diamonds, cobalt, tungsten? (Charlie nod) Then answer me this: are there scars in the hills of Twin Forks Junction—cut by strangers? Well, that, you see, is the difference: we know you are, and we have known it for a very long time! I like your glittering eyes, dear man, and your dream of bridges, but the fact is those great gashes have everything to do with this Mission—and the "other part" virtually nothing!

**Charlie (Incredulous)** Matosch, I don't believe it—that you can sit here, under this very roof where you learned to read and write—and deny the dedication of those who came here—

**Tshembe (Utter dismissal)** I do not deny it. It is simply that the conscience, such as it is, of imperialism is . . . irrelevant.

**Charlie (Clutching his head in despair)** Oh, for Christ's sake, man! "Imperialism!" Can't we, even for five minutes, throw away yesterday's catchwords? The sacrifice that these people—

**Tshembe (Jumping up, afire)** "Sacrifice!" There, you see, it is impossible! You come thousands of miles to inform us about "yesterday's catchwords"? Well, it is still yesterday in Africa, Mr. Morris, and it will take millions of tomorrows to rectify what has been done here—

**Charlie (Intently)** You hate all white men, don't you, Matosch?

**Tshembe (A burst of laughter. Casting his eyes up)** Oh, dear God, why? (He crosses down and away) Why do you all need it so? This absolute loo-onging for my hatred! (A sad smile plays across his lips) I shall be honest with you, Mr. Morris. I do not "hate" all white men—but I desperately wish that I did. It would make everything infinitely easier! But I am afraid that, among other things, I have seen the slums of Liverpool and Dublin and the caves above Naples. I have seen Dachau and Anne Frank's attic in Amsterdam. I have seen too many raw-knuckled Frenchmen coming out of the Metro at dawn and too many hungry Italian children to believe that those who raid Africa for three centuries ever "loved" the white race either. I would like to be simple-minded for you, but—(Turning these eyes that have "seen" up to the other with a smile)—I cannot. I have—(He touches his brow)—seen.
LOUISE HANSBERRY

TSHEMBA (Swiftly, to end it) It is not I but you who are obsessed. Race—racism—is a device. No more. No less. It explains nothing at all.

CHARLIE Now what the hell is that supposed to mean?

TSHEMBA (Closing his eyes, wearily) I said racism is a device that, of itself, explains nothing. It is simply a means. An invention to justify the rule of some men over others.

CHARLIE (Pleased to have at last found common ground) But I agree with you entirely! Race hasn't a thing to do with it actually.

TSHEMBA Ah—but it has!

CHARLIE (Throwing up his hands) Oh, come on, Matoesch. Stop playing games! Which is it, my friend?

TSHEMBA I am not playing games. (He sighs and now, drawn out of himself at last, proceeds with the maximum precision and clarity he can muster) I am simply saying that a device is a device, but that it also has consequences: once invented it takes on a life, a reality of its own. So, in one century, men invoke the device of religion to cloak their conquests. In another, race. Now, in both cases you and I may recognize the fraudulence of the device, but the fact remains that a man who has a sword run through him because he refuses to become a Moslem or a Christian—or who is shot in Zatembu or Mississippi because he is black—is suffering the utter reality of the device. And it is pointless to pretend that it doesn't exist—merely because it is a lie!

CHARLIE (Deeply affected) You know something, Matoesch? I don't think I'll ever understand you: on the one hand you go completely beyond race, on the other you wrap yourself in it! (He is circling the perimeters of the cloth. Now he starts in towards TSHEMBA, thinks better of it, folds back a passageway and goes up to him) Now if only you could drop the devices yourself, you might find out we're on the same side—(TSHEMBA throws him a look and abruptly turns away and snatches up the fabric furiously) For Christ's sake, man, we want the same things! We're both searching! Only, I respect your anguish. Now, if you could just try to respect mine.

TSHEMBA (Whirling on him) "Respect," Mr. Morris? What is there to conceivably respect about the fact that your so-called "anguish" has brought you thousands of miles across rivers, mountains, whole oceans, to rapturize a dirty, smelly little hospital which, presumably, must distribute one new germ for every old one it almost accidentally exterminates!

CHARLIE Now, just a minute, Matoesch.

TSHEMBA (Rising over him) "Respect"? Those are vile and expensive vanities. In your own country you would not be paying tribute to this place, you would be campaigning to get it closed!

CHARLIE (White heat) The fact of the matter is that it is better than nothing and that is what you had before: Nothing!

TSHEMBA And even if that were true—billions and billions of dollars, pounds, francs, marks, have long since paid for all the hospitals—

CHARLIE And you really think Marta Gorterling came here for gold?— Or was it cobalt? (Advancing on him. The two stand jaw-to-jaw) I'd like you to answer that, Matoesch. Do you?

MARTA

TSHEMBA (Smiling easily) Of course not. She came to find fulfillment. Just as you came for salvation, and I to find—cloth! Here's hoping each of us finds what he is seeking. At Africa's expense, as always! (He drinks) Now take your stolen liquor and go, please. This conversation will never get any further.

(Kneeling, he turns his back to Charlie, and his full attention to the box of odds and ends)

CHARLIE (Not moving) It has to.

TSHEMBA For whose sake...?

CHARLIE For both our sakes.

(CHARLIE is about to pursue the point but stiffens with sudden apprehension as he notices that PETER and NGAGO—spear in hand—have approached the hut)

PETER Bwana.
ACT TWO

SCENE 8

Immediately following, MADAME sits in the parlor as before; TSEMHE sits cross-legged at her feet, his head resting back gently against her.

TSEMHE You will stay on, then?

MADAME At my age, one goes home only to die. I am already home.

TSEMHE Yes, of course. When you first came here, did you know that you would stay here and die here?

MADAME Yes, I think so. One knows, doesn’t one? When the ship steamed into Bremmer Pool and I saw the African Coast for the first time, I did indeed feel that strange foetal moment when, for some reason or other, we know that our destinies are being marked. (Laughing a little) Doesn’t always turn out like that, of course. But those are the times we remember, so it seems true enough. Torvald was twenty-seven; resplendent in his helmet and a new pair of boots. Steaming down to Africa! Ah, we were something in our circle in that day. “Going out to Africa,” people would say, “Ahhhh, ahhhh…” and then wonder if they should give us a coin or two. (Gentle reflective laughs punctuate all of these allusions) And then, there we were: Torvald and me, a cello and forty crates of hymnals. I was twenty-eight, had two pairs of culottes made of fine Egyptian linen, shots for malaria and a helmet of my own—and what else might one need for any adversity in life?

TSEMHE What was he like then, Madame?
ABIOSEH It is creatures like that who make it impossible for us.

TSHEMBE You are altogether committed to them, aren’t you?

ABIOSEH I am committed to God, to civilization—and to Africa! Yes, Africa, my brother—

TSHEMBE The American blacks have a name for those like you, Abioseh, but it lacks . . .

ABIOSEH Yes, Tshembe—but it is not I who am Judas! It is you who have sold yourself to Europe! It is I who chose Africa! Tshembe, Tshembe . . . I have watched you and listened to you and desperately wished that you would share my goals for our people. I have waited and prayed. But you believe in nothing! You act on nothing! You have put man on God’s throne—but you serve neither God nor man!

(Abioseh turns on his heel and starts out)

TSHEMBE Where are you going?

ABIOSEH I must go.

TSHEMBE Go!? Go where?

ABIOSEH To see Major Rice.

TSHEMBE Peter . . . !

ABIOSEH (Turning to him) They are murderers, Tshembe. Murderers!

TSHEMBE Abioseh, stay out of this. It is not your affair.

ABIOSEH (Taking bold of him) It is both our affair. Tshembe, come with me!

TSHEMBE (Breaking free) He is an elder. He helped to raise us. They will kill him, Abioseh . . .

ABIOSEH I must go.

(Abioseh starts out, Tshembe grabs him)

TSHEMBE No!

(They grapple and at last Tshembe flings him to the ground and grabs up the spear to hold him there)

ABIOSEH Then you must use the spear!

TSHEMBE Abioseh, there is butchering on both sides. Stay out of this!

ABIOSEH Christ leaves me no option.

(Tshembe rises and stands tall in his righteousness, inviting the blow)

TSHEMBE Abioseh! We sat together as children and watched the fire and spoke of what we’d become as men. Look at us now!

ABIOSEH (Advancing on the spear until it rests against his breast) Then use the spear. Because that is the side you have chosen. The side of terror, the side of blood. I make you your brother’s keeper!

(They two brothers stand, facing each other. Abioseh sweeps past him and exits)

Blackout
PETER

CHARLIE Peter.

(Charlie exits quickly, and Peter and Ngago step into the bar. The air is charged at Tshembe, still on his knees, and Ngago regard each other—until, at a sign from Peter, the latter withdraws and sits, within earshot, outside. Peter smiles at Tshembe with great warmth—this is their first meeting since his return—and they embrace. Tshembe invites Peter to sit on the box, and sits on the floor—opposite him. Even at his most "relaxed," however, he is acutely aware of Ngago)

PETER You did not answer the summons yesterday, cousin.

Tshembe Summons?

PETER From the Council.

Tshembe What do you know about that?

PETER (Takes out a strip of bark) I know about it.

(He hands it to him)

Tshembe (Grinning at the realization) You, too—!

PETER Why did you not come?

Tshembe What would I have done there?

PETER You would have heard what is happening to our people.

Tshembe (With a great sigh) I know what is happening to our people, Peter.

PETER Then why did you not come? And in your father’s house I am not "Peter"—I am Ntali, the name our people gave me.

Tshembe Well, Ntali, the truth is, I can no longer think of myself as a Kwi. (Ngago sits forward, listening) Only as a man.

PETER (Dubiously) You took part in the funeral service as one who knows who he is.

Tshembe It was a way of saying—"goodbye."

PETER Tshembe, I speak for the Council. There is a need for leaders.

PETER (Gently) I "understand," cousin—that such men have forgotten the tale of Modingo, the wise hyena who lived between the lands of the elephants and the hyenas. Tshembe, hear me. (What follows is not merely told but acted out vividly in the tradition of oral folk art) A friend to both, Modingo understood each side of their quarrel. The elephants said they needed more space because of their size, and the hyenas because they had been first in that part of the jungle and were accustomed to running free. And so, when the hyenas came to him, Modingo counseled (PETER rises to become the “wise hyena”): “Yes, brothers. True. We were first in this land. But they do need space—any fool can see that elephants are very large! And because I was born with the mark of reason on my brow—on which account I am called Modingo, ‘One Who Thinks Carefully Before He Acts’—I cannot join you on our side while there is also justice on the other. But let me think on it.” (He sits, brow furrowed, chin in hand) And thereupon Modingo thought. And thought. And thought. And the hyenas sat and waited. And seeing this, the elephants gathered their herds and moved at once—and drove them from the jungle altogether! (Turning to Tshembe) That is why the hyena laughs until this day and why it is such terrible laughter: because it was such a bitter joke that was played upon them while they “reasoned.” (There is silence for a moment, and then he leans forward to place his hand upon Tshembe’s) Tshembe Matoseh, we have waited a thousand seasons for these “guests” to leave us. Your people need you.

Tshembe (Sadly) Ntali, the Europeans have a similar tale which concerns a prime . . .

PETER (Rising in anger) You are full of what the Europeans have. It is a good thing to discover the elephant has a point of view, but it
jurisdiction. I must order everyone, male and female, to wear side-arm. I am sorry, Dr. Grotterling, but at this point—

MARIA I understand, Major.

RICE Mr. Morris?

CHARLIE Are you “ordering” me, Major?

RICE I am making a suggestion that well might save your life.

CHARLIE (Drawing up his sleeve) Major, would you like to check my arm?

RICE Mr. Morris, this is Africa—

CHARLIE Yes, I know. Where Stanley met Livingstone!

RICE Precisely. And where one does not conduct an enquiry on the ethics of resisting cannibalism while being seasoned for the pot! (To Dekoven) Doctor—?

DEKOVEN Why will order me to fire it, Major?

(He throws down his cigarette and strides out)

RICE If this Mission persists—

MARIA (Interrupting wryly) I trust, Major Rice, you don’t expect me to wear one. After all—(Peering at him)—I might hit you.

(To TSHEMBE)

RICE Why don’t some of you educated chaps talk sense into these murderers? What do they think they are going to accomplish? Murdering people who never did them a moment’s harm—and their own people to boot? We don’t pretend that it’s been all jolly on our side—but this business—what’s the good of it, boy? ’Tain’t going to solve a bloody thing! And they can’t win, you know. Why don’t the fellows like you do something . . . talk to them? (They gaze at one another—the European with almost plaintive urgency; the African without expression. At last Rice turns—a man perplexed and embarrassed, who desires, like all of us, sympathy) There—you see, Mr. Morris; the response to reason. And it will be no different with Kumalo. It may surprise you, sir, but I do not enjoy my present role. I am not by temperament an adventurous sort. Or a harsh one. I have become a military man only because the times demand it. (A curious, urgent and almost sad defensiveness) This is my country, you see. I came here when I was a boy. I worked hard. I married here. I have two lovely daughters and, if I may presume an immodesty, a most charming and devoted wife. At some other time I should have liked to have had you out to our farm. This is our home, Mr. Morris. Men like myself had the ambition, the energy and the ability to come here and make this country into something . . . (He turns ever so slightly from time to time to catch Tsembme’s expression) They had it for centuries and did nothing with it. It isn’t a question of empire, you see. It is our home: the right to bring up our children with culture and grace, a bit of music after dinner and a glass of decent wine; the right to watch the sun go down over our beautiful hills—(Looking off with a surge of appreciation) And they are beautiful hills, aren’t they? We wish the blacks no ill. But—(Simply, matter-of-factly, a man confirmed)—it is our home, Mr. Morris. (A beat. He looks up, a little embarrassed) I should be grateful if, whatever other impression you may have received, you would try to remember that when you write of this place.

MARIA: Marta, I must go to bed. (Pointedly) Do you know, in some ways I think I am quite glad to be going blind? The less one sees of this world, I am convinced, the better . . .

(To TSHEMBE) MARTA rises to assist her.

RICE (To TSHEMBE) There is an eighty-thirty curfew for all natives. (He looks at his watch) It is now eight-fifteen. (To all, crisply) Good night.

(He exits. CHARLIE stands looking after him)

MARTA (Her arm about MADAME) Good night, Mr. Morris. Good night, Tsembme.

CHARLIE Good night, Doctor.

MADAME (Pausing before TSHEMBE) You must come back and tell me all about your travels, Tsembme. I am so pleased that you got to see my mountains. I should have loved to have seen them again . . . Ah yes . . . (She reaches out to touch him, but instead balls up his
ACT TWO
SCENE 6

In the darkness the roar and burst of jets explodes overhead. In the distance the muffled sounds of destruction. Then silence—and, gradually, the faint jungle sounds of dawn.

It is the following day. A clearing in the jungle lit only by shimmering shafts of sunlight through the density of trees overhead.

Out of the shadowy steps NGAGO—in the uniform of the Freedom of the Land Army: green fatigue and shirt, cartridge belt, long knife at the waist, rifle in hand. Two WARRIORS (one the young woman seen in the first scene) similarly attired, with rifles, move swiftly to their appointed places, keep watch, and occasionally respond to his words.

NGAGO makes a ritualistic sign and moves with a dancer's grace, almost hypnotically, circling the stage. He is no ordinary leader and this is no ordinary exhortation. His voice at times rises in traditional anger; more often it is almost a whisper, a hiss, a caress. He is the poet-warrior invoking the soul of his people.

NGAGO (Raising rifle hand ritualistically) We must speak swiftly and move on. Brothers! Sisters! (His hand sweeps the audience) Here now are our people flying before the enemy—hunted in the land of our fathers—woman and child and grandfathers of the Kwi peoples. See them and understand! See them, people! (Gesturing directly into the audience) This young one was making her way from the embers of her village when the soldiers caught her. Five of them! Must I tell you of the crime!? (Gesturing again) Rise up, old father! This old man came through the woods with his family and met the troops. (Screaming) HE IS WITHOUT FAMILY NOW! (Pointing) And look there! And there! (He and the WARRIORS crouch as a helicopter circles overhead, then fades off) And there! They drop lakes of fire on our villages! The hummingbirds of death sit motionless in our skies to fire on us like animals! They drive us like beasts into great camps they have built for this hour! What then but to fight? WHAT THEN BUT TO DRIVE THEM OUT!? (Softly, hypnotically: an incantation to the slowly mounting staccato of the drums) People, pass this word in the forest until the trees whisper it, until the river hums the message: Send us your sons! Send us warriors! KILL THE INVADER! By spear and by rifle! In the night, in the morning! On the roads—in their homes—in their beds! Let us drown them in the blood they have shed for a thousand seasons—(His voice buses almost to a whisper, caressing the words)—and so make Death black for all their generations—(He kneels and circles his hand over the earth)—so that in all our land no seed of them—(He picks up a handful of dust)—no single scent of what they were—(Letting it sift away through his fingers)—remains to afflict our children's children's children! (Rifle in the air in classic pace joined by the WARRIORS) KILL THE INVADER!

Blackout

STOP

START
someone important has died and no one has come to tell me. For a few years Aquah's children came. But they have grown up and gone away and now—no one comes. (A young boy appears behind the Mission and looks quickly about to make certain he is unobserved: a sudden, fairskinned youth in the late teens, in shorts, filthy undershirt and sneakers, and—incongruously—a clean white pith helmet. MADAME stiffens and stares straight ahead) Now, sir, "Caliban" is almost upon us. He has turned on the generator and now the river breeze tells me—(He crosses swiftly to a tree stump)—he is crossing the compound to make certain—(He looks from right to left, stoops and reaches into the tree stump)—that Dr. DeKoven has left him a bottle. (He comes up with the bottle, drinks, recaps and replaces it, and heads for the Mission) This, sir, is Eric.

ERIC (In the door) I am here, Madame.

MADAME (Without turning her head) Eric. Show Mr. Morris to his room.

CHARLIE Hello, Eric.

ERIC Mr. Morris.

(Manipulating his pith helmet under his arm, he picks up the American's bags and exits. CHARLIE is about to follow when Mme. Neilsen takes his arm)

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

(CHARLIE exits. The old lady sits staring dead ahead)

Dimout

ACT ONE
SCENE 2

Dusk. The Matoseh hut.
As the lights slowly darken in the parlor, they come up on a Kwi hut, the great house of an elder. ERIC sits on a mat with a bottle before him. He drinks a good one, adjusts his pith helmet and studies himself in a hand mirror as he whistles an African tune. Offstage the drums are constant.

Over the rise comes TSHEMBA MATOSEH, a handsome young African in worn and rumpled city clothes, his tie loosened, jacket slung over his shoulder, a traveling bag in one hand. At center, he sets it down, wipes his brow, then bearing the whistle sneaks up on the hut and joins in the tune.

ERIC (Looking up with startled apprehension and joy) Tshembe! You came!

(TSHEMBE throws his arms together straight out over his head and claps three times in the Kwi "sign" of greeting. ERIC reciprocates and the two brothers embrace)

TSHEMBE Where is my father?

ERIC He died last night.

TSHEMBE (He crosses away to look out at the dying sun) So I missed the last goodbyes.

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

TSHEMBE "Sons, sons: hurry, hurry. Do not dawdle—(A man deeply moved)—or you will miss your last goodbyes."

ERIC When I wrote you, I didn't think that you would come at all.
LOURNAINE HANSBERRY

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

ERIC  We never see Abioseh anymore. After you went away, he went off to St. Cyprian's.

TSHEMBE  Did you send word to him of our father?

ERIC  Yes, but I don't think Abioseh will come.

TSHEMBE  You also didn't think that I would come. (Brightening) Eric, you've become a man.

ERIC  It's been five years...!

TSHEMBE  Five years... You smoke?

(Enters in, opens his bag and tosses the boy a few packs of cigarettes and some newspapers)

ERIC  American cigarettes! (He eagerly breaks a pack) Willy almost never has American cigarettes.

TSHEMBE  Willy—? (A long pause, to remember) Dr. DeKoven? (He regards Eric, the pith helmet, feltly clothes and whiskey bottle; the other averts his eyes. He fingers the bottle, drinks, puts it down, then snatches the helmet from Eric's head) He gives you things—

ERIC  Yes.

TSHEMBE  Cigarettes? (Eric nods) Whiskey even?

ERIC  Tell me about Europe. About your life there... T schembe, please!

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

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

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

ERIC (Wide-eyed) You are married?

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

LES BLANCS

ERIC  You have her picture? (Ts he mbe tosses it, gets up, takes off his shirt and fills a basin to wash) She—she is European!

TSHEMBE  Very.

ERIC  How old is she?

(He is studying the photo critically)

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

ERIC  Why?

TSHEMBE  It is a custom among her people not to.

ERIC  Why?

TSHEMBE (Absurdly) Because it is.

ERIC  She's not very handsome.

TSHEMBE  (Shaking water from his head and taking the photo back) It is also not the custom to say such things about other people's wives!

ERIC  She looks older than you do.

TSHEMBE  She isn't. Europeans—wrinkle faster. (Looking at the photo) She is handsome. And she has eyes that talk.

(He kisses the picture fondly and puts it away)

ERIC  What color are they?

TSHEMBE  Gray.

ERIC  Ugh. Like Reverend Neilsen's.

TSHEMBE  And like your own. What is wrong with gray eyes?

ERIC  It is no color at all.

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

ERIC  What color is her hair?

TSHEMBE  Red like the sunset.

ERIC  It sounds ugly.
marched along in perfect formation, their eyes looking straight ahead, and it was the damnedest thing: I could feel their eyes on me, even though it was I who was watching them. And then they were gone and it was too late . . . and I kept wanting to call them back, to reach out and say, “Hey! . . . Lookit me! I never knew you were. Did you know I was . . .?”

(He sits silently; for a moment he is in that other time)

TSHEMBE—Yes?

CHARLIE (Turning to him as if the point should be self-evident) Well, don’t you see—? (But TSHEMBE merely waits, blankly) Matosch, we cannot spend our lives like this! Sometime, the contingents have got to stop—and look at each other. Tshembe, if we can’t find ways to build bridges—to transcend governments, race, the rest of it—starting from whatever examples we have—then we’ve had it. (Smiling thoughtfully) Which, in fact, is why I came here.

TSHEMBE—To this Mission?

CHARLIE To this Mission. Do you know where I am really supposed to be right now? Geneva—the Summit Conference on Disarmament. Fifty new ways to talk peace—and plan war! The world likes its cynicism in heavy doses these days and my editors wanted my own inimitable version. But, you see, I took a different airplane. I walked into that airport and realized that I had had it, that my insides were up for grabs—that from here on in, well, no matter what, I had to find the other part. The part. Nobody believes it even exists anymore. And you know something? Until I came chugging down that river, I didn’t know that I had stopped believing it either. That they would actually be here—the Reverend, Dr. Gottlering, DeKoven, Mme. Neilsen—doing—being—what most of us think is impossible. (A beat. Shrugs) “Confession of the Week.” (He gets up and crosses to the liquor cabinet. They are silent for a moment)

TSHEMBE (Smirking) Mr. Morris, I am touched, truly. But tell me, when you passed through Zatambe, did you just happen to see the hills there and the scene in them? (emotionally, now at his utmost apprehendingly) The great gashes from whence came the silver, gold,
MARTA: They are done one at a time, Mr. Morris! (Leads the way across to his father, one of the Africans, and holds up a vial of pills) Give him this—let him chew one—three times a day. Understand? Chew—

FATHER: Chew.

MARTA (indicating with finger): One—three times a day. Any first impressions, Mr. Morris? (She motions to the next patient, a young woman, to follow her, as Father leads the boy off)

CHARLIE: Well, yes. I was a little curious... Isn't the— (He begins) —lack of sanitation here somewhat of a problem?

MARTA (Amused): "Sanitation," Mr. Morris? You mean the dung—goat dung? (She takes the patient's pulse) Actually it's less of a problem than too much sanitation. Here we have to give up some things for others. The African feels much more at home with goats and chickens wandering about the wards. The wards are huts. Their own families cook the meals. It's the only way they'd come. (To the patient) Breathe in. Out. (She demonstrates and the woman follows suit with great seriousness) In. Out. Please help yourself to a drink. (She hands him a cup and indicates cabinet)

CHARLIE: Thanks, I can use it.

MARTA: Yes, I'm sure. (Continuing the examination) Sorry, no ice.

CHARLIE: (As cabinet.) At this moment it would be beautiful even right out of the bottle! (He pours and drinks, closing his eyes to enjoy) After a day and a half on that sailboat, Doctor, there is nothing as good as Scotch without ice! (Opening eye) But tell me, how do you manage without refrigeration? I thought that most drugs—

MARTA: We improvise. You'll see. (With curious pride) No refrigeration, no electricity, no phones, television, cinema... (Nurse, an African, enters swiftly, whispers to the woman, and both suddenly run off, followed by the others)

CHARLIE: What was that?

MARTA: If you are open-minded, you will learn it and be deeply rewarded. I can promise you that. I know, because—

MARTA (Shrugs): Mr. Morris, I've been here five years and I'm afraid I still have a great deal to learn.

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

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

CHARLIE: What's he like, Doctor?

MARTA: What's he like? He's everything you've heard. When Reverend Neilson came here forty years ago, he came with a peculiar great idea—

CHARLIE: (Finishing it off) —and it is the idea which remains important?

MARTA (Nodding): Here the native should feel that the hospital and the church are a part of the jungle, an extension of his own villages. (Looking at him intently) I hope you will stay long enough to fully understand what he has done here.

CHARLIE: (With his own meaning) —I would like to stay a long—long time, Doctor. (As bear) Returning the keys. Your keys! How come all the locks?

MARTA: Now why would you suppose, Mr. Morris? (A little laugh) You know, the most difficult thing for Americans is apparently the discovery that the whole world doesn't share the West's particular moral concepts—private property, for one. If you have any valuables, you must keep them with you or under lock and key. (Charlie looks at her oddly. She responds with disarming directness) Oh, I know what you are thinking, but we have had to get rid of prior notions. We cannot romanticize the African. There is too much work for that.

CHARLIE: Well, I do have a lot to learn, don't I?

MARTA: If you are open-minded, you will learn it and be deeply rewarded. I can promise you that. I know, because—STOP
ACT TWO
SCENE 5

Not quite an hour later. The Mission.

CHARLIE’s portable is open before him on the veranda. He types rapidly, then rips out and crumples the page. DEKOVEN looks up from the drink he is nursing.

CHARLIE No cable. No mail. No phones. I wish to God there was something I could do.

DEKOVEN Mr. Morris, you really must learn to give up. You are sitting there, still harboring the fugitive hope that sooner or later Torvald Neilsen will walk out of that jungle and announce, “I have been to Zatembe to intercede for kumalo!” Isn’t that so?

CHARLIE (Smiles) It was only a thought—

(TSEMBA enters)

TSEMBA Mr. Morris! Dr. Dekoven. Is Peter here?

DEKOVEN He went across river early this morning.

TSEMBA Then I must wait. Do you mind?

DEKOVEN Of course not.

CHARLIE (As TSEMBA turns away) Tshembe—

TSEMBA (With polite finality) Mr. Morris.

(He sits on a stump at some distance. CHARLIE at last turns back to DEKOVEN)

CHARLIE You know, I care about this place. Very much.

LES BLANCS

DEKOVEN I do not doubt that.

CHARLIE You said something the other day. About how coming here had “saved your life.” Did you mean that?

DEKOVEN For whatever little that’s worth

CHARLIE Well. Obviously a great deal to a good many people.

DEKOVEN Some other age will have to know that, Mr. Morris. I don’t

CHARLIE Why not, Doctor?

DEKOVEN Mr. Morris, there is a hospital for Europeans only seventy-five miles from here. Entirely modern. Here things are lashed together with vines from the jungle. Surely you must have wondered why.

CHARLIE Well, I assumed I knew why it was obvious . . .

DEKOVEN Electric lines between here and Zatembe could be laid within weeks, a road in six months. The money exists. All over the world people donate to Missions like this. It is not obvious, not obvious at all

CHARLIE But I thought the African wouldn’t come if it were different.

DEKOVEN (With a gentle smile) Marta is two things, Mr. Morris—a very competent surgeon and a saint, but she questions nothing very deeply. One of the first things that the new African nations have done is to set up modern hospitals when they can. The Africans go to them so freely that they are severely overcrowded. Something is wrong with Marta’s quaint explanation, don’t you think?

CHARLIE Apparently.

DEKOVEN (With great acuteness and irony) Mr. Morris, the struggle here has not been to push the African into the Twentieth Century—but at all costs to keep him away from it! We do not look down on the black because we really think he is lazy, we look down on him because he is wise enough to resent working for us. The
problem, therefore, has been how not to educate him at all and—at the same time—teach him just enough to turn a dial and know which mining lever to raise. It has been as precise as that—and that much a failure. Because, of course, it is impossible! When a man knows that the abstraction ten exists—nothing on earth can stop him from looking for the fact of eleven. That is part of what is happening here. (Drinking and looking off) But only part.

**TSHEMBE** (Swinging around and smiling slightly) You seem disturbed. **Mr. Morris**

**CHARLIE** Well, it's simply that—well, it takes a hell of a lot of education to turn a backward people into... How many people in this village can even read?

**TSHEMBE** Read what? **DEKOVEN** Everyone. Books. Six, eight, a dozen or more.

**CHARLIE** (Sitting back, confirmed) Well, then.

**DEKOVEN** (Smiling) Morris, this Mission has been here forty years. It takes perhaps twenty-five to educate a generation. If you look around you will find not one African doctor. (Shrugs) Until they govern themselves it will be no different.

**CHARLIE** (Wob) And the... "other part"? You said there was another part, Dekoven?

**DEKOVEN** (Rising and moving about like a man possessed, reliving the past) The other part has to do with the death of a fantasy. I came here twelve years ago believing that I could—it seems so incredible now—help alleviate suffering by participating actively in the very institutions that help sustain it.

**CHARLIE** You're not suggesting that lives have not been saved here, Doctor? Why, you alone...

**DEKOVEN** Oh, I have saved hundreds of lives; all of us here have. I have arrested gangrene, removed tumors, pulled forth babies—and, in so doing, if you will please try to understand, I have helped provide the rationale for genocide.

**CHARLIE** Genocide? Come on now, Dekoven, you can't really...