing liturgical Latin.* TSHEMBE *throws back his head and begins, with all his power, to chant the offstage funeral chant. The two barbaric religious cries play one against the other in vigorous and desperate counterpoint The LIGHTS come down on the novice* PAUL AUGUSTUS *on his knees,*

and the terrified ERIC, *still clutching his robes, as* TSHEMBE *sweeps out.*)

BLACKOUT

ACT ONE

SCENE 3

Evening. MME. NEILSEN *sits alone on the veranda taking the night air.* CHARLIE *appears in the parlor doorway and regards the night, momentarily caught up in the distant funeral chant offstage.*

CHARLIE. (*Musing.*) "And it shall follow as the night the day—" (*Calling inside.*) Say, Doctor Gotterling, you know this is the only place I've ever been where the night really *does* follow the day. Whatever happened to your twilights here? (MARTA *joins him in the doorway. They are not aware of the* OLD LADY.)

MARTA. (*Tongue-in-cheek.*) Well, Mr Morris, I shall tell you: since they serve no useful purpose at the Mission—we have eliminated them entirely!

CHARLIE. (*Charmed.*) Shall we stroll by the river, Doctor?

MADAME. (*Impishly.*) Excellent, Mr. Morris. Marta is romanced so seldom! (*They start and then laugh.*)

CHARLIE. (*Extending his arm.*) Doctor—shall we?

MARTA (*Not unpleased.*) No, I think not.

CHARLIE. (*With a courtly turn toward* MME NEILSEN.) Madame?

MADAME. (*Delighted.*) No, I think not!

CHARLIE. (*To* MARTA.) Won't change your mind? I've always wanted once in my lifetime to stroll through the African jungle in the moonlight, arm in arm with a lovely lady.

MARTA. Have you really?

CHARLIE. No, but I thought it sounded good.

MARTA. (*Not moving.*) It could be dangerous.

CHARLIE. (*He reaches for her arm*) Doctor, I'm not that dangerous!

MARTA. Really, Mr. Morris, it's not wise to go wandering at this hour. (*Crosses* D. *to sit on the veranda edge, regarding the night.*) The terror isn't a joke—as much as we all wish it were.

CHARLIE. It's almost—impossible—to associate terror with that incredible moonlight.

MARTA. (*Tightly.*) They found the Hokinson family murdered in the very same incredibly beautiful moonlight. (*A beat.*) They had three children.

CHARLIE. And is there no way—?

MARTA. This country is almost a quarter the size of the United States, Mr. Morris. The patrols have to come from wherever they are when the alarms go off. And sometimes they don't go off at all. (*Rising and crossing* D. L *to the flare signal wire*) Sometimes the first thing they do is cut the flare signal wires. Sometimes the servants are in on it. But then— (*With sudden bitterness, scanning the darkness.*) —they *all* are.

MADAME. (*Sharply.*) Marta! You know better than that, my dear. (*Then, recovering quickly.*) Ah, how I should like a bit of music! Do you perhaps play an instrument, Mr. Morris?

CHARLIE. (*Stirring from preoccupation.*) Oh? Ah—no, I'm afraid that I don't. (*Sits on the veranda edge.*)

MADAME. What a pity that Torvald did not get back in time to play for us this evening You will love the austerity of the cello in this lush, tropical atmosphere.

MARTA. (*Impatient and a bit overwrought. Rather blurting.*) I think it's maddening of him to stay away like this! (*She immediately catches herself and crosses away*)

MADAME. (*Matter-of-factly.*) Torvald has been tramping around these villages for forty years, my dear

When he has done whatever he has to do, he will come home.

(*A jeep slams to a stop offstage, followed by the rushed steps of* MEN.)

CHARLIE. (*Rising.*) Now what—?

MADAME. (*Coolly, drily.*) It is the sound of the nerve ends of frightened men, Mr. Morris.

(RICE *enters over the rise* U. R. *with* TWO SOLDIERS, *rifles borne at the ready—who patrol slowly back and forth* U. S. *as the scene continues.*)

MARTA. Major Rice!

RICE. (*With urgency.*) There's been another attack. (DEKOVEN *enters from within the mission* L.)

MARTA. Dear God.

RICE. The Duchesne family Wiped out

MARTA. (*Half moaning.*) Why? Why?

RICE. All of them.

MADAME. (*A quiet cry.*) No, no.

RICE. Including the servants. Where is the Reverend?

DEKOVEN. He hasn't returned.

RICE. What has to happen before you people finally understand security measures! (*Crosses* D. L. *to check the flare signal wire.*)

MADAME. (*Quietly, reflectively.*) The Duchesnes . . . the Duchesnes . . . they were decent people . . .

RICE. And these are the savages they want us to sit and "talk" with—

CHARLIE Major Rice, I'd hardly call Kumalo a savage.

RICE. (*With sudden sharpness, facing* CHARLIE.) No, of course not. The blacks are always "civilized" in the next man's country, aren't they, Mr. Morris?

CHARLIE. Injustice in my country, Major, does not excuse it in yours—

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