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INKHOKHOTSAZANA

by

Mulima kw'omusundi wa kuboka

Edited by R. J. Ryland

A modern play in classical style

As old ways collide with new

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INKHOKHOTSAZANA

by

Mulima kw'omusundi wa kuboka

Edited by R. J. Ryland

Setting: *An Organized Society in a Developing Country*

Time: *The Present rooted in the Past as old ways collide with new*

Characters; 7 men, 2 women + a Chorus of Men and a Chorus of Women

MFALME; *The ruler/leader of the country*

INKHOKHOTSAZANA (INKHO); *Mfalme's wife*

POM; *Mfalme's cousin and chief advisor, Inkho's former lover*

KETO; *Mfalme's brother, a shoemaker/ Leader of the Chorus*

GLORIA; *A Journalist from the neighboring country and*

Inkho's childhood friend

MASIA; *An advisor to Mfalme*

LEO; *Mfalme's son, Inkhokhotsazana's step-son*

JOMO & SIMIYU; *Palace Guards*

A CHORUS OF MEN & A CHORUS OF WOMEN; *Citizens*

DANCERS

Summary

Mfalme has banished his wife, Inkho believing she betrayed him by 'sleeping' with her step-son Leo. As it turns out, Mfalme's chief advisor, Pom, has orchestrated the ruse as revenge against Mfalme for snatching Inkho from him and Inkho for having left him for Mfalme. As Mfalme's cousin and most trusted advisor, Pom's accusations are accepted without question and thus create a case of 'the enemy within'. Mfalme's anger and jealousy against Inkho spreads oppression and cruelty to all the women of the land. By royal decree, men are permitted to abuse their women. In a bid to bring Mfalme to his senses and punish Pom, the women of the land revolt by forming the Women's Liberation Front and focusing the eyes of the world upon them, including the journalist, Gloria, from the neighboring country of Noteba.

INKHOKHOTSAZANA

by

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THE PROLOGUE

(At rise, POM'S devilish laughter echoes throughout as wind whips across the stage amidst the rumble of thunder. The sounds of a Dirge instrumental set in. As SFX quiets, sharp screams are heard off-stage. A pandemonium ensues as a frenzied CHORUS OF WOMEN enters the stage, dashing from corner to corner as if all hell has broken loose. Amidst their running and wailing, a CHORUS OF MEN in uniform enters in single file to the rhythm of drum beats, chanting war cries. The CHORUS OF MEN appears macho, sporting sunglasses and bulging muscles. The scantily dressed CHORUS OF WOMEN responds with exaggerated sexual movements and gestures, mocking the MEN as they enter. The CHORUS OF MEN and The CHORUS OF WOMEN perform an antagonistic choral verse with each sex struggling to outwit the other)

CHORUS OF MEN

*Who has the worst snare of all?
Whose arrogance we can't bear?
Baby, honey, kiss me hug me,
What a foolish breed of poultry care?
Women they have no countenance at all!*

CHORUS OF WOMEN

*Who made the stars shine in the sky?
Who made some with snakes as a weapon?
To bite us with, at our time of despair!
Is it our fault that Eve lied?
Surely to correct that we have tried!
Men, they have no countenance at all!*

CHORUS OF MEN

*Gooooo times!
Satan's having a party in hell,
All women invited,
Carry them, your pots, pans, lipstick, fake hair,
Boil in his stew, we don't care!
Darlings enjoy your fare,
Women, they have no countenance at all!*

CHORUS OF WOMEN

*Must we rebel?
 And put up arms?
 Or do we employ our killer charms?
 Must we resist to our point of insanity?
 Gooood times, we'll struggle till our death,
 Tell our kids to lay our wreath,
 For the back-bone of humanity has lost breath,
 We don't care, it's you who will cook and die of lust,
 Men, you have no countenance at all!*

CHORUS OF MEN

*You think you will get away with it?
 Cheating the king?
 Cook by ourselves? Dog shit!
 Lust, well, that's for you too!
 Women of today...
 So counterfeit!
 What can you ever do?
 Can't cook, rear babies, make home
 All you ever talk of...
 Charm, beauty, money and lust!
 Lust! Who said we are idiots!
 Women, women, weee! Chunga!
 Inkhokhotsazana...Inkhokhotsazana....
 La femme fatale
 Now you'll suffer...*

(The CHORUS OF MEN spreads to form a semi-circle around the CHORUS OF WOMEN shouting war cries and chants; they perform a ritual almost erotic dance with the CHORUS OF WOMEN responding in kind with both groups blending into a single circle. Suddenly drumbeats are heard off. The CHORUS OF WOMEN breaks from the circle screaming and running off. THE LEADER enters as THE CHORUS OF MEN appears confused.)

KETO, LEADER OF THE CHORUS

(Sees the confused looks of the MEN.) Hey you! What are you still waiting for? Don't you have anything better to do? Men of today! You have no countenance at all! *(THE LEADER makes to "cane" the MEN who walk away in protest, then to Audience.)* What is wrong with some people, as if they applied to be born men? And do you have to prove it anyway? Am I not a man? Anyway only my wife knows that...and women can be bad score sheets for one proving to be a man. But that is beside the point. Let's talk about Inkho, my sister-in-law and I am not lying—

KETO, Cont.

Neither am I bragging. She must have been created when the creator was free of Monday blues and the fatigue of the weekend hadn't set in...somewhere...Tuesday I think...after which, he started creating her all over again...She, the kind of woman you would sell your entire portfolio just to be seen hanging out with her shadow even just for a second. Many a man waited not for chemistry or hormonal nothings to happen in order to drop dead in love with her! This story is set somewhere in your heart, your house, your religion, your country, your office or a place called there, or somewhere, nowhereI want to tell you that the time Inkhokhotsazana lived can be the past, the present or the future or any time. That depends on you... This story is a reality, or a dream, a death sentence to somebody, a laughing gas, and soap to another, a towel. A theory, a philosophy, poetry, nonsense.... It could even be non-existent...a creation of your imagination and fantasies...a myth or legend. That depends on your upbringing and degree of freedom of choice. My brother, Mfalme, caught a fish that nobody has ever and will never again catch in the history of time. Before I bore you let me begin to say that, Inkhokhotsazana was a beauty, the kind that sent women screaming with envy- their own enemy they say- and men opening their mouths like dry soil waiting for the rain—in fact nobody called her Inkhokhotsazana...they stopped at Inkho because to say the whole name kept them too long in the presence of her unbearable beauty. I am the only man who resisted the temptation of her lethal beauty; all protocol observed... may I unveil the beauty behind Inkho...but if I am caught...mimi siko! (*INKHO enters, crossing the stage moving much like a cat as THE CHORUS off sings her name, 'INKHOKHOTSAZANA'. INKO exits off.*) Was I lying? Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder... they cheat you. But these things called love and politics, what specific part of the body is responsible? The heart, the mind, the brains, the brawns, the liver? I mean, it is just too elusive for me! Between hate and love which one is stronger? Whatever your opinion, I strongly believe love is extreme hate inverted and therefore the same thing...and both of them are dangerous... Or maybe our society is too brainwashed to understand these tough topics. Political and love buffoons are on the increase...explosive stuff! (*Silence*) I hear somebody coming. I'll hide, I don't want to be caught revealing state secrets... that is equal to treason you know, might be forced to state the source. I can lose my stomach, then, where will I place my hard earned one dollar per day? You know I have all that belongs to me on a flash disk. (*Exits.*)

(*MFALME enters amid the floating sound of a stringed instrument, the flute, and African drums. He lights candles, in preparation for a romantic interlude with INKHO. He bathes himself in candlelight, kneeling before a decorative screen behind which, one must imagine, is an awaiting bed.*)

MFALME

*Why waste time my angelic dame
For love's sake believe this is no game
Here I am waiting*

*So your charm can be my hearts painting
And so most adorable of women
Hasten to melt resistance with thy lovely eyes.*

*Oh heavenly masterpiece, thaw my heart of ice.
Inkhokhotsazana where are you? The candles are dying,
Impatient at your graceful arrival.
The stars scramble to see your face.*

(INKHO enters in an erotic evening gown, flaunting herself to MFALME.)

INKHO

*How elated is my joy
For success in keeping his majesty in wait.
Oh the power of Inkho's love!
Tire not of waiting, my body shall be the bait,
To lead you my lord, to my slaughter house of love.
Your joy shall be undeterred, flying free as a dove.*

(MFALME and INKHO dance in celebration of their love. THE CHORUS OF MEN AND WOMEN enter, dancing in compliment to MFLAME and INKHO. The dance ends as THE CHORUS exits and MFALME and INKHO embrace.)

MFALME

*Bind thy body in mine; let me feel the warmth of thine.
Be not shy, in bliss let us fly.*

INKHO

*If you please should you flatter?
Hasten to cease or I'll collapse under shyness's platter.
Yet I need to master all the energy for tonight.
Stand not on office or might.*

MFALME

Should I say much, when your words request of such?

INKHO

*Won't Inkhokhotsazana's love do his best
To have seat and take rest
While I mix cupid's concoction of wine
While the moon stares in jealous shine?*

(INKHO pours wine in two glasses. In the shadows, POM watches, jealously eavesdropping on the two lovers.)

MFALME

Suit your charming presence—

(Dropping to one knee, MFALME receives his wine from INKHO, staring directly into her eyes as he speaks.)

*To Inkho, queen of my soul,
I raise my glass.
Let thy grace grant me peace
And take away all my tears and fears.*

(MFALME and INKHO toast, kiss and sip. Suddenly INKHO changes mood, places her glass on the table and walks away from MFALME pensively. He rises in wonder)

INKHO

*Love, my soul troubles,
My fears carry in doubles,
My future seems uncertain.*

MFALME

*Speak daughter of my in-laws
Whether it be abomination,
Let me suffer the loss.
I'll make it law to the nation
To put your heart at calm
And sing to you a protection psalm.*

INKHO

*I'm tormented daily that your cousin, Pom,
Labors to spoil our love and throw it to the storm.*

MFALME

*I hear thy word; let Pom worry thee not
For he's not a flood to sweep our love so hot.*

INKHO

Bear my speech; his eyes seem evil all this time!

MFALME

*Suffer not; dance me to my room
And forget all about Pom's loom.
Should he disturb my angel
I'll send him to his doom.*

(They dance amorously to the inner room. Two of MFALME'S GUARDS enter inspecting and securing the area as POM disappears from sight.)

JOMO

Isn't he feeling good? Such a nice woman!

SIMIYU

I say husband and wife ate wedding bliss the next three months from their nuptials.

JOMO

You mean three months before?

(They laugh and "high five.")

JOMO

She puffed up! *(Demonstrating, creating a large belly with his hands.)* Really puffed up!

SIMIYU

You mean ballooned...Eh pregnant?

JOMO

No! Puffed up. You don't say preg... In public! If Mfalme hears you he'll cut out your tongue. You want to abort the baby?

SIMIYU

Security check. Quick! *(They look about then relieved, continue.)* You talk like woman!

JOMO

This room smells sweet!

SIMIYU

Yes sweet like... *(Checks around again to ensure they are alone then laughs.)*...Eh Inkhokhotsazana!

JOMO

Don't shout, Pom will... I saw him peeping.

SIMIYU

And burning with passion. You see I know he also wants Inkho. The fool!

(THEY joke as THEY pretend to inspect the area for security purposes.)

JOMO

(Picking up a candle.) Candles! This must be one of Pom's games; he wants to burn the palace!

SIMIYU

Take them away, quickly! Threat to security! Terrorism! *(He raises one of the wine glasses.)* And what do you say of this?

(THEY inspect the wine glasses, drink, brandish them as royalty, and pretend to fall drunk with wine.)

JOMO

Eh, no big deal. Security check finished. No threat uncovered, except for the candles.

(SIMIUY and JOMO pick up the candles and exit, the stage goes dark.)

PROLOGUE II

(KETO enters and standing in a spotlight, addresses the Audience.)

KETO, LEADER OF THE CHORUS

Whatever you've seen is what happened 10 years ago and that is history. But it happened in the name of 'history informs the future.' However, right now I want to show you something else which is happening right now... Let me fast forward to the present. Are you ready for a crash landing ride? Safety belts tight? Did you think the story was a bit outdated for a post-modern audience? Are you complaining? How do I help you then to understand...nothing gets done without a little kitu kidoga, right? Want a banana you have to rub someone's hand. Mkono mtupu... You know what I mean. If you don't have anything to offer, you won't have any friends. I have nothing to give so please don't come to my home. But even an enemy is smiled at for what he knows. And I know more than you. Listen carefully since what I am telling you is in the present and I am not joking. There is a man people call Pom but they don't know him. You will know him soon enough. I hate him...he is drunk with that oldest wine called 'absolute power' that strips a man of humanity, leaving him a mere skeleton of what was once a clever boy. If they come for me...tell them ...eh...I am dead...Remember I hate violence.

ACT I, SCENE ONE

(JOMO enters as KETO exits. JOMO examines MFALME'S chambers, checking for any security lapses.)

JOMO

Now what's wrong with that monkey? *(Starts whistling and dancing to a tune as SIMIYU enters.)*

SIMIYU

Allo, you monkey! How is your big-eared wife?

(JOMO instantly stands, thinking it's MFALME.)

JOMO

At your service, saya!

SIMIYU

Relax monkey!

JOMO

You scared my nerves away. How is your elephant-mouthed wife?

SIMIYU

Alive but threatening to die soon if I don't buy her food and lipstick.

JOMO

You are late. The third time this week. You are fired! *(Laughs)*

SIMIYU

I was attending to him, that tail-less monkey called Pom.

JOMO

Ehh...

SIMIYU

He say, "Simiyu do this...Simiyu, do that...Simiyu, soap my armpits, bring food. Simiyu, bring me woman without blood from convent...Simiyu...."

(JOMO is laughing whimsically.)

JOMO

And you bring woman from convent?

SIMIYU

He threatened to kill me if I refused.

JOMO

It's because you are stupid. I don't do such stupid jobs.

SIMIYU

Who is to say who is more stupid? (*Dropping the matter.*) Security good?

JOMO

Shwaari Kama Ra...Rat! Do you see that rat who fancies himself a great lover?

SIMIYU

Let's dance then, in celebration of our efforts to building the nation.

JOMO

(*THEY begin to dance foolishly.*) You like the way I dance?

SIMIYU

Like the beating I gave my wife this morning to cook me tea.

(*MFALME and HIS ADVISORS enter, catching JOMO and SIMIYU still dancing around the room.*)

MASIA

What is going on here?

JOMO

(*Falling on his knees.*) Work...Not me, saya, it's him.

SIMIYU

No, him, saya, he says (*stammers*) ...we do...dance to...exorcise demons...threat to your security.

MASIA

Are you crazy?

SIMIYU

No, saya. Am not a nut, saya. I am Inspector Constable Simiyu...

MASIA

Which is which? Constable or Inspector?

JOMO

(*Laughing*) He's an idiot inspector, saya. Which tribe is that?

POM

Get out of here, you scoundrels. Next time learn to differentiate between your mother's playhouse and Mfalme's palace.

(JOMO and SIMIYU exit.)

MFALME

(To POM.) What's your report concerning the issue?

POM

What issue?

MFALME

I need answers, Pom. Answers!

POM

About what?

MFALME

About everything happening here... The Women's Liberation Front. They want me to release the prostitute, Inkhokhotsazana!

POM

Simple. No big deal at all! Just shoot, burn and drown their ashes! What's the matter with you? We're three grown men. Use your heads!

(A piercing scream rents the air. In runs A WOMAN, her hair disheveled. THE WOMAN, who's name is GLORIA, runs behind POM. JOMO and SIMIYU enter carrying whips. They move to grab her but she ducks behind MASIA.)

MASIA

Hold it, Jomo, what is it?

JOMO

We find woman in hall. Woman threat to security, saya. Woman has no manners...

SIMIYU

Jomo say truth. Woman no manners. Want to shoot you without cloth, saya.

POM

Speak up woman! What have you to say for yourself? Don't you know women are not permitted to enter Mfalme's private chambers?

JOMO and SIMIYU

We beat demon, we beat threat to security. *(Saluting.)* We beat till become ashes.

(MFALME, MASIA and POM look at GLORIA who is very scared.)

GLORIA

Sirs, they want to rape me.

JOMO

(Laughs.) That woman lying, saya.

POM

(Looking at their genitals.) I see you are real men...I see things are looking up for you!

(JOMO and POM do not understand.)

MASIA

You betray yourselves. Get out, you baboons!

(Now understanding, JOMO and SIMIYU cover their genitals with their hands and exit.)

GLORIA

Sorry to have busted in like that.

POM

(Acrimoniously.) Do you have an appointment? Don't you know that women can't and shouldn't see Mfalme in here?

MASIA

Pom, just shut up!

POM

Then woman, get out!

(MASIA and MFALME realize the woman is no ordinary woman. She is dressed in western clothes and speaks in an educated tone.)

MASIA

Pom, shut up your empty tin!

MFALME

(To GLORIA.) Feel free to speak. Why such an unceremonious visit?

GLORIA

Your guards are awful! They think like pigs.

POM

They are on official orders woman! They are not allowed to think on their own!
(MFALME silences him with a sharp look.) Sorry sir.

MFALME

You must pardon my brainless cousin for his insensitivity. You see we have a situation in our country at the moment. That is why our security is tight.

POM

Are you a terrorist or rebel? Do you belong to the Women's Liberation Front? You women need all your tiny heads blown off. Advocating for rights— what rights? Where are the responsibilities that go with that? International rights my foot!

MFALME

Jomo! Simiyu! (*JOMO and SIMIYU return.*) Take this stinking burger out of my presence. Give him five strokes.

(JOMO and SIMIYU, delighted, whisk POM out as he threatens revenge.)

GLORIA

(Ignoring the chaos.) I'm Gloria Graza, in short, G.G. A journalist from your neighboring country, Notebo. I came to get my pass.

MASIA

Who told you we give passes here?

GLORIA

The immigration officer told me journalist passes are only issued at the palace!

MASIA

What is your mission?

GLORIA

I came here to do an audio-visual piece on the situation in your country...Many western investors—

(MFALME and MASIA become suspicious.)

MASIA

Who told you we have a situation?

GLORIA

I mean...the socio-economic factors affecting you're...eh... Gold and oil reserves and what makes you one of the most growing states in Africa.

(POM enters rubbing his bottom in pain followed by SIMIYU and JOMO laughing and jeering. POM turns on them angrily and they exit off. POM attempts to sit, but thinks better, and stands watching silently.)

MASIA

Well...we are good planners.

GLORIA

And you know what they say, behind every successful endeavor stands a tired woman.

MFALME

Who said that? When, why, where?

POM

(Unable to contain himself.) Utter nonsense. Women are the very deathly parasite of our rich country. Trying to shove us backwards with WLF...morbid toothache, constant pain in the...

MFALME

Are you an agent of WLF?

POM

Of course she is one of them. We know your kind. Trying to overthrow our leadership.

GLORIA

No, sir. What is "WLF"?

MFALME

Why do you think behind every success lies a bloody woman?

Gloria:

Eh...eh...Perhaps the folly of being a woman, I guess. Pardon me if my speech is not seasoned before your so masculine presence.

MFALME

Have we met somewhere? ...Some conference maybe?

GLORIA

No, not to my knowledge.

(MFALME rises, taking a closer look at GLORIA.)

MFALME

You seem vaguely familiar. Surely we've met somewhere...but why are you so nervous my sweetest? *(Stroking her cheek.)* You have butterflies in your stomach?

GLORIA

(Pulling away) My lord, it is just that I am humbled by your presence...

(Brief silence.)

MFALME

You are quite charming. And we've treated you badly. We owe you something for your trouble. I grant that you stay in my country for as long as you wish. Only...You are not allowed to go to restricted areas. Masia, you will give her appropriate accommodations, a special car and constant security.

GLORIA

I have my own arrangements, sir...

MFALME

Should you find it prudent to stay here, in the palace, I'd find it much appreciated.

(MASIA escorts GLORIA from the chamber.)

POM

Sir, I think she must be a spy. I don't like her attitude. I don't trust her. No woman ever has such courage.

MFALME

She didn't tell us what press she works for.

(MASIA returns with GLORIA.)

POM

What is it now?

MASIA

Sir, she wants to see your wife.

MFALME

What wife?

GLORIA

Please sir!

POM

Why?

GLORIA

Curiosity. I've heard stories of her beauty. I'd like to see for myself.

POM

She must be from Women's Liberation Front.

MFALME

Remove her from my sight. *(MASIA quickly takes GLORIA out.)* But she is very beautiful. Pom, what do you think?

POM

Sir, let's investigate this, set up a commission, I'll be the head, arrest someone. This is a conspiracy I swear!

MFALME

Trace her steps. *(As exits.)* Never let her out of your sight, I might need her.

(POM follows. Lights out.)

PROLOGUE III

KETO, LEADER OF THE CHORUS

(Standing in spotlight, addressing the Audience.) You just saw what happened and you haven't seen anything yet. You can see I am trying not to be subjective...Positive media, you know! But, I have a problem with objectivity. How can you be objective without wallowing through subjectivity? Unless you are made of wood. If you are an emotional animal like me, well, let's begin by crying. *(Sobs.)* If you couldn't cry, then you are in opposition. Laughing is a bit simpler. *(Laughs whimsically.)* If I was learned, I would have said where the rain started pounding the earth from. Because I am the village idiot and Mfalme, my brother, regards me as a liability, I bet I will say... where didn't I stop eating ugali from. Let me get you to the crux of the matter. I invite you to assist me to judge. Don't breath hard, they might hear you. *(A WOMAN passes. The WOMAN sneers at KETO and shakes her fist. KETO cowers slightly then points to her as she exits.)* There's a mama who brought akala shoes to repair. The other day she hit me with a calabash at the village-market as I was window-shopping the latest cow ...I mean car. It has a digital micro chip engine and touch screen, side mirrors, with sensors that ...it has a cock-pit for carrying chicken. I was infatuated with her .I think cars also have feminine qualities; mood swings, the best men, costly... I too fear the wrath of women. You know I don't know how to multi-task. I leave you to your own devices, but don't fight. I hate violence!

ACT I, SCENE TWO

(Lights up in the woods outside the palace walls near the place where INKHOKHOTSAZANA was banished 10 years earlier and has remained imprisoned. JOMO and SIMIYU stand guard.)

JOMO

I hate Pom. I really hate Pom.

SIMIYU

Why should he make us guard the prisoners instead of staying in the palace?

JOMO

Do you think he's stupid?

SIMIYU

I think he's a warthog on heat. I wish President returns before that warthog crushes our backs, we're palace material not prison warders!

JOMO

Today it is better. We guard Inkhokhotsazana and her child.

SIMIYU

It is a pity. That woman will starve to death. Mfalme should do something.

(GLORIA peeps from right side and hides behind a tree and gives a long howl like a ghostly wolf.)

JOMO

What's that?

SIMIYU

Ghost. I say a ghost!

JOMO

What do we do? We run away?

SIMIYU

It is the only option.

JOMO

But we are guards.

SIMIYU

Let's allow the ghosts to pass then we'll come back.

(JOMO and SIMIYU scamper away. GLORIA tiptoes to where INKHOKHOTSANA is held.)

GLORIA

Inkhokhotsazana!

INKHO

Who is there?

GLORIA

It is I. Gloria.

INKHO

Gloria?

GLORIA

Yes, dear friend...

INKHO

From days of our youth till always. What do you want? Why have you risked your life so?

GLORIA

I am here for you...I need to tell the world your side of the story.

INKHO

Leave me alone; let me die here in banishment.

GLORIA

No, you will soon be out.

INKHO

No hope. No hope, dear one, ever.

GLORIA

I saw your husband. I spoke to him.

INKHO

You saw my husband? You spoke to MFALME? Did he recognize you?

GLORIA

His memory is short. I denied it anyway. Or perhaps his eyes have grown weak over the years like his mind.

INKHO

And still I love him. But if you are to help me, you must help me crush Pom. It is Mfalme's cousin, his advisor Pom, that is the sole purpose behind everything. You must help me expose him for the dangerous fraud he is.

GLORIA

They caught other women activists and hanged them naked last week. Ten of them from the Women's Liberation Front.

INKHO

May the gods show mercy on them! I need my husband back. I want him to know the truth. You have been to America? Have you any word from Harvard? What has become of my step-son? Have you heard from Leo?

GLORIA

Leo is alright. He knows of your plight, but did not know what to do.

INKHO

I miss him. It is not his doing.

GLORIA

(Giving INKHO food and water.) There is much to tell, but there is no time for now. I must go before those idiots return.

JOMO

(Stepping out of the bushes, brandishing a knife.) And so we have!

SIMIYU

We'll have her for dinner, drink to our fill and then beat the daylights out of her educated head.

JOMO

Women, spell it out. What do you want from here? Security threat, eh? Don't stand there and lie to us.

GLORIA

What do you want from me officers? I am just collecting herbs...for my experiments. I am a nature scientist.

JOMO:

An herbal journalist? *(Laughing.)* Ah, he-he! What experiment? You are collecting materials to make a bomb?

GLORIA

What I am doing is none of your business.

(GLORIA attempts to leave but JOMO and SIMIYU block her exit.)

INKHO

Jomo! Let her go!

JOMO

I'm sorry Madame, thought threat to your security, saya...eh....

SIMIYU

(Correcting him) Madam!

JOMO

I meant madam.

INKHO

Come closer so we can talk in private.

(JOMO and SIMIYU release GLORIA who runs away.)

SIMIYU

You see...she ran away, madam.

INKHO

(Feigning anger.) Follow her, you idiots!

(JOMO and SIMIYU look at each other in surprise and run blindly off.)

ACT I, SCENE THREE

(The lights rise on the interior of the Palace, specifically MFALMZE'S throne room. An arrogant POM enters, calling for one of the Guards.)

POM

Jomo, come here you monkey!

JOMO

Yes, afwande! No, I mean yes, Pom...yes, saya.

POM

Go to the convent and get me a nice young lady; brown, tall and under 16!

JOMO

A virgin! *(POM sits on the throne.)* But you are sitting on Mfalme's throne!

POM

Are you accusing me of some sin?

JOMO

It is illegal, saya, for anyone to sit on the throne. Except Mfalme, of course. That amounts to a death sentence.

POM

Jomo, are you threatening me?

JOMO

Forgive, saya, I am just warning you! It is a Capital offense!

POM

Enough of your gibberish. Do as I say and bring me a little juicy woman from the convent!

JOMO

But, saya, I can't leave. I am on orders to guard the palace.

POM
(Shouting angrily.) Jomo!

JOMO
(Saluting) Yes, saya!

POM
 You are an idiot! Say it!

JOMO
 Yes, saya, you are an idiot, saya!

POM
 Not me, you idiot. You! Say, 'I am and idiot'.

JOMO
 Not me, you. You are an idiot!

POM
(Enraged.) This throne belongs to me now! If you disobey me I will kill you!

JOMO
 Forgive my ignorance. I'll bring the nun, saya.

POM
 Take her to my house and call me.

JOMO
 Your wives, I mean, your tamed women...they will know, saya?

POM
 It works to their advantage to keep me happy. *(Laughs.)*

(JOMO exits. POM remains on the throne, posturing and primping, full of self-pride. A trumpet sounds off. MASIA enters, discovering POM on MFALME'S throne.)

MASIA
 Get off that throne you fool!

POM
 Who in hell are you to order me around? Which tribe do you come from?

(Trumpet off again. Enter SIMIYU.)

MASIA
 I know you are Mfalme's cousin but...

SIMIYU

Are you deaf, man? Mfalme is coming.

(POM jumps out of the seat and stands next to MASIA as MFALME enters. MFALME is obviously disturbed, at the point of being infuriated.)

MFALME

Women! They are the bane of my country!

MASIA

(Attempting to reason with MFALME.) Let's find a solution. In a month's time we shall be bombed by the international forces if we don't release Gloria.

POM

Come on! You give them much too much credit!

MASIA

Gloria has to be set free if we are to maintain peace.

POM

What's wrong with the all of you? Do you think the international forces would attack us for the sake of a mere woman?

MASIA

Shut up Pom!

POM

You shut up! What, are we to let that meddling journalist determine our destiny as men? She is a spy from across the border. Not bred by any of our brethren and friend only to that deceiving Inkhokhotsazana.

MASIA

You wag your tongue like a dog in heat.

POM

She had no business messing in our affairs.

MASIA

I'm warning you!

MFALME

Jomo, my royal whip!

MASIA

Today you are first, Pom.

POM

No you are first. Yesterday it was me!

(JOMO and SIMIYU enter fighting over the caning whip.)

SIMIYU

It's my turn to cane them today, saya.

JOMO

No it is mine. You had the honors last week, Simiyu...my hand is itchy.

MFALME

Pom, marry the ground!

(POM falls prostrate to the ground. SIMIYU and JOMO scramble to cane him but MFALME takes the whip and lashes POM with it. MASIA watches fearfully. POM slowly stands up, rubbing his buttocks in pain. JOMO and SIMIYU hit hands in joy, much to their ultimate dismay as MFALME forces them on the ground.)

MFALME

Jomo and Simiyu! Down! Now!

JOMO and SIMIYU

Saya!

(MFALME lashes them both. They slowly recover onto their feet and rub their back sides.)

MFALME

Now, get out of my sight. *(JOMO and SIMIYU quickly exit.)* Masia, what do we do now?

MASIA

We have the militants from Notebo to deal with. They seek revenge over our imprisoning their kindred, Gloria. And our own rebels, the Women's Liberation Front. Mfalme, this could lead to much unrest if we are not quick in action. The women have only banded together to spite us. If we release Gloria, that will humor them for the present and give us time to devise a plan to defeat them.

POM

(Painfully) Mfalme, don't listen to those feminine scoundrels. They have nothing between their legs! Cowards, the lot of them! We can't release Gloria!

MFALME

So, first we must curb the Women's Liberation Front. Those women are making the country impossible to run!

MASIA

We must destroy the rebels.

MFALME

We'll stand firm. There will be no retreat! Ever. We'll crush the WLF!

POM

Now, that's the speech of a real man!

MASIA

But, we must consider our tactics. If we don't release Gloria by tonight the WFL will invade the palace and we are not prepared to fight them.

POM

Let them come. I'll show them that my grandfather killed a buffalo barehanded!

MASIA

Gloria is scheduled to hang tomorrow. I think that is not the path to follow.

POM

Just hang her and be done with it. She's the cause of our trouble.

MASIA

We must remain sober on this matter, this will invite more trouble.

POM

Then let's just shoot her and feed her to the jackals.

MFALME

If you speak again I'll cut your head off.

MASIA

Shut up, Pom, all you ever think of is foolishness.

MFALME

We will release her, and then you will bring me Inkhokhotsazana from the jungle.

POM

God forbid! You can't release that snake from prison.

MFALME

(Furious) Pom! That's my wife we're talking about here!

POM

You should have shot her long ago...Troubling yourself because of a woman! A woman who betrayed you.

MFALME

Inkho is no ordinary woman.

POM

The way she cuckold you! Whoever heard of a man crying for a woman after that! It's a sign of weakness, I say.

MASIA

(Admonishing POM.) Have you forgotten who you're talking to? *(MASIA looks at MFALME, anticipating a response, but MFALME only stares into space.)* Last night I tried to get confessions out of Gloria, she was dead silent as an ant. She isn't just any woman; one could think she is a goddess!

POM

Don't make excuses for yourself, Masia. You went to Gloria in hopes of seducing her and you hit a wall!

MAISA

What? You think everybody is an adulterer like you?

POM

Your problem is you never mastered the art of seduction. We all know it, Masia, with your girlish emotions. Who doesn't know what you are?

MASIA

(Laughing) The caterpillar thinks himself to be a snake!

POM

At least the snake could charm Eve!

MASIA

Will you ever learn to shut your mouth, Pom?

POM

Who's Gloria anyway! Just a Parrot who's eaten a lot of pepper and can't withstand the pain. We'll deal with her accordingly.

MFALME

Pom, leave my presence, now.

(POM begins to exit just as SIMIYU enters hastily.)

SIMIYU

Saya, I swear I don't know about it!

POM

(Returning quickly.) What is it, you idiot!

SIMIYU

Woman not there, saya. I swear not me. It's them, saya, not me!

MASIA

What woman?

SIMIYU

The woman like angel with skin like ripe berries and mouth like red honey.

OTHERS

Gloria!

SIMIYU

I don't know her name, saya. I think it is not one from the convent...

POM

(Suspicious) Yes, not one from...The one from Notebo?

SIMIYU

She disappeared like the shadow of my mother's Ugali down my throat! I think she's a ghost.

POM

I told you that woman is a demon.

MFALME

Assemble the guards. Bring her here in 30 minutes or you will all be dead.

SIMIYU

But only a ghost could slip through the bars in that dungeon and disappear without a trace. How do we search for a ghost? *(Falls to his knees, sobbing like a baby.)*

POM

This is a conspiracy and Masia must be behind it. I can see it in his eyes.

MFALME

No woman has ever outwitted me. Who does Gloria think she is? *(MFALME exits in a rage followed by MASIA, POM and SIMIYU.)*

MASIA

(As exiting.) I wish we'd never started this.

(Lights out.)

ACT II PROLOGUE

KETO, LEADER OF THE CHORUS:

As you know, yes I know you don't know, Mfalme fears he is losing control of his country. And he begins to see that he has little help from Masia and Pom in solving the crises. What you also don't know is that Mfalme is on his way to an international conference with Keto, his brother, the chairman of IMF. By the way I have a postgraduate diploma in political journalism from Oxford though I don't have the first degree. Do you know what IMF means? (*Laughs.*) I used to think I am the only one who is slow. IMF stands for "Involuntary Meal Forfeited" also known as Hunger Strikers... (*Laughs.*) Let me meet my worthy brother...first time in ten years. I am Keto, the IMF PHD, remember I hate violence.

ACT II, SCENE ONE

(*MFALME enters down stage/aisle and is joined by Keto.*)

KETO

Long live, my lord. I am here. You sent for me?

MFALME

Welcome, brother. It has been a long time.

KETO

Ten years.

MFLAME

You have relocated to the slums?

KETO

Ah yes. Let us talk here, away from the fleas and rats that like visitors, especially the rich ones. It is best they don't know that I have a rich brother. I hate violence.

MFALME

As you wish.

KETO

I don't like the way you look. Like a cock that has been crushed in a fight.

MFALME

Keto, I need your advice. It is difficult. Very difficult. I need real answers. You know my dilemma, Keto.

KETO

Word travels. I trust you have spent much time thinking on it.

MFALME

I stopped thinking when I realized that nothing I ever thought made sense. It's all obscure. Like wind in the air.

KETO:

Think deeply brother, think!

MFALME

What difference does it make? To think or not to think? What matters is that my love languishes deep in the cold forest by the order of my own word. I hate it.

KETO

That woman loves you. Be reasonable. Who would ever betray her husband with his son?

MFALME

That is what haunts me. It's even harder to bear, knowing how much I trusted her. Women!

KETO

I go to see her daily. Everyday I see her...everyday she passes her love to you through me. Wake up. You've slept too long.

MFALME

With my...with my son, Leo...Keto, don't you understand, she slept with my son! How could she betray me with my own son? I can't bear it any longer.

KETO

It's all a lie. But even if it were true, does that give you permission to treat all the women of our country badly? To send out a decree that men may abuse their own wives? The mothers of their sons and daughters?

MFALME

I swear to you...I shall erase them all from the face of the earth. The beasts! And Inkhokhotsazana must die a slow death for her betrayal.

KETO

Ten years is too long to banish anyone all alone in a cold forest full of danger, all because of a lie by that imposter, Pom.

MFALME

Watch your mouth Keto!

KETO

If I had a cane, I would whip you severally till you came to your senses.

MFALME

Why big brother? Why? Am I so helpless then?

KETO

I may just be a poor shoemaker, but I am also your elder brother, and I have a Masters in journalism from Oxford...and

MFALME

I know.

KETO

But I am satisfied with the way I am. I only hate the way you behave like a child. Ignorant and selfish. Crying for help when you cause your own fall. You are no longer a baby, honorable, Mfalme!

MFALME

Stop lecturing me! Give me answers before my head explodes!

KETO

Pom lied to you. Your wife is innocent. Your son Leo, too, is innocent.

MFALME

Don't mention that traitor here. Let him rot in Harvard.

KETO

He graduated with a PHD last week.

MFALME

Who cares?

KETO

And he'll be marrying soon.

MFALME:

That's his own funeral.

KETO

Your callousness is unbelievable. You must stop this insensitivity to your own flesh and blood! What is wrong with you! Are you insane?

MFALME

(Calmly) I saw them Keto, with my own eyes. I couldn't believe it.

KETO

Sometimes the blind sees only what he wants to see. There is more to see than you care to remember.

(The Lights dim as music sets in to symbolize a reflection back into time. INKHOKHOTSAZANA enters and pours a drink, then as the tempo of the music increases, she begins to dance.)

INKHO

How blessed you are, Inkho! While the sun shines, dance away your soul! Can you believe you are pregnant! *(Touching her stomach.)* Oh, my beautiful child, you should be dancing for joy. *(She continues to dance gracefully. LEO, about 20, enters with a letter in hand, overcome with excitement.)*

LEO

They accepted me mama! Mama!

(LEO embraces INKHO.)

INKHO

What is it my handsome one? Careful...You'll crush my baby...oh...

LEO

Mama, I'm so excited!

INKHO

May I join in the celebration or am I too old now?

LEO

You won't believe it! You won't believe it! I tell you. It can't be true!

INKHO

A girl. I should have known. What daughter is it this time round? You should stop chasing everything in a skirt, Leo!

LEO

No, Mama, not a girl. *(Throwing his arms wide.)* Harvard awaits your arrival, Leo. Hasten your flight and speed off! Thou goest for the best! *(He hands her the letter and dances with excitement.)*

INKHO

(As she reads the letter, LEO can barely contain himself. Waving the letter in the air, she hugs him with joy.) Harvard! They accepted you to Harvard! You're a genius! You're a genius! You're a real genius son of my co-wife.

LEO

(Suddenly solemn.) I wish my mum were alive. She would die of joy.

INKHO

(Taking him into her arms.) Peace my child. Am I doing so badly then?

LEO

(Realizing.) I'm sorry Mama. You love me as if I were your own child. No one would believe you are a stem-mum. You are fantastic! The very best!

INKHO

This calls for a dance. I hope you haven't forgotten your steps.

LEO

I remember everything you've taught me. And I've been practicing. I'm even better than you remember!

INKHO

Let's see.

(They dance. As the music plays, POM and MFALME enters. MFALME is shocked to see INKHO and LEO in what appears to be a compromising dance move.)

POM

(Pleased.) See, what I have always told you.

INKHO

(Disengaging.) What a pleasant surprise. You're back so soon, my love. *(Goes to hug him. Mfalme bars her.)* What's the matter, my dear one?

LEO

(Taking the acceptance letter from INKHO and brandishing it in front of his father.) Father, I am going to Harvard!

MFALME

(Pensively, not listening.) So it's true. So it's true...not you, Inkho. Not you. Don't sweet me!

POM

(Adding salt to injury.) See with your own eyes! Mwenye macho haambiwi tule! You've been denying it. As a matter of fact, they often sleep together. I see them often, cuddling, rolling and...in the bedroom. In the bath.

INKHO

Pom!

MFALME

So you're a traitor, 'my love'. *(Emotionless.)* You're a traitor.

LEO

(Confused.) What is happening, Father? I don't understand.

MFALME

Shut up you idiot! Don't "father" me. Aren't there enough desperate women of your own age out there?

LEO

What do you mean?

POM

Old enough to play house with your father's wife!

LEO

Pom!

POM

(Surveying the ensuing tension and taking full advantage.) Feigning innocence, eh? Mfalme, that thing bulging out *(Pointing at INKHO'S swollen stomach)*— could be his...I mean Leo's...In fact, it is for certain. I saw it being conceived!

(Unable to restrain his anger anymore, LEO jumps on POM with blows. SIMIYU and JOMO rush in to see what the commotion is about. Seeing POM being strangled, they start cheering. MFALME is lost.)

POM

Help me! *(POM and LEO roll on the floor with LEO on top.)*

MFALME

You idiots help him!

(SIMIYU and JOMO misunderstand and begin to attack POM.)

MFALME

(Furious) Idiots!

SIMIYU and JOMO

(Jumping to attention.) Yes sir!

MFALME

I said help Pom!

(SIMIYU and JOMO struggle LEO away from POM, even though LEO is much stronger than the two.)

POM

(Composing himself as HE rises.) It's the truth anyway.

INKHO

(Breaking down.) Are you accusing me of prostitution...incest with my own son?

POM

(Correcting.) Your son? Eh, eh. No. You are mistaken, my dear. Your **step**-son. Get it right!

(LEO is burning with rage but the GUARDS manage to restrain him.)

MFALME

Remove him!

(SIMIYU and JOMO let go of LEO and mistakenly grab POM and make to throw him out.)

MFALME

You idiots, use your brains! *(THEY release POM, still confused, and grab LEO. MFALME turns on INKHO.)* Woman you are a disgrace! *(HE slaps her and roughs her up. INKHO falls to the floor and POM kicks her. MFALME looks at him and then roughly pulls her to her feet and begins again.)* I never wish to see you again, you whore!

(INKHO can bear it no longer and tears away. SHE weeps uncontrollably, running from the room. POM and MFALME chase after her.)

MFALME

Wait woman! I am yet to teach you a lesson!

(From off, INKHO'S weeping degenerates into screams. Then silence as the lights are restored. KETO and MFALME are alone on stage.)

KETO

Do you believe me now?

MFALME

It cannot be. Pom is not a liar. Pom has never lied to me. He is my cousin. My number one advisor and most loyal of all! He would drink my urine as tea if it so pleased me.

KETO

He is braced to destroy your home and you.

MFALME

(Unconvinced, as much because of what it means if he were wrong.) I need better ways to inflict torture on Inkhokhotsazana and tame those rowdy women. Those are the answers I want, Keto. Not justifications and self-pities.

KETO

Brenda, your own daughter, born in the wilderness of banishment is already 10 years old and...she was born without the services of a mid-wife...

MFALME

Leo's daughter, Keto. The son I bred bore a daughter to my wife.

KETO

You should see her. How she resembles you...in manners as well as features. She is unmistakably the product of your loins.

MFALME

(Exiting in icy protest.) I won't have anymore of this. I need tangible answers. Not endless confusion and empty rhetoric from disgruntled elements.

KETO

(Laughing.) The gap between the wise and the foolish has no solution because the two can never be mixed in the same cup. Explosive, you know...Gossip is sweet, especially when it concerns the rich and famous. Oh, you think men don't envy this monopoly of women? Then why do they watch football games and read newspapers, especially the gutter press, all their days...? *(From off, GLORIA screams as she is being lashed. This frightens KETO.)* I swear, I don't know what is happening now. This has taken me off guard and was not part of my story. I don't really know what to make of it! Allow me to take refuge and watch from a distance. But don't fight!

(Lights down.)

ACT II, SCENE TWO

(Lights rise on MFALME'S chambers where MFALME sits pensively as a group of DANCERS performs to music in front of him. GLORIA'S screams continue from off where she is enduring a beating by the GUARDS. At times the screams subside only to rise again in sharp cries. MFALME stares into space amidst the eerie conflict of dancing and beatings.)

MFALME

Jomo!

(GLORIA'S screams disintegrate into whimpers as JOMO enters.)

JOMO

Saya!

MFALME

That's enough. No more beating. Bring her in.

JOMO

Who, saya? Pom?

MFALME

Fool! The Journalist.

JOMO

Which one?

MFALME

(Annoyed.) Jomo! Who are you interrogating, you idiot?

JOMO

(Scared) At your service, saya.

(JOMO exits and returns with SIMIYU leading a blindfolded, gagged and cuffed GLORIA in bloodstained torn clothing. JOMO motions for the DANCERS to exit and the music fades out.)

MFALME

Remove the blindfold and untie her.

SIMIYU

(To GLORIA.) Remove your blindfold, woman! It's Mfalme's order!

GLORIA

You must untie my hands, first.

(JOMO chuckles.)

MFALME

Remove her blindfold, you idiot! And then untie her hands!

SIMIYU

Saya!

(SIMIYU unties GLORIA'S hands and removes her blindfold. When she looks at MFALME, she screams. SIMIYU exits.)

MFLAME

Woman, I thought I warned you against interfering with my affairs. *(GLORIA responds only with silence.)* I am talking to you, Gloria. *(GLORIA stares at MFALME.)* Good, very good. I'm talking to you and all you do is stare through me like I am some kind of ghost.

GLORIA

I want to return to my country. What more do you need of me?

MFALME

I give orders, my beautiful one (*stroking her chin with a fake smile*) and you will obey! (*MFALME pulls a magazine from inside his jacket, and opens it to a page, shoving it forcefully in her face.*) What's this? Eh? Hey! I asked you a question, woman of the media? (*GLORIA refuses to respond. MFALME pours a drink and offers it to GLORIA.*) Look here, it is in your best interest to cooperate. (*GLORIA refuses the drink.*)

GLORIA

You are a disgrace!

MFLAME

You are an impostor; heh, I thought we might make a good couple. But no. Jomo get me my royal switch!

JOMO

But she is already beaten, saya...

MFALME

Do as I say, Jomo! (*JOMO exits.*) You are a good journalist. But if you meddle in my affairs...I'll kill you...you mess with my family...I'll kill you...Accuracy, fairness, objectivity...Why...

GLORIA

All those reports are true, the true image of the rogue person you are. Give it up Mfalme...you have lost the battle ...the world already knows that you are evil...a terrorist...

(*JOMO enters and gives MFALME the cane. MFALME whips GLORIA until she drops and writhes in pain*)

GLORIA

I hate you!

MFALME

And I love you. That's why I must beat you. Books of wisdom say whoever loves his daughter disciplines her.

GLORIA

You should rot in hell!

MFALME

No one is allowed to see Inkhokhotsazana without permission. How did you get to her? How did you take these photos? (*Slams magazine against her shoulder.*)

GLORIA

Leave me alone, you egocentric animal!

MFALME

Eh...mmmh! I ask you a question and all you tell me is 'leave me alone.' Hmmm.
You...very nice.

GLORIA

Inkhokhotsazana must have been forced at gun point to sleep with a beast like you.

(MAFALME postures as "a beast" and approaches GLORIA aggressively.)

MFALME

Gloria...you're gorgeous...Oh my!

GLORIA

Your wife rots in prison and you turn your attentions on me? I am not
Inkhokhotsazana!

MFALME

Let's forget the past ...like lovers...this is our world. Drop that woman off it!

GLORIA

The cries of Inkhokhotsazana engulf your country in darkness...

MFALME

(Strokes GLORIA; she wards him off.) You have such silky skin.

GLORIA

How elated my soul shouts for success in keeping his majesty in want...

MFALME

You will marry me, Gloria. My wife betrayed me...

GLORIA

Inkhokhotsazana's love does you best and you failed her.

MFALME

Stop torturing me, Gloria! History has no relevance to me...

GLORIA

To sit on the throne and have your head at rest.

MFALME

That woman is a traitor, Gloria...

GLORIA

While you mix cupid's concoction of love your love languishes near death with your child close to her breast.

MFALME

(Angrily storms out on Gloria.) That's enough, woman! Enough! *(Gloria sobs.)*

(Lights dim.)

(KETO enters. He winks, cries and laughs hysterically before disappearing into the shadows.)

(Lights out.)

ACT II, SCENE THREE

(Lights rise on POM alone in MFALME'S chambers.)

POM

(To himself.) Very good...this one...or this one... *(Comparing two seats.)* I hate the waiting. It all stinks of fowl! How is a man supposed to live life to the fullest? Money, women and power! *(He starts a war chant and as if fighting MFALME with a knife, wrestles him to the ground. He takes aim for the fatal blow.)* You idiot... from today...I shall take over, okay? Very smart. You won't budge ...for now... *(Moving closer)* I am not joking, man! I am dead serious! You hear me? Dead serious, like sweet death itself. Good! Let's be civil, now. Just turn over your... I'll blow out your brains then you'll stumble out and die. *(POM sits comfortably on the MFALME'S throne.)* Long live your Excellency, Honorable Pom! .King of democracy and justice...affirmative action and rule of law, *(Laughs)*, and henceforth husband to my queen, Inkhokhotsazana. I told you it won't be too long. Come to me girl. What are you doing with that impotent skunk? Women, you know what your tragedy is...too loyal. Too soft! Why can't a man have his cake and eat it, too? *(Rising.)* Poor Inkhokhotsazana, angelic beauty...drawing all men to the poison ivy of her love. I would have made you happier than that clown. But you chose him because of his money and influence. How vulgar. Rot in jail! Rot till you rot no more, my love. You were once mine. Have you forgotten? Love of my youth...But you are still mine...when I become King, you will come running to me...You will die for Pom... *(JOMO and SIMIYU enter for their routine security checks. On finding POM, they quickly retreat but he has seen them.)* You village imbeciles!

JOMO and SIMIYU

(THEY halt, bumping into one another.) At your service, Pom!

POM

Call me “Honorable Pom.”

JOMO and SIMIYU

Honorable Pom.

POM

Did your fat, illiterate mothers teach you the basic motor-skill of knocking before entering...?

SIMIYU

(Laughing.) You think it is basic? We could not afford old engines to knock!

JOMO

Saya, our house had no door...and there was no need of knocking since we all came in and left at the same time...

POM

Shut up! What a waste of time, space and energy. One day I’ll serve you as a meal to the royal dogs...Now, what do you want?

JOMO

Security checks, horrible saya!

SIMIYU

Yes...check for ghosts...demons...danger...terrorist and crime scenes, saya.

POM

Fools...

JOMO

Full? Not empty?

POM

Say, “I am a fool...”

JOMO and SIMIYU

You are a fool!

POM

Not me! Say, “You are a fool.”

JOMO and SIMIYU

Not me! You are a fool!

POM

(Annoyed.) You think you’re clever, eh-eh. Now repeat, “We are fools!”

JOMO and SIMIYU

We are fools, saya!

POM

“We are big, blind fools headed to hell!”

JOMO and SIMIYU

We are big, blind fools headed to hell!

POM

Now, kiss my feet!

JOMO and SIMIYU

Now, kiss my feet.

POM

Do it, you fools! Now! Or I’ll slice the lips off your face.

(JOMO and SIMIYU scramble to kiss POM’S feet just as MFALME’S SON, LEO, enters. LEO glares at POM with disgust.)

LEO

(Mockingly.) Finally, we meet again. I hoped I was coming for your funeral.

POM

(To Jomo.) Who let this imbecile in? I thought you were under orders not to let anyone in?

JOMO

He just passed...What! Where did he pass through?

POM

Arrest him now!

LEO

If you touch me...I’ll blow out your brains...You’ve never seen the likes of the wrath of a wounded lion!

JOMO

Not me, saya! You arrest him!

LEO

Get out of here. Both of you. This is no concern of yours...

(JOMO and SIMIYU exit.)

POM

And how did you get past the border into the country? I thought you were banished?

LEO

A child needs no permission to enter his father's home.

POM

So, the gods of the earth assist mankind! Do some people never learn?

LEO

Where is my father?

POM

What do you want of him, you traitor?

LEO

None of your business. Where is he?

POM

Very wrong. You were disowned. By your father. By the State.

POM

I see you have not changed. Still the low-life scum of the earth scoundrel that you were during my youth.

POM

Don't waste your Harvard jargon here, adulterer.

LEO

I have no need for mindless banter, where's my father?

(MFALME enters.)

MFALME

I am here...After all these years you have the nerve to show your face here! You thought wrong!

LEO

Father! Still as stubborn as ever!

MFALME

I should have castrated you back then.

POM

Correction. You should have shot him back then.

MFALME

Pom, keep out of this.

LEO

Father...

MFALME

I am not your father...I am your rival...and the catch is your step-mum. Get out of my sight! Now!

POM

This is madness, saya. This vagabond steps in here after all this time and makes a mockery of your Highness...

MFALME

Pom...shut up!

LEO

Father...I won't mince words with you...I have something for you...It could solve this case...

POM

What case?

LEO

(LEO gives MFALME a small recording device.) Listen to it, Father.

POM

Enough of your games!

MFLAME

You have nothing I want.

LEO

Listen! It is for you. For your honor. For your sanity. It is the truth!

This is Not the End of the Play

Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes