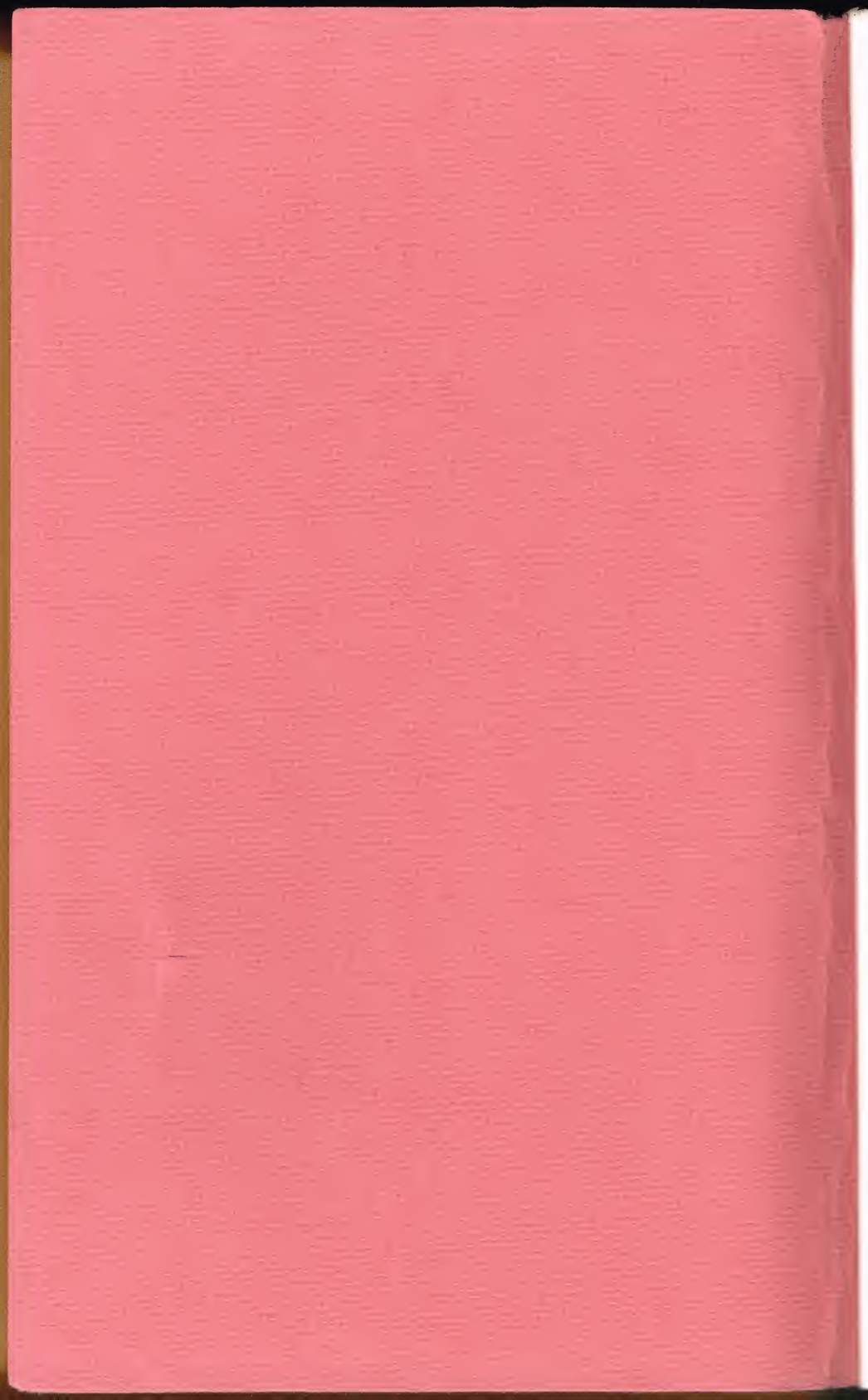




# PLUNDER

A PLAY BY F. PERLMAN





P L U N D E R

by Fredy Perlman

New York City  
June 1962

Front Cover by John Ricklefs

First Printing: 100 copies  
Printed by the author on the  
General Strike for Peace Offset Press  
at the Living Theatre  
New York  
1962

Reprinted in 1973 by  
*Black & Red*  
Box 9546  
Detroit, Mich. 48202





PLACE: The Free World

TIME: The American Century

PERSONS IN THE PLAY

The Audience

Participating members of the Audience:

DARIUS STARK, Corporation Owner	}	Sons of Darius Stark
Senator EDWARD STARK		
HAROLD STARK, State Department Consultant on Foreign Affairs		
CECIL STARK, Judge, Administrator, Corporation Lawyer		
PRETORIA STARK, Harold's wife and Darius Stark's Secretary		

BRUNO STARK, Playwright; son of Darius Stark

Masks in Bruno's Play, in order of appearance:

KRISHNA MOKSA

NATHURAM, Indian Beggar

HARILAL, Indian Businessman

AN AMERICAN SALESMAN

CHUANA MOKSA, Krishna Moksa's wife

INDIO MOKSA, son of Krishna and Chuana Moksa

MOSES BURUMBA, South African Revolutionary

SERVUS NERIANA, Aspiring S. African Mine Worker

BARBARA BURUMBA, Moses Burumba's daughter

MRS. BURUMBA, Moses Burumba's wife

THREE BUREAUCRATS

DUTCH ENTREPRENEUR

AMERICAN MILITARY ADVISOR

AMERICAN MAN

AMERICAN WOMAN

OTHERS

VAISYA MOKSA, son of Krishna and Chuana Moksa.







BRUNO

Forgive the intrusion, fellows

--Masters, rather.

I well understand the gravity of my trespass.

Purge us! you say. Ennoble, entertain us!

Give us Drama, Culture and Form.

Masters! What a task!

I'll dance! But what have you left

With which to purge you, ennoble, entertain you?

An empire of dregs, froth and scum

Is what remains, by your grace, of my dominion.

Dregs, froth and scum from which to spin pure form?

You give me radishes, onions and garlic and let me  
be the cook of your stew,

And what, Masters? You want the stew to taste like  
stew, and not like radishes, onions and garlic?

You say the stew is foul if you can taste the  
radishes?

You call it an abomination?

Your what? Esthetic tracts? They're clogged for  
weeks from such a fare?

Rancid red radishes, you say?

Putrid preparation?

Ah! You want a stew that transcends its components,

The components unidentifiable,

The radishes hidden, disguised.

The stew must be general, digestible as Pure Form.

You must be able to deny the radishes.

Impossible conditions!

You would have me conduct you through soot, grime  
and dust

And you'll demand, in the end, your purity?

Your faces clean, your suits unspotted, your tracts  
without a blemish?

Art, you demand. Beauty.

With dregs, frcth and scum to Purge, Ennoble,  
Entertain.

I hedge, you say? You fear I'll befoul your silent  
sleep: have you wake in black morning hours, your  
mouths full of pungent radishes, walls reeking of  
garlic, itching red lumps on your skin, and drink,  
deodorize and scratch, yet the taste, stench and



itch remain engraved on your tongues, walls and skins--forever.

But hold, Masters! I have it!

To purge, ennoble, entertain?

Obviously! Placed so far below you, I cannot approach your discernment.

Oh Masters! To attribute my perspective to you!

Forgive my impudent rashness!

For how can you see dregs, froth and scum where I do?

You have merely to see dregs, and you prosecute.

Froth, and you judge.

Scum, and you execute.

Oh, Masters! Your generosity is truly unbounded!

You grant a reprieve on such easy conditions!

To purge you, ennoble, entertain you,

I have merely to parade the dregs, froth and scum

And let you prosecute, judge, and execute.

What occupation can compete with the prosecutor's as a soul-laxative, to purge--

What faster than a judge's bench can elevate a common conscience, ennoble it--

What greater joy than the executioner's--what entertainment?

I have merely to prepare the surroundings.

The steel beams. The marble walls.

The security you crave in the court.

And in the center, a rose.

#### SCENE: INDIA

(Front of Indian hut: a pottery. Enter Krishna Moksa, 20 years old, shaping a clay bowl with his hands.)

Here, oh mighty prosecutor, is a dreg in far-off India.

You'll quickly recognize the nature of his crime.

(Enter Nathuram, a beggar)

NATHURAM

Still making bowls and dreaming of Bhagavad Gita!  
When will you get married, Krishna?

MOKSA

I am married, Nathuram, and you are a beggar. I am married to Earth. Each bowl is made of earth-substance. I take the substance in my hands, give it roundness, my imagination peoples it, and I have a world--a roomful of worlds. How can you say I am not married? Earth is my bride; with her I conceive worlds, ages of men, of animals, of loves, adventures and deaths. Here, look into this bowl, Nathuram: do you see the fierce armies facing each other, and in the center Arjuna, struggling with his soul--should he fight, or shouldn't he? And on this one, Nathuram, is India herself, rising like a sick man, shaking the plague from her body.

NATHURAM

Can you cure my brother's sickness by telling him to shake it off? Teach me, Krishna, teach me to feed my brother's family by showing them your bowl and telling them there is food on it. If the soul of India is sick, can the sickness be shaken off on bowls?

MOKSA

Nowhere else, Nathuram. I cure India's sickness with bowls. You could cure India with cloth.

NATHURAM

You are still a dreamer, Krishna.

MOKSA

While I dream, India lives. I see India on every bowl and there is India. Every bowl is a speck in the universe, and each contains the whole universe. When I no longer people my bowls, there will not be a universe. For you, Nathuram, the universe is empty.



## NATHURAM

If I went back to making cloth, I would starve and nothing would change, Krishna. You are mistaken. From the day when the Portuguese sat their Patriarch in Goa, our dreams no longer matter.

## MOKSA

Our dreams no longer matter because we no longer dream. It is we who are letting India die! We have books and religions that once inspired men to poetry, sculpture, architecture, philosophy. We had the finest cloth in the world even when the English could not tell men from wolves. Was not your father's cloth finer than any of the cheap English we have today?

## NATHURAM

Those days are past, Krishna! The Europeans won! Our souls are diseased; India is dying--if this was not so, the Europeans would not have won!

## MOKSA

It was not the weakness of our souls but of our arms that gave Europeans the crown of India! The savage Portuguese saw vitality, culture and prosperity they had not dreamed existed. If we had fought them with their instruments, we would have won, we would have become a powerful empire of Portuguese Christians, we would today carry murder and death to every corner of the world. But then there would not be India.

We are sick, Nathuram, but only because we let ourselves become what they make us. What can be more sick than the murders, the physical and spiritual tortures the healthy Westerners inflict--in the name of a Christ they say was as gentle and loving as Buddha?

## AMONG AUDIENCE

## DARIUS STARK

Aw, who's going to sit through this! It's like those glasses you put on and see everything upside down!

## NATHURAM

Maybe you are right, Krishna. I can still remember my father's happiness when he would weave--he told stories his grandfather had told him. Sure it was better cloth than any we see today. But the British merchants came and sold their cloth so cheaply --they never told us they had to change thousands of men into animals to sell their manufactured cloth so cheap.

We never knew we were expected to buy only things made in England until there was nothing else to buy. So my father lost his vitality and no longer told any stories. They bought him out for almost nothing--generations of weavers sold for three shillings!

The old man thought he'd lost his craft, betrayed his tradition --and he went begging. And so I went begging.

My brother had a plot of land and couldn't pay the taxes. Money-lenders took his house

Now I don't have anything against Natives. They've got the same I.Q.'s we've got. But there's no use denying they're underdeveloped is there?

All over the world they live in backward regimes--more backward than anything we've ever known. If it wasn't for our know-how and our aid they'd go on being backward for centuries.

We go there and build factories, mine resources, grow food--we bring economic growth into regions where there was nothing, nothing at all!

## HAROLD

Father, don't you see it's just this self-righteousness that breeds disaffection?

## DARIUS STARK

Now don't you go shooting your mouth off, Harold. Do you think you see the world as I've seen it? Who do you ever talk to but the officials--the natives who wear the same clothes we do,



and land and food and still the debts were not paid. Go speak to him of souls--tell his wife and children India's soul is still alive; quench their hunger with the Spirit of India!

(Enter Harilal, in Western clothes)

HARILAL

Krishna Moksa! I see you haven't given up yet. I say, would you mind giving me a second? I've been telling an American friend about you, and now he insists on meeting you. He represents an American pottery concern, and may take me on as an overseas agent.

MOKSA

I do not know who you are.

HARILAL

Come, come now. You are joking. Nathuram! How are you? Sorry I didn't see you over there. What are you doing these days?

NATHURAM

Begging.

HARILAL

Yes, I'd rather thought so. Tell me, is something wrong with Moksa? Either his memory is short, or he's acting as if I were an Englishman. Come now,

talk about the same subjects, and usually graduated from one of our schools?

When I was a kid I was sent to India--among the real natives--and I saw stuff you'll never see! A huge land of nothing but famines, castes, superstitions and parasites. Do you think by talking to Indians about the plays on Broadway you learn what backwardness is really like? If it wasn't for us and the English they'd still drown babies in ponds. If it wasn't for the schools and churches the missionaries built there/

Krishna. We used to make such fantastic plans together--have you forgotten? Once we sat on this very stoop and compared our commodities, our products.

MOKSA

I have never compared commodities. I have never made a product. I do not know what commodities are. I only make bowls and jars. I have never seen you before.

HARILAL

Get down off your pedestal, Krishna. This is Harilal. Surely you're not still holding against me my decision to stop making my own pottery, and to carry Western lines instead? That was over a year ago. I knew it would hurt you, but have you forgotten my offer to take you in on it, 50-50? That offer still holds, Krishna. And if I become an agent for this American firm, the offer holds there too: 50-50. I just can't understand you, Krishna.

MOKSA

I remember Harilal. Harilal is dead. I have seen the spirit leave his body. You are not Harilal.

HARILAL

For heaven's sake, Krishna, how long are you going to remain in the Middle Ages? The times are changing, and you have to change with them.

Maybe people appreciated the craft and care I used to put into every article--some said I made better pottery than my father,

AMONG AUDIENCE

DARIUS STARK

When I was there over forty years ago I didn't just talk to the diplomats and lawyer boys who come here for their educations. My father didn't own a plant, so he couldn't send me in fancy jet planes to represent his firm all over the world.



maybe even better than yours, eh Krishna? But is that a reason to spend my entire life at it?

Besides, you know the people lost interest. Don't you remember how concerned I was, how worried that I was losing my craft? How we used to sit, you and I, and try to think of ways to make better pottery!

You commended my work and I yours, but no one bought it. What contortions we went through trying to figure out why they'd lost interest! But do you know why, Krishna? They actually preferred the imported pottery. It held things just as well and lasted longer. They would have bought it even if it hadn't been so much cheaper than ours.

What did they know or care how much of ourselves we put into each jar, each bowl?

I had to earn my living and earn it hard by going among the poorest and filthiest natives. Some places I went they'd never seen canned food!

Would you believe it-- whenever I sold a bowl or a pot, they thought I'd made it myself, by hand--they couldn't believe there were thousands more where it came from, and when I tried to tell them they became suspicious and thought I was some kind of devil.

Once you got going it was pretty easy; scratch the surface and you found a market there all right.

But it sure wasn't anything like what I expected. Wherever you went, ignorance and superstition.

NATHURAM

But you knew, Harilal? And Moksa knew?

## HARILAL

Sure. I knew. But do you know, Nathuram, that my greatest fear has always been that I would someday wear rags and go begging, like you and your father? Yes, I woke to modern realities. They wanted imported pottery, so I sold it to them. Maybe I lost your type of dignity, Krishna, but I became aware of other kinds of dignity. I live in a clean house now, and I have a healthy wife; we can afford all the meals we eat. You think I crawled along the ground for this, but you are wrong, Krishna. All I had to do was fill out order blanks and speak to salesmen--and I'm richer now than I ever was before. There's no crawling in it. Salesmen show me their lines and I choose the ones that will sell. Of course I've changed. I'm no longer poor, and I no longer make my own merchandise. But look at yourselves: is it not about time you changed too?

(Enter young American pottery salesman)

## SALESMAN

Say, Harry, is this the guy you were telling me about?

## HARILAL

This is my American friend, Mr. Darius. Yes, this is Krishna Moksa. And that is Nathuram.

## SALESMAN

Oh yea? Are you the assistant here, Nathan?

## NATHURAM

I am a beggar. I do not belong here, Mr. Darilal.

## SALESMAN

The name is Darius. Here's something for you.

## NATHURAM

Thank you, thank you Mr. Darilal.



SALESMAN

Are you hard of hearing, Nathan? I said Darius:  
D-A-R-I-U-S.

(A crowd gathers)

NATHURAM

No, Mr. Darilal. I am only 23 and my eyes are getting poor. Bad diet, they say. But my ears are perfect; I can hear everything, Mr. Darilal.

SALESMAN

You god-damn. . .

(Crowd closes in)

Oh, never mind. Customer is always right, right Harry? Say--I didn't catch your name--

MOKSA

Moksa.

SALESMAN

Yea, say Harry tells me you get something like a religious kick out of making pottery.

NATHURAM

Ha! He's getting one right now, Mr. Darilal.

(Some laughter in the crowd)

SALESMAN

Your stuff is pretty nice. Does it have some special uses--like, do the Arabs use it in their temples? You know, is it special religious pottery?

MOKSA

Eat. Drink.

NATHURAM

Defecate. I believe you call them toilet bowls, Mr. Darilal. The little ones are for very small children.

SALESMAN

Eat? You mean these are regular bowls? You didn't tell me this guy was a competitor, Harry. How much do you make on this stuff? Say, what would you call yourself, anyway? Potterer? Bowl maker? You know, like I'm a salesman.

MOKSA

Artisan. You can see it on my face. Where is your face, Mr. Salesman?

SALESMAN

What did he mean by that, Harry? Say, did you bring me here so your buddies could get their kicks making fun of me?

(Moksa slips away through crowd)

SALESMAN

What do all these people want anyway?

HARILAL

(aside to Salesman)

Maybe we had better leave. He was not very pleased by the offer.

SALESMAN

Hey, where did he go? I wanted to ask him some more questions.

NATHURAM

He has gone begging. He is going to become my assistant, Mr. Darilal.

SALESMAN

Yea, let's get out of here, Harry. Can't say my heart'll break about his turning down the offer. You know something, Harry? These pals of yours. They're dangerous, you know what I mean Harry?

CURTAIN

## HOUSELIGHTS ON

## AMONG AUDIENCE

## DARIUS STARK

If I hadn't seen what an unexplored gold mine the foreign market was, I'd still be salesman for the firm I started with. But I quickly saw what I was missing out on.

## HAROLD

Father, don't you see the light this casts us in?

## DARIUS STARK

How else do you think I got a start? Think you'd be where you are now if I hadn't gone there? I didn't have a father who could set me up in a plush office before I'd proved what I was made of.

## HAROLD

You put people out of their jobs because you thought they were superstitious and then their money was good enough to buy your pots?

## DARIUS STARK

I don't see what's gotten into you! When did you start sentimentalizing about how we spoiled the traditional ways of natives? Ignorance and superstition were the only traditions they had. Everything I did was for their own benefit, and don't you forget who else benefitted from it! If it wasn't for men like me, our own American continent would today be nothing but another dark continent. It was men like me, not university lawyers like you, who fought the Red Indians and put them on reservations and made it possible for men to live here and build the most powerful nation there ever was! Don't you talk to me about traditional ways until you go and fight the traditional ways as I had to.

## PRETORIA

These things must happen every day in every part of



the world--it's just business. No one can do anything about them.

DARIUS STARK

You'd never believe what I had to go through to buy one of those fellows out. If we didn't buy them out, people would continue to buy the hand-made stuff even if it cost ten times as much as mine.

PRETORIA

Maybe my father was one of those you tried to buy out.

DARIUS STARK

When we did buy them out, they accused us of God-knows what--destroying their souls! And the time we had getting them to sell our commodities! You haven't the vaguest idea what backwardness means. Some of those people would sooner have lost their lives than sell manufactured goods. And even when they did sell it, they continued spending their time making clay bowls by hand long after they'd lost a market for them. You'd have to see it to believe it.

PRETORIA

My poor father. He was one of those who continued making pottery long after people stopped buying it. When I was little he would tell me how much it meant to him. He would still be making bowls, he would tell me, if the Europeans hadn't come.

DARIUS STARK

Those people worked just to be working--for nothing! We came to free them from that drudgery, offered them leisure, comfort--but they'd gotten so used to backwardness they actually preferred to remain enslaved to their drudgery.

PRETORIA

History can't be stopped in its tracks just to allow one man to continue making bowls by hand. Yet it's

strange--I feel as if the flesh were loosening from my bones, like a leper's.

LIGHTS OUT

BRUNO

What? The prosecutor cannot bear the crime through the criminal's eyes?

Masters, do not forget yourselves! You're in a court and not a steam bath.

Remember the marble walls, the steel beams and the rose.

What can this Moksa be to you?

To think of you making bowls in distant India!

Ludicrous vision!

What does this Moksa represent but the dark, the superstitious, the backward?

What but the savagery, the famines and the plagues from which your brave ancestors emerged

In what you call your Renaissance?

This Moksa speaks of work as if it were itself an end,

He calls work Self-Expression, an extension of his soul.

What Mysticism! What Puritanism! What Impudence!

How quickly he displays his tendencies!

You bring him freedom from these primitive demands: this enslavement to hand labor, this pointless search to see himself in his work.

Work as a goal? Bosh!

It's been your destiny to free men from this crude distortion.

Work is but a means to comfort, security.

Work is a hardship to be endured for its rewards.

Self-expression! Ah how the backward rationalize necessities!

What is the point of self-expression when you can have a task, a role, a function?

What point in understanding the universe when you can extend your physical being over it?

Work is a commodity, an asset in the acquisition of capital.

Capital means power over men, and over things.

Mastery! Leisure! Personality!

Capital is a way of life! It is freedom!

With power over men and things, what need for work?

Who would choose drudgery then?

Except this dreg in India.

You want to pity him because of his seeming  
ignorance.

You believed him when he claimed not to know a  
commodity.

Would you prosecute on the basis of seeming?

Take as grounds a criminal's claims?

I repeat, claims, and seeming!

Assuming Moksa's ignorance before this encounter  
--which we can certainly doubt--

Did he not turn down Harilal's generous offer?

Reject this most acceptable path to wealth and  
power,

Freedom, Recognition, Personality?

Poor deluded dreg! He would even deny the role in  
which you saw him,

Would laugh at you, Masters--

Laugh at roles, at functions, personalities, by  
claiming to transcend them!

#### SCENE: SOUTH AFRICA

(Moksa's home in Durban: the home is one room.  
Africans and some Indians at table, sitting on  
chairs. Chuana Moksa serves coffee. Indio,  
twelve years old, sits silently on bed.)

Ineffectual mystic! See him now,

The exalted Philosopher twenty years older,

No longer even artisan, he's now a South African  
miner,

Married, has a daughter who despises his position,  
His airs of transcending his condition;

With a son who, even so young, despises Moksa's  
inability to cope with his situation.

See Moksa now, Masters, still trying to defy the  
freedom you offer.



Judge him, Masters. Judge severely.  
 This is not one who breaks merely one of your laws.  
 He rejects power, turns his back on wealth.  
 He scorns leisure and will not do business.  
 He would burn the entire dossier that contains your  
 laws.

Call his laughter envy, or derision, even spite.  
 But know, oh mighty judges, that his laughter  
 undermines:

Your benches, this court, and everything you stand  
 for.

MOSES BURUMBA

(Vigorously)

We have accepted enough! In the fields we are  
 horses and cattle; in the factories haulers and  
 pushers. In the mines we are worms who crawl in  
 and bury ourselves to dig out their stones.

MOKSA

I agree with Burumba. We are becoming like animals.  
 The living day is no longer filled with man's  
 fashioning his soul into the world. It is impos-  
 sible to express ourselves in the mines. I came  
 with many dreams, but they are shattered. Here I  
 spend all my time, my energy, my life underground  
 --the dreams are lost; and still I have no food; my  
 wife is pregnant, and my daughter seeks among them  
 what I cannot give her.

BURUMBA

If we act, we must act together. Whoever acts by  
 himself is lost.

SERVUS NERIANA

Take care not to let things get out of hand.

BURUMBA

Ah yes, we must take care. Neriana does not want  
 to miss being appointed foreman.

## MOKSA

When we cannot express ourselves in our work, we become dry inside. I had many things within me, but today they are only a memory of something that was real once, and tomorrow not even the memory will remain.

## BURUMBA

Only two courses are open to us. We can do what Servus Neriana wants: continue as we are and crawl along our bellies for the rewards they may drop us. Or we can start resisting, an armed resistance, and change the situation ourselves.

(Loud talk)

## NERIANA

I had doubts about coming to this meeting. Mokska said there would be no talk of violence. But I knew this would not be so. We must peacefully accept our condition and work within it to improve ourselves. If you listen to Burumba, everything will be destroyed.

## MOKSA

Violence itself cannot accomplish anything, it cannot change the situation. With violence you exchange one set of rulers for another, but for the rest of us the situation is the same. It is the situation that must be changed.

## NERIANA

That is my position also. If we want to improve our conditions, then each of us must work well and he will be recognized and promoted to better conditions. There is no other way.

## BURUMBA

We are all familiar with your position, Servus Neriana. It is given by your name. But I do not understand what Mokska is saying. Are we to accept the European laws of violence, are we to watch

ourselves mutilated every day, without any resistance?

MOKSA

We must resist without violence. We must resist.

(Barbara Burumba, ten year old girl, runs in)

BARBARA

Father! They're burning our house!

(Moses Burumba curses; runs out)

MOKSA

How long can we bear this?

(All the men exit, except Servus Neriana)

NERIANA

Who is burning your house? What facts do you have?

BARBARA

It's your fault! I hate you! Let me go!

CHUANA MOKSA

You will stay with us until your father comes back.

(Neriana exits)

INDIO

I want to go with father!

CHUANA

You stay here, Indio.

(Indio and Barbara sit at table)

INDIO

Your father wants to fight the Europeans, but he's not as strong as they.



BARBARA

My father says you people don't want the Europeans ever to leave. Your father wants to live right next to them, to eat with them.

INDIO

He does not! But he's not so stupid as to go out and challenge them--he'd rather wait till our side is strong enough. Your father's just asking to be killed!

BARBARA

And you'd like nothing better, would you? Then you could join your sister in the English school.

INDIO

You can't even read--even your father can't read!

BARBARA

But your white-skinned sister can read can't she, and you know what side she chose don't you? You'll never see her again, I bet.

CHUANA

What is that?

BARBARA

Oh. . . I'm sorry. . . didn't you know?

CHUANA

What is it? What do you know?

BARBARA

I heard she's running off with that American boy friend. . . they leave tomorrow. . . I thought you knew.

(Enter Mrs. Burumba, distressed)

MRS. BURUMBA

Come, Barbara.

CHUANA

What happened? Where is my husband?

BARBARA

I want to go to father!

MRS. BURUMBA

We are going to Cape Town to stay with my brother.

CHUANA

What happened?

MRS. BURUMBA

They are bringing your husband.

(Exit Mrs. Burumba and Barbara)

INDIO

Why are they going to Cape Town?

CHUANA

To stay with Barbara's uncle.

INDIO

Barbara's father is dead isn't he?

CHUANA

We don't know that.

INDIO

She said I wanted him to die. But that's not true!  
And she said Pretoria ran away with an American.

CHUANA

That was just a story, Indio. Little girls tell  
many stories. We don't know it's true.

INDIO

Why did Pretoria want to go to English school?

CHUANA

I sent her.

## INDIO

She hates us, Mother. She told me. That crazy old fat woman, you know which, once told her she'd be the death of you and father and me. Pretoria said she wanted to kill the old woman, because she knew the old woman envied her white skin. I wanted to also. But she never killed the old woman/

## CHUANA

(Screams)

Stop it! Stop it! Why do you repeat every bad story you hear!

## INDIO

Pretoria hates us, Mother! She hates us because we're black!

## CHUANA

She's your sister, Indio!

## INDIO

If she ran away with an American, then she's not my sister! I hate her! I hate her! I hate the Europeans! I hate Pretoria as much as the Europeans! Why doesn't father want to fight against the Europeans, like Moses Burumba? It's Mr. Neriana that wants to sit alongside them.

## CHUANA

The Europeans are men too. If your father fought against them, he would lose his spiritual freedom and become the same as they. Then not only his body would be enslaved, but his soul too.

## INDIO

But father said that in the mines he didn't have any spiritual freedom. So how could he lose it if he'd fight?

## CHUANA

Indio, you have to show them the way--and you cannot show anything by killing.



## INDIO

Mr. Neriana wants us to be like Europeans, and father wants Europeans to be like us. He doesn't want them to leave, does he Mother?

(Rioting outside)

## VOICES

So you think we're animals, do you?  
Go back where you came from, Hindu!  
Don't hit him again, Ed. He's had enough.  
Where I come from you'd  
be a nigger--just a  
plain nigger,  
understand? You'd  
never get away with  
calling us animals,  
Nigger!  
Let him go.  
I'll teach this nigger  
to know his place!

(Door bursts open.  
Moksa is pushed in,  
bleeding, injured.  
He lies down.  
Chuana washes his  
injuries.)

## AMONG AUDIENCE

## EDWARD

Let's get out of here!  
What the hell's he  
trying to prove? What's  
he trying to prove?

## PRETORIA

Edward, why are you so  
upset? I've never  
seen you like this!

## EDWARD

Haven't you had enough?

## PRETORIA

Edward, have you ever  
taken part in a racial  
riot?

## EDWARD

Naw, Pretoria. Christ!  
What would I want with  
a racial riot?

## MOKSA

They'll not be satisfied until we walk on all fours  
and obey their whistles like dogs.

CHUANA

Krishna! Oh it's horrible! What have they done to you?

MOKSA

Burumba is dead. His wife ran away in panic. Where is her child?

CHUANA

They went to Cape Town.

INDIO

I told you he was dead. I wanted him to die. I wish I hadn't said that to her.

MOKSA

You wanted him to die?

AMONG AUDIENCE

HAROLD

Pretoria, you're not letting this melodrama get under your skin!

INDIO

Barbara said we wanted to be Europeans, so I said her father would be killed fighting them.

MOKSA

Burumba didn't fight. He didn't raise his hand against them. He tried to save his house--he was in a frenzy, didn't know where to turn, told his wife to run as far in the world as she could, and someone yelled: There he is, there's the agitator, and they started beating him, and they beat and beat till he bled, and still they beat him.

CHUANA

Why do they hate us so, Krishna? Why?

MOKSA

Why, Chuana? I do not know. Men who convert other men into animals must themselves become animals. They have

AMONG AUDIENCE

PRETORIA

It was Edward who took me away from them. Big, brave, manly Edward!

made beasts of us.  
By brute force they  
have deprived us of  
our humanity--they  
want to think of us  
as spiritually lower  
beings.

CHUANA

What had you or Moses  
Burumba done to them?

MOKSA

Perhaps men like  
Burumba remind them  
that beneath our out-  
ward appearance we  
are still men, where-  
as beneath theirs,  
they are beasts. This  
is a knowledge they  
cannot stomach. They  
hate us for it. The  
more we become what  
they make us, the  
more they hate us.

CHUANA

They will not rest until they have killed all of  
us.

MOKSA

If they kill us they will have no one to hate. For  
centuries the Europeans crowded men into stinking  
ships and sold them in America like dogs, pigs and  
horses. They judged men by strength, by age, by  
tricks. After doing this to men the Americans  
learned to hate them so fiercely that one forgot  
there was still a human spirit in men who hated  
this way. You see, it is themselves they turned  
into wild beasts, and they hated those responsible  
for it. I had thought their hatred died down

EDWARD

You're going nuts,  
Pretoria! You won't  
tie me into that racial  
riot!

PRETORIA

I was only a girl then,  
a girl with all of life  
in front of me. Edward  
promised me everything  
I had ever dreamed of.



after their war against slavery. I was mistaken. There was an American in the mob--I have never seen such a face! There was no sign of human spirit--it was the face of a wild, enraged beast.

INDIO

You should have killed him!

AMONG AUDIENCE

PRETORIA

I feel as if the dead were dancing in front of me. Twenty years! What an awful pit!

MOKSA

Then I would merely have changed place with him-- I would have become like him. If I had not seen it I would not believe men can be reduced to such ferocity. It was he who led the group. He did not get his fill from beating Burumba, who was almost dead before the American reached him. So he turned to me. I would be dead now too if the others had not told him it was still a crime to kill a free Indian. A free Indian, you see! Poor Burumba! It was not a crime to kill him!

INDIO

Pretoria ran away with an American.

MOKSA

My son, you do not know what you are saying.

CURTAIN

HOUSELIGHTS

AMONG AUDIENCE

PRETORIA

Harold! Oh Harold, forgive me! I lied to you! It was so long ago! I told you I wanted to go back because they needed me. How little I cared whether they needed me. It was I who needed them, so I

took them for granted and went to them to have my baby--

HAROLD

Your baby!

PRETORIA

Indio told me they had left South Africa because father had been in a racial riot. I never believed him! I thought he was making it all up because he hated me for leaving. Oh how I hated him! I hated all of them!

DARIUS STARK

For heaven's sake, Pretoria! You should have told us. We could have brought your kid up decently.

PRETORIA

How easy it is to be generous fifteen years later! But what was I then? A light-skinned African girl your son picked up on his travels--and with an illegitimate baby!

DARIUS STARK

It's nothing to be ashamed of Pretoria.

PRETORIA

You would have thrown me into the street! Oh please forgive me! You've done everything for me. But you see, they--they took me, and though they had nothing they took my baby when I left them.

EDWARD

You bitch! You mean you had someone else's baby and then came back and married my brother?

PRETORIA

Harold! What is he saying? It was his baby!

EDWARD

My kid! You're out of your head, Pretoria. First I beat her father and then I gave her a baby.

That's good! She's sick, Harold. You'd better get someone to look at her.

PRETORIA

Edward gave me that baby the same day he almost killed my father!

HAROLD

Calm down, Pretoria! You know we no longer give free reign to Edward's unregulated practices! He besmirched the firm's name wherever in the world he went--but that was well over ten years ago.

EDWARD

What's gotten into you Harold? You aren't taking her seriously are you? What do I want with racial riots? Christ, I wasn't even in South Africa then!

HAROLD

When, Edward?

EDWARD

How should I know when? I never said I knew when it happened! Where's Cecil? Didn't he say he was coming?

(Another part of the Audience. Cecil stands up, with ledgers under his arm)

CECIL

Here I am, Ed. And I've brought the books. They'll show any distortions in black and white; we've got files of transactions, dates and figures for just such eventualities as these. If it really happened, the figures will show it.

EDWARD

Well what are you standing around holding your books for? Christ I must have been a kid then! You got anything on me for 1943?



## CECIL

Why do you always get so excited Ed? If we've got it in the files, it means we've taken care of it. All right, I'm looking! Let's see. 1943. Looks like I didn't bring that one.

## EDWARD

Well then go get it!

(Exit Cecil--he leaves the theater)

## EDWARD

He'll find it! He'll find I was in India then. What'll you make out of that?

## HAROLD

Clumsy imbecil!

## EDWARD

Oh yea? Just because I never graduated from military school? Just because I can't dance a minuet in uniform like you can? That means I was in every racial riot that ever happened?

## HAROLD

You can't even cover yourself decently. If you're talking about the time you were in India starting the crockery plant, that was years after Pretoria's father had left South Africa.

## EDWARD

Don't tell me where I was! Cecil's going to find it in the books. You're a big man now, aren't you Harold! Flying around the world talking to the foreign service boys!

## DARIUS STARK

Restrain yourselves! Why's everyone taking this thing so seriously? Edward had about as much to do with beating Pretoria's father as I had with ruining him.

## EDWARD

The hell I did. You know I was in India at the time dad--and you know damn well why! It was your idea, not mine. Don't tell me you forgot! It was so you could rake in all those wartime profits!

## DARIUS STARK

Are you talking about the Indian crockery plant?

## EDWARD

It was your idea to start that factory! Use the local iron, labor, raw materials, sell the stuff to the British Army--and Bingo! Out goes the stuff and in comes the profits. Bingo! Just like that! Yea, I know dad. You went to India when you were a kid and that's how you got started. I know all about that! And ever since you've been sitting on your fat ass letting me do your dirty work. Sure, dad! You just sit and rake in the profits and give dollar bills to cripples. Just don't forget who it is that makes your Bingo work! Christ I never gripe. I like working in dirt. I'm proud of it! Just don't go telling me about any riots in South Africa!

LIGHTS OUT

## BRUNO

Of course we do not want a punishment so severe.  
Such an open display of personal violence.  
Your youthful energy, your know-how, your  
entrepreneurial talents,  
Are shamed in such a guise.  
This crude executioner, this unveiled Hercules,  
He is not one of you!  
Body of a giant, head of a child, a bloated infant!  
He lacks your shrewdness, your finesse.  
For you are a far subtler executioner.  
The execution must be slow, impersonal,  
Must have the appearance of a natural force.  
This was too crude, too personal, too direct!  
Yet whisper it, Masters--you can admit

The punishment was nevertheless deserved.  
 Of Burumba, naturally, we need not speak.  
 He was a Red.  
 Yet do not think Moksa has been converted.

SCENE: INDIA

(A field. Moksa, a peasant, and Indio, his fifteen year old son, are stacking dry wheat.)

This backward infidel with his medieval outlook  
 Returned to India to farm.  
 His daughter visited and tried to reform him  
 --the same daughter who took refuge among you--  
 But with pitiful results.  
 He farms now, as you see, but do not be hoodwinked.  
 Stubborn Moksa still remains unreformed.  
 He has seen his ways discarded throughout the  
 modern world.  
 Has seen his countrymen adjust.  
 He has felt the pangs of hunger, heard his family  
 call  
 To support himself and his own;  
 To take his role seriously, to internalize the  
 rules,  
 To earn, to save,  
 To cooperate in freedom, as you say.  
 He seems to farm now, but you'll quickly see  
 He does not take his role seriously.  
 In South Africa he saved,  
 But only, as you saw, to break away from his  
 condition.  
 The purpose of his savings being beaten out,  
 He arrived in India with money.  
 He bought a small patch of land--a wise first move,  
 But, would you believe it, instead of providing for  
 his own with the rest,  
 And in a land where all his neighbors were  
 borrowing  
 --think of the rents, the debts, the interests!--  
 This unreformed medieval frittered it all away!



He gave instead of lending!  
Subtle executioner, surely you'll find  
The terrible implications of this savage crime.

INDIO

I shouldn't have stayed home today, father. You  
don't need me here.

MOKSA

No, my son. I do not need you. You did not bring  
rain.

INDIO

This brown grass--it's not good for anything.

MOKSA

Days, weeks, years pass without a drop of rain.

INDIO

There's no wheat here anywhere, father.

MOKSA

Spring has passed without rain. Summer has passed  
without rain. Now it is autumn, my son.

INDIO

What's the point in stacking it?

MOKSA

We must learn to eat the dry brown grass that has  
no fruit and no seed.

INDIO

It can't even be fed to horses.

MOKSA

There will be no more rain.

INDIO

You're talking strange, father. The drought can't  
last forever.

MOKSA

The drought has been spreading for generations.  
It has now covered all of India.

INDIO

If it wasn't for all those tax collectors.

MOKSA

Our throats are parched. We are all learning to  
eat the brown grass.

INDIO

It has to get better, father.

MOKSA

Your mother must now go far away every morning and  
come back with drops of water every night from the  
distant well. Dry, brown water.

INDIO

If Pretoria hadn't left her baby we'd still have  
enough.

MOKSA

What remained of our water I have given to those  
who ran out sooner.

INDIO

I thought you'd never let mother work in that  
factory.

MOKSA

The children, she said. The children. They have  
not yet chosen your purity.

INDIO

That's it, isn't it? Pretoria's child. If it  
wasn't for her, mother wouldn't have had to go!

MOKSA

Where do our obligations lie, Indio? Can we feed  
only the children of others, and starve our own?

Like this brown grass, we have dried up inside. We can bear no more fruit. Even the memory of clear, clean water vanishes within me. Men vanish in the desert sands, and the sand sweeping across our sun-parched bodies will soon turn us, as it even turns rocks, into sand. There will not even be a recollection that men once lived here. I remember one who dreamed that India would shake off this fatal dust, that torrents would fall and wash it away, that life would start again. But the drought has already destroyed far too much, it has stayed far too long. Who will remember what life was, what it could be? You, my son? You were born after it was all over. Your memory reaches only as far back as death. And the others--poor miserable wretches --they cannot even remember that there once was India. Their only dreams are of food and debts and tax collectors. One comes and says Things are not what they used to be, and I tell myself here is one who remembers. But he does not remember. He speaks only of debts. He had never borrowed before and now he sees the moneylender constantly. The land does not yield as much as it did. Newcomers are constantly chopping corners off his plot. Implements and clothing are more and more expensive. There's not enough food to feed the family. Debts are never paid, they only grow larger. Things are not what they used to be, he repeats again and again and always he means the same thing. The man dying of thirst has lost all thoughts except one: to spend the rest of his life drinking. We are sick men who cannot remember life as creation, expression, understanding; we cannot remember life at all; we can only dream of being not-sick, the rest of eternity being not-sick, nothing else. Totally consumed by the presence of sickness, our only hope is to be totally consumed by the absence of sickness.

#### INDIO

I do not understand what you are saying, father. You speak as if everything that has been done to



Asia were the fault of Asians, as if the Europeans had never come. . .

MOKSA

Ah, Indio. You truly do not understand.

INDIO

I do, father! You said the poor farmers can think of nothing but debts and taxes, as if those were their favorite thoughts. But if it weren't for the moneylenders picking like hungry vultures at their dying flesh, they wouldn't think of debts, and if it weren't for the tax-collectors who are paid to take the food and shelter of Indians and ship it to England, they wouldn't think of taxes. If it wasn't for the English we wouldn't have these debts.

MOKSA

Perhaps the English had something to offer, perhaps we were unwilling, or unable, to integrate it into our spirit.

INDIO

Whatever it was, they certainly didn't offer it! They made us run it for them so the English rich could go shooting animals. I've just been reading about South American Incas. There you can really see what the Europeans had to offer.

American scientists dug up some remains --they probably didn't know what it meant, how it brought

AMONG AUDIENCE

(Cecil returns to theater with a ledger. He tiptoes to Edward and whispers.)

CECIL

I found something Ed.

EDWARD

(loudly)

You what?

CECIL

Here in the book. October 3, 1943. There's a note about an

to light what the Europeans did. Otherwise they'd never have written it.

Do you know that before the Europeans came the Incas were a big population--I forgot how many--and they all had more than enough to eat, every day and in every season--and it's just because they had enough to eat that they could think of other things.

These scientists described public works, and beautiful handicrafts and architecture as India and China had. One of the scientists is an agriculture specialist and he said the Incas were more advanced than the Europeans. But they were peaceful. And that's why they lost. They didn't know how to fight, and they lived in the same world as the Europeans. . .

. . . in the same world as the Europeans who didn't know anything other than  
(shouts)  
Stealing, Torturing  
and Killing!

accident and a riot.  
The plant was shut  
down for/

EDWARD

(loudly)

Oh yea? So maybe I was in it! How the hell did I know it was her old man?

DARIUS STARK

Watch yourself, Ed.

EDWARD

Those bastards were wild--they wanted to close down the mines and push all the whites into the sea!

(loudly)

What the hell was an Indian doing in South Africa anyway? Christ I should have beat him until he'd nothing more to say/

(Harold excitedly gets up and grabs Edward by the collar)

HAROLD

Shut up, Edward! Shut up! Can't you open your mouth without a

(Indio stops,  
removes mask)

morbid discharge of  
stinking bigotry?

INDIO

(calls backstage)  
Turn the lights on. They're fighting.

HOUSELIGHTS ON

AMONG AUDIENCE

(The actors look on)

EDWARD

Those bastards don't know what the hell's good for them! I don't give a damn whose old man he was! He couldn't. . .

(Pause. Edward grabs Cecil's book)  
Christ almighty! What did you say? Give me that book!

(Reads)

"Accident. . . riot. . . plant shut down for renovations--"

(To Cecil)

You four-eyed jackass! You got rocks in your head? Christ you looked up that accident in India when half the country swarmed down on us to shut the plant until we put in safety devices and got women and kids off that one job! You stupid jerk! This was years after that riot! Why the hell do you write things down if you can't remember what they mean?

CECIL

I didn't say this had anything to do with South Africa. This happened just after I had started . . . it was the first accident report that came into my hands. There was some kind of confusion --a mix up on the application for work. When that woman applied/

EDWARD

Yea, that stupid old bitch who burned to death. Someone put her to carrying pails of red hot metal and she dropped them and then fell into it. Christ did we have to rush her old man out of there! We practically had the whole country on our back.

DARIUS STARK

Our plant, Ed? This is the twentieth century-- such things don't happen any more--not in any of my plants.

PRETORIA

Harold! Edward is lying! He beat my father!

HAROLD

You're lying Ed! You couldn't have been in India at that time!

EDWARD

(points to book)

Doesn't this show you I wasn't even in South Africa when your father was beaten? You losing your mind Pretoria? Can't you understand I was preventing a riot just when you say I was in one?

DARIUS STARK

Pipe down, Harold. He says he wasn't in it.

PRETORIA

Harold! It isn't true.

HAROLD

All right, Pretoria. All right! It's obvious Edward was in the riot. Is that a reason to pull the whole house down? You know Edward looked for fights wherever he went before we put a muzzle on him--it's his only way of proving he's a man. Fights are his normal exercise--he couldn't have known your father was on the other side of this particular one. We can't undo that now! All we can do is see to it that wild men no longer carry our image abroad.



## INDIO

(Continues)

The Incas were dragged off their farms and pushed into mines, just like everyone else. Irrigation systems that had taken centuries to build were abandoned, entire forests were burned and once fertile land is now a desert. Bridges and public works collapsed in time if they were not destroyed outright. And today, after all the Europeans had to offer, the people who live in that region have even less than we. Now the region is called Peru and Bolivia, and the Europeans say it's overpopulated and the people are lazy--but fewer people live there now than ever in the time of the Incas. A few big landowners own all of Peru, and the one time Incas chew leaves to forget their hunger and tell themselves there's something wrong with them and therefore it was right for the Europeans to destroy them.

## MOKSA

Much of what you say is true, Indio. Ah, you are so young. You have learned much, but learning has not been a pleasure for you. It has been a necessity, like bread, or an instrument, like a plow--perhaps a gun. Yet you have vitality--a vitality that is altogether strange to me. Do you think you can solve the riddle? What would you have the Incas do?

## INDIO

They should drive their landlords into the sea! I'm sick of seeing people chew on dry leaves and tell themselves the Sun caused it all, while allowing their conquerors to rape their daughters and then thanking their daughters for dumping unwanted children on top of unbearable loads.

## MOKSA

Do not always come back to the same thing, Indio.

Ever since your sister returned to America, you have been blaming her for our misery. But she must have loved us very much to have come to us in need.

INDIO

It's you who keep repeating yourself. She hates us. She came here only because she didn't have anywhere else to go. She told us she'd lose her position with that rich American if she had her baby there. It was only too convenient to tell him she had to visit her family. She probably told him we were pure pink-skinned Englishmen who keep an entire yardful of dirty-skinned Natives to dress them and feed them and do their work.

MOKSA

She tried hard to befriend you, Indio. It is you who turned your back.

INDIO

Exactly as she befriends her dog in the white man's world. "You aren't men" she told me. You know why? Because only the pink-skinned are Men, and we're brown, dirt-colored. And because Men are the ones who blow the whistle while we Natives are the ones who jump. What if we starve to death, or if mother has to go into a factory to get food for Pretoria's baby! After all, what does it matter! Mother is only an old black woman!

MOKSA

If you and I had gotten the food, your mother would not have gone to the factory. And do you not forget your brother -- should he not be fed?

INDIO

If there was only Vaisya we could make it! And if Pretoria loves us so much, why doesn't she send some of her American money to support her daughter?

## MOKSA

Do not accuse so unjustly. She wanted to help us, but I wrote her she must not. Her life is for herself to lead. Perhaps she is much happier in America than she would be with us. We must not impose our wretchedness on others. You accuse the British and the Americans and your own sister. Is it not you and I who are at fault? If you could stay with some work. . .

## INDIO

You know how I've tried, father. But every time a lazy empty-faced animal yells You, do this! I lose control over myself. How can the others just stand there, like mindless beasts, and swallow that abuse!

## MOKSA

I know, my son. I know. It is I who should find work. Ah, but I begin to turn in circles. You should be learning, not battling oppression and hunger. I have nothing to tell you, my son. When I try, I begin to sound like the others: sell your time and energy in exchange for money, renounce your life to keep on living; give up your soul to save your body. Physical survival does not concern us very much, either you or me. For me, to extinguish what is inside oneself, what one is, means death--after that, physical survival or extinction make little difference. For you, if I understand you, when men become obedient oxen in order to survive, then survival is not worthwhile. Neither of us can make the sacrifice, and as a result your mother is sacrificed--for our purity. The children, she said. They have not yet chosen our purity--they cannot be sacrificed to it.

## INDIO

You're mixing me up, father. I'd gladly sacrifice myself--I'd give my life so that we could live as men. But to go into the factories and be pushed

around like a draw-cart, to spend every living day doing the same thing! You go helpless and blind and deaf; you lose your mind and can never again tell what to do unless someone tells you. That's not a sacrifice; that won't help anyone; I'd be letting myself be murdered, a little every day, until there was nothing left of me but an imbecil, a cowed dog.

MOKSA

We let Chuana sacrifice herself for survival. Yet we do not retain our purity.

INDIO

Look, father, there are people at the house.

MOKSA

Like pure drops of rain that fall into the sea and merge with the salted water, so soon indistinguishable from all the salted water around them--we no longer have any purity to sacrifice. . .

INDIO

Who are you looking for?

VOICE

Is this the home of K. Mokser?

INDIO

If you call it a home. . .

MOKSA

. . . our only thoughts are of salt, our only dreams are to abolish the salt--and all our hopes are surrounded by salt. We have no purity to sacrifice. . . only a vague memory. . .

(Enter three Bureaucrats)

BUREAUCRAT 1

You are Mr. K. Mokser? Your occupation is farming, I understand?



MOKSA

Yes, Moksa. Occupation, yes, farmer.

BUREAUCRAT 2

We represent the  
pottery firm/

AMONG AUDIENCE

PRETORIA

Harold!

INDIO

Mother! Where is  
mother?

BUREAUCRAT 1

We understand the farmers have been getting very  
bad weather. Is this your son, Mr. Mokser? I  
understand you have another son?

MOKSA

My son. Two more. Bad weather, yes.

BUREAUCRAT 3

We would like to make things easier for you and  
your sons, Mr. Moksa.

(writes)

You say you have two other sons?

(aside)

These people never give us the right information.

INDIO

Where is mother? What have you done with my  
mother?

BUREAUCRAT 2

Would you mind asking your son to keep his hands  
to himself?

BUREAUCRAT 3

(aside)

Small wonder these things happen. All passions;  
they can't control themselves.

BUREAUCRAT 1

In a year like this your farm must be a grave  
liability to you, Mr. Mokser.

## BUREAUCRAT 3

If you will merely sign this paper, Mr. Moksa, you will be guaranteed a job on a rubber plantation, a nice home, and education with part-time work for your oldest son.

## INDIO

They've murdered her! They've murdered mother and they want to pay us! They want to buy mother from us!

## BUREAUCRAT 3

(aside)

This kid's a fanatic.

## AMONG AUDIENCE

## PRETORIA

No, it can't be true!

## MOKSA

I. . . cannot. I must speak to Chuana.

## BUREAUCRAT 2

Well, you see, Mr. Moksa, your wife. . .

## INDIO

Murderers!

## BUREAUCRAT 2

Restrain yourself, boy! This is not a circus! We've come on serious business.

## BUREAUCRAT 1

It is quite unprecedented, Mr. Mokser.

## BUREAUCRAT 2

There was an accident.

## AMONG AUDIENCE

## PRETORIA

Harold! It can't be true! My mother committed suicide!

## BUREAUCRAT 1

The women who worked with her say she did it purposely.

## BUREAUCRAT 2

Yes, you see. It was suicide.

CURTAIN

## HOUSELIGHTS

## AMONG AUDIENCE

## PRETORIA

She killed herself. She couldn't stand it any more--the drudgery, the unrelieved drudgery, the hunger. She couldn't stand it. That wasn't a life for anyone to lead--it was for animals, cooped up animals. How she must have hated it! How much easier it must have been to leave, to let herself die in the factory. Edward is lying! He had nothing to do with my mother! He's lying! He tried to kill my father.

## EDWARD

There would have been a riot all right! Jesus don't you see that Harold?

## HAROLD

Edward! What on earth are you talking about?

## EDWARD

That accident! A woman drowned in burning metal and the Indians started hollering to beat hell to get us out of there.

## CECIL

What a strange thing that was. It was a series of irregularities, one after another.

## EDWARD

Christ if they'd gotten hold of that woman's husband!

## CECIL

The plant's Executive Director sent me a full report on it. I remember it as if it happened last year. That was twenty years ago! When the woman filled out the application form, she put down two children, plus one overseas; the two actually staying with her were different in age--one was over ten years older than the other.

EDWARD

They'd have gotten him to sue us for all we had and had us in court for years!

CECIL

Right after the accident the Executive Director ran to the woman's house to make out the contract with her husband; he found out there were three children there. The older boy and, besides him, two babies. One was colored and the other one white.

EDWARD

They'd have liked to break into the plant and tear us to pieces!

CECIL

She hadn't listed the white one on the application, can you imagine that? The older boy had some kind of a problem, as I remember--a complex of some sort. The accident report said the woman committed suicide, but the kid just kept on insisting the report was a lie, as if he knew something that wasn't in the report.

EDWARD

That's what I was preventing!

PRETORIA

(To Edward)

Animal! Lying animal! I called you brother. No! Harold, it isn't true! Mother couldn't have died like that. Father and Indio sent her into the factory because they couldn't work. But she wouldn't stand for it! She worked hard enough taking care of them--she didn't want to support all of them! She had enough! Harold, tell them my mother killed herself.

HAROLD

Pretoria! In heaven's name stop that bawling! I should think you'd be relieved to know your mother didn't commit suicide but died in an accident.



EDWARD

What the hell's the matter with you? Doesn't this prove I wasn't in South Africa. . . ?

HAROLD

Imbecil! Can't you control your rattling mouth? The woman you're calling a stupid bitch, the one who drowned in burning metal--are you that dense? It was Pretoria's mother! You should never have been given free reign over the India plant. From the very beginning there was no clear chain of responsibility in that plant.

PRETORIA

An accident. Edward's factory murdered my mother with an accident. It burned her alive. Edward's factory burned my mother to death. My mother didn't kill herself. She committed an accident.

DARIUS STARK

What's gotten into all of you? Sure, accidents are unfortunate! But this happened over ten years ago didn't it?

PRETORIA

Why couldn't I have been burned by an accident and free my bones from the loose flesh hanging. . . ?

DARIUS STARK

It's too bad it was Pretoria's mother, but it's always got to be someone, doesn't it? Don't forget every bridge that's built, every great step-forward man has made, every peak he's reached, involved certain sacrifices! And haven't we repaired some of the damage by sending help to her father?

PRETORIA

Accidents happen all the time. They are the way Edward's factories do their killing. No, Harold! Don't tell me it was an accident in Edward's factory. It isn't true! You are Edward's factory!

All of you are Edward's factory! I married Edward's factory and it burned my mother with an accident!

EDWARD

Aw tell it to the Russians will ya? To hell with this jazz! I'm not accountable for every black bitch that drowns! Christ the bomb we dropped on Hiroshima burned hundreds of 'em! Drop one of those and you don't even know you killed anyone! A single H bomb can wipe 'em all out! Christ don't talk to me about burning anyone's mother!

(Edward leaves the theater)

PRETORIA

Murderer.

LIGHTS OUT

BRUNO

Do not cry out!

This was done subtly.

It was clean, humane.

Who but old Moksa could have prevented it?

Not you!

What can this be to you--this merely human concern?

To you, who can destroy all life

With one signal, one word, one mistake,

To you who can destroy all life

With a mistake?

Man must be surpassed, you once said.

You have surpassed man.

What earthly concern are those who fall behind?

The unregenerate, the rebellious, the backward?

Look at your rose.

Must not infinite weeds and thorns be laid aside

Before the rose can be displayed in all its beauty?

The little humanitarian sentiments are easily come

by.

Take hold of yourselves! Is it not you who say

Rome was not built in a day?

What of your steel and your oil  
 Your railroads, canals, automobiles and bridges,  
 Are they not everywhere on display?  
 Did they not need, in each instance, a man,  
 A great man!

One unafraid to cut away the thorns, the weeds,  
 the bushes?

And are these achievements not yours to enjoy?  
 Is not this your solid wealth, your everlasting  
 glory?

Where now is that mass of suffering millions  
 But dead and forgotten?

You have surpassed man.

You are and must remain wax statues, unmoved.

Retain your Objectivity.

Their problems are not yours, nor can you share  
 their concerns.

Their goals cannot be yours, nor even their ideals  
 --though once, perhaps, you shared them.

The barrier is now impassable.

To think this may have moved you!

Oh! I cannot bear the thought of such a  
 spectacle!

To have set a gallery of wax statues on fire  
 --a familiar vision, perhaps?

To see the wax melt and see beneath

The shrivelled faces of dead men!

Oh do not soften, Masters, remember who you are!

SCENE: JAVA

(Jakarta, Indonesia, 1946--or, as it was known  
 then in the West, Batavia, Dutch East Indies.  
 A slum facing the banks of the Kali Canal.  
 Moksa, a beggar; Indio, an unemployed planta-  
 tion laborer; two three-year old children, one  
 dead. Moksa stares; Indio reads newspaper.)

Remember, this old beggar is not one of you.  
 And if his son now seems to pose a threat  
 Remember this is natural, happens frequently

--that often when a sewage pipe is laid, it may  
develop a leak--

The leak may seep through its soft surroundings  
And create a vast pool of quicksand.

INDIO

Look at this, father. You thought it was only the  
Dutch? Here's an American newspaper. "Heavy  
Russian Columns Move West in Iran." They just  
finished cheering the Red Army, and they're already  
telling the Americans the Red Army is going to  
march all over Asia.

MOKSA

Cannot change.

INDIO

Peace and cooperation. Oil and rubber they mean!  
That's why they dropped atomic bombs on Japan!

MOKSA

Servus Neriana said we cannot change the world.

INDIO

Atomic bombs! Do you hear, old man? They burned  
them alive--everyone! Now the Dutch can slaughter  
more of us than the Japanese ever did!

MOKSA

Burumba could not change, Chuana.

INDIO

Don't you care what's happening any more? Ever  
since that child died you've been talking strange.

MOKSA

Chuana! Why have you killed us?

INDIO

It's that stinking body that makes you sick!



MOKSA

You Moses Burumba have killed my child.

INDIO

I'm going to throw it in the canal.

MOKSA

You can dispose of my son Indio. You cannot dispose of my daughter!

INDIO

You can't just keep it here rotting! It'll poison Vaisya next!

MOKSA

(threatening Indio with cane)

You cannot take her away!

INDIO

Put that stick down, father! Are you going crazy?

MOKSA

Can you help a poor old man?

INDIO

This isn't your child! It's Pretoria's, and it's dead!

MOKSA

I am only a beggar. I have nothing.

INDIO

If the Dutch guard finds out about this baby he'll have us beaten to death for making a health hazard.

MOKSA

Please give something to a poor old beggar.

INDIO

Do you hear old man? They'll beat us to death!

MOKSA

Chuana was a good woman. I have killed Chuana.

INDIO

What'll happen to Vaisya when we're gone? They'll throw him in the canal!

MOKSA

My son cannot work. He is clean and pure. I have nothing.

INDIO

This is Indio, father!

MOKSA

Ah, I see you! You are my son. I am Krishna. You are the fire that burns my soul. You have killed your mother, Indio. You did not go to the factory.

INDIO

You always go back to the same thing. You're saying just what they want you to say: that everything they do to us is our own fault, or our poverty's fault--the same poverty they've given us is what causes our poverty! or else it's the communists' fault. It's never the fault of the Dutch or the English or the Americans; they're just peace-loving Businessmen going peacefully about their Business. It's we who butcher ourselves, because we're cannibals; it's we who starve ourselves, because we're ascetics; it's we who murder our own children, because we superstitious Natives love to stink up our slums with the rotting bodies of our own children. Can you hear me, old man? You know well we had nothing to do with mother's death--nor did she! You know exactly who killed her! The very same people who took your daughter and then killed her daughter. Do you hear? Don't you remember how you'd tell me about the stinking ships in which they packed Africans like so much meat--and if the whole shipload died of disease, they went back for another load? Do you think

those who died on that ship committed suicide? It's the same thing wherever the Europeans go. In Polynesia the Polynesians disappeared right after the French started Civilizing them; in Hawaii and Tahiti the original people are almost completely gone; all over Africa they kill men with guns and factories, mines and starvation diseases. Do you think all the dying people on this plantation are committing suicide; should they eat the rubber and tell themselves it's all their own fault? What they should do is chase out the guards and take over the land and grow food on it. But the guards would shoot, and that means violence doesn't it? And violence is bad for the soul isn't it? So we have to blame ourselves and go begging, don't we? Stop screaming, Vaisya!

(Picks up Vaisya)

But you do not know any better, do you? Do you know what a cash crop is, Vaisya? I'll tell you. It's something that can be grown in a large area, sometimes as big as Java--something like rubber, or coffee, or sugar, or cotton. To grow it and pick it and carry it, a whole population of black and brown and yellow men is needed--these men are called Natives and are treated like animals, because all they're good for is picking and carrying the cash crops. After it is picked, the cash crop is put on big ships and taken to America and Europe, because that's where Civilization is, Vaisya. There Christians fix it up and put it in cans and they sell most of it back to the Natives, and the white Christians keep the cash. The Natives can't fix it up themselves because they're backward--those who think they can are Reds. That's called Progress, Vaisya. Remember that: Progress. The Europeans take Progress all over the world; it's because of their Progress and their Christianity and their white skins that they're civilized. See: we can't ever be civilized, because we're Natives. And it doesn't matter if

you live there. They do the same thing to the black men who live among them. Of course it's different if you look white, like your sister; then you get to eat the Progress, instead of just being beaten with it. But sometimes they even load Progress on their own people, white Christians, as in the book I read you. You've forgotten it already? Vaisya, when they do it to their own people they don't call them natives; they call them Oakies. But the Joads are just the same as we, even though they're white.

MOKSA

Moses Burumba! You will not teach violence to my son!

INDIO

Come to the door, old man! Come here!

(helps Moksa to door)

Do you see that? It's the Kali Canal!

MOKSA

You cannot kill violence with violence.

INDIO

Do you see that man squatting? You know what he's doing?

(Voices outside)

VOICE OF DUTCH ENTREPRENEUR

Our doctors still work with a system of ethics two thousand years old. They think it is their duty to keep alive as many as possible.

INDIO

(points)

That woman is washing her clothes.

VOICE OF AMERICAN MILITARY ADVISOR

It's chaos. Pure chaos.



## MOKSA

My son was a drop of clean pure rain. Why do you hate your sister, my son?

## INDIO

You understand, don't you Vaisya? We grow crops we can't eat and we get water we can't drink.

## VOICE OF DUTCHMAN

I do not see how somebody can live here. It smells, if you pardon the expression, like a hell here. You have no idea how many people are here!

## MOKSA

You have wronged your sister, my son. You have killed your sister's child.

## INDIO

Crazy old man! That pool of dead rats killed the baby! It'll kill Vaisya next! The Kali Canal is poison!

## VOICE OF DUTCHMAN

They live positively like animals, with no idea of health or cleanness. The same water they use for a toilet, for washing, for drinking.

## INDIO

The Dutch don't drink from it, or wash in it. They don't even walk by it because it smells of the dirt and the leavings and the death of Natives.

## VOICE OF DUTCHMAN

And these are the same people making so much noise about independence! They do not know how to keep their houses clean and they want to run a government. It is unbelievable!

## INDIO

We're all going to die from it! Everyone who lives by the banks of the Kali will die from Kali poisoning. And we'll be buried in the Kali because we smell like the Kali.

## VOICE OF AMERICAN

I should think that under close supervision and control these people can and should be able to learn to take major responsibility for measures of birth control which would assure a population growth on a qualitative rather than a merely quantitative level.

## INDIO

See the Dutchman's nose twitch? He's not used to smelling Natives by the banks of the Kali.

## VOICE OF DUTCHMAN

Supervision? Ah, yes. I understand. But that is an American luxury, is it not so? Supervision is very expensive. We must get rid of the leaders.

## INDIO

They're coming to look at their pack of animals.

## VOICE OF DUTCHMAN

The trouble is, there are too many people here.

## INDIO

If he comes in here, he'll smell that bundle! What'll you say then, father?

## AMONG AUDIENCE

## HAROLD

Well I'll be damned! Where did you say those people were taken?

## CECIL

What people?

## HAROLD

The husband of that woman who died in the accident.

## CECIL

We had to send them to Indonesia to get the affair straightened out.

## VOICE OF AMERICAN

As I understand it, Holland's population density is six times greater.

## MOKSA

You must not speak of violence, Moses Burumba!

## INDIO

They'll throw the body into the canal and they'll beat us like they beat Burumba!

## MOKSA

You must not speak violence, Moses Burumba!

## VOICE OF DUTCHMAN

Is Holland so dense? Ah! I did not know. But that is on paper, is it not so? Here it is something altogether different.

## INDIO

At least Burumba wasn't a coward!

## VOICE OF DUTCHMAN

If these people could learn--responsibility, birth control and so on--no yes, that is already a different situation.

## AMONG AUDIENCE

## DARIUS STARK

Why in hell'd we send them to Indonesia? There's been trouble down there for as long as I can remember.

(Dutch Entrepreneur and American Military Advisor enter Moksa slum)

## DUTCHMAN

More intelligence, less intelligence, that is not what I want to say. We do not speak of this type of thing, no?

## MOKSA

Come in, my friends. Come in.  
(calls)  
Chuana!

DUTCHMAN

They are unbelievably lazy. They do not want to work.

MOKSA

Chuana--we have visitors.

AMERICAN

Do you mean--he understands?

DUTCHMAN

Ah, yes. I remember. He was sent to us because he was in some kind of trouble.

AMERICAN

God Almighty! What do they keep here--rancid meat?

MOKSA

Coffee! Chuana, our visitors need coffee.

DUTCHMAN

The smell here is not so easy to get accustomed to --I always forget how terrible it is.

MOKSA

Ah, Chuana cannot hear me. Maybe we do not need coffee.

INDIO

Maybe Kali-water will do.

AMONG AUDIENCE

CECIL

It wasn't actually Indonesia at the time, dad. It used to be the Dutch East Indies.

AMONG AUDIENCE

CECIL

We tried to have them taken to Australia. But the Australian Government has a regulation like ours about Orientals. You know, the Quota System.

AMONG AUDIENCE

CECIL

Under the circumstances the Staff did as much as it could.



## DUTCHMAN

The trouble he was in--I do not remember. Probably stealing. They all steal.

## INDIO

We steal dead rats from your canal.

## MOKSA

Sit down, my friends. Sit at the table.

## DUTCHMAN

I am sure he did not understand very much. His mind is not "all there."

(laughs)

## MOKSA

Chuana is no longer with us. She has gone back to the cave.

## DUTCHMAN

We gave him work, but he did nothing. You see he is a beggar. But he thinks he is a landlord, with a big house, and maids.

## AMERICAN

(To Indio)

You! There doesn't seem to be anything wrong with you! Why aren't you working?

## INDIO

Why not ask your friend?

## MOKSA

The earth could not be shaped. It had turned to sand.

## AMONG AUDIENCE

## CECIL

Our report said they were given jobs and a home. That closed the matter.

## AMONG AUDIENCE

## HAROLD

What city in the East Indies, Cecil?

## PRETORIA

Harold--not you!

## DUTCHMAN

Ah, yes. He must be one of those we did not need at the end of the season.

## INDIO

That's why I'm lazy, you see. I don't eat enough dead rats.

## DUTCHMAN

He is one who is good for nothing. He sits here and waits for the season to begin again. The better ones find things to do--they go into the army. But this one just thinks of things to steal, of ways to make trouble.

## AMONG AUDIENCE

## CECIL

It was Batavia at the time. So far as I knew the whole transaction ended there. But the report may have contained inaccuracies.

## INDIO

Lying animal!

## AMERICAN

What's that?

## MOKSA

(To Indio)

Burumba! Do not speak like this! Do not speak to them!

## AMERICAN

Haven't you learned respect? Under proper supervision and control, you'd never be allowed to sit idle in this stench! Children run naked in this filth!

## MOKSA

Do not beat him again! Do not beat him!

## INDIO

(To Dutchman)

Animal! You call us lazy! Only a year ago you were crying how the Nazis raped your daughters, separated your families, put you into big plantations and turned you into oxen to grow food for the Master Race! You cried that they converted you into animals and then called you animals; that they separated your families and then said you had no sense of family. But you want me to join your army and slaughter my own people so you can speak of my sense of family! Animal! And if we join the Nationalist Army and chase you back to Holland and take your land to grow food for ourselves and work harder than you know how--then we've suddenly gone Dutch-Crazy!

## DUTCHMAN

This! This! I will not tolerate this! This will not be allowed!

## AMERICAN

Calm down! There's some truth in what he says, isn't there? If you keep no discipline here you should expect this type of insubordination.

(To Indio)

If you have so much energy, why don't you spend it cleaning up this place and getting the stench out, instead of shooting your mouth off? How long is it since you've washed? Look at this filth! You have a sick man and two babies here. Use some of that energy taking care of them! You dump all your garbage right on the floor. Those pots look like they've never been cleaned. Don't you have any sense of responsibility? Look at those children! It's amazing that anything can stay alive in this miserable stench, this filth!

## INDIO

Get out. Get out! Get out!

MOKSA

You had better get up from the table now, my friends. Moses Burumba is very violent.

INDIO

Get out!

AMERICAN

Let's get out of here. I don't want to start anything.

(To Indio)

What you need is close supervision and control. You have to learn to take major responsibility. . .

(Indio picks up the bundle with the dead baby, as if to throw it. . .)

AMONG AUDIENCE

PRETORIA

(screams)

Indio! What are you doing? Stop! My baby!

CURTAIN

HOUSELIGHTS

AMONG AUDIENCE

HAROLD

It must have been. . . it must have been. A deranged man, two children and a rebellious boy. There couldn't be two like it. That stinking bundle was Pretoria's child. . .

PRETORIA

My dead baby!

HAROLD

Edward's baby! Calm down, Pretoria! Those were just rags.

PRETORIA

Harold! She died of poverty! I'm not responsible for poverty!



HAROLD

They weren't Javanese at all! The Dutchman said they were brought there from India--because of theft, he thought!

PRETORIA

My mother didn't kill herself because of my baby! Edward admitted it!

HAROLD

The filth and poverty in which that child died were thoroughly unnecessary! One doesn't need prophetic vision to see that!

PRETORIA

Harold! I'm not responsible!

HAROLD

The money-starved Dutchman couldn't see through the wealth he sucked in the human resources he wasted. The bungling use they made of manpower could only lead to a violent reversal.

PRETORIA

Harold! Please help me. We tried to find my brother! We sent help to father!

DARIUS STARK

Cecil, are you sure it was the right man we sent that aid to?

HAROLD

We've finally learned that inefficiency and insubordination have to be controlled all the way down to departmental levels.

CECIL

I don't know what you mean, dad. If it's in our files/

DARIUS STARK

Stop that jibberish! Those people last year--

the one Pretoria said was her father--

HAROLD

We're checking irresponsibility all the way down the line. We're not going to waste human resources as if they were confetti.

PRETORIA

Confetti! Human resources! Harold, you're horrible!

CECIL

Don't get upset, dad. When a hand is interviewed, Personnel Staff seeks to ascertain/

DARIUS STARK

Bungling imbecil!

CECIL

Well we can't file everything, you know! We've tried to minimize on the length of the form, as well as the bulk of the file, by recording only such data as will prove relevant at the plant where the applicant is employed.

PRETORIA

No more!

DARIUS STARK

We've got to find out, Pretoria. We pay our debts all along the line. I can't believe any cracked old Indian is your father. If this wasn't your father, then by god we'll find him. We'll see that whatever damage there is gets repaired. When I've got debts, I pay them!

PRETORIA

What damage? How can you repair?

LIGHTS OUT

## BRUNO

The façade falls. The wax begins to melt.  
 The solid steel beams, it turns out, are made  
 of plastic,  
 The marble walls are painted wood,  
 And the rose,  
 The beautiful red rose, the rose of  
 justification:  
 A crêpe facsimile!  
 Its aroma mechanically emanating  
 From a perfume squirt in the vase.  
 Is this a fitting end to the farce? you ask.  
 You've thrown your sins to the devil  
 for generations.  
 Infidel devil. Heretic devil.  
 Red, black and yellow, traitor, anarchist devil.  
 But who'd ever have thought the devil'd come up  
 To confront you with an inventory?

(From among the Audience, Vaisya Moksa  
 walks on to the Stage)

## VAISYA

(announces)  
 The next scene took place in India, last year.

## SCENE: INDIA

(Bare hut. Krishna Moksa, very old beggar,  
 lies stretched out on the floor. Indio has  
 same mask. Vaisya walks into the scene)

## INDIO

You are pure, Vaisya. But your purity sits  
 heavy on my stomach!

## MOKSA

Do not let an old man die.

INDIO

Father was pure too.

VAISYA

Be fair, Indio. You've told me yourself that father had no choice.

MOKSA

I will not return in the shape of a man. I have not lived my life well. Do not let me die.

INDIO

Did he maintain his purity? Look at him! Did he?

VAISYA

They didn't let him.

INDIO

When he worked in South African mines he spoke of spiritual freedom.

MOKSA

Once--once I was a man. I shaped the world with my hands--the whole world with my hands. That is a man.

VAISYA

He wore the face they wanted him to wear. You've told me that yourself!

INDIO

When he begged in the streets of Jakarta he still spoke of spiritual freedom.

MOKSA

I shaped the world with my hands! Is that not a man?

VAISYA

In time he became what they wanted him to be. He had no choice.



MOKSA

Was I not a man?

INDIO

I say he had a choice.

VAISYA

What could he have done?

INDIO

He submitted. He should have fought!

VAISYA

Then he'd have become what they are.

MOKSA

In the dungeons I could not see my hands. Death came first for my hands. But once I shaped worlds.

VAISYA

Violence is not an Indian way--it will not bring an Indian world.

INDIO

Is your sister Indian or American?

VAISYA

That's not fair.

MOKSA

In the desert there was no clay. Do you not understand? I could not shape the sand.

INDIO

Is your sister Indian or American? Answer me! Where is your India?

VAISYA

Do you think your face is any more real than father's?

MOKSA

Dead rats in the canal. You will bury me in the canal. I did not live like a man.

INDIO

I'm going to Congo to fight, Vaisya.

VAISYA

You'll destroy yourself.

INDIO

If you want to collaborate, stay and collaborate.

VAISYA

What kind of world will be built by the maimed, the mutilated, the ruined?

INDIO

Stay, then! I've long forgotten I have a sister! I'll easily forget I have a brother!

MOKSA

(sits up, agitated)

You are causing this meeting to get out of hand, Moses Burumba. You are calling for violence! I should not have come to this meeting! I knew it would not be nonviolent. We must accept the world as it is; Moses Burumba. The best we can do is accept what is given to us. You want to destroy everything! I will not hear it! We must rise by our own talents and energies. Ah! You see! You are wrong! They are beating you, Moses Burumba. You are wrong, Moses Burumba! You are wrong!

VAISYA

Poor father! He's been trying so hard to live his life over again.

INDIO

It's disgusting. He lost his own self so completely he can't even find himself in the

past! It's not his own life he's reliving! Moses Burumba was his friend. A real revolutionary! Father started calling me Moses Burumba when Pretoria's baby died. Burumba was beaten to death by a mob of Europeans because of a man called Servus, a filthy opportunist who turned traitor. Now father's playing the part of this Servus!

(Knock on door. Enter a Bureaucrat.)

BUREAUCRAT

Excuse me. Is this the Mockser residence?

INDIO

Residence? I believe in your part of the world it is called a "slum."

BUREAUCRAT

Technically of course the housing in a depressed area is often slum housing. I meant no offense. I am looking for a Mr. K. Mockser.

INDIO

Vaisya, is this a depressed area? Is it below sea level, below the Himalayas, or what? I had always known we were oppressed people, but that we also live in a depressed area, that is new.

VAISYA

Our name is Moksa.

BUREAUCRAT

Thank you very much. We have instructions from our home office to provide Mr. K. Mockser and his family with emergency relief. I take it the gentleman sitting there is Mr. K. Mockser?

INDIO

He's not a gentleman; he's a beggar! What emergency relief? Have you killed my sister?

## BUREAUCRAT

Excuse me?

## VAISYA

My brother means that we are surprised. What is the reason for this sudden relief, as you call it? Who is behind it? What does it consist of?

## BUREAUCRAT

All I know is the big boss' daughter-in-law got it into her head her father was Indian, that he lived here, and that his name was Mockser. We got instructions to put Mockser on our payroll without hiring him, to see that he's decently fed right away, and to find him a house in a good area. It sounds crazy to me too, but we just do what we're told. If you want more precise information, you'll have to communicate with the central office.

## INDIO

(To Vaisya)

He'll make some filthy use of us. You shouldn't trust any of them, Vaisya.

## BUREAUCRAT

Excuse me. I'll let my assistants know I've located K. Mockser. I also sent for some food.

(Exit Bureaucrat)

## VAISYA

You are sometimes as small as they!

## INDIO

Why do you always seek excuses for them? They have money and power; they don't need to be justified by you.

## VAISYA

The whole village is going to be developed, houses and schools are coming, and you call it "mere palliative."



(Moksa starts crawling to corner of hut)

INDIO

The only reason the village is being developed is so the people can work more efficiently for the profits of the rich.

VAISYA

A man comes to help father and you suspect him of something filthy.

INDIO

The last time they came with "emergency relief" was when they murdered mother.

VAISYA

Even if they gave us everything you want you would hate them.

INDIO

They don't do anything because they love us. They do things for profit.

VAISYA

But you no longer care if what they do is good or bad. In your eyes, whatever they do is bad, merely because they do it and not you.

INDIO

Don't talk crazy, Vaisya! When it's profitable to kill us, they'll kill us. If we want to live, grow and be human, we have to destroy them. That's why I'm going to Congo.

(Re-enter Bureaucrat and two Assistants, carrying papers and a tray)

ASSISTANT I

(Holding steaming tray)  
Which one is Kay Mockser?

## INDIO

I am. The old bundle in the corner is a child. I'm his father. Whatever you're bringing, I do not want it. I know what is in it.

## MOKSA

(Looking at Vaisya)

Ah, Nathuram. You are still begging, I see. I had rather thought so.

## BUREAUCRAT

The old man is K. Mockser.

## ASSISTANT II

(Going to Moksa with forms)

Mr. Moksa? Would you mind just looking over the first two pages, and filling out the top half of the/

## VAISYA

I'm afraid his mind wanders too much to read these forms. He is not able to concentrate very well.

## MOKSA

(Grasps the forms)

No, Nathuram. You cannot take it away again. I am Harilal, Mr. Darius. You have not forgotten the offer. 50-50 you call it. Ah, that is a good offer. Is it not a good offer, Nathuram? I do not have to wear rags and go begging. And you are only a beggar, Nathuram.

## ASSISTANT II

We'll have the movers here for your property first thing in the morning, Mr. Moksa.

## ASSISTANT I

(Taking tray to Moksa)

We brought fine Indian and American food, Mr. Mockser, whichever you prefer. We had the Indian dishes supervised by a religious man to make sure they're--religious.

(Assistant I sets tray in front of Moksa)

ASSISTANT II

I'll just leave these forms here, Mr. Moksa. Tomorrow's time enough to file them. Maybe one of your sons can help you fill them out.

BUREAUCRAT

If there's anything else you need, Mr. Mockser, just call this number. Here's my card.

(Exit Bureaucrat and two Assistants)

MOKSA

(Plays with the food like a child with a toy)  
I have accepted the offer. I do not have to go begging, Nathuram. I will have a clean house. I will have dignity. Mr. Darius has offered me 50-50, Nathuram.

Chuana! Come and see, Chuana! Mr. Darius has returned everything. Here is Pretoria's child, you see. Yes, Pretoria is coming back. We will have a clean house, Chuana. I will teach my sons the battle of Arjuna. I will teach them to shape bowls, Chuana. I will be an agent. We will live in a clean house, Chuana. I will be an agent.

(He eats with reckless enthusiasm.)

CURTAIN

## HOUSELIGHTS

## AMONG AUDIENCE

DARIUS STARK

(After long, loud laughter)

You see, Pretoria? He got that help all right.

(Laughs)

He even knew where it all came from.

CECIL

(Hurries to Stark, and whispers)

Dad! That money was never used! I remember you allotted money for a house and "emergency relief" but you didn't tell me what it was all about. That's why I didn't bother you with the manager's report. Why didn't you tell me this was important? I merely filed that report like any routine report. The manager said he returned to the hut that night to see how things were going, and one of the old man's sons almost killed him. The old man hadn't eaten for a long time, and that food was much too rich for him. The way his system was, it may as well have been poison. I wish I hadn't filed that report, but I didn't know it was important. The old man died of the food.

LIGHTS OUT

VAISYA MOKSA

The last scene is in Congo.

SCENE: CONGO

(Jungle. Indio sits on the ground leaning on high plants. He is uniformed. Vaisya walks into the scene.)



INDIO

Surely you've felt more real since you've been here.

VAISYA

I came only because I no longer had any reason to stay in India.

INDIO

You came because they murdered father.

VAISYA

That's not true, Indio. You know how he felt about seeking revenge.

INDIO

He never admitted you have to fight force with force. He begged until they poisoned him. He even begged for the poison.

VAISYA

Murdering them won't bring father back.

INDIO

If he had learned to kill he'd be alive now.

VAISYA

He'd be a killer.

INDIO

Instead of a beggar who was poisoned like a rat.

VAISYA

I want to build a new life for ourselves, not to kill.

INDIO

We can't build while butchers slice our limbs and sell the pieces across the ocean.

VAISYA

So we'll become the butchers and we'll slice their limbs.

INDIO

That talk is cowardice, Vaisya. If they know what's coming to them, they won't slaughter us.

VAISYA

To fight and remain true to yourself isn't cowardice. To oppose without changing places with your opponent--that isn't cowardice.

INDIO

Father never changed places--he started to raise his hand once--only once--and he left it down from then till the last day.

VAISYA

Father betrayed himself--they forced him to become what they made him.

INDIO

And they won't force us?

VAISYA

I don't know! I don't know. That's why I came.

INDIO

It's only when they start dying from it that they'll find out their plunder doesn't pay. When a master's life is taken as easily as a slave's, slavery will end.

VAISYA

Shh. I hear someone coming.

(Voices offstage)

VOICE OF MAN

Haven't you had enough of this adventure? Do you want to stay until we're ambushed in this barbarian wilderness?

## VOICE OF WOMAN

I have to find them. I have to! Both their names were on that list! They must be somewhere!

## VOICE OF MAN

Sure they were. So what? There were hundreds of names on that list, and we haven't come across anyone.

## INDIO

(whispers)

You've come across someone now, mercenary!

## VAISYA

(whispers)

What are you going to do?

## INDIO

(whispers)

I'll build him a new life, Vaisya.

(Enter Man, revolver in hand, and Woman, both masked. They stand in corner, behind, and do not see Indio and Vaisya, who continue to whisper.)

## MAN

The guard said it was sure death to walk in here. The Indians will think we're Belgians, the Katangans will think we're Swedes. We'll get butchered whichever territory we're on.

## WOMAN

I'm going to call again.

## VAISYA

I don't like this, Indio. Maybe we have to fight those who enslave us. But I don't like it.

## INDIO

Tell him, Vaisya. Tell him. He'll pat you on the back.

MAN

Go ahead and call, for heaven's sake. It doesn't seem to have made a difference so far.

INDIO

They'll butcher us until they know every death on our side means a death on theirs.

VAISYA

You're crazy, Indio. They can obliterate everything.

INDIO

Themselves included.

VAISYA

What consolation is that?

MAN

Couldn't you at least wait until the State Department got this mess straightened out?

WOMAN

I've got to find them!

MAN

Well why don't you call?

WOMAN

I'm frightened.

VAISYA

The longer I hold this rifle the more I feel like an animal.

MAN

So am I.

(excitedly)

These things always get sidetracked!

INDIO

(aims rifle)

These things always do.



VAISYA

(holds Indio's arm)

Don't. If we've become murderers what right have we. . .

INDIO

Leave go! You want to get us killed?

WOMAN

What's the matter?

MAN

I thought I heard something. Nothing. Always that same group of fanatics!

WOMAN

What group?

MAN

Each one of these so-called revolutions starts out yelling democracy and ends up being led by a bunch of fanatics who want to raze to the ground everything we and the Europeans worked for.

INDIO

Now you'll leave me alone?

VAISYA

No! Murderer!

MAN

If they'd only be satisfied with a voice in their governments we wouldn't have to send any of our boys abroad. But no! Once they start, the fanatics join the din and then they want everything--our plants, our roads, our investments. Well are you going to call or do we get out of here?

WOMAN

(calls weakly)

Indio! Indio Moksa!

INDIO

(puts down rifle)  
Did you hear that?

VAISYA

She called you.

MAN

Have you had enough now?

INDIO

It's Pretoria.

VAISYA

What?

INDIO

It's Pretoria. Maybe she brought the mercenary  
to kill me.

WOMAN

Yes. I've had enough.

(Man and Woman walk away)

VAISYA

She's looking for us.

INDIO

So what?

VAISYA

I'm going out! She's your sister--our sister.

INDIO

You're staying here, Vaisya! He'll kill you!

VAISYA

I'm going.

(He gets up and moves towards man and woman)

INDIO

Come back here!

(Indio reaches out for Vaisya, then runs out in front of him)

MAN

What's that?

(Turns around and sees Indio and Vaisya. To Woman)

Get out of here! Run!

(Man points revolver at the struggling Moksa brothers)

MAN

Don't move!

VAISYA

(calls)

Pretoria!

(Indio and Vaisya struggle, until Indio pushes Vaisya behind the bush)

MAN

Don't move, I said!

AMONG AUDIENCE

(Two shots.  
Indio groans,  
and falls.)

PRETORIA  
Harold! Stop!

(Pretoria runs up  
on stage)

VAISYA

(to Pretoria)

You murdered my brother.

("Armed African Soldiers" stand up from behind the bushes. Soon they encircle the group in the center. They slowly move in.)

## PRETORIA

(hysterically shaking the body of "Indio")  
Indio! Speak to me! It's Pretoria!

(The frightened actor "Indio" removes his mask and stares at Pretoria, whose mouth twists into an awful grimace. He writhes out of Pretoria's grasp, leaves mask on ground, and backs off the stage, still staring at Pretoria.)

## VAISYA

(Motions for the moving "Soldiers" to stop.)  
That's enough.

(The "Soldiers" continue to move, making a closing semicircle.)

## PRETORIA

I killed him. I killed Indio! I murdered my brother!

(pause)

Indio! Forgive me! I killed mother!

## BRUNO

(runs to center of stage)  
Wake up, Pretoria!

## PRETORIA

(looks backstage)  
Mother! Father! Where are they? They were here!  
They're alive! I saw them!

## BRUNO

(shakes Pretoria)  
They're actors in a play, Pretoria! They're masks!

## PRETORIA

Then give me a mask that will make me one of them! They need me!

(looks at Bruno)

You. . . go away from me!



BRUNO

This wasn't meant for you, Pretoria.

PRETORIA

(picks up the Indio mask and speaks to it)  
I'm going with you, Indio. We'll go back to the village. Father will have clay again, won't he Indio? Surely you and I can find the clay. We'll look together. Then we'll watch father shape his bowls. They're beautiful bowls, aren't they Indio?

BRUNO

Forgive me, Pretoria. I had not known what depths a mask can penetrate. I've accomplished my purpose; I've torn off your mask, but that mask through the years had merged with your flesh. Forgive me, Pretoria. I had not meant to tear a mask of flesh. Is it possible that time can consume our true faces so completely, obliterating even the memory of our selves, leaving flesh death beneath a mask? Forgive me, Pretoria. I did not know there was no face below the mask. Exposed, you'll bleed to death. Forgive me, Pretoria. I'll find a new mask to cover your bleeding faceless flesh.

VAISYA

(to the "Soldiers," who now tightly encircle the group)  
That's enough! What are you doing?

"SOLDIERS"

We've been tortured long enough!  
We're awake now! We are not animals any more.  
This time they're going to pay for it! From now on they're going to pay for it!

AMONG AUDIENCE

(Pretoria, holding the Indio mask, lunges through the circle of "Soldiers")

DARIUS STARK  
(stands up)  
Stop this! Lights!  
Lights!

## PRETORIA

Father! Mother! It's Pretoria. I've come back.

(She holds up the Indio mask)

I came with Indio. I'm going to stay, father.  
Yes, father. I'm never going to leave again.

CURTAIN CLOSES SLOWLY

HOUSELIGHTS ON

DARIUS STARK

(To Audience)

There's no more! That's all. Go home! There's nothing here worth getting yourselves bothered about. You and I know we've got the best protection in the world. Don't go listening to all the tomyrot about corporations and militarists. What we give you is a set of laws that protect a man's hard-earned rewards. Go home and thank God for that. You're all decent people--you know what it means to have your freedom protected. Our way of doing things is under attack in every part of the world. But we've been in trouble before, and we've always come out on top. Go back to your jobs, your families. You can rest assured that if ever the day comes when we in this country have to hand out what we've broken

our backs earning, we'll blow the whole thing to smithierines.

(Darius Stark leaves the Theater, followed by Harold and Cecil.)

(no curtain call)





