

THE GOVERNOR OF OUR TIME

BY

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**A play submitted in partial fulfillment for the degree of Master of Arts in Literature at the
University of Nairobi,**

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DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has not been submitted for a degree in any other University.

Candidate Gandhi Furaha Samuel

Signature:

Date:

This project has been submitted for examination with our approval as University supervisors

1st Supervisor Prof. Ciarunji Chesaina

Signature:

Date:

2nd Supervisor: Dr. Waigwa Wachira

Signature:

Date:

DEDICATION

To my wife Winnie.

And children Sifa, and Sophie:

Your understanding and sacrifice cannot be fully recompensated.

To

My father Kitsao and mother Kabibi:

Your love and patience is a source of inspiration.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.

My sincere gratitude is to all those who encouraged me to do this project. More notably to Prof. Ciarunji Chesaina and Dr. Waigwa Wachira (my supervisors) who apart from expressing great confidence in my ability, taught me to work within tight but appreciable deadlines; to Prof. Hellen Mwanzi and Prof. Henry Indangasi, for giving a nod to the initial rough concept that I presented to them.

I would not forget my classmates for their encouraging comments during and after the presentation of the proposal. Your comments have bolstered my confidence.

Finally, to all theatre lovers and literary critics I have written this piece always with you in my mind.

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THE GOVERNOR OF OUR TIME

A play by

Gandi F Samuel

Characters

<u>Mm'bosi:</u>	The governor of Tsiirya
Mrs. Mm'bosi:	His wife
Zungu:	The Governor's son
Jilosi:	Minister of finance, industry and development
Patience:	His wife
Doctor Ironess :	Lady minister of gender and culture
Binyumba:	Minister home affairs
Mwanze:	Minister foreign affairs
Kabuche :	A young traditional dancer
Kithure:	His father
Luwa :	Zungu's fiancée
A woman:	Liquor vendor
Lako	} village clowns
Langu:	
Teacher-Local teacher	
Mrezi:	His wife
Dancers	
Villagers	
Police	
Chief	
Guest 1& Guest2:	Foreign explorers

Synopsis

At a time when a new discovery of oil in the Southern part of his state spells a brighter future and a turning point in the middle of second decades in power, *the governor of our time* has to deal with a tribal revolt in the area where the deposits of the black gold lie, he has to stump out corruption and political witch hunting that is threatening to tear his cabinet right in the middle; and as if that is not enough in his in -tray, he stumbles upon a rare spectacle of young talent and beauty, on his visit to the villages in the South, a talented beauty that explodes his passions and stretches his moral integrity to the limit even threatening to tear up his family. Here is the story of a governor whose deep humility, sense of responsibility and cultural conservatism, ironically, conspire to ruin him.

The Governor of Our Time is a play exploring the problems that hinder National unity, tracing the root to bad leadership, and personal prejudice. It offers the proposition that the root cause of bad leadership is when leaders are drawn away from their responsibilities, by personal desires, by allowing distractions from their core responsibilities. The basic idea is that the root of bad leadership is a tainted moral integrity, and the inability to keep kin and cronies in check.

Prologue:

(At the teacher's compound, in front of a makeshift structure clearly marked Cultural Discrimination Victims' Rescue Centre. A group of girls is lined up for rehearsals of a traditional dance under the supervision of the teacher and his wife. The teacher after a thorough inspection realizes one girl is missing.)

Teacher: Where is Kabuche? *(Silence)* I am talking to you people where is the soloist? *(Silence)* Well, well, you won't speak to me *(to the audience)*. You see, this is why I always find it tricky to deal with girls, one minute you understand them, the next, they are completely strangers. *(to the girls)*. Okay, okay girls, for the last time, where is Kabuche?

Girls: *(In a chorus)* In the dormitory!

Teacher: In the dormitory, what is she doing there, and did I have to squeeze it out of you?

(The girls look at each other, then one girl fearfully)

Girl: She is un ..unwell!

Teacher: Unwell? But she was well...very well ...

(The teacher's wife emerging from the makeshift dormitory).

Mrezi: Mwanga, Mwanga, Mr, Mwanga, my husband, you need a little more understanding and patience with the girl's; when they tell you Kabuche is unwell, then she is unwell, I am well aware of it myself, you may be a good dance trainer, but management of the affairs of these girl needs another pair of hands....

Teacher: Well, well, I see: give your wife an inch and he will take an el. I allowed you into this, but now you have even become a doctor; well good doctor, maybe I don't know how to handle girls, but let me tell you what I know about talent: without practice, talent is dead! besides, I know something more about this particular group of girls, they are disadvantaged in so many other ways and their talent is the only hope for them, if they sleep on it, they are as well as rolling up the mat of hope, and I cannot allow that to happen!

Mrezi: But you can't drive them like donkeys either!

Teacher: The labor of practice, is like the labor of child birth, it is soon forgotten upon Success.

Mrezi: But it's only for today's rehearsal, surely all these girls are as good as Kabuche, this rehearsal can go on without her...

Teacher: Exactly, you should let everyone know that I will not let pride lead us into a pit!

We are a team and that is what we shall remain, I will take that late excuse, but next time I should be informed early. Neima take Kabuche's part...(*Neima leads the dancers*).

Soloist: Mjeni loka, mwenye mudzi ahole.

Guest come, so the host lives

All: Mjeni loka, mwenye mudzi a hole.

Guest come, so the host lives

Soloist: Mjeni ni Baraka, ujeni ni theri

A guest is a blessing, a visit peace

All: Ujeni ni Baraka, ujeni ni theri.

A guest is a blessing, a visit peace

Soloist: Mwanemwane ragonya nyoka asena!

Alone, alone, the snakes were
killed, friends!

All: Mwanemwane ragonya nyoka asena.....

Alone, alone the snakes died, friends!

Teacher :(*Stop! Suddenly*) You should not look gloomy, now that was wonderful, clap for
Yourselves. And now is the time for the good news...

All: good news?

Teacher: Yes, the chief was here this morning and he gave me this, (*he produces a letter from his trousers pocket*) it is an invitation for us to perform before the governor who is soon visiting our village, what a rare occasion! (*cheers*) You can now understand my strictness...and the call to practice even harder. One more thing, we'll break for lunch but when we come back I want you to invest your energies around the waist, it is the asset of any African dance; when well used it pays aesthetic dividends, is that alright!

All: Yes, Sir!

Teacher: Rip Rip!

All: Hurray!

Teacher: Dismissed.

(*exit*)

ACT ONE: SCENE ONE

(A well furnished office in the governor's palace, there is a table at the head of which sits the governor and his four Ministers, two sitting on either side of the table. a meeting is in progress).

Mm'bosi : I declare this meeting officially opened; could the secretary please take us through the agenda.

Secretary: Actually, this meeting has, but, only one agendum; the awarding of the contract of the oil exploration in the Southern Province of our state, which I think the honorable minister here (*indicates where Jilosiis*) will elaborate.

Jilosi : Ah yes, thank you, Mr. Secretary. Ee gently men

Dr. Irones: I am not a gently man

Jilosi : Oh! You See, gently men ,and now lady here, what I mean is when you have only one lady in a governing council like this, you find it easier to round her off to the nearest gender; but my apologies all the same.

Dr. Ironess: I demand that the apology be specifically directed to me, since I am the aggrieved party; and it comes from the heart not the lips...

Mm'bosi: I think that's an admissible request, Mr. Jilosi please....

Jilosi (*Scornfully with a side look*) you are free to read, my heart, but allow me the use of my lips, to say (*quietly*) I am sorry.

Governr: Now let's stick to the business of the day, Lady Ironess, I hope you are fully compensated. Minister!

Jilosi : Yes, gently....yes, as I was saying your governorship, the zeal of our youthful department of geology, coupled with a team of young engineers from our state university, has started to be rewarded(*nods of approval*)A team of student engineers have stumbled on, what they believe, are huge signs of the presence of a treasure enough to wake our slumbering economy .They are not yet sure what exactly it is, oil or natural gas, but no one expects them to be anyway,...Sure I mean, we don't expect any high degree of accuracy of their prediction, they being a bunch of curious students probably scraping the surface of soil, as children usually do, and knowing how meager our investment is in research and exploration.....

Dr Ironess : We should all bear the burden of shame which should be as heavy as our 40 years of independence.

Governor: We are crawling, but we'll soon walk.

Jilosi In any case, your governorship, is it befitting of a politician, and a governing council member, to admit a weakness, which indirectly could be finger pointing at your governorship. Collective responsibility demands that we be....

Lady Ironess: (*Emphatically*) Sincere! I should be embarrassed if I should apologies for that.

Governor: Honorable members of the council, wear your coats of decorum that duty at such deliberations demands of you!

Binyumba: It used to be that, our culture did not allow a woman to talk parallel with a man, let alone interrupt him; but like the weather, everything seems to be changing fast; I am worried whether the reins of our culture are in the right hands.

Dr. Ironess: Yes, the reins have changed and the horses too. But change is not even the word, progress is, or better still the horses are galloping.

Governor: Order members, I am on the chair still. Honorable Jilosi our eyes I mean ears are all yours. Rail us where we got derailed

Jilosi: (*Unfolding a map*)Yes, I was saying a team of young researchers, I admit, I am a little proud of them, so young and so poorly equipped, are confident that there is buried in the bowels of the pastoral land in the south, just between the pastoral and the mixed farming communities, it has to be between there and not far from our vast game reserve; there or there about, underneath the soil, how they could have done it with such meager equipment and budget I don't know, I hope nobody is pulling a fast one on us, on me I mean, though I twice checked the calendar to ensure it was not 1st April, all I am saying is we need to counter check their findings by awarding a bigger, and real company, a contract to do a full exploration. It is not in my veins to trust the throbbing hearts of such younger men, withered at the dawn of their life by the prospect of joblessness. Their curiosity might be aroused by anything.... You all know what marasmus does to innocent babies...we all prospect to prosper, but let's prosper properly.

Dr. Ironess: Oh how I wish the girls and boys were able to dig it out by themselves! The burden of unemployment currently breaking our backs would dissolve off our backs. It's a pity now we have to think foreign...

Binyumba: I should think we have always been thinking foreign, even acting foreign; maybe all that we need to do this time is to hasten our thinking and acting

Dr. Ironess: It would sicken me if it were something to do with culture, which falls directly under my docket; with culture you need to be wary of some things foreign; even so I am beginning to get nauseated.

Jilosi: Women! Why should such a factual matter as this make you sick?

Dr. Ironess: Nothing really. I think it is just that my mind and heart are handcuffed, I think that's so with other women, well of course I am not theorizing; I did a bit of psychology, but I can't brag I am omniscient; something I am certain about men- because I've treated quite a handful-is that their hearts and minds, most often, or always are divorced; wouldn't you agree your governorship?

Mm'bosi: Lady Minister, I understand your zeal at articulating issues in your docket, but why don't we stick to the agenda? It seems we need to swallow our pride, and, as the Hon. Minister here was saying act foreign. What are the options?

Jilosi: I have done an advanced out sourcing, of course as the minister in charge of finance and development, but it remains the mandate of this council to make the last decision. Let me give the financial analysis and terms of each.....

Drironess: And I will give a character analysis of the nations from which the companies

Mwanze: How is that relevant? In any case shouldn't I be the one to give such an analysis, being constantly in contact with the international world?

Dr Ironess: There is something tied with culture in business; culture and gender falls under my docket!

Mwanze: (*Sarcastically*) Looking at the way you are dressed, and the artificiality of your make up, what dregs of culture could you be championing?

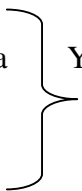
Dr. Ironess: (*Taking items from her hand bag, combs her hair and re-does her lipstick and powder, then admires herself in a hand mirror*) You won't admit it but I know you wouldn't hesitate to have me as your third wife; I should parade you to

tourists as a cultural artifact; how you have clung, like a bat, to the African bull mentality!

Mwanze: That's an insult, your governorship; the minister should be reprimanded, or else be relieved of her duty for unbecoming conduct! She can't despise our values and purport to champion our culture!

DrIroness: Bah! Lust and greed have never been African values. Besides, culture does not have to stand still and watch as time overtakes it. See, wouldn't you agree I am dark and lovely, yet modestly African?

Mwanze
Binyumba
jilosi



Your governorship!

Dr. Ironess: I see, truth is always an insult to some people. Isn't it true that you have two wives and would not hesitate to add a third, it's all over your face even if your lips won't confess it ; the eyes are the windows to the soul.

Mm'bosi: Silence! I shall not tolerate any more bickering! Not when such a matter as serious as the prosperity of our state is at stake; minister get us on track where before we were detracted.

Jilosi: I have with me an American company: Yankees- oil Inc; a Canadian company: Amuoroil International; a Chinese company: Hwangnoil, and a Japanese company Sikuzoshi Gas International....

Dr. Ironess: The Americans are a good father if a strict disciplinarian is your type. Quite biblical too-they won't spare the rod and spoil the child; they may ask you to clean your room, but before you remember where you last kept the broom, they'll be doing it on your behalf....

Jilosi: Can't you let me finish? And would you shun talk that may twist our arms diplomatically?

Dr. Ironess: Companies are as human as the humans running them. The Chinese for example, are as swift as the hawk; give them a contract at dawn and they will claw it before

you even yawn, and at breakfast they will have moved in, by lunch time you will be eating the proceeds of your project ...I may not be accurate but that is my fair enough assessment..

Mwanze: Your governorship! This talk will undress us diplomatically....

Dr.Irones: But this is a confidential cabinet meeting: who is the Judas among us? Must we look over our shoulders even in the confines of our own chambers, oh yes I see it's not yet Uhuru....eh...

Jilosi: Your excellence, if this continues...

Dr.Ironess: If this continueswhat? Are you threatening his governorship with a walk out? Quite college culture, I see. All I am doing is to supply the human side of the deal before I let you do your specialty, which most often is your worst too: finance. I stress, business culture is as good a factor to consider in awarding such a contract as national culture, and culture is human.

Mm'bosi: Silence! How the media would make a feast out of this melodrama! (*Firmly*)I will not be governor, if I be referee over this insensitivity; the matter of prosperity of our state shall not be turned into fodder for personal vendetta.

Dr. Ironess: Indeed, your governorship, I will not be a minister of culture if I lock out truth from such deliberations. Allow me to finish my assessment. The Canadians are stealthy, even mysterious; but they are friendly, I like their soap operas; as for the Japanese, besides their hi-tech and love of sea crawling delicacies, their martial arts films are a bit too violent for my type; my children love them though, it gives me a heck as a mother..I now zip my mouth (*runs a finger across her mouth, the men, apparently relieved breathe a sigh of relief*) of course, we are not dealing with national character; individual companies have their own unique business cultures.

Jilosi: The Americans, I mean Yankees- oil are offering to do it at 90percent for the first 10 year; 80 percent for the next 20 years, and 50 percent for the rest of the time the project is viable.

Mm'bosi: And the Chinese?

Jilosi: 70 percent for the first ten years,60 percent for the next 20years and 50 percent for the rest of the life of the project. The Canadians and the Japanese are tied at 70

percent for the first 10 years, 60 percent for the next 20 years and 40 percent for foreseeable future.

Mm'bosi: And how far is the foreseeable future?

Jilosi: We can't be sure. The research just expressed a long stretch of hope. A century or two...or there about.

Dr. Ironess: You see, I knew it! We have a tie, that's where my character analysis comes in handy...

Jilosi(*ignoring her*) All contracts include eviction, relocation and full compensation of the current occupiers of the land.

Dr. Ironess: Eviction! Eviction? Did I hear right? I hope it won't come to violence, isn't it so Mr. Home Affairs?

Jilosi: The project must be done, and it can't be done when the land is occupied. This project is so important to *us*!

Mwanze: I can't be so sure about the necessity of eviction, or the eruption of violence; the land in that particular area is mainly occupied by poor peasants: mixed farmers and pastoralists, further in the South. We know their bloody scary history; the area is volatile, even without the intrusion of this project; but the pastoralists may not be much of a problem, they being absent here and present there all the time; but the mixed farmers, their subsistence economy being a little stable, may prove a little difficult. If I know our people well, and I think I should; the intimacy with which they hold land, then we better prepare for a little running after, or chasing, or eviction or violence or all the above.

Dr. Ironess: Oh how terrible!

Mm'bosi: We have not decided on the company we are awarding the contract.

Jilosi: I go with the Americans.

Dr. Ironess: The Canadians

Mwanze: The Canadians tied with the Japs, so you need to be more specific! I am for the Japs!

Dr. Ironess: Only one company gets the contract, the friendly one!

Mwanze: The Chinese, swiftness has never been a sin to me.

Binyumba: He who marries my mother is my father.

Jilosi: Your governorship it looks like you are the tie breaker!

Mm'bosi: My choice should be the choice of the people, since I am governor of all. As you noticed in the terms laid down in the contracts of this project, this project will be more beneficial to the younger generation, our posterity, as for us old fogies, we will be relish to the maggots in our eternal vaults by the time the full harvest is in. The best futuristic offer is between the Japanese and the Canadians.....

Dr. Ironess: Yes I knew it.....I and his governorship always think alike!

Mwanze: Yes, I knew it too; he will pick the Japs, men always think alike!

Mm'bosi: Actually, I go for the Canadians: I could do with a Businessman, but I could do a little more with a friend.

Dr. Ironess: Cheers...Cheers!

Mm'bosi: On the matter of the relocation of our people-I don't think any evictions will be necessary, and certainly, violence is out of the question: it shouldn't even be in our dictionaries. A lot of blood has been poured over petty tribal trifles in that area; oh how absurdly lowly our thinking is! We triumphed over the Goliaths of racism and colonialism, only to cannibalize ourselves over life's trifles; the colonist must be dead drunk with our ridicule. And to think I can be governor at such a time, and watch over such madness! Even in a violent movie there might be a love scene or two, but it is not so with our life! I will take it upon myself to make the life of our people one long movie with only one scene: the love scene. Dr. Ironess, organize my visit to the region, I have to assure and re- assure the people that I am, because they are!

Dr. Ironess: {

Mwanze : {

Binyumba: { Excellent, your Excellence!

Jilosi : {

Mm'bosi: The meeting is adjourned.

Mwanze
binyumba } Excellent, your Excellence!

(Exit, first, Binyumba, then Mwanze; Dr. Ironess and Jilosi linger awkwardly until the governor asks)

Mm' bosi: Is anything the matter?

(Dr. Ironess and Jilosi stare at each other disdainfully, then Dr. Ironess picks her hand bag and leaves, still staring fiercely at Jilosi. The governor and Jilosi remain at the same place).

Jilosi: *(Rubbing the palms of his hands against each other, in front of his mouth, and with a slight bow)* Your governorship, I had just a small matter if you would just lend me your ear, but for a minute.

Mm'bosi: Oh really? I hope it's not about your young ewe this time; it has eaten much of our time, lately.

Jilosi: Of course not about my daughter, though if your hounds had nostrils, the game *would* be in their mouths by now! *(Laughs, then suddenly drops voice)*
Your governorship, you know some things are not for many ears! Many cooks spoil the broth; you saw how noisy the meeting was! I knew it was hard to reach a good decision, what with the likes of Dr. Ironess parroting so! But, what can you expect from people who do not get enough of their husbands, any way!

Mm'bosi: Mr. Jilosi, would you, please, make your point!

Jilosi: Yes, sir! About the contract, actually, there is an offer by another company, which I kept quiet about, it's a disaster to discuss good business deals with people who don't have business blood in their veins. Now this company, the nationality is not even important, but the offer will blow any sensible business person off their heads: where as all other terms are as in the Canadians' offer, this particular company, and you know it was I who first floated the idea, is offering 10percent shares for the governor, a housing estate to be built in a location of your choice on the globe; and on top of it, your governorship, if I remember well, did I hear you say you honeymooned in Zanzibar thirty years ago? You can have a second one in

Hawaii, if you just scribble your signature here... (*Giving him a pen and indicating where to sign*).

Mm'bosi: And what are they offering for the deal maker?

Jilosi : Nothing much, I am your servant, your governorship, and I am content just being a Lazarus, too. Besides, wasn't it Chinua Achebe's Unoka, who said: 'The sun will shine on those who are standing before it shines on those kneeling under them?'

Mm'bosi: Ha haha Unoka! Your memory is so sharp! *Things fall Apart!* You still recall it 40 or so years down the line! But how could you forget, we used to call you Unoka, didn't we!

Jilosi: And I would reply, Okonkwo! You would Unoka me and I would Okonkwo you...

Mm'bosi: Now please Unoka... its time you went to see your wife, I hope your daughter is doing fine, too.

Jilosi: So well, I should be counting cows, soon! (*Laughs loudly, then, as he exits Mm'bosi follows him with his eyes*).

Mm'bosi: Just as shrewd as he was at High School. Habit is an old bad master. Ah, but, Dr. Ironess' words: the reins have changed and the horses too; they are galloping aren't they? (*Exits into one of the rooms*)

ACT ONE: SCENE TWO

(*An open field, behind which is a dilapidated primary school. There is a decorated tent in which are chairs and tables arranged in such a way that the anticipation of an important guest is obvious. Enter Dr. Ironess looking anxious.*)

Dr. ironess: The people have not arrived yet. I hope they are coming anyway. No surprises so far, though. The dais is equally empty. But, where is the chief? Where is security? (*Enter four police officers, briskly, carrying guns*). Hey, you four, take positions strategically. Stop looking so gloomy, too, otherwise you will scare the people away and the governor will have no one to address. Hold your guns as walking sticks, too: I don't expect them to be of any ordinary use. Do not shoot unless it is absolutely necessary, and even then, shoot in the air! These people are

unarmed..... (*The villagers begin to trickle in some carrying spears, others machetes and others, bows and arrows, and a handful, carrying clubs*).

Police officer 1: Oh! My my my, mama, these people are heavily armed!

Dr.Ironess: (*Panicky*) Stop mamaring me! When did I mother you? If you don't have breath enough to call me honorable minister for... (*Aside but almost loud enough for the officer to here*) presently I am manning two, oh three portfolios: gender and culture; security, and protocol. It wouldn't be so, but the man in charge of security was down again with his chronic flu: as is usual when the governor is guest to these hot spots. (*To officer one*) I emphasize, the people are unarmed, whatever is in their hands, or hidden in their garments is either ornamental, or part of their working implements; hasn't it crossed your mind that you are among mixed farmers and pastoralists?

P. Officer1: (*Saluting, stumping foot heavily*) Yes, sir . . . madam!

Dr. Ironess: You may as well call me sir! I am presently manning a man's portfolio. (*Almost to herself*) Unfortunately, he signed for the allowances in advance. The last time he was host to that, his chronic flu, he was spotted touring the State Park with his wife; it is his favorite spot when out with his family. Poor Petit, she has complained to me that by now she could tour the whole park with her eyes closed.

Police Officer2: Ma...sir! When shall it be absolutely necessary? (*Aside*) How do I begin to call a woman, sir! Well, with a little disgust I could, an ugly woman, even for the irony of it, but for such an attractive, and respectable lady...

Dr. Ironess: To do what?

Police Officer2: To shoot, I mean!

Dr. Ironess: Use your sixth sense, it won't matter if you use your seventh, (*Quietly*) though I doubt if you have any at all;(emphatically) this is a peace meeting and any shooting will be contrary to the theme. (*She walks about, staring in the crowd*)They look quite harmless to me or else they are perfect candidates for Nollywood; I hope nobody will provoke or incite them. Now where is the teacher? He assured me that the dancers would be here by now, if they are not I should be damned: the governor has a soft spot for art and particularly traditional music. (*Enter teacher breathless*).

Teacher: I am sorry madam, I am late but I can explain....

Dr. Ironess: Are the dancers ready?

Teacher: Yes madam!

Dr. Ironess: Now you can explain. *(Aside)* Why should I believe him anyway? He can't confess he was having a quick one.

Teacher: I don't drink madam!

Dr. ironess: But who said you do?

Teacher: I thought your nostrils picked the smell of the local brew; well, that stench is the natural odor of the crowd; it could be more putrid, you are lucky the day is still young! Still, you can verify, my breath is fresh... *(Moving near her and attempting to breathe heavily out. Dr. Ironess backs away!)*

Dr. Ironess: No more explanations, at least you made it, but where is the chief? *(Enter the chief, also anxious. He comes and salutes madam and remains stiff.)*

Teacher: My explanation is still necessary madam. It is me who needs it more than you. The dancers, madam, are mainly recycled material, former students of this school...

Dr. Ironess: You mean they are now in secondary school or college?

Teacher: I mean....drop outs!

Dr.Ironess: Drop outs? How could that be when basic education is free?

Teacher: In these, our regions, free can be more expensive, in any case, madam, money cannot be the problem since it is already scarce.

Dr.Ironess: But, can they dance?! That's what matters for now. Write the rest as a petition and hand it over to menow go, have them ready, the governor will be here any time now*(Noticing the chief who has been stiff all that time!)*

Chief: *(Saluting again, and again)* Sorry Madam, though you could as well be sorry for me! I had to go all round the villages to round up these few people you can see here. This area is vast! You can take my petition for the subdivision of this location!

Dr.Ironess: Excuse taken! Now take over security and don't take advantage of the absence of your real boss; I can boss around equally well.

(She checks to ensure that everything is okay. The villagers have been trickling in).

Now good citizens let us rise up for the governor! Let's clap as he comes.....

(The governor and his delegation walk briskly in and take their seats at the dais amid ululations).

Dr.Ironess: And now, let's have the dancers come in; our culture is our pride; and it should remain so, long after I leave the ministry. *(Aside)* Now where is this teacher; he looks quite slippery to me. He should not let me down, for this is now where I ought to shine.

(A group of young female dancers bursts into song from one part of the arena and come dancing in. They enter the centre stage and dance facing the dais, then turn to face the people. The dance should be well choreographed, and in the final stages the lead dancer should be left on stage, she should go take the governors hand, bring him on stage and dance with him. All this while the governor shows he is completely taken in by the dance! The prowess of the young dancer is crucial to this scene. The crowd cheers up as the governor joins the dancers on stage. And when the dance is over....)

Dr. Ironess: A big applause for the dancers, more applause for our governor! How proud I am I to be the minister of culture and gender! How humbled am I to be witness to such great cultural art and talent, and to serve under a governor who is so responsive to the beauty of art! Applause for our governor! How humbled am I to learn that here in this village is hidden such indigenous artistic treasure! Why have I let the haste or the hectic city life corrupt my soul; when a gulp of fresh air crowned with such harmony; such rhythm...

Mm'bosi: Lady Ironess!

Dr.Ironess: Yes, Your Governorship!

Mmbosi: I know it is not yet speech time. But lest my merrier heart woos my mind to forget this: let me say it now.

(Silence)

I order that this girl and her troupe be my guests at the State Palace. She that charms a king clears her way to greatness...It is an emphatic request Lady

Ironess. Such talent must be put into good use; my guests should cherish this artistry.

Dr. Ironess. Request granted. Your governorship! Isn't that so citizens?

(Applause from the crowd. Only the teacher is apparently not pleased). And now it is speech time, I emphasize: the theme of this meeting is peace! The word peace may be repeated in each of a speaker's sentence, if the craftiness of the speaker's repertoire can allow! Keep tribal prejudice out! Now, I call upon the chief!

Chief: Your governorship sir, distinguished guests, my mothers and fathers, I am your son, though I have been treated as a dog: my barking is cherished as long as I am not in the main house. My word is taken for granted, unless it is a word in aid of the re-union of a couple that has quarreled or fought after a drinking spree.....I have had to extend my house to accommodate wives running away from their husbands' battering, I have intervened to save girls from early marriages your governorship; I have sacrificed, too, to unite warring clans, at nobody's appreciation. Today your governorship, sir, if your visit can help bring peace, and I know it will, although sanity is more desirable, you will also help me and my council of elders do what a chief should actually do! Our wealth too, has become our curse. Your governorship let your visit be the lamb by which the demons inciting us against our brothers and sisters are exorcised. Let peace prevail now! Let's sing the song of peace, and of unity and of love, in place of the dirges that we have been singing, let peace prevail!

All : Let peace prevail!

Chief: Let peace prevail!

All: Let peace prevail!

Chief: The dog, after wagging its tail, can now coil it between its legs in the presence of its Master! I now call upon the governor. *(Mm'bosi stands t address the crowd).*

Mm'bosi: The wine the chief has put in our bags is so fresh, that had I no new wine to add to the bags, I would simply keep quiet and get drunk with the chant: let peace prevail. Where peace is dinning; its brother unity is a natural guest, and love is their host; and harmony is the song they sing upon the

sumptuousness of their ideas; what follows naturally are the mirthful stories of prosperity they whisper in each other's ears. My people, we're one, and we are blessed to be so. Our unity was demonstrated in the performance by these young dancers: the whining of the female *chapuo*, was happily answered by the boom of the male drum, and the baby born was the exhilarating performance that has just melted our hearts; the truth of my belief has been confirmed; science appeals to our reason and breeds prosperity; but the true measure of total prosperity is in the quality and appreciation of a societies art! My visit has been initiated by a matter of science; which has set hope a glow; but hasn't this performance set my heart on fire? The marriage of Science and Art thrives on peace and unity; and this is a mystery indeed! The off springs of such a marriage shall, indeed, bath in prosperity! Now, I will begin with the science part. (*Analogously*) Let me ask this (and I know it is within the practice of our culture even if in its whispered darkness), isn't it better to allow a brother make children for you than die from embarrassment of impotence! Of what use is a blunt sword, lying new and idle in its sheath? Where is the pride of lying with a fertile virgin, if you can't make her produce? Yet this is what we do, living on this particular piece of land. A treasure lies deep in the bowels of this land but the potency of our naked eyes is limited and denies us full prosperity. Perhaps our impotence will be cured one day, but for now, in matters of mining we are impotent! Fortunately, we glory in the thickness of blood, but today the ocean joins the world in more mutually enriching relationships; a friend in deed and with a need is indeed the friend we need, indeed, for our needs. Fellow countrymen, I understand the vexation of a young man from whose claws his newly married maiden is snatched; a man with ten wives would not willingly give away the first however old she is and however cold she has grown. But this is so because he feels, lawfully, man enough to be the husband (owner) of all his wives, and he glories in the value she, the first wife, has brought him, even if just being the breaker of his riotous youth.

Fellow countrymen, I know our land, and I say our land because what is yours is mine, and what is mine is yours--our new dispensation makes thicker our relations even more than our blood could; our sense of neighborhood has extended beyond our next door occupant, the blood of our tribes has trickled and dissolved into one mighty river....our land need not be like the woman beside whom we have lain all our life; this parcel of land is more of our mother; it holds the breasts from which we, all as children, ought to suck; a man can have as many wives, but can any have as many mothers? If you agree that it is our mother from whom we all ought to suckle, then may I announce that deep in the bowels of this land lies a fortune which can transform our lives; but we can't dig it out by ourselves, so we have sought friends who are able to do it. They cannot do it, however, while we are here occupying the land; I have taken the trouble to come to explain this myself because I understand the danger of over relying on messengers, who could be easily distracted by the beauty of your daughters and forget or distort the message! I and my council assure those who will be moved that they will get land of same size elsewhere, on top of which will be a pat on the back that will help them resettle. That, I can assure, will be done and it is for the benefit of all of us! Let peace prevail! Let the rain of prosperity rain!

(Scattered applause) Now, I can take one or two questions. *(Silence, the crowd murmurs; then one drunken man comes forward, the crowd tries to restrain him).*

Kithure: Thank you, who? Well, I don't know whether to call you father or my son, or my in law...but,.. but our people like to refer to people they don't know well, to be safe, they call them father in-law or son....well whichever; I followed your speech with these*(indicating the ears)* my two, I followed. I know better than these people ...because I know they want to ask what I will ask, but will ask when you are gone;

People: Stop him now....

Kithure: Let me lance the boil. You say you will give us land elsewhere, but this land was given by our ancestor, my great grandfather was born here, married here and died

here, we buried him here, his son and the father of his son and their fathers; you are our leader but not directly our ancestor,

A man in the crowd: Stop him now, what nonsense is he saying? He is drunk, that's all.

Kithure:not in our lineage, how then will you give us land? Secondly, (*indicating by folding a finger*) where, I hear, we are going if indeed it is truly there, how shall we relate with the animals? I love game meat, but how do we live with hyenas and lions, they don't even make tasty game meat!

Mm'bosi: Thank you, my in-law, I see you are old enough to be my in-law and your wisdom outstrips your hangovers; well, for the first question, you are right I am not a blood relation to you, yet our new constitution bonds us better than what our blood could do; and through it we have more entitlements than our ancestors could bestow us, so you chose and made me your father, well in spite of my age; be assured then that I will see to it that you have your entitlement; as for the second, let me say that going by what we earn from animals, I think man and animal can be better mutual friends than man and man; luckily even the biggest of animals can be tamed by man's wit; I assure you your safety. Now please we really need to stop there, so we can have time to prepare for the expected prosperity. Let peace and prosperity prevail! (*As the people leave the teacher is seen whispering something in Dr. Ironess' ear*).

ACT ONE: SCENE THREE

[*Same place, later that afternoon. Elders have a meeting*]

Elder 1: I salute you, Elders of the Council!

Elders: We salute you, regent of our ancestors!

Elders 1: A guest is a blessing to the host. We have heard the howling of the wind that has blown the governor our way; good wind brings showers, and good wind also helps the women sort the maize before pounding it in the mortar, but not so with a hurricane. I lay upon this council, the words of the governor for your sorting.

Elder 2: Fellow Elders, I heard the governor plainly with my two. He has a way with words. I should be anxious if he had the opportunity to greet my younger wife on her way to the river. He has a gourd of honey in one hand, but I could see the handcuffs in the other. The stinging bee is also the maker of the honey. I would fight a duel with the man who snatches my first wife in spite of her wrinkles; how am I expected to part with my land, which I am only but a ring in the chain of ancestors, in whose honor I am guarding it? Besides, you know my household: four wives and ten children,--and it reached my ear yester night that the youngest wife has not seen her moon---their hearts, I mean my wives' and children's and mine are tied, as with an umbilical cord, to this land.

Elder 3: (*Mwalimu's father*) Fellow council members, I have seen many suns rise and many suns set than most of you here. My eyes have lost their youthful sharpness but even in their old age, have noticed that the wind is no longer our good messenger, rain is no longer her message, and when it is, it is the message of death. May I ask fellow elders: which of us here has his barns full of harvest? Whose cow or goat has recently born twins? Who, in the recent years, and Malimwengu you can testify to this, which of you has, in the recent years, received full dowry from his daughter's marriage in livestock walking on their four legs? Aren't we even lucky if they are married at all? You talk of a duel over your first wife, and my blood boils because it is a warrior's blood. My grandfather fought in Mekatilili's army against the Whiteman; my father fought in the second world war, and upon his return he was among the pioneers that started the struggle against the Whiteman, for our independence. I was only ten years old when I got involved the struggle for independence. My mother had given me food to take to my father in the forest, posing as an innocent cattle herder. I took the food to my father for I knew their hide out, but before he had eaten it, I heard the gunshots and I, immediately, started running without looking back. I was young and swift so, I dodged behind the trunks of the big *mvule* trees, and into the thick forest. Unfortunately or fortunately, I fell into a ditch in which was a large gaping hole.

That is how the pursuers lost sight of me. But not before I had heard my father's melancholic cry: "They have killed me, son."(*Pause*)Those words. . . I can't forget them, set the fire of anger in me and I volunteered from that moment to join the struggle in full swing. I had the anger and hate that is the right horse on which revenge rides, but it was also legitimate anger and hatred. What was I fighting for? This land. What were we fighting for? This, our virgin land. But we had genuine anger, hatred, resolve, purpose and a genuine enemy. The colonist was our common legitimate enemy .We were isolated tribes then but united in our anger and resolve. But now independence has handcuffed us! Is not the chief the son of Katimbo? Doesn't he work for the governor whom he brought here this afternoon? Did we not anoint the governor to be our elder recently? Just the other day we adorned him with our traditional attire! Didn't he just look like our ancestors! Why then do we disagree with him when he comes to offer us another land and money and promise of a part in a treasure we cannot see? We can talk of duels as if we haven't poured enough blood! *Uhuru* made us one, so we are one!

Elder 3: Fellow elders, I respect the views of my old man here but even Mekatilili herself would not have shown such cowardice. The worrier's blood in you is definitely getting cold! Would you slaughter a hen for the man who is in bed with your younger wife?

Elder4: Definitely not! Yet our traditions have clear rules of dealing with such a man! Isn't he fined a cow and a few gourds of palm wine? (*Glances*)Doesn't the wife remain yours? Our ancestors were wise. Divorce is a tiresome process.

Elder3: True, but I am a farmer and cannot leave pregnant grain stalks unattended.

Elders4: I have a herd of goats and cows; I cannot live with them so near hyenas and lions.....if I take the governor offer.....

Elder2: Yet it is a strange hand that slaps its face; individualism finished the snakes. The leprosy of the coward is being a little more cautious; He takes off before sizing up his enemy. But a little caution and a little patience has always rewarded the great warrior! Especially, if patience is spent on observation.

Fellow elders, it may have passed your eyes but isn't it recently that we buried Mabandauha the great witch doctor? Hadn't he complained, before his death, that

women should be stopped from their invasion of our sacred forests? The trees that make our herbs have fed the fires on which our food is cooked... Didn't Lake and Langu dig his grave recently? In short, we no longer have herbs enough to concoct potent oaths, and the powerful administrator of such oaths is dead! (*Enter Lake and Langu dressed in rags.*)

Lake: Ehe! You appreciate the beauty and depth of the graves that we dig, but you don't invite us to your meetings!

Langu: And who can dispute that I am the greatest hunter and palm wine tapper? Haven't I fed this village with the most delicious rats; and graced every social event with the best wine? But now you can't invite me to a meeting!

Elder1: Where are these women coming from?

Lake: Eeh. You dare call us women as if you have stones between your legs! Continue abusing us if your body is made of iron! But if it is as mine is, it will go down here. And you will need me.

Langu: We will make his grave shallow..... (*They laugh*) or else he be fed to the hyenas (*They laugh. Enter woman carrying a ground of palm wine*)

Elder1: Woman who invited you to this meeting? Can't you see this is a men's affair? You can't sell your beer here?

Woman: But it is not even on sale! I am under instruction to give it to all for free.

Elder: For free? (*Enter Kithure father of dancer. He is leading a goat, a rope around its neck and the other end in his hand*)

Kithure: I learnt of this meeting and told my heart: 'Kithure, why don't you bless your elders with something small, having been so blessed yourself?' My heart is a leaping with joy! Oh how true this saying: you know where you are coming from but not where you are going. Who would have guessed? Fellow elders, take this goat and drink the palm wine and celebrate with me!

Elder2: Celebrate with you?

Kithure: Were your eyes closed? Wasn't it this afternoon that my daughter set the heart of the governor a glow? Now didn't he say he was my in-law? He has a son, and I know he will not resist the charm of my daughter. But it doesn't matter to me, whether he or his son is marrying her! I can do with any as son in-law! But, tell

me fellow elders, who do you think can be a better so in law, the father or the son? Lake and Langu, let the shakers roll. (*Lake and Langu produce and start playing the shakers which were hidden in there coats' pockets and begin to sing*) Elders, I have bought, this (*indicates the goats*).I have not yet even paid for it, Marume is such a kind man; but isn't credit as good as buying? And this wine is yours, too! It is not our way to let a man celebrate such an occasion alone! Let me ask fellow elders, how much dowry should I ask of the governor, you know times have changed! Should I take the same amount if the father is the son in law, and not his son? I need your advice.

Elder1: This is a council of elders meeting. We are in the middle of discussing Serious matters!

Elder2: Let me remind him that the governor took his daughter and our daughters too, I don't expect him to pay dowry for all our girls. Furthermore, he only joked that his son may be interested in Kabuche otherwise the troupe was invited only to entertain the governor's guests.

Elder3: Is he celebrating now, when he beat his wife when she bore a girl in her first pregnancy; and did he not send her away when she got no other child?

Kithure: You are opening the door to the secrets of my family. Gossiper! I respected you elders, bought a goat and wine – free, free! And all I get are insults? Lake, Langu and you (*indicating the woman*) follow me! We shall walk round the village and I am sure we can find people who can appreciate my generosity, and we can find people who are thirsty enough to eat the goat and drink the beer! (*Exit Kithure, woman, Lake and Langu dancing.*)

Elder1: Times have really changed, are these people we now call men? Let's conclude the matter we were discussing. Elders, we have heard two sides. We must now reach a conclusion!

Elder2: I'll stick to my land! Fight for the land.

Elder3: My fellow elders, (*he indicates elder 1*) He is our leader; we respect him! He called this meeting and we obeyed! Not because we could not defy his orders, but because we know our tradition! Time has changed. We have a governor, now! We have laws, too!

Elder1: Let's take a vote, as is our custom. (*The vote comes out 3 to 1 only elder 3 is against*). We have reached an agreement, we are all bound by it, our land is ours and everything under it! (*They all exist, and leave only elder three in contemplative moves; he carries his chair by this shoulder walks it about this stage and exist. Later that evening outside the teacher's house, an iron roofed structure, clay bricks*)

Elder3: (*Knocking at the door*) Mwalimu, mwalimu, mwalimu.....

Teacher: (*From inside*) Yes father!

Elder3: Come out, son!

Teacher: It is already night father, what matter disturbs you?

Elder3: When you come out you will know! (*Teacher comes out, father already on his own chair. Teacher comes out.*)

Elder3: (*Whispering*) Son, you are the lamp in this village, shine your light, and help your people...

Teacher: I don't understand.

Elder 3: The elders have decided to defy the governor's orders, they won't leave the land! They are planning a revolt. Young men will be wasted in a senseless war; do something, son!

Teacher: But how could they? The governor spoke so well; everybody stands to gain from his offer!

Elder3: They say they have heard that song before! They have been bitten once!

Teacher: They cannot! The law is clear. The state has an upper hand in a matter of such great benefit to all.

Elder3: Tell them that my son!

Teacher: They won't listen to me. They have the might of all the other youth at their beck. Besides, my elder brother is more suited to intervene, he is a good lawyer.

Elder3: Don't remind me of that prodigal son. He is married to the city; you are the nearest stick that can kill the snake.

Teacher: Father, the elders and the youth will never listen to me.

Elder3: Didn't they teach you anything at school? Do it now. (*He leaves hurriedly*).

Teacher: (*Contemplatively*) Eh! See what I have become: a traveler at a cross roads, at night. I go right and I am assaulted by a swarm of bees. I go left; I wear the tag of an accomplice in treason! tr....reason, tr....reason, reason, reason, who can reason over this? Yes I would cling, but to the school, go wherever it goes, I would cling to it. But what can I do about this matter? (*Thoughtfully*)Dr. Ironess! Yes Dr. Ironess. The petition. (*Mimicking*) “Write down the rest as petition.” Well, I can write; that is one thing they taught me so well at school, I must tell her, too, that the dancers need to come back to school. That is my fight that is my battle.

(*exits*)

ACT TWO SCENE ONE:

(The governor's residence: a palatial house, well furnished sitting room adjacent of which is a large open arena, where guests can be entertained, the governor is seated on a sofa, and in the background the sound of drums can be heard. Meanwhile, a male and female servant is moving about arranging things.)

Mm'bosi: *(To the male servant)* Give me something to drink. *(The servant goes and mixes some juices and gives the governor who declines.)*

Mmbosi: No, don't give me the usual drink. Give me something that will enliven my nerves.

And would you please put under your mentorship the young soloist, she could do well as my special waitress! It would make her stay here more adventurous.

(The male servant winks at the female servant, obeys the governor's order and brings him something alcoholic the governor sighs with pleasure; as the servants exit they pass down stage talking).

Male servant: You cannot hide a heart in merriment; I have not known him to take alcohol.

Female servant: The freshness of the open country air must have woken up some part of him that was in slumber land. I have heard from the kitchen staff that he has ordered red roast meat too, and rice, he has been on green vegetables for the time I have known him!

Male servant: The country side has its own charms; I should take you out there one of these days.

Female servant: Tired lie! I have always accepted your offer but you keep on postponing it. Perhaps I should mount your back and refuse to come down, if that will teach you to honor a promise *(They laugh and exit. On the stage the governor stands up glass in hand. He occasionally takes a sip as he paces about the stage.)*

Mm'bosi: The sound of those drums *(Indicating the direction of the arena where the dancers are rehearsing)* revives my old heart to its youthfulness. What a double treasure, turns up to work in my favor! The promise of prosperity from the discovery of that black gold in the South is a deserved boon to the economy and my reign, which were beginning to tire. The slumping economy was giving

arrows to my opponents, giving bullets to my enemies. But now all that will be history, I shall not have any more worries .No more nightmares over a slumping economy! And then as a bonus, the trip to that land of treasure acquaints me with such rare artistry! Young innocent, raw art; how art and science can conspire to prosper a man! I am a well watered seedling: I have not a choice, but to prosper in all my faculties. *(Then thoughtfully)*.This young girl dancer is art at its greatest manifestation. The innocence in the eyes, the grace of her moves, her subtle but firm command of her dancing troupe.....she is sure a reincarnation of Scheherazade! The beauty of her art has parted the blinds of my conscience and her beautiful face peers in at my unguarded heart! How I wish I were in my riotous youth! But, now, I am so imprisoned by my age and office. I must strive to deny her artistry more space in my heart, lest I'm swept off, and the carpet slips off from under my feet. *(A little more thoughtfully)*I need to hatch a scheme by which I will love and have her yet maintain my integrity. *(Thoughtfully)* Ah yes! My son! My son must come to my aid! Ah but this other matter! How life is an alloy of happiness and sadness such that a tear should fall at the crescendo of man's mirth. This matter of my wife.....

(Enter Doctor Ironess)

Dr.Ironness: Congratulation, your governorship. That was a great speech you gave the Villagers. They must be firmly assured, now, that they have a leader who Cares for them.....

Mm`bosi: I wouldn't be who I' am, were it not for good advisors like you!

Dr.Ironess I always tell people a politician without a good speech is like beer without alcohol! You drink it only to have a stomach upset!

Mm`bosi: Cheers, Dr. Ironess, have a drink, *(Calls servant)* Give Dr. Ironess something. We are in a celebratory mood! *(Then suddenly seems to remember something and changes mood)* How merriment comes but in bouts; and then convulses at its most vivacious moment!

Dr.Ironess; Happiness convulses? I don't quite get you your governorship!

Mm`bosi: But you know well what I mean Madam Ironess. It is in your hands and confidence the matter that ails my heart and withers the full blossom of my joy!

Dr. Ironess: *(Thoughtfully)*. Oh yes! It has also eaten into my very heart. Your happiness is like a lamp that lights the chambers of all our hearts, once it is off, our hearts also darken promptly. Your wife will wake up to reality... Yes, she will one of these days!

Mm`bosi: I grow cold from the memory. I've been cold for the last four years, since the incident... it was such a terrible thing! *(Flash back: Mrs. Mm`bosi appears from the house, an elegantly dressed lady. There is a car outside her house)*.

Mrs. Mm`bosi: *(Calling)* Zungu, Zungu, hurry! And where is the driver?

Mm`bosi: *(Appearing from the house)* I'll do the driving, this is a private family outing.

Mrs. Mm`bosi: Dear, but you have servants at your beck! Besides, you haven't done it for a long time.....

Mm`bosi: Can't I do a small responsibility for my family? Can't I be just husband and father for once! Oh, the shackles of my office!

Mrs. Mm`bosi: Ok. I know your adamancy. You look great today. *(Making his collar)* You are such a wonderful husband. I know you can be a good driver too. The game park is not too far away, anyway; only that it is hilly out there. Just be careful. *(They kiss and get into the car. The car leaves, Mrs. Mm`bosi takes out a camera and prepares to take pictures; Zungu is excited by the variety of scenery and animals. The family is happy. Mrs. Mm`bosi stops the car at times, commands her husband to reverse so that she can take picture. They climb a steep hilly. As the car is descending a steep hill.....)*.

Mrs Mm`bosi: *(Shouts: stop! Mm`bosi brakes suddenly and the Car rolls. Mm`bosi and Dr. Ironess on stage again)*

Mm`bosi: That's how it happened. Luckily my security detail was tracking us. I had a fractured leg; my wife sustained head injuries and has been in the ICU ever since.... my son broke his two legs! But, I shouldn't even be telling you this, Dr. Ironess. She is under your care!

Dr. Ironess: That's right, we have been doing all we can. I was there this morning. We can only hope.....

Mm`bosi: It pains me to see her in so much pain..... she was such a lively woman. How fate changes the course of one's life!

Dr.Ironess: We are doing everything we can. (*Then seeking to distract the governor from his sorrowful mood*) Your governorship, I had a little matter to ask of you.

Mm`bosi: Just say it, Dr. Ironess... You know I can't deny you a thing!

Dr.Ironess: Oh. It is nothing really. It is just a petition from the teacher who trained the dancers.

Mm`bosi: Oh yes, something to do with his promotion I suppose.....

Dr.Ironess: Not really! About the school he teaches. If the people have to move, as it is the plan, he fears the school will be demolished, and no new one has been put up where they are relocating! Besides, he fears for the future of the dancers. They dropped out of school and keeping them here, they being so young...well, that is his opinion anyway, though mine was not very far from his, might be scandalous. I was of the opinion that we could get professional performers.....

Mm`bosi: I understand your motherly concerns honorable Dr.Ironess, but you will concur with me that it is such a rare occasion when the beauty of innocence converges with such youthful grace in a meeting where the only agenda is art. Art is a product of genuine emotions, a meeting in the hall of the soul. That genuineness is what the so called professional performers that we politicians bribe to entertain us do not import on stage....

Dr. Ironess: Oh yes! I understand really, we pay them only to send us to sleep in the middle of the day! Costly pretenders! It is only that I am struck by the curiosity in the faces of these young dancers. They seem to thirst for something more...

Mm`bosi: And they will get it! Dr.Ironess, these girls are on their way to greatness! They only need someone who has a keen interest in them and their art. The village can only retard them!

Dr. Ironess: Thank you, your governorship! And now the teacher has also sent me another letter whose message is a bit sour.

Mmbosi: Yes!

Dr. Ironess: The villagers are said to be planning a revolt?

Mmbosi:- Revolt? But why? There is no reason for that!

Dr. Ironess: Here is the letter; read it for yourself. (*Hands over the letter*)
(*Enter Jilosi. Obviously Dr.Ironess is not amused by his intrusion*).

Jalosi: They are coming.....

Mmbosi: Who?

Jalosi: The delegation from the exploration company.

Mmbosi: You mean the Canadians?

Jilosi: No! The ones I told you about. (*Then he notices Dr.Ironess for the first time and changes topic!*) No! What I meant was that... that was a great speech you gave in the village. Shepherd's staff, instead of tear gas, and I loved this imagery: the land is our mother not our wife...very fitting images, you took them by their own horns in their own language, too.

Mm'bosi: You should hasten the matter of their relocation and compensation.

Jilosi: Count it done! Ah, oh I hear the sounds of the traditional drums and dancers in the arena. That was an excellent troupe of dancers you got yourself, too! Young but so marvelously talented. That village is blessed!

Dr.Ironess: It is part of our State, we all are blessed!

Jilosi: (*To Dr. Ironess*). Yes, and I opine that as the minister of culture, you need to be more responsible, as far as promoting cultural talent is...

Dr.Ironess: (*Not amused*) I know my work.

(*Enter Mwanze the minister for home affairs*)

Mwanze: Oh! How a peoples' prosperity comes even in the most ungodly forms. Who would have guessed we, now, may have to expand our prisons too. Blessings and curses seem to be our twins in this era. And, what ridiculous crimes man is capable of at the prospect of wealth!

Jilosi: Crime? Curses and blessings? What is this you are somnambulating about?

Mwanze: The pains of labor have a foot ahead of the birth of the baby in the Southern Village. Black gold, black curses, black crimes, too.

Mm'bosi: The revolt! Dr. Ironess was telling me about

Mwanze: Revolt? No, Nobody could contemplate such serious treason! Not after your own visit and such a wonderful speech. It is the brutality of the ridiculous crimes that threatens the space in our prisons .A man is now languishing in the cells--poor creatures they'll have to squeeze their like young rats in a hole, and for what! He stabbed his creditor, for demanding a payment of his dues. A goat which the

culprit borrowed, from the deceased.... No he is not dead yet, but he is as good as dead; it turns out the criminal was in a celebratory mood after your visit; he is also expectant of a big dowry from his in-laws... it is ridiculous actually....because he says the in-laws are a governor or his son..... Think of how ridiculously imaginative criminals become at the prospect of wealth. The man's name is Ki..something, they said he was Kit..thure I think, yes, that is it , Kithure, whatever that means!(*The governor is clearly astonished; Jilosi and Mwanze laugh derisively until they notice how serious the governor is. The young dancer who has up to now been elevated to working in the governors chambers hears her father's name and drops a glass and leaves the room, sadly.*)

Mm`bosi: (*To Jilosi and Mwanze*) The fuel of man's happiness is the ashes of his sorrows. The triumph of good is sweeter when the battle was with evil. This piece of news needs not be the poisonous arrow that pierces our merrier hearts. Gentlemen, we have some work to do, if to justify the warmth our bottoms are warming our seats with. Hon. Jilosi, you need to hasten the compensation and relocation programme. That should give the people a little real wealth and save them the strain of fantastic crimes! But, for now, it seems we are a crowd and a good crowd is a good audience; I order a special rehearsal and more drinks too! And my son should see this! (*Enter son, Zungu*) Oh how the two of us think alike. Zungu, shake the hands of these great men, of course, you have met them already, but, who can get tired of shaking the hand of a great man?(*Zungu shakes their hands*) Now sit down.(*Calling loudly in the direction of the arena*) may the dancers come in.....)

(*The dancers enter and begin dancing but Kabuche is missing. The governor is seen straining his neck looking here and there. When the first song is done...*)

Jilosi: This is a rare exhibition of our cultural art; Madam Ironess needs to capitalize on this!

Mwanze: That village is a treasure pot: nature, science and art brewed in the same pot. Wealth and beauty is a potent beer. We should soon be drunk with prosperity!

Jilosi: Hadn't we any work to do to make prosperity a reality, we would, but sit and let this beautiful distraction tease our softer hearts. But now, I must really leave your governorship.

Mwanze: I too must leave, otherwise crime and decay may be our prosperity.....

Mm`bosi: It's a prosperous governor who has such duty conscious servants. I am a little disappointed though, that you are thrilled by such a half thrilling exhibition. The main dancer is not even among them! While the others leave, you (*indicating his son*) can watch a full performance, since you are at home your youthful heart can do with a little more teasing. (*He laughs, then to one of the dancers*) Where is the girl? (*Enter Kabuche, looking a little sad but fighting it off*) May the drums roll again! (*The dancers put up another show! It's clear that Kabuche is not doing her best. When the dance is over the governor orders the dancers out*)

Mm`bosi: (*Clearly pleased*) Tell me where you last saw such beauty, such grace, such throbbing and rhythm woven into such harmony; such youthful vigor put into good use, yielding such a mirthfully alluring conspiracy. If man can find pleasure even in groaning due to his sickness can't his heart be completely loosened in the magnificence of such an artful moment? Were you a lawyer in defense of our culture, wouldn't you be richer with such a treasure of evidence?

Zungu: Well, the greatest risk to the cook of every good relish is a little more salt, or a little less of it. The cook is guilty of a little less salt in this case.....

Mm`bosi: But you relished the relish all the same! I know...

Zungu: I am suppressing the blossom of a full appetite, though, knowing such cultural treasures are on their journey to the museum and history books. Luckily, I have not had to suffer the disease of cultural erosion, my immunization was effective! You brought me up in this city.

Mmbosi: Yet, let us be honest, didn't something stir in you? Didn't the dancers, especially the lead dancer stir some part of you?

Zungu: Well, some part of me! Father, I was not a sleep! And some parts of me are awake all the time. In fact something stirred in me but in the fragments of my memory, the memory of the village. I was young when we left the village; all I can

remember is growing up in this city and you being the governor, my father my governor.

Mm`bosi: But tell me honestly son, man to man talk, isn't the girl beautiful?

Zungu: I was taught that beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder!

Mm`bosi: You don't really have to be bookish! Being a university graduate does not mean being a world encyclopedia as well. It's worthy, at the right moment, just to lay down the shield of westernization aside and just be a man!

Zungu: I am caught up in this maze of your insinuations.

Mm`bosi: Listen son, (*quietly*), this girl has the aura, the purity and innocence in the eyes, her rare talent is an ornament that completes her beauty. Listen, take her out among the green bushes along the ravine in the outskirts of this palace, observe her keenly perhaps your youthful eyes will pore into depths which my old eyes see only a mirage.....who knows the city may court the village there.....

Zungu: But father.....

Mm`bosi: Come on! Off with the heifer! Proud is the owner of the bull that breaks the fence of his pens and those of neighbors!' Go, woo her and woo her hard! And make me proud. (*He shoos him away Zungu leaves not really pleased. The governor laughs proudly*). The hounds are set on the scent, but the game is their masters'.....the mystery of love: one can even love on behalf of another.

Zungu: (*Down stage on he goes out, imitating his father*) "Woo her and woo her hard," as if the mouth can woo in the absence of the heart.

(*Exits Zungu*)

ACT TWO: SCENE TWO

(*The outskirts of the governor's palace, an extension of the grounds of the governors parlor; there's a burbling stream, and the occasional singing of two birds; the singing is such that when one bird calls the other answers. Enter Zungu trailed by Kabuche, Zungu is showing her around!*)

Zungu: These trees were planted, yet how natural the scenery is! It is the closest we city dwellers can get to the allure of wilderness.

Kabuche: Yet, the eye of the wild hunter is not fooled by the natural mask of this scenery.

Zungu: Yet, any sophisticated creature cannot but cherish such beauty, hence long to make an abode in the proximity of such a beautiful place.....

Kabuche: Yet, the homeliness of such an abode would not match the homeliness of home .I miss the openness of the village ,its sounds ,its people ,my mother ,and brothers --as if one can talk of one's real mother and brothers in a place where everybody is mother, father and brother.....

Zungu: Aren't you happy to reside in the governor's residence?

Kabuche : Why not? But, it is not the residence that I would say makes me happy; I brought with me my happiness, it resides in my heart; and my heart does not reside in the coconut tree, like the monkey's!

Zungu: (*Aside*)Let me try this line. (*Clears his throat.*)This forest makes me feel like a wild game hunter. I see the trophy, but it is dodging my arrows .I'm anxious my hunt will come to naught!

Kabuche: It's the trophy that is more anxious that your poisonous arrows may only injure it instead of killing it; city people are poor hunters!

Zungu: (*Aside*) She has a quiver of words, too. I must be tactful, even if for my father's sake.....(*changing the subject*) You look so naturally at ease when dancing, you could well be a magician, the way you interpret the mysterious language of those drums. (*Feigning pleasure*) You rode me by the horns throughout the performance or else, I was a wild puppet and you the puppeteer! What more, you are Scheherazade's twin in the eyes of my father; I hope it will not be my head for John the Baptist's in Herode's platter!

Kabuche: If your head were worth the trouble it would not be in your possession by now. But, I have never ridden horses at such ease; or puppeteered so willing puppets, at half effort, I wasn't at my best today!

Zungu: Really!

Kabuche: Something is gnawing at my heart.

Zungu: (*Aside*) I hope that thing is not me! All the same, I have to change tact again. Let me begin from the beginning. (*To Kabuche*).I 'm sorry for being so discourteous but tell me what your name is!

Kabuche: Kabuche, it means pampered baby girl. My mother`s idea. Oh how I miss her! She taught me how to dance before my teacher polished us!

Zungu: Your teacher!

Kabuche: Mr. Mwanga! He coached our traditional dance group and specifically prepared us to perform before the governor; he is such a wonderful teacher!

Zungu: Then you are still in school?

Kabuche: I am not in school; I dropped or let`s say I left; no the school spewed us out, no I mean, my father caused me to stop learning, all of us in the troupe are out. Mr. Mwanga is training us at a rescue center.

Zungu: But I don`t understand! At what stage did you drop out?

Kabuche: Std. 6. That is seven years ago I was 10, then.

Zungu: (*Aside*) My God! Shall I be saddled with an academic dwarf? Does my father know this? (*To the girl*) But, why couldn`t you go back to school?

Kabuche: It`s a long story! (*hesitating*) my father married me off to an old man, a distant relative I only knew as my grandfather, in payment of a debt; for three years I lived like a child of the old man`s eldest wife; then one day , this eldest wife, whom I was fondly referring to as mother, ushered me into the old man`s hut. Up till then, I had been referring to the old man as father. Now, she asked me to sweep the hut clean, she told me to prepare a special meal, that evening, and informed me that I would know my husband that night. It is then that I learnt I was married.....I was dazed with fear, anxiety, and horror! I cried at the prospect of the unknown. But when the tears dried up, the reality of the situation still rudely stared at me! I stopped crying and started thinking. I noticed that firewood was running out, so I excused myself to go to the bush behind the hut to look for more! I sneaked behind the bush and never looked back! A few meters from the hut, and whom do I meet to my utter shock, the old man from a drinking spree! He must have sensed I was escaping. He took me by hand, back to his home. (*Too sad to continue coherently*). I had lost an opportunity and with it a future. The thunderbolt struck at dawn and with it I was painfully ushered into womanhood! And the dreams of school were that night devoured by the ogre to which I was bequeathed as a younger wife. I didn`t stop dreaming though! I was

heartbroken, but the urge to escape was only fired up. And one day, I took that giant step of courage and at around 9.00pm I was knocking at teacher Mwanga's door after walking 12 kilometers! His wife was also very understanding; they encouraged me to go back to school; which I did but, three months later, it turned out, I was pregnant; I heard to drop out. The curtain of hope had fallen and with it the end of my school life. At thirteen, and pregnant! The prospect of motherhood was scary to me.... (*sobs*)

Zungu: (*Aside*) Could this still be happening in our time? Oh father, how could you be so distracted into such ignorance! So she is a mother! (*To the girl*) It couldn't have happened!

Kabuche: I would not believe it, too, had it not happened to me! (*sobs*) Unfortunately, the baby died at the sixth month and I had to undergo an operation for it to be removed. I survived, miraculously, but could not go back to school. I couldn't go to my parents, either, for fear they would take me back to the man. Mr. Mwanga and his wife offered to let me stay with them, in collusion with the chief I stayed. Mr. Mwanga and his wife opened a centre for girls like me and those escaping from female circumcision, it is here that he and his wife started honing our dancing skills.

Zungu: It's unbelievable that such primitive cultural practices are still happening! (*Aside*) She could be lying for all I know, she seems mischievous enough to concoct a pitiful story to win the governors son! What a fool I am making of myself. (*To Kabuche*) I am sorry! (*Changing the subject to liven her up again*) (*Not convincingly*) But, you are a wonderful dancer! Why don't you try something modern, something more current! I don't...I mean as for me, ten mighty hands may strike at the dead skins of those drums and yet my hair won't stand on end.....

Kabuche: That's is very strange of an indigenous man. In the village, even the stiffest village man rocks at the sound of the African drum and they are helplessly at our beck during each one of our performances.

Zungu: Let us say I am a man with different tastes!

Kabuche: Music resides in my heart. You surprise me though; your father enjoys our performances. He invited us here to entertain his guests. I am made to understand some very important guests are coming! We are to put up our best performance; the best show in defense for our culture!

Zungu: The explorers! He told me a treasure has been found in the village where you came from. A great economy booster that will expand our economy, improve our condition and unite all of our tribes.

Kabuche: I don't fully understand, but all I know is he talked with the elders about something then we danced and the next thing we know we were in a bus, to this place.

Zungu: (*Aside*) I know I should stop this wooing and begin the shooing! But where do I start? (*To the girl*) Listen here girl, if I were you, I would go back to the village andjust go to school.

Kabuche: I'd very much love to! But I can't disobey the governor, he is like a father to me. If he wants us here, I know it's for a good reason....

Zungu: (*Aside*) See! She doesn't understand. It is I who doesn't want you here. That good reason father is keeping you here, I am beginning to feel, is not good to me.... (*Meanwhile, Kabuche has moved a little further to where a bush of flowers has attracted her; she exclaims at the beauty of the flowers!*)

Kabuche: What wonderful flowers! The day's sun has withered their petals yet they have courageously remained bright! (*She moves to pick a flower, then in shock screams*) snake! It is a real snake! (*She runs to Zungu and clings to her in fear! They are face to face in a forced embrace!*) Do something; let us get out of here! Kill it!

Zungu: Kill it? A real snake! Wait a minute! Where is it? (*He moves near the bush of flowers!*) Oh! What a deadly creature in such a wrong place! (*Takes Kabuche by hand and pulls her away!*) Let's get out of here! (*Hand in hand, Kabuche still scared they exit.*)

ACT TWO: SCENE THREE

(Back in the governor's parlor. The governor is seated on a long sofa, sipping a drink. Enter Zungu.)

Mmbosi: Oh, here comes my secret spy; assure me O faithfully hound that the battle is won.

Zungu: It is an omen, father! A bad omen.

Mmbosi: Omen? What are you talking about?

Zungu: The girl! The snake! Father she is blemished, she is not a girl! She is a woman! Father, listen, if I were you, I would send this pack of village girls back to the village, and to school. They will ruin your reputation, keeping them here when they should be in school. You could get professional traditional dancers if your appetite for traditional music is that wild.

Mmbosi: I see, you have become my advisor, too! The hen begot the egg and the egg the chicken! But how fire begets ash! Zungu, I specifically want you to marry this girl!

Zungu: Father, you know I can't, you know I shouldn't and you know I shan't!

Mmbosi: Because you have not thought out well why you should. Listen son, you may glory in the savagery of youth, but the sun is not standing still, if you can't make up your mind now it will be too late.

Zungu: I have long made up my mind, Father. I shall not be yoked with such a primitive girl! What will the world say? Zungu, the young engineer, married a plain village girl, and not even a pure girl but a small village woman. Father, I should die from the ridicule of such a move. I have made up my mind! And you of all people know I've made it up already. I am engaged to Luwa...I am old enough now to make my own decisions!

Mmbosi: Oh, I see you are too old now to be my son, is that what you mean? Everything else I do for you and give you is acceptable but my advice is stale? Oh how every course of my responsibility is barred by obstacles! My sense of love and sense of responsibility are ever the arrows that pierce my heart most fatally. Listen, here, son: marriage is not an assembly of academic degrees, marriage is not a union of power and money and class! Marriage is not just the seed of fondness: love is

fondness, but marriage is more than fondness. Marriage, my son, is a musical dance, a performance whose key ingredient is harmony; each performer genuinely plays his part with genuine commitment, and the reward is emotional, even spiritual satisfaction. Son, this girl may not be educated but she is richer than most educated women. Her beauty and talent are a great source of wealth!

Zungu: Father, I know talent is a rare ability; I don't see what's rare in her dancing!

Mmbosi: Drop the goggles of westernization in both of your eyes, and you will see talent in her. It is not too late for you to learn to dance the African dance as well!

Zungu: Me? To be a traditional dancer?

Mmbosi: We are all traditional dancers in a way; the African drum always has the potency to stir something in us!

Zungu: I have fallen in love already! With Luwa. I can't fall for this unsophisticated girl; furthermore, she is not as innocent as she is; she is not pure! *(Aside)* How do I begin to tell him the whole story?

Mmbosi: Falling in love is a misleading western phrase. We don't fall in love; like I said love is harmony, unity, and understanding! Love is art. You have to be an artist to love! Appreciating beauty is a cognitive affair! Look, think and look again; and love follows like a faithful hound.

Zungu: But, I can't let Luwa down! What will everybody think?

Mmbosi: You know you can't marry that girl.....she is unmarriageable!

Zungu: Unmarriageable, but why?

Mmbosi; *(To audience)* How do I begin to tell him the whole truth? I can't devastate him now with the whole truth! *(To Zungu)* Just know, son, that you can't marry that girl, Luwa. You shouldn't even be intimate with her.

Zungu: Yet, she is the one I love; I can not be a guest where my heart is a stranger. To marry without love is like to Jump off a plane without a parachute; And to marry an impure...

Mmbosi: To marry without sense is to whip one's own heart; infatuation is quick sand on which the edifice of marriage cannot be built. Look son, look for that girl you call your girlfriend and let her know you can't marry her!

Zungu: But why father, won't you let me make my own decision. Why won't you let me decide my own destiny! I am 22 years old now, for your information, and out of college! Besides, it is just old fashioned to be forcing me to marry an impure, primitive girl!

Mmbosi: I am just doing my responsibility! Now go tell her, tell Luwa that you can't marry her!

Zungu: I can't father, I am going to her now, but only to assure her that till death do us part! My love for her is like a flooded river, it knows not the limits of its banks.

(Exit)

(The governor, Mmbosi, remains on stage; he laughs loudly and begins to sip his wine, again)

Mmbosi: Hahaha! *(Imitating Zungu)* "But, father, won't you let me make my own decisions, decide my own destiny? I am 22 years old now for your information and out of college! Besides it is just old fashioned to be forcing me to marry an impure, primitive girl!" Talk of a colonized mind? As if he himself is pure! As if any African can boast of purity! Haven't we all been ravished by westernization? What does he know about decisions and destiny? "Old fashioned", "primitive" the bullets of the bandit that killed our sense of African civilization; we have buried our traditions and with it our sense of civilization; and sense of responsibility! Where children meekly obeyed their parents and observed family etiquette we now have fashion and a rusted sense of civilization; fathers are no longer fathers; children no longer children; the family is broken up and with it the nation; where we had children we now have moths rushing towards, not only into the foreign light but the fire too. But he can't simply marry that girl he calls girlfriend! His marriage to the village girl is too strategic for me. The pivot of my reign and life too. It is such a symbolically portentous wand! With one stroke the two main tribes will be united in life-the poor and the rich; the village will have married the city too, Tradition and modernity would exchange rings! The threat of a revolt in the South will fizzle out; but above all I will be a happier governor and father. My love for traditional art will be quenched; let science prosper us in the mining project in the village, and let art cheer us up in this desolately mundane city! I must find harmony with my self; for truly this girl has struck an old chord

in my heart; my youth is fully awake in me; and were I not imprisoned in the expectations of my position; I would pounce... and pounce hard! But how do I tell my boy the truth? Which purity can he teach me? What hard decisions haven't I taken? Can he talk of purity in her mother's presence? What does he know about his own history? How do I tell him the truth of the secret of our relationship? No, he can't marry Luwa; he cannot when I am alive.....

(Enter Jilosi who hears the last statement)

Jilosi: I am sorry to intrude into my governor's noble thoughts, but I thought this matter is urgent!

Mm`bosi: *(Startled)* What is so urgent?

Jilosi: The visit. The delegation of the explorers. They are coming tomorrow!

Mm`bosi: Oh, you mean the Canadians! How could I forget!

Jilosi: No! Not the Canadians. The ones I told you about.....Okwonko, don't you recall? You were to sign the contract document, but I thought I should invite them anyway! If they miss the tender they could still be content being tourists, or just our guests.

Mm`bosi: But I don't remember signing any document!

Jilosi: Okonkwo! A king's smile is a more genuine signature than some scribbling of ink on paper! You could still sign even in their presence.

Mm`bosi: *(Seriously)* But you know I can't do that, we still would need the signatures of the others!

Jilosi: We may not be able to mine and manufacture our own products, Okwonko; but I don't think it is the same with signatures! *(Laughs.)*

Mm`bosi: *(More sternly)* Stop insulting me with such a childhood pseudonym. It was good to read about and identify with Okwonko, but he may not be the best of African characters. Remember his tragic end! Besides, we are now grown ups Jilosi; we have more serious responsibilities. Childhood rivalries may have fired us up, but things have changed now. You might have gotten away with stealing pens, books and exams in high school but delinquency has to die with childhood; we are now playing on a different stage; a wrong move and the earth below our feet opens up! No, old habits must die! Were you not a friend, and was I not concerned about the

unity of our state, was I not a believer in the power of change, I would fire you on the spot; for attempting to corrupt a loyal state servant! But go now, and do not say I didn't warn you!

Jilosì: (*Surprised at the seriousness. Bows*) Sorry your governorship; but, what do I do with the guests?

Mm`bosi: Like you said, let them come as tourists. They could enjoy a nice performance of our traditional dances! The Canadians are coming, too!

Jilosì: Thank you your governorship! (*Exits but not happy*)
(*Down stage as he goes out*)

Jilosì: (*Imitating Mm`bosi*) "Old habits must die; ha ha ha I see.....the wolves must put off the coat of sheep skin! Or the sheep must wear the wolf skin proper, which is change as well! (*Thinks a little bit*) well, I see (*Quoting and imitating a female voice*) "The reins have changed and the horses too! Better still, the horses are galloping! Change is not even the word; it is progress!" I see... I knew it. Dr. Ironess! The stealthy green Mamba in the grass. I could tell from every one of her moves that she was going to ruin my life. Poison the well for me: but now she has not just poisoned the well! I have drunk of its water and I am ruined irrevocably! She must be taught a lesson!

ACT TWO: SCENE FOUR

(*A well furnished sitting room; framed photos and pictures on the wall imply a well travelled man; everything suggests affluent and dignity. Enter Jilosì with a bottle of champagne.*)

Jilosì: Patience, Pattie...where are you! Let's uncork this champagne and celebrate...Pattie..

Patience: (*From the kitchen*) I am in the Kitchen!

Jilosì: In the kitchen?!

Patience: Yes, in the kitchen!

Jilosì: But why of all places! A minister's wife in the kitchen? Patience, what embarrassing humility! You have servants!

Patience: The house is mine and all the rooms too; I can be anywhere anytime!
It is the beauty of volition!

Jilosi: Well, but what if some oil should spill on your face! Well, I could still love you even with a scar on your face, but, it is not necessary; I wouldn't want you scaring our guests a way like a female ogre!

Patience: Of late, you have not hosted many of them though, I mean guests. They are always keen on the bulge of your pockets. What is the celebration all about?

Jilosi: The maturity of the best laid plans! Some people must know men! I Jilosi, *the* man above men.

Patience: You can't fool anyone though! You don't look that happy! Champagne is not enough to rinse the sorrow of a man!

Jilosi: Sorrows! Listen here dear: obstacles follow a successful man! Triumph comes with every felling of a Goliaths in life; and this kind of triumph makes a man's heart merrier than champagne would. It takes the best laid plans! And any obstacle in the way of the best laid plans must be cleared!

Patience: What are you talking about?

Jilosi: The best laid plans can not be ruined by a woman! Not when the planner is Jilosi: the courageous buffalo bull, of Africa. Patience, I have overcome every obstacle, defied, courageously the tentacles of poverty, escaped from the imprisonment of backwardness; Patience dear, do you know how insulting it is to be bullied by schoolmates; to be called Unoka, the Lazy man? Well I took it positively and here I am! I can now stand every challenge! Clear every obstacle in my way! And I will stop at nothing!

Patience: Sit down and I give you something to eat! You look quite famished and ruffled?

Jilosi: Ruffled and famished? Patience, that's the understatement of the year! I am rattled and threatened! And now this cobra must bite!

Patience: Rattled? Jilosi, be straight with me! Whoever rattled you must be on their way to me, too!

Jilosi: The governor threatened to sack me! But, keep away from this!

Patience : But why!

Jilosi: Patience, are you the only person in Tsiyehu who is behind news! There is a huge treasure of oil in the Southern Province of our state; I am in charge of the whole project, eviction and relocation – I am quite pleased with the plan we have put

with the young lawyer from the village; and the security arrangement; It was not difficult to get the chief on our side! There were a few screams of course, but the village is cleared, eviction done successfully! I go to the governor to remind him to sign the exploration contract documents and what do I get; a threat with the sack! I was shocked! Now, you know what, dear, it is easier to stand such shock if you are threatened by a *real* governor! But, a friend you have known all your life! It comes as really deadly shock! And you know what? The worst part – which may concern you; I heard him, before I went in, telling his son that he cannot marry Luwa-your daughter! My daughter!

Patience: (*Surprised but not shocked*) He cannot marry her?

Jilosi: Yes! Are you not shocked?

Patience: Well you know I was not as enthusiastic as you were from the start, but that does not mean I am not a little surprised. I understand; may be that is why I am not completely surprised! The idea started, exclusively, as a men's affair! And you, two, successfully imparted it into the young hearts! Every time you saw them play together you, especially, reminded them they would be a wonderful couple.

Jilosi: Are you insinuating that you were not for it? And that, perhaps, you are not on my side?

Patience: I was not against it as long as the two youngsters understood what they were getting into! Of late I have observed they don't see each other as often. Childhood fondness does not automatically translate into marriage! But I did not think there was a document to be signed, upon which you could be threatened with the sack!

Jilosi: There was no such document, but it was one of my best laid plans! The document which is the subject of the governor's threat was an authorization for the mining contract in the south! A beautiful business deal that would have changed our lives!

Patience: Jilosi, your blind ambition has always been the spade by which you have dug your grave, and quite often you have threatened to drag all of us into it; what with burdens of debts. I have always warned you that your hands were not meant for business. Nevertheless, you are not the only official in this state! How is it that you were the only one threatened?

Jilosi: I am the only Minister for finance and development, and I am the only one who knew about this deal. Look dear Patience! I need your support! You recall recently I promised you a trip to Iceland!? Told you life is adventure! And adventure is trying something new, something not yet tried, who knows you may win a place in the Guinness book of records; when white tourists throng our beaches in summer, isn't it adventurous for us to roam their ice-cold lands; skate and ski there for as long as the world remains round; wouldn't it be fun spending a night in an igloo? Pattie, my dear! All I want is to please you. But ,somebody is going to ruin this! And this is none other than Doctor Ironess! I know for sure it is her, because the governor talked much about changing times, changing habits; and I remember in the first planning meeting Dr. Ironess used those very same words. (*Imitating a woman's voice*) "The reins have changed and the horses too.....it is not just *change*, but *progress*...." that is what she said. A kind of statement to rub into the governor's mind that he can no longer trust us, his fellow men. You know my dear; the game of power is a game of influence and influence comes by the positioning of oneself, positioning oneself near the seat of authority. It is a practice as old as the Bible, this craving for a position at the right hand of the throne! Now, I've observed Doctor Ironess closely and I think she is getting too close to the boss! Especially, since the tragedy of the governor's wife.....

Patience: (*Stopping him by waving a hand*) Jilosi, you can't make such far fetched conclusions. Dr. Ironess has been, so kindly, attending to the governor's wife ever since her unfortunately accident!

Jilosi: You think so because you have not seen how she rolls her eyes whenever she speaks to the governor! You have not seen how she encroaches on the governor's personal space whenever she is haggling over this or that! I know the strategy! She knows quite well the reaction of a starved hyena at the sight of gazelle! If nobody intervenes, be sure she will ignite a scandal! All I am asking you to do is observe her! Rebuke her; if there is any truth to what I say! And I know there is! She can do with a little face pinching, if to avert a moral scandal, or else a manly blow will completely ruin her!

Patience: You can't set me on the scent of a fellow woman!

Jilosi: She is our common enemy dear! Behind every successful man there is a woman; I have laid down the best plans, all I am asking is your hand! Leave the governor to me! Somebody should know when you rattle a snake.....I see he has an obedient, malleable son. (*Enter Zungu almost panting*) Oh, I see you will leave a longer life, I was thinking about you!

Zungu: Forgive my intrusion, my.....

Jilosi: Father, almost father in-law, go a head...

Zungu: Yes, father; I came to see Luwa; I've not been seeing her for quite a long time!

Jilosi: Oh! Really, sit down and have something, mama Luwa..... (*Mama Luwa from the kitchen*).

Patience: Yes!

Jilosi: Come! You have a visitor.

Patience: I am coming.

Jilosi: Come now!

Patience: I am coming; what is so urgent!

Jilosi: What is so urgent? Everything is urgent! The patience and humility of women can also be their worst enemy! (*As patience comes out of the kitchen*) where is your flower!

Patience: Luwa? Well she went out for a walk or some fresh air; that is what..., I think she said?

Jilosi: (*Mimicking her*) "That is what I think she said!" Patience, can't you keep a close eye on her!

Patience: She is old enough.

Jilosi: Old enough, not to be my child well.... (*To Zungu*) never mind what she says, she means the opposite definitely. (*still to Zungu*) is anything the matter?.... Patience, excuse us for a moment. (*Patience goes back into the kitchen*)

Zungu: Well, it is about Luwa.....and my father!

Jilosi: (*Surprised*) eh!

Zungu: Part of it has to do with my father, and part of it or all of it Luwa.....

My father insists I shouldn't marry Luwa.....I should marry the village girl ,the dancer! I don't understand?

Jilosi: (*Startled*) But, why? He and I have been at the center of it all? Why the change of mind!

Zungu: I don't know; but ever since the arrival of the village dancer my father is no longer the same. He is so passionate, but about what, I don't know..... He insists I cannot, I should not and will not marry Luwa.

Jilosi: (*Thoughtful*) Why, the governor is my friend; well, the left hand my indeed not know what is in the right. A person's best friend may, equally, be his worst enemy, too. (*Thoughtful then aside*) This is my moment, though. The crack must develop into a full blown abyss!

Zungu: Hon. Jilosi, you are so close to my father! Could there be a hint as to his insistence?

Jilosi: Not that I know. A friend is open to clues of all kinds but the duality of a politician has a rival only in a chameleons' trickery! But, do you know why he insists on the village girl?

Zungu: He only says she is innocent, talented and unravished but I know better.....

Jilosi: (*Aside*)This is the moment to drive the double edged sword and widen the wedge. (*Thoughtful*) Well, I have a remote hint if it can be a hint at all; it is the wildest of all guesses, but a guess is, as good as all guesses are, a shadow of the truth! You can't hide a man in love, you know.

Zungu; (*Perplexed*) No, you don't understand, I can't love that girl!

Jilosi: I don't mean you!

Zungu: (*The insinuation hits him hard*) No no no! That's the wildest imagination! I know my father!

Jilosi: Well, it's not treasonable to imagine! Well, to be a father is only one side of a man! But to be a man and a politician is to be a polygon!

Zungu: I know my father! He is the least of men to ignite a scandal.

Jilosi: I should know that too, but talking of a scandal, my second point could be closer to the truth. Dr. Ironess! Since your mother's tragic accident, she has ever flirtatiously inched closer to the governor.....

Zungu: *(Not amused and saddened by the mention of her mother)* she couldn't be that immoral!

Jilosi: She is just being a politician, a politician of our time.

Zungu; I mean she couldn't go behind my mother, especially now that she is invalid. Besides, what has that to do with Luwa and the village girl?

Jilosi; Now, you are asking the question! Sorry about my insinuations! I see you are so fond of your mother, she must be so close to your heart, I know it; poor Merrylene, she is such an upright woman.....well my son... in-law, I should add, politics is such a complex web. Innocence is its guise but the spider does not lay in wait for nothing! The naïve fly is often its prey. When your eyes open up, you will understand it better. Only the pigs revel in the comfort of the mire..... *(Emphatically)* Politics is power, and power is influence, and influence is position..... position near the source of power! The relish will be eaten at the dining table, eventually, but it is the cooks who know what goes in to make the broth. *(Stares here and there then puts a hand on Zungus back and almost whispers in Zungus ear!)* Now, listen carefully. Dr. Ironess is my enemy number one, in politics and in life. 'Enemy' is a milder term to use; I should say she is my sorcerer; and she has a motive, too. She is bitter; a bitter woman is more venomous, more hateful, furiously vengeful, the most deadly cobra! I know her well, because she tried every scheme at wooing me to marry her since we were in college. You see how adamant she is in every manner, that is how hard she woos men, too, and that is how hard she is at inflicting the most damage at those who ignore her! I knew she would get at me one way or the other! She knows me and the governor are friends so she will drive a wedge between us! She knows the governor and I are intent no having you and Luwa marry and that such a marriage will cement our relations, elevate me politically, so she is hell bent to destroy that prospect; so she has a double plan; one stone for two birds! She takes advantage of your mother's sickness, and the Delilah entices the governor; she poisons his mind about Luwa, you know how women are their worst, bitter enemies, so she poisons the governor's mind against Luwa to get at me, while at the same time, she pierces my heart with her poisonous arrow by ruining my position in relation

to the governor....Now this is not imagination.....I've been in politics long enough to know foul playNow listen, you and me have a common enemy! If your heart is with my daughter; you must do everything to protect her; love is sacrifice! I am ready to fight on your side, love can be a gruesome battle.....A good lover is also a good general.....he fears not even death.....Oh Romeo and Juliet! No youth has ever loved as much as they! And how their closest kinsfolk were there worst enemies.....Now, you must know this, a general must have good plans, the best laid plans...I have a plan which will not only earn you the love of your heart but will make you eternally richer and happier if you will cooperate. Are you with me?

Zungu: (*Thoughtful*) Lay down this plan, I am a soldier in your army. For Luwa, I can do anything!

Jilossi: Good! For the love of his heart a man should be able do anything! Now you are aware that oil has been discovered in the Southern part of our state; where that miserable witch dancer comes from; the governor is, in fact, using you as a political bait to boost his political image in that village; a decoy for public relation. I am in charge of the mining contract I have sourced for a company to do the mining but the governor is refusing to sign the contract because the tender committee chose a Canadian company. This morning he threatened me with the sack for attempted or potential corruption. I insist that the contract be given to this company I have chosen, because their offer is beyond the wildest, business imagination. It is not only good for our people but too appetizing for *us*. Between me and you, all we need is his signature in the very ink of the pen that he uses, we need the official seal on the documents and you and me can go live abroad, leave the rest to me!

Zungu: No! That's treasonable!

Jilosi: When you said you would do *anything for Luwa*, what was your meaning of *anything*?

Zungu: Treason is not *anything*. It is the worst of all crimes; and to do it upon my father is unthinkable!

Jilosi: I see! So you'd rather kill my daughter with unfulfilled love!

(Enter Luwa, she has heard the last)

Zungu: *(Running to meet Luwa and trying to embrace her. But she has been so much taken back by the statement, she does not co-operate)*

Oh Luwa, I promise that nothing can take you away from me!

Luwa: What's going on father! Why talk about my death and unfulfilled love.....

Jilosi: No, It's nothing really, We.....we were reminiscing on the adventure of Romeo and Juliet.

Luwa: I clearly heard my name!

Zungu: Yes.....he was saying you were my Juliet, I your Romeo!

Luwa: *(Looking serious)* Romeo..... *(laughs sarcastically)* Well, you are a Romeo no doubt; but your Juliet is your village girl.....

(sarcastically) Ha ha ha, Zungu , the exotic young engineer Weds a village dancer, probably the daughter of a witch; Oh, what a perfect match! The whole town must attend that wedding!

Zungu; Who told you about her!

Luwa: Who told me! The wedding of the son of the governor and a rare talent from the village cannot be a secret in this city; some people even suggested the city is wedding the village. At first I was not convinced by the city's gossip mills, so I went to look for you in your home. Who do I see, cherishing a special rehearsal by the village dancers? The governor himself, your father, openly hypnotized. After the performance he leads me into the garden and there in the glow of the evening sunset, he tells me: "My daughter ,a matter has been gnawing at the back of my mind ; the matter of your relationship with my son Zungu; we know how fond of each other you are, I and your father; we know the fact that you have grown up together; as parents we could not stop our children from loving each other, but we could not have known that your fondness would blossom into such wild infatuations. Well, there is a sign of genuineness in your belonging together, which under normal social circumstances, would make such a natural couple. But, how life is bitter at its sweetest moments! And how one would wish something could be undone, which was earlier done, The reality of life sometimes is more

fantastic than the illusion of art. I am the least to wish to be the harbinger of this piece of news.....but I know my son would never be able to convey it. He would never accept that you and him cannot, and should not marry...’’ Well, I did not make sense of the rest of what he said, and I still do not understand; but it is the sincerity with which he did the revelations that really shocked me! *(Breaking down)* Father, tell me, what is going on? Where did I go wrong...? *(Sobs and covers her face in her arms! Zungu rushes to her but her father arrives first)*

Jilosi: Leave us alone young man. I will attend to the distress you have caused my daughter. But know this: marriage is not kisses and caresses! A husband’s duty is to rise to the occasion at the hour of his wife’s need! Now leave us, my daughter deserves not the hand of a coward. *(Enter Patience, she is shocked by her daughters situation. She rushes to where her husband and Luwa are.)*

Patience: What happened?

Jilosi: It is the governor! He has devastated my daughter by disclosing to her the impossibility of her marriage to his son!

Patience: Oh , but why him!

Jilosi: I told you he has lost all his senses. I know it’s the sorcery of Dr. Ironess--thunder should strike that evil woman! She has the governor by the horns and she is riding him down into an abyss. Oh poor mother Africa! You have endured the ravishing of cruel dictators, but where in thy bowels exudes such a primitive conservative! A revolt is brewing at a time of prosperity in the Southern part of his state, and he has the time to cherish the hypnotism of a young village witch, in the name of a talent. Talent? Art? Must his pleasures destroy us? No! I shall not let him ruin my daughter, and my family and my plans too.....I have painstakingly planed my life.....and whoever stands on my way to success must pay dearly!

(Curtain)

ACT TWO: SCENE FIVE

(A room in a hospital .Has all the equipments to suggest I. C .U. A motionless form of a woman lies on the bed and machines are ticking. Enter Mm'bosi, he stands beside the bed sadly staring at the motionless figure.)

Mmbosi: Who would have thought that doing my responsibility, as a husband, as a father, as the head of my family would end like this? *(Contemplatively)*. Now, if to wake from this painful sleep is labor too hard for doctors, is it too hard for God too? How could my sense of responsibility part two love birds in such a painful way! I swore to love you in fine weather, and, equally in tempest, yet blind was I to this: that a day would come when I should cherish the permanence of your suffering. Words sworn cannot be unsworn even if the raging blood threatens to burst the banks of a man's veins. But shouldn't a man act manly for the sake of those whom he loves? Shouldn't he protect them and ease their pains? Oh the cruelty of these machines that elongate your suffering! What will make me strong enough to loathe them, for I know I must be strong, strong to say enough is enough! To say enough of this suffering! I will end your sufferings, soon! Yes, I must end your suffering my love. *(He bows a little then leaves)*.

ACT THREE: SCENE ONE

(Back in the governors Residence. The governor is seated on a large sofa set in his parlour. He beckons a servant. Drums in the background)

Mmbosi: Get me the dancer!

Servant : Yes ,your governorship. *(rushes out)*
(Enter girl dancer shyly!)

Mmbosi; Welcome my

Kabuche: Thank you your governorship!

Mmbosi:*(Taking the advantage of there being no other person he points to a drinks cabinet).* Get me something to drink over there. *(As the girl goes, Mmbosi ,hypnotically, stares at her. When the girl gives him the drink).*

Have a sit; there is something I want to tell you?

Kabuche: Thank you mygovern ...

Mmbosi: Never mind! Now I would like you to prepare for the big day. I have a delegation of explorers from Canada, oh and other guests from where is that? Never mind, they are coming as tourists. I would like them to see for themselves the cultural treasure that is our pride. Well I have been made to understand that you would prefer to go back to the village, to go back to school, but, I tell you it is within my power that the school can come here after you! And that I promise; but I now just want you to...to know that you are in many ways more blessed than the most educated of women. You just need someone who will notice that, and work on you to perfection. Your art is rare! You could ask for John the Baptist's head, and Herode would gladly hand it over to you! *(Lowering his voice)*.Would you accept my ...my son's hand in marriage?

Kabuche: *(Firmly though shyly)*No!I understand he is engaged. That girl who came here the other day and you went with her into the garden...

Mmbosi: Oh that girl? her name is Luwa. She is his choice but you are my choice... for him I mean.

Kabuche; He has never clearly hinted his intentions!

Mmbosi: He is a shy boy; He needs a little agitation.

Kabuche: (Shyly) Eeh.....still, I wouldn't.....I always see him as stiff. He does not break even at the sound of the biggest drum!

Mmbosi: Well, if that is what you think of him; well may be you have not had much time with him. You may be swept his direction by his youthful demeanor; all the same I wouldn't like to part with your art! My heart is opened up and may I ask.... You see young girl, there are so many things you could do in this house yet live as your heart wishes! Listen young girl, people crave to be in this great residence but they little know how cold and lonely it can be. Look here, to woo for another man is a craft I am weak at! Would you also reject the hand of your governor? Let me make a rare confession: seeing that I am drunk with passion, being that you already have me by the horns...knowing how I am lonely here, very cold and lonely, in a place people think is the most joyful ...Young girl, I am offering you the opportunity of a life time! Years of toil would never bring you this close to real success, and all you need is simple to say yes! You don't even need to think about it? (*Taking her by the hand*) Now what do you say

Kabuche: (*Very shyly jerks her hand away, shocked*) You are my father!

Mmbosi: Exactly, you can love me just as a father, if that is the easiest way to you.

Kabuche: My father couldn't say such things!

Mm`bosi: (*Embarrassed*) Indeed, I must be mad to say what I just said but you and your art are the witches of my conscience. Now girl, you and your people stand to benefit tremendously from this union.....you could be happy forever more...you know these opportunities don't knock at youthful doors twice!

Kabuche: I am happiest when dancing.....

Mm`bosi: (*Changing tact*) Exactly, I am happiest when acting, dancing and acting, a marriage of the most essential ingredients of drama. Now girl, I have everything planned. You will put up a great performance on that day! I have invited so many dignitaries; the whole town is also invited. They know you are being married to my son though, but he is adamantly sticking to hisDelilah. Please, do not undress your governor in public. Don't worry too, I have told the people the wedding is part of the dance rehearsals; a dramatization of our culture in practical context; I have also told them the groom will be masked until the ceremony is

solemnized. You will be free to choose whether to stay married or not after the performance. Now please, do not undress me and our culture before such dignitaries! You carry my heart and confidence like an egg...Promise just to do your partNow go tell the others and rehearse even harder!

(Kabuche:(*Shyly*) *I don't understand.*

Mm`bosi: You don't need to, just play your part!

(Exit Kabuche)

Oh, the shackles of my office! I am drunk with love, love of this girl, love of my culture: the beauty of its art has loosened the shackles of my conscience and now like a drunken man in a dark room, I am groping for direction! This wedding means so much to me, for the harmony of my soul and the flesh, the village and the city, the poor and the rich which are the two main tribes that need to dissolve into one ocean of Nationhood! But how man`s best intentions for his people are also the most misunderstood and most unwelcome .The price of nationhood is paid by the individual...with this union I must now curb this upcoming revolt in the South.

(Curtain)

ACT THREE: SCENE TWO

(The governor in his parlo. Enter Jilosi, apparently in haste!)

Jilosi: Good morning, good governor! How death is not ashamed to be guest at a man`s wedding! How grief has the audacity to gate crushes at a man`s moment of prosperity!

Mm`bosi: Death? What are you talking about?

Jilosi: It`s fire, in the Southern village! The mining project is jeopardized!

Mm`bosi: By what?

Jilosi: Last night, the people were forceful evicted, they were beaten, a few women were raped, several injured...

Mm`bosi: But I put you in charge of the relocation and compensation!

Jilosi: Exactly, that's why I am more at a loss! It happened just after I had paid off...You see, I was worried at first about putting such a large amount of money in the hands of poor people who perhaps rarely get hold of money in notes. But then I said what the hell, it is their right and it was my responsibility, so I paid them!

Mm`bosi: So, what fire is it you now talk about? Did they drink their heads off and butchered one another?

Jilosi: Yes, exactly, I thought so myself, at first, but then it looks like it is more than a typical, spontaneous, village brawl; it is so meticulous executed, it must have been planned!

Mm`bosi: Planed? But who has the audacity to plan such a heinous act?

Jilosi: You won't believe this your governorship, I would not keep it from you anyway. The ring leader is a teacher; the one who trained the dancers.

Mm`bosi: The teacher? But what could be his motive? I responded to his other petitions and even promoted him!

Jilosi: Exactly! He has no motive. Somebody else has, and it seems he is working under the direction of that person!

Mm`bosi: But who could that be?

Jilosi: When we were leaving on the day of your visit to the village, you may not have noticed it, but the teacher and Dr. Ironess remained behind and were seen talking earnestly!

Mm`bosi: Dr. Ironess? It can't be. What will be her motive? She has always been so supportive.

Jilosi: Your governorship, the donkey that works hardest also has the most deadly kicks! If we were not politicians, I would not be convinced myself!

Mm`bosi: But she has no clear motive.

Jilosi: You have not been observing her lately.....The slightest desire can be enough motive for a politician.....haven't world wars been fueled by trivialities? Listen, now since your wife was incapacitated by that tragic accident, Dr. Ironess has always drawn ever closer to you, the way she speaks, her make up and all, it all

betrays a soft spot for you.....it is aimed at enticing you to fall into a trap! If anyone thinks Delilahs are extinct, let them do it at their own peril.

Mm`bosi: No. No! It can't be: Dr. Ironess is also my wife`s doctor! She is the one nursing her!

Jilosi: There you are! Nursing her to remain in her eternal slumber so she could take over! I am beginning to suspect that madam governess' coma is artificially induced.

Mm`bosi: Oh my God! (*Deeply contemplative*) How foolish have I been? The trickery of doctors! The trickery of politicians! How even the best things can be used to inflict the worst damage.

(*Enter Dr.Ironess almost panting*)

Dr.Ironess : Hell has broken lose; who sent goons to the village to demolish their existence?

(*Mmbosi &Jilosi stare at each other*)

Mmbosi (*Sternly*) Madam Dr.Ironess, you are fired!

Dr.Ironess (*Shocked*)What?(*silence*)Sir! Is it I you are addressing?

Mmbosi: I said: you are fired. Now leave! (*As she leaves her eyes meet those of jilosi and they stare at each other fiercely (then she leaves quickly)*)

Dr. ironess: Don't I have the right to know why?

Mm`bosi: Leave, woman or else, you will be forced to! (*Dr. Ironess exits*) But, where is, or where was the man in charge of security? (*He takes a phone and dials a number*) Mr. Lalausi, are you the hyena that shall remain asleep while your tail burns?

Lalausi: (*From the other end*) No, sir, I am not asleep; it is just that my flu is getting worse. I would wish to extend my sick leave, if you...

Mmbosi (*Barking into the receiver*) Sick leave terminated! And, if you don't report here quickly, work will be terminated too. A running nose is not as bad as a bullet in the head! There is a riot in the Southern part where the exploration project is expected to start, see that the teacher is arrested and brought here !

Lalausi: Did you say a riot, sir? In the Southern part? No, it can't be! It could be somewhere else but not in the southern part. But, I will take your orders all the same. Just need an extra allowance to buy some extra handkerchiefs!

Mmbosi: Just do what I said !(*banging the receiver back to its place*)
(Curtain)

ACT THREE: SCENE THREE

Zungu: (*In the governors house .He seems to be searching for something. He opens one drawer then the next. And then stops to celebrate his findings, a seal and a pen in one hand*)

Zungu: I am at crossroads! The decision weighs on me like a ship at anchor! The love of my father and the love of my heart- Luwa pull at my arms as two cruel mothers during Solomon's judgment. I deliver this (*showing the seal and pen*) to Hon. Jilosi and I am assured of the love of my heart and eternal happiness abroad! What else could a young heart want? I don't deliver, and I hurt my heart's love and forever be yoked with a primitive girl, play into the scheme of a heavy handed father. How is it that the one I should look up to has become the stumbling block to my prosperity? The thought of missing Luwa curdles the blood in my veins. I am now but a bat whose sense of reason is frozen. I will act and think later, and hope to find pleasure in the result of my thoughtlessness.

ACT THREE: SCENE FOUR

A modestly furnished sitting room ,there is a good looking sofa set, pictures and awards on the walls: Enter Dr Irones in a grey coat)

Dr Irones: (*Removing the grey coat*) It feels heavy and hot in this weather, and you don't notice it when it is getting dirty too! (*Putting on a white coat*) Ah, its long since I was in this (*indicating the white coat*) my real professional dress! (*Takes a stethoscope which was hanging somewhere and puts it around his neck*) And this is the badge of honor by which I was baptized; and licensed to nurse, and heals the society. Politics was sweet and clean, until gangsters invaded it! Let me now freely nurse the heart broken.

(Exit)

ACT THREE: SCENE FIVE

(A hospital I.C.U. where the governess is was lain; still in the same position.

Enter Dr.Ironess!)

Dr.Ironess: *(Addressing the motionless figure on the bed)*

The resilience of a woman should energize your will to live! You were such a wonderful woman; you kept the governor in his senses and tamed the egos that so often tempt a man to slip into cruelty! But now in your absence, all he hears is man talk! Oh , how medicine, how science, even in its wondrous magic, is so limited in its ability ! I will summon other women here to pray with me, perhaps, the softness of their voices may be the harmonious music God needs to respond with a miracle.....

(Enter Patience)

Patience: Oh, I was not expecting you here, considering what's going on!

Dr . Ironess: I couldn't be anywhere else , given that I have nothing else to do there .I was fired this morning !

Patience : Fired ? But why?

Dr. Ironess:- Well, I don't know : I suspect that is how politics works. You are hired and fired with the same zeal.

Patience: I can't believe it, too. What's happening with the governor? There is a wedding at the governor's residence! Tomorrow, foreign dignitaries have been invited; he is marrying his son to the village girl; how he will manage to force him, I don't know; the boy insists he will die with my daughter, Luwa!

Dr.Ironess: Ever since that village girl came there, ever since he invited them- poor children, they need to be at school not senselessly dancing for already successful dignitaries—he has not been his usual self. Pleasure can be a sweet distraction, and distractions seem to abound in politics.....

Patience: Dr. Ironess, you are a psychologist, do you think he has lost his senses?

Dr, Ironess: A man completely loosened by the allure of beauty cannot be in his right senses. The artistry of that village girl took him wholly in; it made residence in his soul and no doubt his conscience is now exiled. Art is beauty, and beauty is power, and power is politics! The politics of black art have invaded the throne.

Patience:- My God, we need to pray!

Dr. Ironess: For what? For whom?

Patience: For our Nation!

Dr. Ironess: Let us begin with her. (*Indicating the figure on the bed*) Perhaps it would not have happened, if she were by her husband's side!

Patience: You are right, let us pray! (*They start praying*).
(*Out side the hospital ward, the governor is pacing up and down the corridor*)

Mmbosi: I must be courageous. I must do it today! The cruelty of those heartless machines must be stopped. I will free her and set her off into her eternal journey; if she finds peace, I also will find peace and harmony with myself. I cannot watch the crudeness of science elongate her agony. (*He opens the door to the ward and he is startled to find the two women praying vehemently. He is embarrassed. He closes his eyes pretentiously and waits until they finish!*)

Mm`bosi: Oh! I never expected to find you here! My sincere apologies! Looks like a women`s group meeting. Dr. Ironess, I didn`t know you were so ardent at praying.

Dr. Ironess: Oh, I am one of those who don`t put our own lamps up on display; anyone can join in prayers; science was never meant to cut our telephone line to God! As you observed though, I am ever ardent, all the same, otherwise I would not be a woman!

Patience: We came to pray for our sister's will; when a mother is sick the whole nation is!

Mm`bosi: I am sorry but I should leave you women alone. A man's voice might spoil the seduction in the prayer! (*Patience and Dr.Ironess look at one another. Exit Mm`bosi*).

ACT THREE: SCENE SIX

(*The governor's parlor, Enter Mwanze. To the audience*)

Mm`bosi: Ah! Here comes a sober minded man! A man with real Africa blood. At a time when everything is in a spin in my mind I could do with his advice.
(*Shaking Mwanze`s hand*)

Good morning brother; it`s a great day isn`t it?

Mwanze: It dawned well, there is a dark cloud hanging over the sky threatening to ruin the brightness of the day, but that`s the duality of our weather, a bright sunny day is welcome; at the same time a cloud of rain is a blessing too.....

Mm`bosi: Sit down brother, and, may I ask if your ear could be hired!

Mwanze: Hired? Your governorship, my ear is at your service, it can be hired for free!

Mm`bosi: Am glad to hear that, now listen, something has been gnawing at the back of my mind, but it is now gnawing at the front of it too.... You are a perfect African bull Hon. Mwanze, your heart beats in the African rhythm and your blood is as hot as the African sun! Forgive my imagery, all I want to say is....I am an African, too, and I have blood....You get what I mean...?

Mwanze: Well I get you, quite well sir, to be African is not just about color, it is to have African blood and a heart beating in the African rhythm, too!

Mm`bosi: Exactly, hot blood and regular rhythm; now you know this tragedy of my wife.....

Mwanze: I understand Dr. Ironess is dutifully attending to her.

Mm`bosi: Well, yes..... but, forget her, for now. She is now doing it not under my instruction. I sacked her late last evening!

Mwanze: I heard it over the news, I was surprised!

Mm`bosi: Don't be! She is a green Mamba. Now on this matter of my wife; you see she has been lying there for three or four years now. I love her so much, but you see she is of....I mean coldness has shrouded the whole of me and my house. I am afraid that same ice cloud is now threatening to cover my heart and mind! What I am asking of you is would it be perfectly alright, get me: would it be perfect legally, traditionally and morally for me to try my hand again at marriage!

Mwanze: (*Thoughtfully*) The same matter has been gnawing at the back of my mind too! How men think alike! I have for long wanted to tell you, an African man always needs a blanket! There is nothing potentially immoral than a lonely noble man! But, our traditions allow, our laws allow, and our morals allow, who am I to disallow! If you have seen the blanket (*whispering*) and let me give you a hint – it has to be young--what is stopping you? It is the foolish man who though in a position to possess the desires of his heart, still denies himself....They call it self-control, but I call it self brakes, when you carelessly apply them, you still end in a disaster; If you step hard on the brake pedal, you don't move at all. Ha ha ha I am planning to add a third wife, myself.....ha ha ha. But it is different with me! My African religion is quite permissive, with you it's a little tricky, your Christianity could be a handcuff! Luckily, I see you dropped your Christian name at the dawn of our independence; you may as well renounce the whole faith and convert to traditional African religion! It is the surest way of living life to the fullest, yet be assured of a place in heaven!

Mm`bosi: Is that a prerequisite! Can't I just move on.....

Mwanze: They won't allow you.....the church, I mean! But that is because they don't understand the reality you are living....

Mm`bosi: They will understand, I just want to be myself.....

Mwanze: It's easier to live that way! Who is the blanket, if I may ask?

Mm`bosi: The young dancer from the village!

Mwanze: Perfect! How men think alike! Had you delayed a minute I would be the one inviting you to the wedding.
(Cheers, they hug and laugh).

ACT FOUR: SCENE ONE

(Police station: the teacher, handcuffed, is dragged in the office from a cell. He is flogged. Enter Lalausi, the Minister of security; he has in hand a number of handkerchiefs with which he keeps on wiping his nose, he sneezes sporadically.)

Lalausi: Is this he?

Wardern 1: Yes sir!

Lalausi: Are you quite sure? They said he was a teacher. *(sneezes)*

Wardern 1: This is he, sir!

Lalausi: Give him a harder one! For inciting people.....But are you sure this is he?

Wardern 2: Yes sir!

Lalausi: Give him a second, harder, for causing the termination of my sick leave! And the governor will be here any minute, to see for himself the inciter! I should be embarrassed to parade to him such a frail creature! A fat criminal would have improved my stature in governor's eyes!

(Enter Mm`bosi, obviously in a bad mood and anger!)

Mm`bosi: Where is he!

Lalausi: Here sir, I went to arrest him myself *(the two warders stare at each other he, Lalausi looks at them fiercely and winks a warning.)*

Mm`bosi: You were a little late though. *(To the teacher)* Traitor, traitor, traitor! Judas Iscariot reincarnate! Who is the giver of the 30 pieces of silver this time? I have sacrificed to bring unity between your village and the city, the poor and the rich; I paid full compensation for the relocation of the villagers; a project worth billions is going to transform the village from peasantry to prosperity. Then, I paid you well for training the dancers; I rewarded you with a promotion that you would have worked all your life to earn, but you still have a motive to incite people and lead a revolt!

Teacher: Lead a revolt? I have no motive for that, but it seems someone else must have. Some villagers were not willing to give up their land, for the exploration, as you requested; they were too afraid of broken promises to be tickled with a well made speech. I blew the whistle by informing Dr. Ironess, who is in your cabinet! But

where you speak of compensation, the villagers got the tear gas, battering and demolition of their shacks! The aggressors were in police uniform!

Mm`bosi: What are you talking about? Oh I see! It's now confirmed! It is Dr. Ironess who is bank rolling you! See! Give a poor man a few coins in the pocket and you will be shocked at how imaginative he becomes! If he does not drink to blindness, or even kill himself in his reveling, he concocts the most romantic of all crimes. Blind ambition ruins even the best of villagers! A few coins in the pocket and you seduce one of my ministers and with her plot my downfall. But do you know the full legal consequences of such treasonable action! We are not in the jungle; we are in a state where rule of law is supreme!

Teacher: We are also in a state where the whistleblower pays for blowing the whistle and the most hardworking donkey is taken to the slaughter house! You are right sir, we are not in the jungle but in the Animal farm!

Mm`bosi: He is a politician, too, I see! A village politician! Well, now listen! A politician, and for your case, a good inciter must, also, be a good orator! Listen here young man! You will use your oratory to tell your fellow villagers, plainly, my passionate intent! All I have fought for is the unity of all, poor and rich; I dream higher dreams for this state and that mining project is the spark that will ignite the economic boom of that village and the whole state. When I visited and discovered that rare talent, the artistry of those dancers, I exclaimed, Eureka! science and art have colluded to prosper my reign! Tomorrow, a big delegation of foreign dignitaries is visiting; all I have been doing since my visit is to convince my son to marry the dancer for that would be a perfect union; but he has declined, and now, I have decided I am marrying her myself! I will have the whole troupe of dancers in my residence too to be professional entertainers, oh what an elegant ensemble of cultural treasure? I plan big thing for their prosperity. Any disturbance of peace and unity will ruin these plans! Can you just explain that to the villagers in a very plain tongue, perhaps, they will understand you better!

Teacher: The villagers have ears and respect, but they have hearts, too. If progress is to rob them of all their possessions, the plan should include a way of dealing with their anger! You might have bigger plans but if someone within your inner circle has

other plans, its futile; otherwise, the villagers need no more talking, an action would do better. All the same, I can risk talking to the people, but you have to deal with the one who ruffled their feathers behind your back!

Mm`bosi: I have already done that, Dr. Ironess is sacked; and after full investigation she should be arrested.

Teacher: I know a kind person when I see one. The kindness of that woman cannot allow her to do such cruelty as was done to the villagers!

Mm`bosi: Do your part; otherwise her fate will be yours too!

(Exit).

ACT FOUR: SCENE TWO

(Governor's palace, well decorated, the atmosphere is that of the approach of a big occasion, the Governor is in a jovial mood. Enter Mwanze)

Mwanze: Good morning your, governorship!

Mm`bosi: Good morning, fellow African bull. Tell me did the father assent?

Mwanze: Yes! He was so pleased he was wondering whether he could be given the dowry while in custody.

Mm`bosi: Custody?

Mwanze: Yes, you remember I told you about a man who stabbed his creditor after he had demanded his dues from him? The culprit had taken a goat on credit, which he slaughtered to celebrate the marriage of his daughter to a governor or the son! It turns out it is the dancer's father!

Mm`bosi: Dear me, so I will have a criminal as father in- law! Did the mother consent too?

Mwanze: I went to look for her in the village. And you know what happened there recently, I don't know who ordered such cruelty on the villagers! When I told her the matter, she just wept and never said a word. I considered her tears to be tears of joy! I have invited everybody anyway.

(Enter white guests, first two confident youngmen)

Guest 1: Hi, jambo: could this be the governor residence?

Mm`bosi&Mwanze: *(startled)* Yes!

Guest 1: I am Ashiashna, from Kushistanian, a counthry righth outside Asia; I am the governor's son, there, and the sole shareholder of Maperoil the biggest exploration company in Asia! I have a greath intherest in African Art too; music and carvings? Oh how I have made greath forithune Thrading in African art! I am here at the governor's invitation; concerning the-er oil exploration project! Well, I would not mind if I got permission to scout for art too! This is my friend.....

Guest 2: Shakeromanse! Expert promotheer of cultural music! A man without culture is lost; a three without roots hhe,hhe,it's thtrue!

Guest1: Could we see the governor, please?

Mm`bosi: I am he!

Guest 1: No, I mean the other one; the real one *(produces a photo. The photo of Jilosi. Mm`bosi and Mwanze stare at each other. Enter Jilosi)*

Jilosi: *(Seeing the guest is shocked, but recovers quickly)* Your governorship, these are the tourists I was talking about! Good people.....

Mm`bosi: *(Pulls Jilosi aside then sternly)* Mr. Jilosi, you are fired!
(The guests are surprised)

Mm`bosi: *(To the guests)* Sit down, a guest is a blessing, all the same! You can cherish a performance of traditional dance, I suppose; you came at the right time too! A historic traditional wedding is in the offing! Welcome to Africa! Bro. Mwanze, organize a special performance.

Mwanze: Yes, brother! *(Rushes out, and when he comes back he is trailed by other foreign dignitaries)*
Your governorship, I am pleased to introduce the delegation from Amuroil-Canada. These are the ones we voted to do the exploration in the south; I did the invitations myself! *(The other group of guests is perplexed!)*

Mmbosi: Oh, welcome to Africa! Hope you will enjoy! Business, Science and art reside in the same soul here! Cheers!

(Enter the dancers but the main dancer is missing! The dancers dance to wild cheers from the Crowd, but the governor is all the time looking here and there, unsettled and unhappy).

Mmbosi: Ladies and gentle men! That was just but an appetizer, if you come to Africa you must have a big appetite, I am so proud to be your host, tonight! I have never felt so proud to be an African! *(He takes Mwanze aside!)* Where is the soloist!

Mwanza: She declined to join the others; she is out there weeping!

Mm`bosi: But why? Why at this crucial time! Get her in! The hearts of the businessmen need a little soothing for good business!

Mwanze: Your governorship, I don't think it's a good idea!

Mm`bosi: What?

Mwanze: Dragging her in! For that is the easiest part, but shall we coerce her heart and limbs to dance?

Mm`bosi: But she can't let us down like this! She is only a small young, poor girl! What does she want now?

Mwanze: I have tried to ask her, she says she just can't dance, her heart is so weighed down by the sorrow of her two mentors, her father and now her teacher who are languishing in prison cells!

Mm`bosi: But those are criminals she should understand that! We can't stand her impunity! Explain that to her!

Mwanze: I don't think that's a good idea sir! I can explain but by the time I finish, we will be embarrassed beyond repair! Remember how you have boasted in all the media in defense of the sublimity of our arts? You can't afford to drag a bundle of emotionally distressed village girls on the stage! You could see even the others were not putting up their best? In the next round, they will all be dancing the same dance of emotional breakdown. The girl has a point: music and dance issues from a free spirit in ones soul!

Mm`bosi: So what do you suggest? We don't need a long political speech at the moment!

Mwanze: Exactly! Let's release them and invite them to the performance! Let them enjoy with the audience. The girl, upon seeing them she will obviously be elated. And, don't be shocked if she dances her dresses off! Besides, you will need the father

to handover the girl during the wedding tomorrow! After that you can either invoke your power of pardon which is perfectly within our laws or put them back in prison!

Mm`bosi: I see! You talk like a real politician! Organize for their release and invite them here then order another round of performance! Make sure the tears of the girl are wiped out effectively! Signs of coerced dancers shouldn't be detected at all!

Mwanze: Yes sir! You act like a politician, too. A real governor of our time!

Mm`bosi: Ladies and gentle men, that was but only an introduction, I have the pleasure to introduce, the beauty of African art! Black is beauty and beauty is power! (*Orders another round of dancing ,now with Kabuche leading*).

(Enter teacher and Kithure, tired and distressed, but looking okay. More guests have now arrived; among them is Zungu and Luwa. But upon entering Luwa, warms up to the foreign guest 1 from Asia as if he were an old acquaintance. All through the performance Luwa should be seen close to, and in earnest conversation with guest1, the son of the governor of a foreign state, and one of the guests invited by Jilosi, without the approval of the committee. She completely ignores Zungu). During the performance guest 2 –Shakeromanse,the promoter of Africa art-- gets so exhilarated he jumps on stage and dances with Kabuche. He is completely taken in by the dance! Upon the end of the dance, guest 2 rushes and takes Kabuche the dancer's hand, and clings to it amourosly!).

Guest 2: Allow me to break prothocol to give a speech! Black Arth is beauty, real it is! I have thravelled videly and witnessed greath thalent at work, buth I have never seen before now, physical beauthy in such wondhrous harmony with arthistic beauty. Ladhies and genthlemen, beauhty is human and so is culthure; beauthy is a threasure and so is arth! My hearth is thouched! And thouched in a profound way! If people sthill doubt the truth of love at first sight, it is because they have never seen such beauthy; and if they see it, they are too mechanical to appreciate it! Foolish is the man who tries to hide his emotions, to hide his love like a

faggoth under his clothes! I have loved this girl and her art, and I am proud to associate with Africa! Cheers to good relations!

All : Cheers!

Mm`bosi: Thank you for that impromptu speech brother! Cheers to unity! Cheers to good national and international relations! Cheers to peace! Cheers to Business! Cheers to prosperity! (*Zungu looks clearly ignored by Luwa as she is totally engrossed in explaining something to guest 1*).

Tomorrow is yet a greater day for the cementing of relations! We shall witness the signing of two covenants: social and business. Cheers to prosperity! I now declare the day well spent! Guests can leave at leisure! (*Guests exit, still Luwa and guest 1 are together, they are holding into each other's hands and Zungu is not apparently happy.*)

ACT FOUR: SCENE THREE

(Zungu and Jilosi exchange plans, seal some document)

Zungu: Let me register my displeasure at the encroachment of that foreigner into my territory. I hope you are not double-dealing, for, here are the items by which your scheming heart glories. Let your hideous plans give you your entitlements, and let me have mine, too: Luwa. (*Hands him the contract documents and official seal.*)

Jilosi: Blessed is the young man who comes to the aid of the elderly. (*Laughs proudly and sinisterly, and lifts up the seal*). This is the symbol that signifies one's power! I am its bearer now! And once this contract is solemnized, my way to fortune is cleared. Young man, if you linger in the shadows of old men with undying ambition, if you associate yourself with great minded people, you have no choice but to prosper. Now, sign here as your father would have done; (*Zungu takes pen and signs*) yes, there you are: like father, like son. Good, now, go to my house; the love of your heart-- Luwa- awaits you. I have everything arranged for the two of you! By this time tomorrow you should be honeymooning across the sea! Now go! (*Exit Zungu, Jilosi remains on stage still admiring the seal*). A little too late, but better late than never; with the fire fully lit in that village, and the arrival of my guests, the governor's sunset has arrived accompanied by thunder. I only need

to sit on that seat to coordinate real development. Tonight I must clear every impediment that has, for years, blocked my assent!

(Exit Jilosi)

ACT FOUR: SCENE FOUR.

(Jilosi's house. Enter Zungu. Patience comes out of the kitchen. They meet at the sitting room).

Zungu: Good day, mama! Show me the love of my heart upon whose sighting my heart may be soothed.

Patience: Have a seat young man! I see you have taken a big gulp of the cup of infatuation, and drunk you are with the dregs of love; you recklessly come into my house, without notice, and ask me to show you the love of your heart as if she were a piece of furniture in a show room; I understand, though, you are the son of my governor and she the daughter of a minister in his government; the fondness of the two of you is the meticulous scheme of two fathers, two selfish friends, and now you are so entangled with her she is like a piece of furniture in the living room of your heart. But let me ask you young man, what will sober you up to reality...?

(Enter Luwa from one of the rooms, she is hand in hand with guests 1; enter, also, guest 2. Zungu is shocked to see Luwa hand in hand with guest1 in Jilosi's house!)

Luwa: Hi, Zungu! What shocks you so! Meet my long time friend Ashiashna; Oh what power technology has to bring people so close and make the globe such small as a village. I loved his Facebook photos, but I am completely knocked over by his handsomeness in reality!

Zungu: *(Still in shock)* But, Luwa, you have always loved me....we have grown up together....

Luwa: Yes indeed, I do love you even now. As a friend, but my heart has a space for a more adventurous love, I love real adventure. Growing up with you has been fun, but being with Ashiashna is fancy, and now ,the miracle of meeting him is sensational. I can have both of you as friends, anyway! *(Enter Jilosi, Zungu rushes to him and pulls him aside)*

Zungu: I respected you but you lied to me. You have given your daughter to strangers!

Jilosi: Cool down young man. These young men you call strangers are my guests; they are parties to the contract your father declined to sign. I invited them all the same. All that my daughter is doing is to keep them company, to soften their hearts for good business; I gave her their contacts sometime back and she has been chatting with them on Facebook. This is just a part of my scheme. Worry not, the prey is yours!

Zungu: But I see she is genuinely intimate with him! How can I be.....?

Jilosi: Young man, the world is a theatre stage and life is a script, we are all actors. It happens that my daughter is a star actress; she can't afford to be otherwise, anyway, her father being the director of the film. Now go and prepare yourself!

Zungu: (*Confused*) I am a confused man! (*He begins to exit, then, thoughtfully*) But at least she listens to her father. She acts while he directs; daughter for father.....star actress! Can't I act, too?

(*Exits*)

(*Governor's house, the governor in his sitting room, enter Zungu.*)

Zungu: Father, I have changed my mind!

Mm`bosi: About what?

Zungu: The dancer! I am going to marry her!

Mm`bosi: But you can't now. Chance knocks at a man's door once, son. You are not the only man with eyes, son; not the only man with a heart, too! Someone has offered his hand in marriage to the village girl. What you despised in her is cherished by others.

Zungu: Who is the man! It could not be the other foreigner.

Mmbosi: Foreigners? I would not let such local beauty, such local talent, such local Artistry go with a foreigner at whatever price. Listen son, I am at the apex of my reign, the apex of life, and I will not allow anything or anyone to deny me the full pleasure that wealth and beauty has bestowed unto me. Beauty and wealth is all around us, but we have so narrowed down our focus of life we don't notice how diverse our sources of wealth and satisfactions are! Now listen, when this girl danced for me in the village, her talent, her beauty, melted every one of my

faculties. I loved her instantly, but, I could not propose knowing the constraints my office and my status entailed. I was still determined to love her, even if in another way, as a daughter – in-law; I knew it would tax me morally, but I also knew it was the best and only way to have her close to me, the only way I could revel in her beauty and her art! So I persuaded you to love her hoping that you being my son could be aroused in the same way. But now I have confirmed: we are so different! So I am marrying her myself! I am not one to deny my heart the pleasure it deserves, especially if that pleasure is genuinely deserved.

Zyngu: But you can't marry her, father; what of mother! She is still alive, sick but alive...and you swore to love her till death.

Mmbosi: I know I swore as a Christian. But, as an African, my traditions allow me to take a second wife; even a third, if my capacity for love is that elastic! I was an African before I became a Christian! I love your mother and I love this girl, too. Plans have reached an advanced stage! Well, many know that it is you marrying her, but I hope it will not be such a big shock to them when they discover that it is the governor himself!

Zungu: Father, please, think again.

Mm`bosi: I have thought, so carefully, son! My heart has been pampered to love again, and I will be naïve to deny...myself a second opportunity!

(Enter Dr. Ironess and Patience pushing a wheel chair, on which is an invalid but apparently a recovering Mrs. Mm`bosi. She is better than when she was in hospital. Mm`bosi is shocked to see his wife out of hospital).

Dr. Ironess: Good day your governorship! I told you there is power in the will of a woman who is determined to fight for her life, no matter what! A miracle happens when science and reason are overtaken by faith. I am trained in medicine but what has happened is beyond my understanding! You won't believe, she just sneezed and the first words she uttered were "Where are they?" I asked: "Who?" She said, "My family!"

Mm`bosi: It can't be true!

Patience: But it is, your governorship, I was with her!

Mm`bosi: No, I don't mean that, I mean what I was told by Hon. Jilosi! It can't be true.

Patience: Jilosi?

Dr. Ironess: What did he tell you, which you did not know?

Mm`bosi: Yes, Dr. Ironess, I didn't know you are such an evil woman! You deliberately kept my wife in a simulated comma that long!

Patience
Dr. Ironess

} What!

Dr. Ironess: How could anyone conjure such preposterous lies!

Mm`bosi: (*Rushing to his wife*) Dear, Merrylyene, I am so sorry!

Merrylyene: (*Whispering*) Just tell me, what is going on? Mm`bosi, You look tired, too!

Zungu: (*Angrily*) He is marrying.....

Mm`bosi: (*Rushing to Zungu, covers his mouth and drags him away from the woman*) Shh! you can't tell her that unless you want to kill her!

Zungu: But she will know, anyway, sooner or later! You are cruel father; it was your carelessness that brought her illness, now it is your immorality that will finish her off! You have started a big scandal, father.

Mm`bosi: Shut up, boy! What morality can you teach me! What lesson can you teach me that experience has not; you can talk of immorality and scandal now because I am the governor at this time. Were I just another man in the street, who would prevent me from marrying the girl of my choice, whether she be first or ninth wife? But am I not imprisoned now by my office and every move I make securitized? I can't even act in a symbolic event such as this that has potential to unite my state: I have been hostage to the endeavors of my heart; my sense of responsibility is the cross by which I am now, crucified; and what a burden one has to endure being a governor at a time when, even your own child, a child you have sacrificed to nurture, can lecture you about morals?

Zungu: Do not lament father, you accepted your office and with it the shackles of expectations. We ought to celebrate my mother's recovery, but now see, we welcome her with a lamentation about your conduct!

Mm`bosi: Son, the greatest embarrassment to a leader of our time is to betray his humility! To have to take of the gown of dignity and display the nudity of humanity; to say

I am ashamed! But, we cannot afford much pleasure when heavy decisions wait! Let us dismiss the women then we can have a man to man talk! Remember there is a wedding tomorrow (*He goes to the women and shoos them into another room. Then comes back.*)

Mmbosi: Now, tell me Son, why did you change your mind about the girl?

Zungu: She changed hers first or his father changed it for her.

Mmbosi: What do you mean?

Zungu : Father, there is so much going on that I don't understand!

Mmbosi: So much about what?

Zungu: About Luwa, about his father Jilosi, about those two foreign guests you entertained last night, especially those two who came first. They were Hon. Jilosi's guests, too....and now one of them turns out to be Luwa's friend. His father says she is only acting love, now it looks like I cannot marry the love of my heart, another man, a foreigner is better placed; and this after all I did.....

Mm`bosi: Foreigners? After all you did? Zungu what did you do?

Zungu: I can't, yet, bring myself to a state of confession. But I now feel the burden on the back of Judas, due to which he destroyed himself after receiving those thirty cursed pieces of silver!

Mm`bosi: Judas! Zungu, why do you speak in such mysterious parables? Be plain to me for once! I don't understand!

Zungu: I see it's your turn not to understand. Tell me why I could not marry Luwa the love of my heart. For, you said it yourself, that I could not; I should not and I would not....

Mm`bosi: (*Thoughtfully*)Listen, here, son, I would not like to shock your innocent youth with any perplexing news. But since you demonstrate the stubbornness of your maturity; I can't forever carry the burden of hiding the truth from you. Truth is a legitimate war general; every one of its death is justified by its triumph. I know I have harbored a piece of information that may devastate you, but so it is, at first, with every truth! It heals by upsetting the status quo of our perceptions. But please, let's not spoil the good mood for now, prepare for the big day tomorrow!

Zungu: But, father, are you still going to marry her, even with mother....

Mm`bosi: I have already invited people, I cannot cancel the wedding now...unity has to be demonstrated son, and it must start with the governor's house; now play your part! (*exits*)

Zungu: (*Thoughtfully*) Hey the old man is drunk with love and it has completely blinded him. But I can't watch him devastate mother, and embarrass us. I must play my part. (*a little more thoughtfully*) well, the only way to stop him is to make sure I stay as close to the girl as possible,...even kidnap her if I must, but... well, I understand the arrangement was that the girl was going to perform before the guests and then at the end of it, the traditional wedding would be solemnized followed by the signing of the contract for the exploration. Well I will keep as close as possible to the girl, even if it means dancing with her throughout the whole performance, then will make sure I rush a head of father to take the girls hand when the moment comes, after all the people already know am the bridegroom; yes, it will be a little confusion, a little embarrassment to him, that is the price of getting father back to his right senses.

(*Exit Zungu*)

ACT FOUR: SCENE FIVE.

(*Governor's Palace.His bedroom. Mrs. Mm'bosi is still lying on the bed. There is great hullabaloo outside. The governor is dressing up, apparently for a big occasion.*)

Mrs.Mm`bosi: (*Waking up*)What is going on?

Mm`bosi: So much is going on dear, so much seems to have gone on....

Mrs. Mm`bosi: But what`s going on now?

Mm`bosi: Now! There is a big celebration going on in the palace. A Special occasion. We are at the dawn of a new era of prosperity dear, a big contract for the exploration of oil in the South is going to be publicly signed; and then, there is a big traditional wedding!

Mrs. Mm`bosi: (*Softly*) A big wedding! In the palace! But, whose wedding is it! (*She attempts to get up but she is still too weak*)

Mm`bosi: (*Bending over to get her back to bed*) No no no! Just remain in bed dear. Do not strain yourself, you still need some rest!

Mrs. Mm`bosi: *(Determined to get up. She struggle again)* Never mind, I am getting better.

Mm`bosi: Please dear, you need some rest; I will get someone to attend to you, but please do not strain yourself. You don't need to be in the main hall, the noise and excitement may not be good for you.....Let me get someone to attend to you.

(As he moves out, he meets Dr. Ironess in the corridor!)

Dr. Ironess: Oh, I am sorry, your governorship. I just thought I should find out how she is doing! If there is anything I could do for her I am....

Mm`bosi: *(Embarrassed)* Oh! really, I was going to fetch a nurse to attend to her in.....I thought the commotion won't do her any good, so I advised her to keep away from the celebrations!

Dr. Ironess: Yes, really, well, I can attend to her.....if..... *(The governor is not really for the idea but Dr. Ironess is determined. The governor just nods and goes towards the arena. He meets Mwanze)*

Mwanze: Good morning your governorship, see, you are elegant both in dress and mood.

Mm`bosi: *(Ignoring his comment)* Is everything ready?

Mwanze: Yes sir, everything is ready, the guests have already arrived. The stage is set.... *(Enter Lalausi, the minister of security, panting)*

Lalausi: They are coming!

Mm`bosi: Mwanze: Who?

Lalausi: The villagers!

Mm`bosi: Oh let them in, they must witness this great union; my heart is a glow with the prospect of unity and prosperityLet them be part of the celebrations.

Lalausi: Sir! They are armed! They are invading the palace!

Mm`bosi&Mwanze: What?!

Lalausi: They are coming, a multitude of them, and they are angry! It is in retaliation to the cruelty with which they were treated during the evictions!

Mm`bosi: Cruelty? But, I put Jilosi in charge of the compensation programme!

Lalausi: Sir, the intelligence I have is that he is the one who sent a gang of rogues to rough them up and now he has laid the blame on you, he must have found good use of the compensation money, now he has incited them against you.....

Mm`bosi: Jilosi? Incited them? But why? Now what do we do! (*Thoughtful*) Yes, yes, if they are coming after me, then they will get me!

Lalausi: Sir, I suggest we use the military!

Mm`bosi: The military? Against, panga wielding villagers? And on a wedding day? Lalausi, I see you are a typical African predator; you drink, but blood and more blood! But, how do I order the killing of people with whom I bear no grudge, people for whom I have sacrificed to serve? If they have been incited, then, I am not their enemy, but the inciter is. Well, they will get at me, anyway, but they will get at me last. Come on, I am the Commander-in-chief and this is my strategy! Mwanze, arrange that we meet them right outside the palace, in style. Lalausi, this is the battle plan: in the front line, put the troupe of dancers and let them dance, as we march to meet them! I don't think anyone can be so blood-thirsty as to slaughter a group of children who are so elegantly dancing their hearts out! And these, after all, are their children! Right behind them, let the teacher and father of the girl, follow! Then I will be right behind with the guests. I will tell everybody the venue of the wedding has been moved to the State Park! We shall all sing unity! As we march to meet them. Upon meeting them, let the teacher speak to them. If, still, they will be thirst enough for blood..... I will volunteer, to be the sacrifice!

Lalausi and Mwanze: God forbid!

Mmbosi: Now go!

ACT FOUR: SCENE: SIX

(Enter a procession of villagers heavily armed with spears, rungas and pangas singing war songs. From the opposite direction they are met by the troupe of dancers. They stand each group facing the other at the main stage. The songs stop and the teacher steps to the front of the line of dancers and the teacher addresses the villagers).

Teacher: I greet you fellow villagers! I know you may not respond to my greetings because your throats are swollen with anger; your hearts are bruised by vexation, betrayal and bitterness. I know you were coming to fight to liberate us; but how I wish we were really in custody, imprisoned! As you can see, we are free and all we have been treated to since we came here is the beauty of the performances of these dancers, your children! I know you have an enemy, I have one too, in my mind, but, I can tell you it is not the governor; if our eyes would open wide enough, we would be able to deal with our common enemy. You can sacrifice me as a traitor, for I speak in defense of the governor, but it's because I know blood and more blood will only be the drug by which our enemy is invigorated! *(Takes the hand of the lead dancer, Kabuche)* This girl is your daughter, my daughter, our daughter, she is young but what she is capable of, what she has done is beyond what any of us can do with our machetes. She has earned great favor in the eyes of the governor, and now her way to prosperity is cleared. This girl, today, is a bride in a big wedding ceremony in the State Park! The governor's message is this: you are all invited to attend the big occasion; we can match there together! If you still insist on seeing blood, the governor has volunteered to die, if to save this nation. *(He orders the troupe to start singing and dancing towards the park. To the villagers)* The only condition to attend the wedding is: no weapon is allowed in. Now dancers lets go.....

(The villagers stand looking at one another, then one by one lay down their weapons and join in the procession)

ACT FOUR: SCENE SEVEN.

(The State Park Arena. Enter dancers ,The governor with other dignitaries ; Enter Zungu , always eye s on the dancer. Enter the villagers.)

Mwanze: *(Acting M.C.)*

Ladies and gentlemen, it would be redundant to tell you what has been in the public domain for the last few days . Perhaps what you need to know is that today we are going to witness the solemnization of two covenants: social and economic. By that I mean , there will be a great wedding , as you all know , but there is also the signing of the exploration of oil in the Southern Part of our State , which the governor wishes to do in public . It is a project for the benefit of all of us. Cheers to unity, cheers to prosperity!

All: Cheers to prosperity!

Mwanze: As you know this is a traditional wedding!

Zungu: *(Coming to this stage)* No , it is a Christian wedding, my wedding, sir!
(The vicar is ready. Vicar! (A priest comes forward Zungu is at the stage standing facing the crowd. He is smartly dressed for a wedding the Governor and Mwanze are confused)

Vicar: Now , since the groom is ready , I call upon the bride.
(Enter the girl dancer, now in a wedding gown. She is brought in by a maid . All this scheme was hatched by Zungu .Cheers !)

Vicar: And now, I call upon you ladies and gentle men to witness the union of these two Lovers, but If anyone is against this union let him say now or forever remain quiet.....*(Silence. The sudden storms in Jilosi, dragging Luwa by her upper arm , Luwa is weeping .)*

Jilosi: Yes, this wedding cannot take place. Say it my daughter, say it!

Luwa: Well I I...No father , I can't.....

Jilosi: Say it! Say what everybody knows.Is he not engaged to you! Yes, I have said it For you! Yes! Yes! There cannot be a wedding, and you *(indicating the governor)* of all people know it. You cannot blackmail my daughter and me

Mmbosi: *(Standing up)* Traitor! I trusted you, tolerated you, but is this how you pay

Me?! Must you sell your daughter in the pursuit of your blind ambition? You should know that it is an abomination for these two to marry!

Jilosi:(*Suprised*) Abomination? Abomination, when all through their life, as they grew up we, and I mean you and me, made them believe they could marry? I have worked hard all my life, to make that a reality, but you tell me now, it was only an empty promise?

Mmbosi: (*Indicating Zungu*) He is your son, too?

Jilosi: My son?

(*Enter Dr. Ironess and Patience—Jilosi's wife---pushing a wheel chair on which is mrs. Mmbosi, who has heard Jilosi's Question*).

Mrs. Mmbosi: Yes, Jilosi, you knew well that I was your friend's girl friend, but on my visit

The hostels way back in college, you had the guts to take advantage of me and the absence of your friend to do what you did; and when I later told you I was pregnant, you only called me a whore, and slapped me! I was about to graduate, but I lost a year and a half, and when my parents pushed me so hard to reveal the father of the child I had to implicate Mm'bosi; but I could not live with the guilt, so one day I told him the truth knowing that he was going to throw me away like a rag just as all boys do, but I was shocked when he accepted and later married me after I finally graduated. Yes, Jilosi, he (*pointing at Zungu*) is your biological son, but you don't deserve to be called a father!

Zungu (*shocked beyondwords runs towards mm'bosi*) Father!

Mm'bosi: He is your father, son! Now you understand, Luwa is you sister!

Zungu: no! he can't be my father, he is planning to kill you!

Mm'bosi: Kill me!

Zungu: He asked me to steal the national seal, the symbol of power, and hand it over to

Him, he also asked me to forge your signature for the contract with those foreigners, all in exchange for Luwa, with whom I would live oversea! You sacked him; he is red hot with revenge.

Mm'bosi: Arrest him, traitor! (*Two police men rush to Jilosi, but before they get him he*

rushes to the governor with pistol and jabs it in his throat and uses him as a hostage.)

Jilosi: You have no authority, morally or legally, to order an arrest, your governorship; I am Now in charge, *(to the policemen)* any foolish move and I blow his brains out! And I know you don't want such violence on such an occasion! Now, be good people, and disperse quietly. You must know, good people, it takes a man some time to painstakingly work out his plans to achieve his ambitions; besides, progress shall not be slowed down by a such a traditional conservative, who instead of hastening a project which has the potential to propel us to the first world, he has time to caress such backwardness in the name of beauty and culture! Such breed of leaders is alien in Africa! Now move!*(As the people move backward slowly, Dr. Ironess, winks at Patience, Patience moves slowly but fearless towards Jilosi, whose attention is now fully on her. Unknown to him, Dr. Ironess has moved behind him, and takes one gun from a policeman).*

Patience: *(Moving cautiously towards Jilosi)* Give me that thing, Jilosi, aren't you ashamed of Disrupting such a peaceful union! You are intent on pouring blood and you call that progress! Shoot me then, and drink my blood to your fill, let these innocent people go. How mistaken I was to believe hopelessly over the years that I could change you! But, you will not get far with this. See, you are a tiny evil island in the ocean of good people, the sooner you realize that, the better for you and all of us. Now, hand over that thing to me!

Jilosi: Don't move near me, chicken hearted woman, I thought you would be bold enough to Be on my side, but how mistake I was, I overestimated your guts; you are only a woman after all!

Patience: The sooner you realize you are sinking dear the better for you, it is not enough to Boast of being a man, a little sensibility could do better! *(by now Dr. Ironess is behind Jilosi, she raises, the gun and hits him on the head by the butt, and lets out a scream. Jilosi falls unconscious; the people rush to surround him).*

Dr. Ironess: He was our common enemy!

Mm'bosi:*(Stepping forward to security)* take him away, his blind ambition has ruined him. *(Rushing forward to where his wife is)* Dear Maryellen, forgive me for the fainting of faith. *(To the people)* you may not have known that my wife has been ill for a long time, but I am elated that she is now well and here with us, thanks to Dr. Ironess, here, and the

support of Mrs. Patience and the women who intervened in prayer and various other ways. Brethren, we have a reason to celebrate and we shall not allow a few people to ruin our prosperity! Welcome to my son's wedding, and the public signing of the mining contract, cheers to prosperity! Let the drums, roll. *(there is dancing as the marriage of Zungu and the village girl is solemnized, and the signing of the mining contract is done at the completion of which the actors free and the curtain falls)*

(THE END)