

Monkey Dance Honeymoon

By Paul Thain

Act One

The Stage is covered with sand, rising to a gentle heap upstage centre ...

Stage-right - a Unit in a poor African compound, signified by angled sheets of rusting corrugated iron, up-turned oil drums, a small double bed, a cheap radio-cassette, the Qur'an, and a meagre string of Christmas tree lights

Stage-left - a Unit in the luxury compound of Hotel Paradise, particularly a seashore patio, signified by sun-beds, beach chairs, a table and parasol, and a bowl of tropical fruit containing a telephone in the shape of a banana

Segregating these Units is a high wire-meshed Fence, stretching from USL to USC, then curling down to DSR. The Fence is in two lengths, overlapping half-way, thereby providing an "invisible" gap to facilitate quick access between the main acting areas

Begin in Black with a pre-recorded sequence, starting with a soft hissing whine. Zoe, a Geordie, whispers to Nathan, a Londoner, both twenties ...

ZOE : Nathan ? ... Nathan ?

NATHAN : ... hm ?

ZOE : I still can't believe we're actually going to do it.

NATHAN : No. Me neither.

ZOE : You okay ?

NATHAN : Fine, I'm fine.

ZOE : You don't look it.

NATHAN : I'm fine.

ZOE : Say you love me.

NATHAN : Zoe ...

ZOE : Go on ...

NATHAN : Zoe, please ...

ZOE : Go on, two minutes time we could both be dead.

NATHAN : For fuck's sake, woman.

ZOE : Well we could.

NATHAN : I know we could. I know we bloody could. Don't you think I know that? Don't you think I'm aware of what could, what could ... yeh, okay, okay, I'm sorry, I'm a bit - I love you, all right ?

ZOE : A bit what ?

NATHAN : Leave it, will you ?

ZOE : A bit what ? Nathan, you've gone all sweaty, now come on - what is it, what's wrong ?

NATHAN : This is my first time.

ZOE : ... what ? You mean you've never - ?

NATHAN : It's ridiculous, I know it's ridiculous, but I've always put it off, found excuses.

ZOE : Why didn't you say ?

NATHAN : I thought I'd be okay, I thought I could handle it, I thought when the time came I'd be all right, I even took hypnosis.

ZOE : You didn't ?

NATHAN : I did. Zoe, I'm bloody terrified, I'm not even sure I can go through with it.

ZOE : You what ?

NATHAN : I'm sorry, angel, but -

ZOE : ... sorry ? You've left it a bit bloody late.

NATHAN : Try and understand ... however irrational, there's part of me just doesn't believe it's physically possible. It's the way I am, I can't -

The hissing whine rises to a sudden roar

" " : ... shit ...

ZOE : It's all right.

NATHAN : ... bloody hell ...

ZOE : It's perfectly normal.

NATHAN : ... jesus ...

The 737 soars into the sky ...

... fading into Silence

Cicadas chant in the heat of a tropical sun

Lights rise on Jalamang, seventeen, a black African, standing behind the Fence reading his "Complete Works of William Shakespeare". He wears T-shirt, jeans and plastic flip-flops. The 737 approaches, squeals as it lands ...

Jalamang looks up, closes his book. He then presses his face against the Wire and projects a whisper to an invisible Queue

JALAMANG : Hello. Welcome. Any newspaper, any magazine ?

A Tannoy pings into life and a female Voice announces ...

VOICE : Ladies and gentleman, welcome to Africa !

JALAMANG : Hello. Welcome. Any newspaper, any magazine ?

VOICE : Will all passengers please proceed to Passport Control and Immigration.

Zoe & Nathan enter DSR and join the invisible Queue, each carrying hand luggage. She wears a summer dress & sun-hat while he wears thick trousers, rolled-up shirt and carries a winter jacket

JALAMANG : Hello. Welcome. Any newspaper, any magazine ?

Nathan traps his shoulder-bag between his feet, then wafts himself with a computer magazine

ZOE : Hot ?

NATHAN : No, no ... stiff wrist.

ZOE : ... funny ...

VOICE : Passengers waiting for the return flight to London Heathrow are reminded the Duty Free Shop is now open.

ZOE : I was half expecting you to drop to your knees and kiss the tarmac. You know, like the Pope. Aw, come on - you're not still in a huff ? You are, aren't you ?

NATHAN : Sorry - were you talking to me ?

ZOE : Okay, okay - perhaps I was a touch insensitive.

NATHAN : *(as the queue shuffles forward)* ... a touch ?

ZOE : It was for your own good. When I saw the blood drain from your knuckles, I thought a bit of humour might help.

NATHAN : Eight miles high approaching touchdown ... don't you worry, pet - flying's perfectly safe, except for the last six inches. That's not humour, Zoe, that's sadism.

ZOE : Terrible, aren't I ? So how can I make amends ?

JALAMANG : Hello. Welcome.

ZOE : How can I appease my lord and master's righteous indignation ?

JALAMANG : Any newspaper, any magazine ?

NATHAN : Eight letters - the closest a man comes to a woman's mind.

ZOE : My oh my, what a surprise !

NATHAN : You did ask.

ZOE : You know, for years I thought it was an opera.

NATHAN : ... opera ?

The Queue snakes a little further ...

ZOE : German opera. Six ... no, no - seven letters.

NATHAN : What is this ? Jet-lag ?

ZOE : Come on, smart arse.

JALAMANG : Hello. Welcome.

NATHAN : German opera ?

JALAMANG : Any newspaper, any magazine ?

ZOE : German opera, seven letters ... sounds like a bit of a mouthful.

NATHAN : Sounds like a - ?

ZOE : That's a pun.

NATHAN : You don't say.

ZOE : Give in ?

NATHAN : Go on then ...

ZOE : Fidelio.

NATHAN : ... Fidelio !

ZOE : I could never understand all the fuss about performing Beethoven.

NATHAN : ... sounds like a bit of a -

ZOE : Totally bemused, I was. I mean, why on earth would anyone - Nathan !

Nathan's seen Tasmeeera enter - a beautiful black woman in her early twenties, carrying a small suitcase and wearing an expensive Western-style outfit. He inhales lasciviously as she passes ...

ZOE : ... behave yourself !

NATHAN : Can't I look ? Can't I even look ?

ZOE : Not like that you can't, that's not looking, that's ogling.

NATHAN : I'm a man, Zoe, I come pre-programmed - pun intended.

ZOE : Bollocks.

NATHAN : Precisely.

Tasmeeera decides to risk approaching Jalamang ...

TASMEERA : Jalamang, what are you doing here ? Is it Yanks ? Is Yanks okay ?

JALAMANG : Yanks is fine, no problem. I am trying to hustle newspapers.

TASMEERA : ... hustle ?

JALAMANG : As you can see, I am not having much luck.

TASMEERA : But what about school ?

JALAMANG : Father die last week.

TASMEERA : Oh, Jalamang ...

JALAMANG : So much debt, there is no money for school.

TASMEERA : Forgive me - I can't stay, I have to go.

JALAMANG : Yanks is waiting for you.

Nathan watches Tasmeeera leave, turns back to Zoe ...

NATHAN : Surely you're not jealous of a stranger ?

ZOE : Yeh, I know, I'm being silly - I suppose she was rather special.

NATHAN : Too right, talk about hot chocolate.

ZOE : So what about him ?

NATHAN : ... hm ?

The Queue shuffles forward ...

ZOE : Next to the Duty Free, orange T-shirt.

NATHAN : What about him ?

ZOE : Lovely bum.

JALAMANG : Hello. Welcome.

ZOE : Nice pecs, an all.

JALAMANG : Any newspaper, any magazine ?

ZOE : Very tasty.

NATHAN : Yeh, okay ...

ZOE : And just look at the way he moves, oh, yes ... yes, yes, yes ...

NATHAN : ... all right, ha-bloody-ha.

ZOE : Bet he's well-hung, an all.

NATHAN : Zoe ...

The Queue shuffles a little further ...

JALAMANG : Hello. Welcome.

NATHAN : You've made your point, you don't have to -

JALAMANG : Any newspaper, any magazine ?

NATHAN : ... what ? What's he say ?

ZOE : *(rolling it)* He wants the newspaper.

NATHAN : Yes, please.

NATHAN : ... hang on - I haven't finished the crossword.

ZOE : *(poking it through the Fence)* For heaven's sake ...

NATHAN : You know how much I enjoy - Zoe !

JALAMANG : Thank you.

NATHAN : Oh, great. Terrific. Thanks a fucking bunch.

ZOE : I should have thought just for once -

NATHAN : I was looking forward to that. You should ask, you should've asked, you shouldn't just -

JALAMANG : Please, we must whisper - if they think I'm hassling you, it will make great trouble for me. Would you like me to return your newspaper ?

NATHAN : Oh well, that's very decent -

ZOE : Nathan !

NATHAN : Second thoughts, maybe you should keep it.

JALAMANG : Thank you. And your magazine ?

NATHAN : No, no, I don't think so. It's rather specialised - computers, modems, telecommunications, I shouldn't think you'd find much use or interest -

JALAMANG : Please - I would value it very much.

NATHAN : No disrespect, but have you even heard of the Internet ?

ZOE : Nathan ...

NATHAN : A fair question, it's a fair question.

JALAMANG : Internet ? No... no, I don't think so.

NATHAN : What did I say ? He hasn't even -

ZOE : Well if he hasn't, perhaps he should - you're always going on about how important it is.

Nathan turns her aside, whispers ...

NATHAN : What's the point ? I shouldn't think he knows a computer from a camel.

ZOE : Can't you see ? The poor lad's desperate.

JALAMANG : Excuse me ...

NATHAN : It's a magazine, not a bowl of rice.

JALAMANG : Hello ... ? Hello, excuse me ...

NATHAN : Yeh okay, hang on, we're just trying to -

JALAMANG : It is about this Internet ...

NATHAN : Yeh, I know, we're just trying to -

JALAMANG : It sounds very interesting.

NATHAN : Does it ?

ZOE : You see ...

JALAMANG : I would very much like to learn about it.

NATHAN : Would you ? Would you now ?

JALAMANG : Particularly if you yourself regard it as so important.

NATHAN : (*chuckling*) You should be in double-glazing, you're wasted here.

JALAMANG : ... double-glazing ?

NATHAN : Never mind. (*poking through the mag*) There you go, sunshine ...

JALAMANG : Thank you.

NATHAN : ... happy surfing.

The Queue moves on, Zoe pecks Nathan a kiss ...

ZOE : My hero ...

NATHAN : Oh, it's fine for you ...

JALAMANG : Hello. Welcome.

NATHAN : ... I didn't notice you rushing to give him *Middlemarch*.

JALAMANG : Any newspaper, any magazine ?

NATHAN : Now what am I going to read ?

JALAMANG : Hello. Welcome.

NATHAN : (*exiting*) Cosmo-bloody-politan ?

JALAMANG : Any newspaper, any magazine ?

Lights snap out

We hear the angry beat of an African drum; Patio furniture is set

Lights rise on Yanks, a handsome black African in his mid-twenties, sitting on his oil drum, playing a powerful riff behind the Wire. He wears T-shirt, jeans, and a reversed baseball cap

Tasmeera enters, puts down the suitcase, observes. Yanks senses her presence, stops drumming ...

- TASMEERA : Enunbara.
- YANKS : Enunbara.
- He goes to her, ritually kisses her cheeks*
- " " : As-Salamu alaykum.
- TASMEERA : Wa alaykum's-salam.
- YANKS : *(hugging her tight)* You okay ?
- TASMEERA : I'm okay.
- YANKS : Look at you - you look a million dollar, like a movie-star.
- She smiles sadly, breaks way*
- TASMEERA : The driver is waiting.
- Picking up the suitcase, she goes into the Unit. Yanks follows ...*
- YANKS : Did you see Jalamang ?
- TASMEERA : Hustling for newspapers.
- YANKS : Could you speak ?
- She puts the case on the bed, removes several glossy magazines*
- TASMEERA : Only a moment, I was still with the Delegation.
- YANKS : Did he say about his father ?
- TASMEERA : *(nodding)* What happen ?
- YANKS : Fever, some fever. But Jalamang think he just too tired to live.
- TASMEERA : *(taking off her shoes)* ... poor man.
- YANKS : A poor man and a good man, he was a great friend to me. *(he sits on the bed, flicks through the magazines)* The money-lenders gather like wolves, they lose their home, their land, everything. His mother and sisters, they have all gone to live with my father.
- TASMEERA : *(removing her stockings)* And Jalamang live here ?

- YANKS : What else could I do ?
- Tasmeera sighs, puts shoes & stockings into the suitcase then removes her jewellery. Yanks puts the magazines aside ...*
- " " : They should bring a good price. Take them to Paradise, show them to Yousef.
- TASMEERA : Don't you think Fulamatou will pay more ?
- YANKS : Okay, first you try Fulamatou, but don't settle for less than fifty. Tasmeera - he is my cousin, my brother, what else can I do ? In the village there is nothing for him, so what could I do ?
- She zips the jewellery into a toilet-bag, returns it to the case, begins to undress*
- TASMEERA : We can scarcely feed ourselves. He is a good boy, and God knows I feel pity for him but how are we - ?
- Yanks is captivated by her shimmering slip. He reaches for her, glides his fingers over her body*
- TASMEERA : Isn't it beautiful ?
- YANKS : ... so smooth ...
- TASMEERA : ... silk, pure silk ...
- YANKS : ... smooth as water ...
- TASMEERA : From Paris ... three hundred English pound.
- YANKS : ... three hundred ?
- TASMEERA : That is like nothing, he waste thousands.
- Yanks breaks away, stares through the Wire*
- YANKS : ... man oh man ...
- TASMEERA : *(folding the dress into the case)* The worst is not that he does not care, but that he think it is his right to live like that, he think Allah specially choose him to live like a prince.
- YANKS : The man is evil.
- TASMEERA : The man is sick, sick with greed. The people he meet, they are no better, their only interest is for themselves and their profit.
- YANKS : Did he hurt you ?
- TASMEERA : Yanks, you promise.

- YANKS : Did he ?
Tasmeera holds him, whispers
- TASMEERA : No. No, Yanks, truly.
Yanks looks away, presses his forehead against the Wire
- " " : It is not me, it is never me, I am always someone else. Look at me. Mamamondou, look at me ...
Yanks looks at her
- " " : Namuso, I am only for you, what I am, what I truly am, I am only for you.
They kiss ...
- " " : ... we can't - the driver is impatient.
- YANKS : Let him learn to wait.
- TASMEERA : He will come beating on the door.
- YANKS : Tasmeera ...
- TASMEERA : Please, give me time, let me become myself again. Yanks, please, get me my dress.
He relents, drags a box from under the bed. Tasmeera removes the slip
- " " : What are we to do with Jalamang ? He is a clever boy but he is never a hustler.
He finds a shabby African dress, gives it to her
- YANKS : I will take him to Paradise.
- TASMEERA : ... Paradise ? Are you crazy ? Even you cannot gain a living, what chance will he ?
- YANKS : Think positive, woman.
- TASMEERA : He is not handsome, he is gauche, awkward ... *(folding the slip into the case)* ... unless you are a cripple you have to be handsome.
- YANKS : I will teach him to teach the drum.
- TASMEERA : *(laughing)* ... Jalamang ?
- YANKS : You are too hard. He has a beautiful smile, he is blessed with the Spirit, for the drum that is what is most important.

TASMEERA : *(fastening the case)* What about rhythm ?

YANKS : What do they know ? A nice African boy with a big smile sitting on the beach playing his drum -

TASMEERA : You still need style. *(giving him the suitcase)* No trouble, he is only the driver - give him the case and say nothing.

Yanks leaves. Now transformed, Tasmeeera adjusts her shabby dress, smoothing her belly as she gazes round her tiny home before sitting on the bed and wearily cradling her head

Slow crossfade to DSL as Cicadas mix into lapping Waves

Chuckles off, then ...

The Telephone rings

NATHAN : *(off)* ... shit.

ZOE : *(off)* ... don't you dare ! Nathan ! Nathan, I mean it !

NATHAN : *(off)* It might be important.

ZOE : *(off)* Nathan !

NATHAN : *(off)* Won't take a minute.

He enters tying his bathrobe ...

" " : Where is it ?

ZOE : *(off)* Where's what ?

NATHAN : The phone, the bloody phone.

ZOE : *(off)* On the table.

NATHAN : ... eh ?

ZOE : *(off)* The banana ...

NATHAN : Ah, right. Hello ? Yes, this is Mr Freeman. Oh no, dear oh dear, that's a bit of a blow. You're sure, absolutely sure ?

Zoe enters wearing a beach-robe, worried

" " : Well what about the '88 ? No, no, not demi-sec - brut, I want brut. Look, if I'm paying for the best I expect - yeh okay, fine, that'll do, but nice and chilled and ASAP. Eh ? As soon as - oh, never mind, just bring it. Yeh, great, that'll be great, thank you.

He puts down the banana, sighs and sits

" " : Bloody cheek. Tried to palm me off with Asti Spumanti .

ZOE : *(stroking his chest)* I wish you'd relax.

NATHAN : Yeh, I know, I know - haven't been much fun, have I ? What with work and the wedding, then the bloody flight.

ZOE : *(sitting on his knee, kissing him)* And all for love, eh ? You're a prince, what are you ? A prince among men.

NATHAN : Jest ye not. Nothing else would have got me on that plane.

ZOE : Amor vincit omnia.

NATHAN : Speaking of amor, I could really go some Beethoven ...

ZOE : Could you now ?

NATHAN : Much as I relished the Overture, I feel this sudden urge for the First Act.

ZOE : Is that a fact ?

NATHAN : Let's go back inside, hm ?

ZOE : Sorry, bonny lad ... you had your chance.

NATHAN : You what ?

ZOE : Second best to a telephone ?

NATHAN : Aw, come on, you're surely not -

ZOE : A girl's got her pride, Nathan.

NATHAN : It could've been important.

ZOE : More important than me ?

NATHAN : A phone-call, it was only a phone-call. Come on, angel, surely you're not -

Zoe chuckles

" " : ... what ? What ?

ZOE : Had you worried, didn't I ?

NATHAN : ... a wind-up, a bloody wind-up !

ZOE : Just don't take liberties, right ? Next time I mightn't be so generous. Come on then, lover boy - let's see if you can rise to the occasion.

NATHAN : I'm sure I'll come up with something.

ZOE : You'd better. I want no limp excuses.

NATHAN : Don't you worry your pretty little feminist head, I'll try really hard.

They kiss, the banana rings

" " : ... shit.

Zoe sighs, gives permission

ZOE : Go on ...

NATHAN : Yeh, speaking ... eh ? No ice ? What do you mean you've no - ?
(*to Zoe*) ... no bloody ice ! Well how long will that take ? *How* long ? You and me both. No, no - this really isn't good enough, tell the manager I'll be there in five minutes ! (*hangs up*)

ZOE : God, I hate it when you're masterful.

NATHAN : Sorry, angel, but it has to be sorted (*exiting*) Five star means five star whether it's here or Timbuktu.

ZOE : (*following*) It's only a bottle of champagne, I don't see why you have to -

NATHAN : (*off*) ... only ? La-di-da, since when has champagne been only ?

ZOE : For fuck's sake, Nathan, this isn't Europe.

NATHAN : (*off*) I'm well aware of that, thank you. It's the principle, give them an inch and they'll take a - shit, where are they ?

He strides back on wearing vivid shorts and a designer T-shirt

" " : Seen my shades ?

ZOE : Table.

NATHAN : ... ah. (*puts on sun-glasses*), Look, I just want things to be right, for us to have a proper start, that's all. These little things are important. (*holding her*) Hey, come on - smile if you love me. (*she smiles*) That's better.

Off, a distant drum beats a lazy riff. Nathan affects a posh voice

" " : Listen darling ... they're playing our song. Zoe ... ?

ZOE : ... hm ?

NATHAN : They're playing our song.

ZOE : *(chuckling)* ... you daft ape.

NATHAN : *(kissing her)* Love you ...

ZOE : ... love you.

NATHAN : Right then. Oh, you'd better have this ...

ZOE : What is it ?

NATHAN : The key to the security box, just in case ...

ZOE : In case what ?

NATHAN : Well ... case I get mugged or something.

ZOE : ... mugged ? You're only going to Reception.

NATHAN : Haven't you heard ? It's a jungle out there ? No, but seriously, love, you can't be too careful, not here - life's cheap and the living ain't easy, even the drive from the airport you could see it's dog eat dog. Right then - bollocking-mode. Let's see if these natives understand basic service and efficiency. *(mouthing a kiss)* Won't be long.

He leaves. Zoe gazes out across the beach, increasingly captivated by the beat of the drum

Sustain Drumbeat, increasing in volume as Lights crossfade to upstage centre where Yanks and Jalamang sit back-to-back on the heap of sand, sharing a spliff in the late-afternoon sun

Jalamang continues to study his "Complete Works". Yanks' drumming reaches a sudden conclusion with a virtuoso coda

YANKS : ... a simple riff, nice and easy, surely you can do that ? Hey man, I am talking to you.

JALAMANG : We are the stuff that dreams are made on ...

YANKS : ... dreams ? What dreams ?

JALAMANG : ... and our little lives are rounded by a sleep.

YANKS : Jalamang ...

JALAMANG : Isn't that wonderful ? Don't you think it's wonderful ?

YANKS : We are what ?

JALAMANG : The stuff of dreams.

YANKS : ... the stuff of dreams ? Man, you sure has a way with words.

- JALAMANG : Not I, Shakespeare.
- YANKS : Ah, Shakespeare ...
- JALAMANG : Mind and soul and beauty, the man is a master. You will really like this one, it all happens on an island, a fabulous, fantastic island, but first it start with a terrible ship-wreck and a mighty storm -
- YANKS : Jalamang, this is no time for Shakespeare, this is your time to learn.
- JALAMANG : I can't drum, you know I can't.
- YANKS : It doesn't have to be good.
- JALAMANG : Of course it has to be good, to be a teacher is to be an example.
- YANKS : Good or bad, how will they know ?
- JALAMANG : I will know.
- YANKS : So can't you keep it a secret ?
- JALAMANG : How can I teach what I cannot learn ?
- YANKS : Believe me, you will not be the first. You could at least try.
- JALAMANG : *(sighing)* Give me the drum.
- YANKS : That's my man !
- He faces Jalamang, gives him the spliff ...*
- " " : An experience, give them an experience. That is what they want, what they need, especially the women, know what I mean ? *(patting a seductive rhythm)* Cool. Make it cool. Cool and sexy. Take plenty time, let them fall into the rhythm, let them enjoy the way you move, then you tell them the drum speak to their heart, that it waken their spirit. Psychology, Jalamang, it is all psychology.
- Jalamang accepts the Drum, returns the spliff*
- " " : And smile. I know your heart hurt, but you must still smile. Okay ... nice and easy ...
- Jalamang fixes a smile and begins ...*
- " " : Hey man - you are not going to war !
- Jalamang perseveres ...*
- " " : Cool. Cool and sexy.

Yanks sighs, stands, stares out at the sea, sighs again

" " : ... man oh man ...

Jalamang stops, also sighs

" " : Jalamang, how is it you are the only boy in Africa who can't play the drum ?

JALAMANG : Father said I live too much in my head.

YANKS : Your father, he was a wise man.

Yanks carefully nips out the spliff, saves it under his cap

" " : Okay, okay - from the start.

Jalamang stands, leaving his "Complete Works"

YANKS : No, no, keep the book - the book is good, the book makes you special.

Inspired, Yanks clicks his fingers, claps his hands

" " : Shakespeare ! Shakespeare ! We will call you Shakespeare ! Now what is wrong ?

JALAMANG : My name is Jalamang.

YANKS : My name is Mamamondou, but like yours it is too hard for them to remember. Jalamang, surely Shakespeare is the finest of names ?

JALAMANG : It is not my name.

YANKS : *(holding his shoulders)* What else have you to sell ? Hm ? What else ? When you are rich you buy back your name, but now, when you are here, you are Shakespeare, okay ? Jalamang, you must trust me.

JALAMANG : ... okay ...

YANKS : That's my man ! Okay ...

Yanks strolls around, parodying a tourist

" " : ... so here I am, honky on holiday. Look at me. Aren't I easy to recognise ? See how white ? How pale ? Eight hours ago I am shivering in the wet and the cold but now I am in Paradise. And I like being in Paradise. I like it very much. So I take myself for a little stroll along the beach, and then ... then I see you ...

JALAMANG : *(beaming a smile)* Hello. Welcome. How are you ?

- YANKS : I am pretending I don't hear you ...
- JALAMANG : *(louder)* Hello. Welcome. How are you ?
- YANKS : I am pretending I don't see you ...
- JALAMANG : *(pursuing)* Hello. Welcome. How are you ?
- YANKS : Very well, thank you, can't complain, mustn't grumble, and how are you ?
- JALAMANG : Fine, thank you.
- YANKS : Jolly good, mind how you go, take care, have a nice day.
- JALAMANG : *(pursuing)* Where are you from ?
- YANKS : Bristol. I come from Bristol.
- JALAMANG : You are from England ?
- YANKS : Yes, I am English - very, very English. The sun ! Now you talk about the sun ! The sun and the bamboo paste ! Surely you cannot forget - quickly, quickly !
- JALAMANG : What is it ?
- YANKS : Security ! The security guard ! *(touching his toes)* Do what I do !
- JALAMANG : *(copying)* What are you doing ?
- YANKS : Exercising ! Pretend you are exercising !
- JALAMANG : Can't I pretend I'm reading ?
- YANKS : *(jogging like a boxer)* Are you crazy ?
- JALAMANG : *(copying)* My country, my beach - why can't I sit and read ?
- YANKS : Do you want to do the monkey dance, is that what you want ? Only the tourist read on the beach, he will consider you impertinent.
- Yanks stops, gets back his breathe*
- " " : ... okay, okay, it's cool - he only have a smoke, a naughty smoke, he is not interested in us.
- JALAMANG : What is the monkey dance ?
- YANKS : *(pointing)* Look what I see ... fresh off the plane and white as an angel. And all alone.
- JALAMANG : I recognise her, she was at the airport.

YANKS : Come on, beautiful lady, come on - Yanks and Shakespeare are waiting for you. Come on, come on. She's leaving the compound ! Quickly, quickly ...

They hurry upstage, squat behind the mound of sand

" " : The sun and the bamboo paste, okay ?

JALAMANG : ... okay ...

Zoe enters - strolling moodily along the shore. Yanks waits his moment, stands unseen, pats a gentle riff ...

ZOE : Oh ... I'm sorry, I didn't realise -

Yanks smiles, approaches extending his hand ...

YANKS : Hello. Welcome. You are very welcome.

ZOE : *(shaking hands)* Thank you,

JALAMANG : *(shaking hands)* Welcome. Welcome to my country.

YANKS : My friend Shakespeare, he think he is the President.

Zoe chuckles, still apprehensive

ZOE : ... Shakespeare ?

YANKS : This is what we call him. And I am Yanks.

ZOE : ... Yanks and Shakespeare ?

YANKS : I am sure you will remember us.

ZOE : I could hardly forget. *(to Jalamang)* Weren't you at the airport ?

JALAMANG : Thank you for the newspaper, it made a good price.

YANKS : Excuse me - what is your name ?

ZOE : Oh, I'm sorry - I'm Zoe.

YANKS : ... Zoe ? Nice. A nice name for a nice lady.

ZOE : ... thank you ...

YANKS : Zoe ... it whispers like the wind.

ZOE : Not always, I promise.

YANKS : *(tapping a brief rap)* You like the African drum ?

- ZOE : Oh yes.
- YANKS : My friend Shakespeare, he is giving me a lesson. I am very fortunate, he is a fine teacher, he always make it seem so easy. Here ... why don't you try ?
- ZOE : Well actually I really think, I really think I should be -
- YANKS : Zoe, it's cool, we are peace-loving people, we mean you no harm and I promise on my life the drum, it will not bite. Please, for me ...
- ZOE : Go on then ... oh ...
- YANKS : Yes, it is very heavy. That is why first we must sit. *(they all sit)* Okay, start with a simple rhythm ... *(tapping)* ... one, two ... one, two, three ... one, two ... one, two, three. But listen, always listen carefully, because if you listen, truly listen, the drum, it will speak to you, to what is inside you. Isn't that so, Shakespeare ?
- JALAMANG : Yes, that is true.
- YANKS : My teacher, he agrees with me. Okay ... take plenty time and don't be shy.
- Zoe beats a neat riff, initially constrained but increasingly competent*
- " " : ... good, that's good.
- JALAMANG : Very good.
- Zoe stops, Yanks and Jalamang applaud*
- YANKS : You have talent.
- JALAMANG : You do, you really do.
- ZOE : ... don't be silly.
- YANKS : A natural sense of rhythm. Believe me, it is not so common.
- ZOE : Well me brother was in the Boys Brigade, sometimes I'd sneak a go of his drum.
- YANKS : You have played before, I thought so. But talent, you know, it is a blessing from Allah and you must use it wisely. Isn't that so, Shakespeare ?
- JALAMANG : That is certainly true.
- YANKS : So why don't you teach her, hm ? A few lesson ?
- ZOE : Look, it's very good of you, but -

- YANKS : No problem. You are a guest in our country. We want you to have a good time, a real African experience.
- ZOE : The thing is, we've only just arrived and we haven't really decided -
- YANKS : Yes, of course, you're right - it is too important for a sudden decision. But promise tonight you give it your full consideration ?
- ZOE : Okay, I'll think about it.
- YANKS : You promise ?
- ZOE : I promise.
- Zoe stands - Yanks & Jalamang follow suit. As they shake hands*
- " " : Thanks. It's been nice meeting you.
- JALAMANG : Thank you, Zoe, a great pleasure.
- YANKS : Perhaps we can meet tomorrow ? Say ten o'clock ?
- ZOE : Just a few minutes, we're doing nothing tomorrow except sunbathe.
- YANKS : Ah yes ... the sun.
- JALAMANG : You must be careful, Zoe, the sun ... the sun is very strong, it can cause you great harm.
- YANKS : Great harm.
- ZOE : Don't worry, we've brought plenty lotion.
- YANKS : Lotion is not so good.
- JALAMANG : You must use what we use - bamboo paste.
- ZOE : ... bamboo paste ?
- YANKS : Bamboo paste.
- JALAMANG : It is very special. It protects you and gives your skin nourishment. If you like tomorrow I will bring you some.
- ZOE : That's very kind of you, but -
- YANKS : No problem, it's no problem.
- JALAMANG : You are staying at Hotel Paradise ?
- ZOE : Well yes, yes we are, but -
- Nathan strides on*

NATHAN : Hi ! Hi, guys ! How you doing ?

YANKS : *(extending his hand)* Hello. Welcome. How are you ?

NATHAN : Great, never better.

YANKS : *(shaking hands)* I am Yanks, I am very pleased to meet you.

NATHAN : Nathan, I'm Nathan.

YANKS : Nathan, a good name, a good strong name.

NATHAN : Yeh. Yeh, I like it.

JALAMANG : Hello, Nathan. I am Shakespeare.

NATHAN : *(shaking hands)* ... Shakespeare ?

YANKS : Yanks and Shakespeare - I am sure you will remember us.

NATHAN : I'm sure I will. Everything all right, love ?

ZOE : Great. I've been learning about the drum.

YANKS : Your lady, she has talent.

NATHAN : Yeh ? Now there's a thing - full of surprises, aren't you ?

YANKS : The drum, it is the mother of all music.

NATHAN : Yeh. Yeh, I suppose it must be.

YANKS : And as I'm sure you know, Nathan - music is Africa's gift to the world.

NATHAN : Definitely. Well, it's been nice talking to you, to you both, but it's been a long day, so I think maybe we'll -

YANKS : Hey man, what's your problem ?

NATHAN : Problem ? What problem ? I've no problem.

YANKS : It's cool, relax.

NATHAN : I'm relaxed, I'm perfectly relaxed, this is me, this is me being relaxed, I'm fine, don't you worry.

YANKS : Okay, okay, that's cool. So tell me Nathan, how do you find Africa ?

NATHAN : To be honest, we've only just arrived, but yeh, great, it seems great ... different, certainly different.

YANKS : Very different.

NATHAN : A world of contrast, as they say.

YANKS : They say right.

NATHAN : Well darling, I really think we should be - ?

ZOE : I was just coming actually.

NATHAN : Better be off then, it's getting dark, it'll be dark soon.

YANKS : And tomorrow is another day.

NATHAN : We certainly hope so, don't we, darling ?

YANKS : And as a special kindness for my new friends, I will arrange for the sun to shine ...

NATHAN : ... what ? Oh yeh ... great, thanks, thanks very much. Well, that's what we're here for, isn't it ? Ready, love ?

ZOE : Bye, Yanks.

YANKS : You won't forget ?

ZOE : I won't forget.

YANKS : Stay cool, Nathan.

ZOE : Bye, Shakespeare.

JALAMANG : Goodnight, Zoe, sweet dreams.

ZOE : Same to you.

Now alone, Yanks ponders, turns to Jalamang ...

YANKS : Well ?

JALAMANG : She seem very nice.

YANKS : What about he ?

JALAMANG : Eyes so full of fear, it is hard to say, but perhaps he is not so nice.

YANKS : Smart but not wise. You will see many like him. Such people are rarely generous. (*picking up his drum*) But it was a good start, a very good start. And did you see how they like your new name ?

JALAMANG : I have a lot to learn.

YANKS : You did okay. No, truly - already she likes you. Now what you must do is win her trust.

- JALAMANG : And how am I to do that ? With bamboo paste ?
- YANKS : Psychology, Jalamang, it is all psychology - it is not just bamboo paste, it is a gift, a gift from a poor man. She will recognise that ...
Yanks smiles, takes Jalamang's hand ..
- " " : He won't, but she will.
Yanks & Shakespeare exit holding hands
Crossfade to Hotel unit where flowers, a couple of glasses and an ice-bucket containing a bottle of champagne wait on the table
Zoe & Nathan enter as if from the beach, also holding hands
- NATHAN : Don't you ever do that again.
- ZOE : For God's sake ...
- NATHAN : Promise me you'll never -
Zoe breaks to the patio ...
- ZOE : I'll do no such thing ! Oh look, praise the Lord - there's your rotten champagne !
- NATHAN : This isn't bloody Bournemouth !
- ZOE : *(sitting)* I was perfectly okay.
- NATHAN : And what if I hadn't come along ?
- ZOE : I was already leaving.
- NATHAN : If they'd let you. Anything could have happened ! You could have been, you could have been, it doesn't even bear thinking about.
- ZOE : Nathan, will you please - ?
- NATHAN : And what about Security ? That beach is supposed to be patrolled. Didn't the guard warn you ?
- ZOE : What guard ? There wasn't any -
- NATHAN : Oh, wasn't there ? *(picking up banana)* Well there bloody should have been.
- ZOE : *(standing)* Don't you dare ! I mean it ! You're being a proper prat. You open your big gob and you'll drop everyone in it. And for what? Playing the drum and spinning a bit of patter ? Just think will you ?
Nathan sighs, hangs up ...

NATHAN : Yeh. Yeh, you're right, I'm sorry. *(holding her)* I'm sorry, love - I just ... I just can't bear the thought of anything happening to you *(smoothing her belly)* ... to you both.

ZOE : *(pecking a kiss)* Open the champagne ...

NATHAN : *(bowing)* Your every wish ...
He lifts the bottle, drops it in disgust ...

" " : ... aw, the ice is melted.

ZOE : It'll still be chilled.

NATHAN : ... I suppose ... bloody thing won't ... no, no - here we go ... *(cork pops)* Houston, we have lift off !

ZOE : ... careful, you're wasting it.

NATHAN : *(pouring)* Knock, knock ...

ZOE : Who's there ?

NATHAN : Sam and Janet.

ZOE : Sam and Janet who ?
Picking up a glass, he assumes the manner of an operatic tenor ...

NATHAN : "Sam and Janet evening,
You may see a stranger ... "

ZOE : *(chuckling)* You daft bugger ...

NATHAN : *(handing her a glass)* Truce ?

ZOE : Truce.

NATHAN : Here's to sun, sand, and sex. Not necessarily in that order.
Zoe smiles, clinks Nathan's glass ...

ZOE : To us ...
They kiss ... the sky glows gold

NATHAN : This is more like it.

ZOE : Isn't it gorgeous ?

NATHAN : Brilliant.

ZOE : ... perfect, just perfect ...

NATHAN : Like a *Bounty* ad ...

ZOE : ... *Bounty* ad ?

NATHAN : Palm trees cut against a setting sun, golden waves lapping silver sand, it's the business all right. A few years we'll all be doing this in Virtual Reality.

ZOE : ... virtual reality ?

NATHAN : All you'd need is a sun-bed and a head-set.

ZOE : This is real, you great nerd. (*tapping the air*) Look, no glass ...

NATHAN : Yeh, but it's expensive. Synthetic reality's dirt cheap - no airports, no hotels, no beaches, nothing - nothing but numbers.

ZOE : (*sitting*) How can you call a glorious sunset nothing but numbers ?

NATHAN : (*sitting*) No matter how wonderful, it still comes down to light and refraction.

ZOE : Bollocks.

NATHAN : Not bollocks, pixels - information expressed as numbers. Soon we'll have lasers projecting images directly onto the retina, or even interfacing the brain itself. Think about that.

ZOE : I can hardly wait.

NATHAN : Technophobe.

ZOE : Lack-a-life.

NATHAN : Luddite.

ZOE : Philistine.

NATHAN : Like it or not, it's the future ...

ZOE : Says who ?

NATHAN : Says evolution, the symbiosis of mind and machine, all that stuff.

ZOE : Not for me, bonnie lad, I'll be happy nursing me memories.

NATHAN : That reminds me - what did that Yanks bloke ask you not to forget ?

ZOE : I can't remember.

NATHAN : Zoe ...

ZOE : It whispers like the wind.

NATHAN : What does ?

ZOE : I was thinking I might learn to play the drum.

NATHAN : ... the drum ? What, you mean - ?

ZOE : Apparently young Shakespeare's real hot stuff.

NATHAN : I trust you're joking ?

ZOE : I thought it might be fun.

NATHAN : Zoe - they're hustlers ...

ZOE : We all have to make a crust. I'll have a laugh and pay a fair price - what's wrong with that ?

NATHAN : What's right with it ? What do you think that fence is for ?

ZOE : I'll just be sitting on the beach.

NATHAN : Yeh, the wrong beach, the wrong beach on the wrong side of the fence.

ZOE : Just because they're poor doesn't mean they're all cut-throats.

NATHAN : Why take the risk ?

ZOE : What risk ? If they were going to mug me, they'd have already done it, they're hardly going to make an appointment.

NATHAN : And what about the baby ?

ZOE : Hey man, I'm barely three months.

NATHAN : I can't believe you're being so irresponsible.

ZOE : I'm a big girl, Nathan, and I'm a good judge of people. Don't you fret, I'll be fine.

NATHAN : No way.

ZOE : You what ?

NATHAN : I'm not having you gallivanting off with some, some hustler.

ZOE : ... gallivanting ?

NATHAN : You should be here with me, not -

ZOE : Listen you, just because we're married doesn't mean -

NATHAN : Can you not do as you're told for once ? I've said no, and I mean no, it's for your own good, so let's leave it at that, right ?

ZOE : *(slamming down her glass)* Well sod you !
She leaves, Nathan follows, calls through the patio doors ...

NATHAN : Zoe ... aw, shit. Zoe ... look, I'm sorry, love, I didn't mean to -

ZOE : *(off)* ... piss off !

NATHAN : That's right - you have a sulk.

ZOE : *(Off)* I'm not sulking, I'm bloody seething !

NATHAN : Can't you see it's for your own good ? Come on, angel, be sensible. Zoe ...

ZOE : *(Off)* I said piss off.
Nathan sighs, returns to his chair...

NATHAN : ... women ...
He sips champagne, broods a few more moments ...

" " : The moon's coming up. Don't you want to see the moon ? It's really something. No, it really is ... the way it ripples on the water, magic, poetry in motion. Zoe, for fuck's sake - this is the first night of our honeymoon ! Zoe ! Stuff you then ...
He sighs, pause. As he tops up his glass Zoe appears, unnoticed

" " : Angel ... come on, angel ...
She tip-toes downstage ...

" " : ... like I say ... it's only cos I love you, it's only cos -
She picks up the ice-bucket. Nathan looks round ...

" " : What you doing ? Zoe, what the - ?
She pours icy water over his head
He shrieks, she grins

ZOE : Chilled enough for you ?

NATHAN : *(standing)* You cow !

ZOE : Amazing. Do you know, I feel better already.

- NATHAN : You bloody cow !
- ZOE : Sorry, pet - what were you saying about the moon ?
- Blackout*
- Waves mix into pulsing night-insects*
- Stars appear*
- Tasmeera lies in bed asleep, faintly lit by Christmas tree lights. Outside, Yanks sits on his oil-drum listening to Jalamang who stares at the Moon through the Wire ...*
- JALAMANG : ... useless, I feel useless ...
- YANKS : Jalamang ...
- JALAMANG : ... useless even to myself.
- YANKS : Jalamang, if you think like this -
- JALAMANG : I feel it so much I think of nothing else. That is why I hide in my books because I have no where else.
- YANKS : Think like this and you will think yourself ill.
- JALAMANG : This I know, I realise this, this is what troubles me, frightens me. The pressure for me is always high, but before it is not such a problem, before I am working for my future, I have a purpose, a direction, but what is there for me now ? Now I am nothing, now I am a burden. And what about my mother ? My sisters ? Your father is a poor man, I must help, I have to help, but what can I do ? How am I to gain my living ? I have no prospect, no future, I have nothing ...
- YANKS : You remember when we are boys and you come to my village with that huge great book and you tell me all those fairy-stories ?
- JALAMANG : I remember.
- YANKS : Well if you will listen, now I might have a story for you.
- JALAMANG : I am listening.

- YANKS : Once upon a time, there was a poor African boy who live in a poor African village. This boy, you know, he is a good boy, a clever boy, but his parent, they are too poor to send him to school so one day he decide to set off to the city and seek his fortune. But soon ... soon Jalamang, like you and me, he find his only work is hustling on the beach. And it is hard, very hard - so many boys, so few tourist. And of course the dhikr. But one day, when things are looking very bad for him, something wonderful happen. He meet a lady, an old lady. First he think she want him for her bed. But no, it is simply that she is kind, it is simply she has a good heart. And so the boy, he take her out of the city and he show her his country and he explain to her what it is really like to live here. He tell her how his people suffer and how his ambition is to be a doctor so he can use his talent to help the poor. And this lady, you know, she love and trust this boy so much, she pay for him to take all his doctor exams. And now ... now he is a famous man and he help many, many poor people. So you see, Jalamang, because of that old lady, they all live happy ever after.
- JALAMANG : That is a good story.
- YANKS : It is a true story, it happen, such a thing can happen.
- Yanks stands, holds Jalamang*
- " " : What will be will be, that is for Allah, but at least on the beach you have a chance.
- Jalamang nods. Yanks begins to lead him off ...*
- YANKS : Time to sleep, we both have a busy day tomorrow, an important day.
- Blackout*
- Lights rise on Jalamang, sitting on the mound of sand with the Drum, struggling to maintain a regular rhythm. He stops, smiles and stands ...*
- Zoe appears wearing sun-hat, a short-sleeved top over her bikini*
- JALAMANG : Hello. Welcome.
- ZOE : Hi ! Where's Yanks ?
- JALAMANG : At the airport, hustling for newspaper. So how are you today ?
- ZOE : Tell you the truth, I'm not really sure. Everything's so vital, so vibrant, it's like living in a dream.
- JALAMANG : We are the stuff of dreams.
- ZOE : That's Shakespeare, isn't it ?

- JALAMANG : The Tempest. Prospero.
- ZOE : Here's me thinking your name was just a gimmick. You know, for the tourists ...
Jalamang smiles, indicates for Zoe to sit ...
- JALAMANG : ... please ...
Zoe picks up the "Complete Works", flicks through it ...
- ZOE : So how many have you read ?
- JALAMANG : Soon I shall finish.
- ZOE : What ? All of them ?
- JALAMANG : Oh yes. And in the same order as they are written. That way it is easier for me to understand how the mind of the man develop. Next I shall read the Sonnets.
- ZOE : So what's your favourite ?
- JALAMANG : I have so many, but now I am very much in love with the Tempest, it is so strange, so full of magic. What about you ?
- ZOE : Just what I did at school - Romeo and Juliet, and to be honest I thought it was rubbish. I mean, it's dead wet and the plot's just plain daft.
- JALAMANG : I think you are too hard, it is very early and he was still only learning.
Zoe eagerly taps the drum ...
- ZOE : Talking of learning ...
- JALAMANG : So you have decided ?
- ZOE : I decided all right.
- JALAMANG : Good, excellent. Okay, the drum ... *(he smiles, picks up the Drum)* ... the drum, you know, it is very ancient. It is crafted from the trunk of a tree and the skin of a goat. It is an instrument that can take you into your inner-most being and if you listen carefully, very carefully, it will speak to you.
- ZOE : Hello, drum - I'm Zoe.
- JALAMANG : But that ... that of course can take a considerable time.
- ZOE : Don't worry, I'm in no rush to summon the dead.

- JALAMANG : Okay - start with a simple rhythm, we call it barawulu ...
- ZOE : ... barawulu ?
- JALAMANG : Barawulu, like so - one-two ... one-two-three ... one-two ... two ... two-three ...
He struggles a little more, stops, smiles, hands Zoe the drum
- ZOE : Well, the first bit's easy enough, but the rest ...
- JALAMANG : No problem, you are here to have a good time.
- ZOE : Right then ...
Zoe performs a competent imitation, but then flounders
- " " : ... no, I'm sorry, it's just too complicated, all those counter-rhythms and half-beats ...
- JALAMANG : No, no ... it was good. Now what I want is for you to tap a beat across the diameter. (*Zoe complies*) You hear how the pitch changes ? With the drum, you see, there are many variables, many variations, not only in the intensity of the sound but - is there something wrong ?
- ZOE : (*standing*) ... bastard.
Jalamang stands, peers along Zoe's line of sight ...
- JALAMANG : Was your husband planning to join us ?
- ZOE : No he bloody wasn't.
Nathan strolls on, braver in the absence of Yanks
- NATHAN : Hello there !
- JALAMANG : Welcome ...
- NATHAN : Hi, Shakespeare ! So where's your mate ?
- JALAMANG : Looking for work.
- ZOE : Nathan, I thought we agreed -
- NATHAN : I'm just having a stroll, can't I take a stroll ?
- ZOE : You can just stroll on.
- NATHAN : All in good time. Don't mind if I sit and watch, do you Shakespeare? A few year back, I was really into, you know, ethnic music ...

JALAMANG : You are welcome.

ZOE : Nathan, I mean it ...

NATHAN : (*sitting*) In fact, for a while, I used to be in a band ...

JALAMANG : ... a band ?

NATHAN : Yeh, you know - punk, heavy metal.

JALAMANG : You mean a brass band ?

NATHAN : No, no - rock 'n' roll, a couple of guitars and a keyboard.

JALAMANG : Ah yes.

NATHAN : And drums, of course ...

JALAMANG : And what ... what instrument did you play ?

NATHAN : That's what I'm trying to say - I was the drummer.

JALAMANG : I see.

NATHAN : Wasn't bad, actually.

JALAMANG : You must remember the African drum is very different.

NATHAN : So I hear. Your tribe has its own special techniques, does it ?

ZOE : Nathan ...

JALAMANG : Yes, we ... we have our own ways.

NATHAN : Beautifully made, though, real craftsmanship, don't you think, love ?

ZOE : I think you should go back to the Hotel. Now.

NATHAN : All right if I give it a try ?

ZOE : Nathan !

NATHAN : Don't mind, do you ?

JALAMANG : ... no, no ... please ...

Nathan performs a sequence of virtuoso riffs ...

ZOE : ... bloody show-off.

JALAMANG : That was good, he's very good.

NATHAN : Good enough to join the class ?

- JALAMANG : You are welcome.
- NATHAN : Great. *(handing back the drum)* Over to you then, Maestro ...
- JALAMANG : Thank you, Nathan.
Jalamang positions the drum, taps it tentatively ...
- " " : Oh, I almost forget - I have a present for you, for you both ...
He gives Zoe a striped blue and white plastic bag from his pocket
- " " : ... bamboo paste.
Zoe opens the bag, peers in ...
- ZOE : Looks like butter ...
- NATHAN : Looks like butter, smells like -
- ZOE : Nathan !
- NATHAN : It does though, bloody pen and inks.
- JALAMANG : ... pen and ink ?
- ZOE : Take no notice. Thank you, Shakespeare, it's very kind of you.
(applying it) I just rub it in, do I ?
- JALAMANG : Every few hours.
- NATHAN : You are certain it's safe ?
- JALAMANG : We have used it many hundred of years. Soon you will both be nice and brown.
- NATHAN : I think I'll give it a miss, no offence. Go easy, love - if it's half as good as he says they mightn't let you back in. Don't you look at me like that.
- JALAMANG : I am wondering if tomorrow you like to go on a safari ?
- ZOE : ... safari ?
- JALAMANG : With me you will see the real Africa, it will be a real African experience.
- ZOE : Sounds brilliant.
- JALAMANG : I know where we can hire a jeep and for you it will be a special price.
- NATHAN : Thanks all the same, Shakespeare, but we're only here a week - sun and sand, that'll do us.

ZOE : Speak for yourself.

JALAMANG : Nathan, if you stay in the Hotel you will see nothing. My country is full of wonders, I know of many fascinating places. I can take you to the crocodile pit, the mangrove garden, the sacred elephant tree. I can show you things you will never see again in your entire life, beaches so beautiful they will steal your breath -

NATHAN : *(aside)* Yeh, and that's not all ...

ZOE : Nathan !

NATHAN : We'll think about it, okay ?

ZOE : Are you going ? I'd like to get on with me lesson.

NATHAN : What lesson ? He couldn't teach you the barrel organ !

ZOE : Will you stop being so bloody rude ?

NATHAN : It's true.

ZOE : Since when are you such a big expert ?

NATHAN : I know crap when I hear it and he's crap. Sorry Shakespeare, no disrespect, but -

ZOE : ... no disrespect ? How you've the -

NATHAN : It's a con, Zoe, don't you know when you're being conned ?

ZOE : I was having fun !

JALAMANG : Excuse me, what is conned ?

NATHAN : ... eh ?

JALAMANG : Conned, what is being conned ?

NATHAN : Are you taking the piss ?

JALAMANG : Excuse me ?

NATHAN : A con's a rip-off, a cheat, a way of fleecing money out of gullible tourists.

JALAMANG : Ah, yes, I see. Yes, if you like, Nathan - it is a con.

NATHAN : He even admits it. *(standing)* Come on ...

JALAMANG : *(standing)* One moment, please. You're right - it is true I can't play the drum, but I promise you I can still arrange a wonderful safari and much, much cheaper than -

- NATHAN : Save it, Shakespeare, you've blown it. Here ... twenty dalassies, that's for the bamboo paste, so we're quits, right ? Zoe ... ?
- ZOE : I'll see you back at the Hotel.
- NATHAN : You're joking though ?
- ZOE : Go, will you ? Just go.
- NATHAN : What is this ? Haven't I just proved - ?
- ZOE : Piss off ! Go on - piss off !
- NATHAN : Right. Right, I will. Fine. On your own head be it. *(leaving)* See if I care ...
- After a pause ...*
- ZOE : I'm sorry, I really am.
- JALAMANG : *(sitting)* It is I who should apologise. It was wrong for me to deceive you, but I was hoping it might help us become friends.
- ZOE : It's no big-deal, Shakespeare, it's only a drum - it was fun, I was enjoying it.
- JALAMANG : Really ? You really enjoyed it ?
- ZOE : Yeh, really. And I'll tell you what - I'm still on for that safari.
- JALAMANG : That's wonderful - but what about Nathan ?
- ZOE : Who ?
- JALAMANG : Your husb - oh, I see, it is a joke.
- ZOE : Isn't he just ? You'll have to excuse him, he's not normally such a crap-head. *(picking up drum)* Don't mind if I drive out a few demons, do you ?
- JALAMANG : Please do. Perhaps later you can give me a lesson ?
- They chuckle, Zoe beats a rhythm as Lights crossfade to DSL ...*
- ... sustain Drumbeat, underlining the following action -*
- Nathan strides on as if from the beach, hears the distant drum. Further inflamed, he goes to the table, picks up the banana*
- NATHAN : Yes ... yes, you certainly can. Freeman. Mr Freeman, 487. I'd like to speak to the Manager.
- Blackout*

Sustain the Drum, underscoring the following action ...

A tight Pool of Light on Jalamang - squatting on his haunches, arms crossed, each hand gripping an earlobe, hopping as he counts ...

JALAMANG : ... 23 ... 24 ... 25 ...

A black uniformed Police Officer, wearing beret and dark glasses, circles Jalamang, beating time with a heavy baton - echoed by the Drum ...

" " : ... 26 ... 27 ... 28 ...

OFFICER : You are a bad boy.

JALAMANG : ... 29 ... 30 ...

OFFICER : This is what happens to bad boys.

JALAMANG : ... 31 ... 32 ...

OFFICER : Do you hear ? Do you hear me, boy ?

JALAMANG : Yes, sir ! ... 33 ... 34 ...

OFFICER : Louder !

JALAMANG : Yes, sir ! ... 35 ... 36 ...

OFFICER : So how do you like the Monkey Dance, hm ?

JALAMANG : ... 37 ... 38 ...

OFFICER : Well, boy ?

JALAMANG : ... my legs, sir. It hurts my legs ... 39 ... 40 ... 41 ...

The Police Officer foots him in the back, causing him to tumble

OFFICER : ... 41 ? 41 ! Don't you cheat me, boy ! Don't you try to cheat me !

Kneeling over Jalamang, pointing his baton ...

" " : You are a bad and foolish boy. If you frighten away the tourist, they will bring no more money and people will starve. They will starve, do you understand ?

JALAMANG : Yes, sir.

OFFICER : Is that what you want ?

JALAMANG : No, sir.

OFFICER : You promise to return to your village ?

JALAMANG : Yes, sir.

OFFICER : Good. Good. (*standing*) So now you begin again ...

JALAMANG : I can't. Sir, I can't ... my legs -

OFFICER : Am I to beat you, boy ? Is that what you want ?

JALAMANG : No, sir.

OFFICER : Then begin ...

JALAMANG : ... 1 ... 2 ... 3 ... 4 ...

Exhausted, Jalamang stumbles forward

OFFICER : Don't you fool with me, boy ! Haven't I warned you ? (*raising his baton*) Didn't I warn you ?

Lights snap out

Sustain Drum in Blackout, rising to a rapid and violent climax

Fade up lapping Waves

Lights rise as Nathan saunters on with a can of lager, now re-united with his computer magazine

NATHAN : ... amazing ... bloody amazing ...

Unable to believe his luck, he flicks through it, muttering ...

" " : ... never in a million years ...

He sits on a sun-bed, sighs contentedly ...

" " : ... least something's gone right.

He raises his can in homage to the sun, takes a swig ...

" " : ... bliss ... bliss, bliss, bliss

He opens the magazine and winces, blinded by the glare ...

" " : ... shit ! Shades, shades, where are my ... come on, come on ... I know you're hiding somewhere ...

Yanks enters. Nathan over-reacts ...

" " : What are you doing here ? You're not allowed here, how did - ?

YANKS : Hey man, relax. Haven't you discovered yet ? The natives are friendly.

NATHAN : Glad to hear it. So how did you get in ?

YANKS : I was hoping to find Zoe.

NATHAN : Didn't Shakespeare tell you ? They're on safari ...

YANKS : There is no safari. Not today.

NATHAN : Oh yeh ? And why's that ?

YANKS : Zoe has already left ?

NATHAN : Gone a good hour.

YANKS : Too bad, that's too bad.

NATHAN : Some kind of problem is there ?

YANKS : Last night the Police come to my compound and arrest Shakespeare ...

NATHAN : ... arrest ? What do you mean arrest ? Arrest for what ? What's the charge ?

YANKS : No charge.

NATHAN : ... no charge ?

YANKS : There doesn't need to be a charge. I think perhaps some tourist complain about him.

NATHAN : What ... what makes you think that ?

YANKS : It is not so unusual. Here everything is for the tourist. Here the tourist is like a god and if you upset the tourist they can be very harsh ...

NATHAN : ... the Police ?

YANKS : Yes, the dhikr.

NATHAN : ... Dicker ?

YANKS : Dhikr - in Mandinka it means wolf.

NATHAN : Right, with you. Wolf. Listen, do you fancy a beer, or a lager, or I've got some - ?

YANKS : No thank you. I am a Muslim.

NATHAN : Ah yes. Yes of course, no offence.

YANKS : None taken.

NATHAN : So ... so what'll happen to him ?

YANKS : For the moment, I prefer not to talk about it.

NATHAN : Yeh. Yeh, sure.

Pause. Both men stare into the ocean ...

YANKS : To us, you know, Shakespeare is very special.

NATHAN : Yeh ?

YANKS : To be honest, he is not so good at what I do, but anything about books and learning, he is very quick, very clever. Last night, before they arrive, he tell me about something called the Internet. It is about computers. Perhaps you have heard of it ?

NATHAN : Well yes. Yes, I have actually.

YANKS : He tell me soon all the computer in the world will speak to one another. It will be a fascinating conversation.

NATHAN : It certainly will.

YANKS : But not I think for Africa. We are poor, Nathan. People here are starving, we cannot afford too many computers.

NATHAN : No. No, I suppose not.

YANKS : But don't you think in the human family, we should all of us have a voice ?

NATHAN : Definitely.

YANKS : Good, then you and I, we are agreed. But between us there is still a big difference, such a big difference. Did you know most people in the world have never made a telephone call ? Not even one.

NATHAN : Is that right ?

YANKS : This is what Shakespeare tells me. Like I say, he is clever, very special - a spiritual man, kind and gentle. For my family, you know, he is our greatest hope. But since his father die, he must leave school and work on the beach. Such a waste, it is such a waste.

NATHAN : Yeh it's ... it's very sad.

YANKS : Very sad. And after all that sadness, now he find himself in prison.

NATHAN : So what do we do to get him out ?

YANKS : We ? What do we do ?

NATHAN : Well yeh, sure - I'd, er ... I'd like to help.

Zoe enters, dressed for safari ...

" " : Ah, there you are, love ...

ZOE : Yanks, what's happened to Shakespeare ? I've been waiting ages.

YANKS : Forgive me, I try to meet you but I am busy at the Police Station.

NATHAN : Shakespeare's been arrested.

ZOE : Arrested ? For what ?

NATHAN : We're not entirely sure, probably for hustling some tourist. According to Yanks, it's quite common.

ZOE : But that's terrible.

NATHAN : *(sitting)* Yeh, isn't it ?

ZOE : So what'll happen ?

YANKS : You mean this time or the next ?

ZOE : Well ... this time.

YANKS : This time might not be too bad, it will be like a warning....

ZOE : Warning ? What kind of warning ?

NATHAN : Listen love, I don't think Yanks wants to -

YANKS : It's okay, Nathan. They will make him do what they call the Monkey Dance ...

ZOE : ... Monkey Dance ?

YANKS : It is a small torture.

NATHAN : ... torture ?

YANKS : They make you get down like this ... and you hold your ears like so ... and then ... then you have to hop ...

As Yanks hops ...

" " : ... 1 ... 2 ... 3 ... 4 ... 5 ... 6 ... 7 ...

He stops, stands, wipes his brow

- " " : It is very exhausting. Especially in a hot prison cell.
- ZOE : ... poor sod ...
- YANKS : Why don't you have a try, Nathan ?
- NATHAN : No thanks, I, er ... I get the idea.
- YANKS : Not really. I only did seven. He has to do one hundred. If you do one hundred and if you are lucky, they let you go free.
- ZOE : And if you don't ?
- YANKS : If you don't, they beat you.
- ZOE : ... bastards ...
- YANKS : When I talk to them, they tell me Shakespeare is not a very good dancer.
- ZOE : So now what happens ?
- NATHAN : Maybe in a few days they let him go ...
- ZOE : ... days ?
- YANKS : Usually it is no more than a week. Of course, if you are rich, then it is different, then they give you bail.
- NATHAN : And how much is that ?
- YANKS : About twenty of your English pounds. For you, it is not so much, but for us ...
- NATHAN : ... twenty quid ? That's what ? 300 dalassies ?
- YANKS : 334.
- NATHAN : *(leaving)* Excuse me.
- YANKS : I am sorry you miss your safari.
- ZOE : Oh, never mind that.
- YANKS : Perhaps we can try again tomorrow ... ?
- ZOE : Well sure, if you think he'll be -
- YANKS : He'll be fine, now he'll be fine, no problem. Same time, same place, okay ?

Nathan returns with money ...

- NATHAN : There's five hundred, just in case he needs any ... any medical attention.
- YANKS : Thank you, Nathan.
- NATHAN : And if there's anything else we can do - a solicitor maybe, or even, even a barrister.
- YANKS : For a Christian to help a Muslim, that is a fine thing. It will be remembered.
- NATHAN : ... yeh ?
- YANKS : In our religion, we believe on the Day of Judgement, everything will be remembered and everyone will be judged.
- NATHAN : Is that right ?
- YANKS : Judged and brought to account, Nathan. Now if you will excuse me, I will try and rescue Shakespeare ...
- NATHAN : Remember what I said - any problems, you let me know, okay ?
- YANKS : I'll let you know. Perhaps I see you tomorrow, Zoe ?
- ZOE : Yeh, sure. Good luck.

Yanks leaves. Nathan sighs, Zoe embraces him ...

- " " : Thanks.
- NATHAN : For what ?
- ZOE : For being so generous, for being so wonderful, for reminding me why I love you. I thought you handled it brilliantly.
- NATHAN : Well ... had to do something, hadn't we ?
- ZOE : There's plenty who wouldn't. And to be honest, I was beginning to fear you were one of them.
- NATHAN : Don't be daft, I was glad to help. I only hope he's not, you know, not badly hurt.
- ZOE : Yeh. Poor bloody Shakespeare, as if life wasn't hard enough.
- NATHAN : Yeh.
- ZOE : Come on, pet - you did what you could, that's what counts, you can't do more than that.

NATHAN : No.
She notices the mag, picks it up ...

ZOE : Bloody hell ... where did this spring from ?

NATHAN : Amazing, isn't it ? Talk about global village, they're obviously not as backward as we think - I bought it in Reception, same price as home as well, except for the Import Tax.

ZOE : You see, bonny lad ? Yanks was right - Allah moves in mysterious ways.

NATHAN : Doesn't He just ?

ZOE : Well you deserve a treat, bonnie lad. *(kissing him)* You just sit yourself down and relax and I'll fetch you another lager ...
Zoe leaves. Nathan sighs, sits, stares out into the ocean
Waves mix into Cicadas ...
Slow crossfade to DSR - Tasmeera pounds maize for the evening meal. She pauses, wipes sweat from her face, continues ...
Jalamang enters, supported by Yanks. Tasmeera helps hold him ...

TASMEERA : What have they done to you ... ?

YANKS : He's okay.

TASMEERA : Jalamang ...

JALAMANG : I'm okay, no problem.

TASMEERA : *(leading them into the Unit)* No problem ? No problem for honky, you mean ! No problem for Tubab ! *(spitting)* I hope he rot, I hope he rot in hell !

YANKS : The man didn't understand.

TASMEERA : Didn't understand ? They never understand !
They lower Jalamang onto the bed. Tasmeera removes his flip-flops

JALAMANG : I'm fine - tomorrow ... tomorrow I will be on safari ...

TASMEERA : ... safari ?

YANKS : That's my man !

TASMEERA : Are you crazy ? Look at him, you can't expect him to -

- YANKS : He has to. Tasmeeera, they are only here a week, he has to. (*sitting on the bed*) Jalamang, listen to me - I have a day's work at the market so I won't see you tomorrow. You hear me ?
- JALAMANG : ... okay ...
- YANKS : Before you leave, you make sure she buy plenty sweets for the children and pencils for the school, okay ? Lots of pencils.
- JALAMANG : ... okay ...
- YANKS : After the school and the crocodile pit, you take her to my village. You show her everything, the good and the bad. Then you introduce her to my father and your mother ...
- JALAMANG : ... and my sisters.
- YANKS : Sure, and your sisters.
- JALAMANG : That will be nice.
- TASMEERA : Let him take her to King James Island, let him show her that.
- YANKS : No, Tasmeeera, it will be too much.
- TASMEERA : Why do you deny our history ? Let her see what her forefathers did.
- YANKS : Too much, woman. Too much, too soon.
- TASMEERA : But if you only have a few more days ? Yanks, maybe you only have this one chance ?
- YANKS : ... okay, okay. Jalamang, forget the crocodile pit. Instead you hire a boat and you take her to King James Island. You understand ?
- JALAMANG : I understand.
Tasmeeera goes outside, continues to pound maize
- YANKS : When you finish, when it is all over, you bring her back to me.
- JALAMANG : (*sitting up*) You mean here ?
- YANKS : Oh yes, it must be here.
- JALAMANG : But by then it will be dark, and even if it weren't -
- YANKS : Invite her to dinner. Win her trust and invite her to dinner.
- JALAMANG : But Yanks ...
- YANKS : Do it.

- JALAMANG : I will try.
- YANKS : Excellent, that's my man. *(lowering him)* Now you can sleep.
Yanks goes outside, sits on his oil-drum, lights his half-spliff ...
- " " : Man oh man, will there never be an end to it ? The dhikr, they are so hard, I not only pay bail, but on top I have to bribe them.
- TASMEERA : It could have been worse.
- YANKS : Next time I fear they will break him.
She goes to him, smooths his shoulders
- TASMEERA : You can only do what you can do.
- YANKS : Sure, sure I can. But why is it never enough ?
Fade to Black
Silence
A soft wind blows as leaden waves lap a pebbled shore
Light rises on Zoe, squatting as she carefully searches the pebbles, listening to Jalamang who sits on a mound of sand
- JALAMANG : A chance, a sporting chance, that is what they called it, but it was no chance, it was a lie, a cruel lie. Here the river is six mile wide and this island is almost half-way. When they are first brought here, they are told if any man can swim back to the shore wearing his chains, he will be allowed his freedom. It is impossible, the tide and the current and the chains all make it impossible. But even when they know this, even when they are certain of this, some of them, they still try.
- ZOE : And the beads ? What about the beads ?
- JALAMANG : How many have you found ?
- ZOE : *(standing)* Three.
- JALAMANG : Three is very good. Yanks tell me people search for hours and never find one.

- ZOE : *(showing him)* They're beautiful, so tiny ... such wonderful colours.
- JALAMANG : Yes, they are very beautiful, very special. They have been waiting in the river for three, maybe four hundred years.
- ZOE : ... waiting ?
- JALAMANG : Waiting for you - you found them, they have been waiting for you.
- ZOE : More destiny ?
- JALAMANG : *(smiling, shrugging)* It is what we believe.
- ZOE : *(sitting beside him)* So come on, tell me, you said you'd tell me.
- JALAMANG : They belonged to the women. It was their custom to string thousands of these beads together and weave them into beautiful patterns to wear around their waist. The big ships would anchor over there, about 200 yards north of the jetty, so they all had to be taken out by longboat. The women are always taken first because that way they know the men will more willingly follow. You must realise they have no idea where they are going. Even after millions have been taken, no-one, not one single person has ever returned. All they know for certain is they will never see their family or their village ever again. For them it is death, a kind of death. And so when the women are taken from the prison and they are rowed out to the ships they help one another snap their belts and they spill all their beads into the river so part of them will stay in Africa. A tiny part you now hold in your hand.
- ZOE : That's the saddest thing I've ever heard.
- JALAMANG : For us this place, it is like your Auschwitz, it is the black Auschwitz. Twenty million, Zoe. Twenty million stolen lives.
- ZOE : *(rolling the beads in her palm)* What shall I do with them ?
- JALAMANG : Keep them, you must keep them, they are meant for you.
- ZOE : It doesn't seem right.
- JALAMANG : People take them to remember, if it helps you remember, then I think it is good, don't you ?
- ZOE : I suppose. You okay ?
- JALAMANG : I've told you, it is only a bruise.
- ZOE : No, no - I mean here, this place, what it means. Don't you feel angry ? Doesn't part of you hate me ?

JALAMANG : Hate you ? You mean for being white ?

ZOE : I wouldn't blame you.

JALAMANG : If I were to think like that, I would be no better than they. What happen here is not about black and white, Zoe, it is about a mentality. This idea of black and white being two races, it is an invention of the European. For a Muslim, there is no such thing as race, all of us, we are all God's people, all part of the human family.

ZOE : *(folding the beads into her handkerchief)* I think I'd like to go now.

JALAMANG : Sure.
Jalamang struggles to stand, fails. Zoe goes to help him

JALAMANG : Don't worry, I'm fine.

ZOE : Come on - 1, 2, 3 ...

JALAMANG : Thank you.
They stand, look around. Zoe sighs ...

ZOE : Give uz a hug, Jalamang, I need a hug, a big hug.
They hug
Fade to Black
Wind fades to Silence
A distant Muezzin calls his people to prayer as Lights rise on Nathan, standing in the dusk, sipping whisky. He looks at his watch, sighs, picks up the banana. But as he waits, he registers the cries of the Muezzin and thinks better of it, puts down the banana ...
Fade to Black as he pours another Scotch, sits and continues to stare at the ocean
Waves mix into pulsing Night-insects. Stars appear, thin wedges of light escape sheets of corrugated iron. Distant reggae plays
A bare bulb lights the DSR Unit, also the Christmas tree lights - Yanks, Zoe, Jalamang, and Tasmeera are huddled in the tiny room. An empty bowl lies on the floor and they sip water from jam-jars Zoe sits on a box, her back to the audience; Tasmeera lies curled on the bed; Yanks & Jalamang sit on the bed's edge, directly facing Zoe. Yanks stares at her and shrugs ...

- YANKS : He could have shown you far worse. There are villages further east where people live in nothing but a hole, a hole in the ground. If the harvest fail, if the rain is late or too little or too much, they die. They are the first. It is hard, Zoe, sometimes I cry for my people, but what can I do ? I am a poor man, I have no power, I can do nothing. Sure, for sure, like you say, things change, a hundred year ago I am scarcely considered human, but look around you, you see how we live - do things change so much ? I am not asking for charity, what we want from the West is not charity, it is justice. The wealth of England, of Europe, of America, it is all built on the backs of slaves. Don't you think we are owed a great debt ? Wouldn't you imagine that to be so ? But instead, the world, it is crazy, it is upside down, instead it is still we who pay the West, it is we who are still robbed of our wealth and talent every moment of every day. I ask you, Zoe, is that justice ?
- ZOE : No. No, it isn't.
- YANKS : Tasmeeera ? Tasmeeera, are you awake ?
- TASMEERA : I am awake. And I am listening.
- YANKS : Can I tell her about when you went to the market ?
- TASMEERA : *(sitting up)* I will tell her myself.
- YANKS : This is our secret, you understand, it is because we trust you.
- TASMEERA : Give me some water. Last year, I am walking to the market. Things are hard for us and I am wearing my best dress to try and make myself happy. But as I approach the market, a big motor-car drive up and the window buzz down, you know, like this ... zzzzz. The man sitting in the back, he look out at me and he tell me I am very beautiful. He then give me fifty dalassie just to sit with him in his fine car. He say he is a rich and important man and it is true, I later discover he is a minister in our government. He tell me he has a problem. Soon he is to go to Geneva for a Conference, but all his wives, they are all jealous and they are all fighting to go with him. It is a hard problem and it bring him plenty trouble. He then tell me Allah answer his prayers, that Allah guides me to him. I tell him I a, a respectable woman, but that is what he wants, he tell me that way he knows I am clean. He then ask me to go to Geneva. If I agree he will provide me beautiful clothes and give me thirty English pound. Before now I am always respectable woman and I love my husband very much, but we are poor, so now ... now day or night a driver will sometime bring a suitcase of fine clothes and fancy jewellery and eight hour later I am in Europe living in some fine hotel. It is like a palace, but for me it is a prison. But what can I do ? Tell me, lady, what would you do ? What is your price ?
- ZOE : I can't answer that. I just don't know.
- TASMEERA : Yes, and I hope you never do.

- YANKS : You are a kind person, we can see you feel for us. But Zoe, kindness is not enough, we need help.
- ZOE : You mean money ?
- YANKS : Yes I mean money. But I am not asking for myself. A Muslim does not ask for himself. But if you want to help us, if you want to help Tasmeeera and our unborn child, then please help Jalamang.
- ZOE : ... Jalamang ?
- YANKS : Help him and he will help us. You know he is rich with goodness and talent but if he stay here, it will be very bad for him. Next time the Police will be very hard, next time it will be much worse. So you see, it is not simply money, we are talking about his life. You have the power to save his life. This is the situation, this is why I believe Allah brings you together.
- ZOE : How much ?
- YANKS: He already has a scholarship, he only needs money to live and buy books, perhaps ten pound a week.
- ZOE : For how long ?
- YANKS : Jalamang ... ?
- JALAMANG : If I go to University, in total it will be four years.
- ZOE : That's two thousand pound.
- YANKS : Is it so much to save a life ? A life that could bring so much good ?
- ZOE : Of course not. Of course it isn't, but - Look, I'm sorry, do you ... do you mind if I get a bit fresh air ?
- YANKS : *(gesturing)* ... please ...
- Zoe goes "outside". Jalamang begins to get up, intent on following*
- " " : No, no, leave her, leave her a moment ...
- Lights fade "inside" the DSR Unit, sustain night-insects but mix into lapping waves*
- Zoe stands in the moonlight beneath the stars*
- Nathan stands in the moonlight pouring another whisky. He paces, approaches the Wire - although he & Zoe are now physically close, they remain in different worlds*
- Nathan turns away, decides to pick up the banana ...*

NATHAN : Ah yes, hello. This is Mr Freeman, 487. I'd like to speak to the British Consul. Yes, there is a problem but it's confidential, so if you - no, I'm sorry, I don't know the number. Well if it's not too much trouble perhaps you'd be good enough to find out ?

He replaces the banana, sits, stares out at the ocean

Jalamang leaves the Unit, approaches Zoe

JALAMANG : Zoe ... ? Zoe, are you okay ?

ZOE : It was a heavy meal, Jalamang.

JALAMANG : Yes.

ZOE : It'll take some time to digest.

JALAMANG : Of course.

ZOE : It was all planned, wasn't it ? Where we went, what we did, everything, it was all leading up to this ?

JALAMANG : We wanted you to see for yourself.

ZOE : Don't you realise the pressure you've put me under ? Of course you do, stupid bloody question. Look, I'm sorry Jalamang but you have to try and realise -

Off, a brief whistle - Zoe over-reacts

" " : What's that ?

JALAMANG : It's okay, no problem. *(returns a coded whistle)* I am telling them we are friends. You know, not Police. We are still friends, aren't we ?

ZOE : Course we are.

JALAMANG : That is what is important.

ZOE : Yes, but it's just not that simple.

JALAMANG : I understand.

ZOE : No, I don't think you do, I don't think any of you do. Compared to you, I live like the Queen, but I'm not rich. Me and Nathan, we're far from flush. We've just got married, we've just bought a house, well, not exactly bought, not in the sense that you - look, in Europe it's not so much what you own, it's what you owe. And me and Nathan, we owe an awful lot, and two thousand pounds, well, that's ... that's. Look, I'm sorry, I need time, I need time to think. Then there's Nathan, of course ...

Jalamang nods, takes her hand

JALAMANG : You're tired. Let me take you back to the hotel.

ZOE : Yeh. Back to Paradise ...

Blackout

Night-insects mix into lapping waves

Lights rise on Nathan asleep in his chair, muttering in the moonlight

NATHAN : ... Shakespeare ... Shakespeare ...

Zoe enters, gently shakes his shoulder ...

ZOE : Nathan ...

NATHAN : ... not Shakespeare ...

ZOE : Nathan ...

He wakes, howling sudden pain ...

NATHAN : ... sunburn, my sunburn, don't touch my - Zoe. Zoe, thank God. I thought -

ZOE : You daft pillock, you're like a lobster.

NATHAN : *(standing)* Where the fuck you been ?

ZOE : *(embracing him)* Yeh, I'm sorry...

NATHAN : ... careful, careful ...

ZOE : Jalamang invited me back for dinner.

NATHAN : Jalamang ? Who the fuck's - ?

ZOE : Shakespeare. Jalamang's his real name. When we finished the Safari he asked me to -

NATHAN : Hang on - back for dinner ? You mean you went into the shanty-town ?

ZOE : No, no - they've a suite at the Hilton.

NATHAN : The shanty-town, in the middle of the night !

ZOE : *(picking up bottle)* Been a bit heavy with the Scotch, haven't you ?

NATHAN : Zoe ...

ZOE : Lay off, will you ? He asked me to trust him, so I did, okay ?

NATHAN : Are you out your tiny mind ?

ZOE : *(leaving)* Not so much of the tiny.

NATHAN : Now where you going ?

ZOE : *(off)* Get meself a lager.

NATHAN : *(following)* Zoe - you just don't do that kind of thing.

ZOE : *(re-entering with a can)* Why not ? I happen to be thirsty.

NATHAN : Will you be serious, woman ! The shanty-town ! You're lucky to be alive !

Zoe snaps open the can - change of mood

ZOE : Yeh. Yeh, I know. I just never realised how lucky.

NATHAN : What is it ? What's happened ? Zoe, what's happened ?

ZOE : The way they live, man, it breaks your heart.

NATHAN : *(holding her)* Hey, come on ...

ZOE : It's a beautiful country, Nathan, but the poverty, talk about grim. Honest to God, most of them live little better than slaves.

NATHAN : I told you. Didn't I tell you ?

ZOE : Yanks says it's even worse up country.

NATHAN : What did I say ?

ZOE : But people were so kind, so welcoming, that's what really got me.

NATHAN : I knew you'd get upset.

ZOE : *(breaking away)* I'm not upset, I'm fucking angry.

NATHAN : ... angry ? Angry about what ?

ZOE : Haven't I just said ?

NATHAN : Ah, right.

The banana rings ...

ZOE : Who the hell's that, two o'clock in the morning ?

Nathan picks up the banana ...

NATHAN : ... yeh ? Yes, speaking. Ah, good evening. Good evening, sir ...

ZOE : ... sir ?

NATHAN : ... yes, yes, I appreciate that sir, but -

ZOE : Bloody hell - who is it ? Bill Gates ?

NATHAN : *(covering mouthpiece)* ... will you shut it ! *(to banana)* The thing is, sir, she's back ... yes, back safe and well, so I'm sorry to have - yes well, I'll know for the next time, not that there'll - hello ? Hello ? *(hanging up)* That was the British Consul.

ZOE : ... you're kidding.

NATHAN : I'm bloody not ! See the trouble you've caused ? You've had me worried sick !

ZOE : *(embracing him)* I'm sorry, love. I didn't realise I'd be so late, you know what it's like when you get talking.

NATHAN : You and Shakespeare ?

ZOE : Yeh, and Yanks ...

NATHAN : *(breaking away)* Yanks was there ?

ZOE : And his wife Tasmeeera. *(sitting)* God, I'm shattered, me mind's still spinning.

NATHAN : *(sitting)* So what ... what were you talking about ? Zoe ... ?

ZOE : ... hm ?

NATHAN : What were you - ?

ZOE : Oh, anything and everything ... politics, corruption, slavery, you name it.

NATHAN : ... slavery ? With them ?

ZOE : Jalamang took me to King James Island, it's where they kept the slaves before shipping them to the Caribbean.

NATHAN : Sounds heavy.

ZOE : Very.

NATHAN : You sure you're all right ?

ZOE : I'm all right, it's them poor buggers.

NATHAN : They're probably happy enough in their own way, least they've got the sun. So Yanks mentioned nothing about me ?

ZOE : You ?

NATHAN : I only wondered.

ZOE : Not particularly.

NATHAN : Meaning ?

ZOE : Just how grateful he was you helped Jalamang.

NATHAN : And ?

ZOE : And nothing. What do you want ? The moon on a stick ?

NATHAN : I just wondered. Shakespeare must be okay then ?

ZOE : He's still pretty rough. He tried to hide it bless him, but it was obvious they'd given him one hell of a kicking. Bastards.

NATHAN : But he's all right ?

ZOE : He'll live.

NATHAN : Thank God for that.

ZOE : Well, probably.

NATHAN : Went wind-surfing today, magic it was. You've really got to try it. Bit tricky at first ...

ZOE : Nathan ...

NATHAN : All a question of balance really ...

ZOE : Yanks did make me a proposition.

NATHAN : ... but once you've - you what ?

ZOE : Don't be daft. About Jalamang - Shakespeare.

NATHAN : What about him ?

ZOE : Well, he's a bright lad, but he's no hustler, is he ? And the next time some miserable sod shops him, Yanks reckons he'll get a right hammering ...

NATHAN : Yeh ? So ?

ZOE : So he's wasted. So he should be at school, University, not bumming around the beach. But that takes money, and so ... so Yanks asked me, well, us, asked us if we'd ...

NATHAN : If we'd what ?

ZOE : Well, sponsor him. You know - see him through University

NATHAN : Yanks actually asked you for money ?

ZOE : A loan, just a loan. We'd get paid back, every penny.

NATHAN : How much ?

ZOE : Five hundred ...

NATHAN : (*standing*) Five hundred !

ZOE : ... a year. For four years.

NATHAN : ... the bastard.

ZOE : I know it's a lot, but -

NATHAN : A lot ! It's two thousand pounds ! Didn't I tell you ? Didn't I warn you ? Bloody rip-off merchants ...

ZOE : It's not a rip-off, it's for real.

NATHAN : Yeh - a real rip-off !

ZOE : Even if you're right, we can easily keep tabs, you know, check with the school, the university. And since we'd only be paying instalments, say a month at a time -

NATHAN : You mean you've agreed ?

ZOE : Course I didn't. I wouldn't agree without talking to you.

NATHAN : You're seriously proposing we hand over two grand ?

ZOE : Will you listen !

NATHAN : You gone mental, or what ? We can't afford to give away that kind of money !

ZOE : At least think about it. Nathan, these people have next to nothing ...

NATHAN : Africa's full of people with next to nothing, it's hardly news !

ZOE : I realise things are tight but there's always the Fitted Kitchen Fund.

NATHAN : The Fitted Kitchen Fund is for the fitted kitchen ! What is this ? Voodoo ? You've been drooling over that kitchen for months.

ZOE : Don't remind me, but what's more important, saving someone's life or - ?

NATHAN : Zoe, we're here for a holiday !

ZOE : *(holding him)* Look, we're both dog tired. Let's go to bed and we'll talk it through tomorrow ?

NATHAN : Talk till your blue in the face, the answer'll still be no. You understand, Zoe ? No. N-O spells No. Got it ?

ZOE : Yeh. Yeh, I got it.
Zoe goes upstage, picks up a sun-bed

NATHAN : What you doing with that ?

ZOE : I'm not sharing a bed with someone I don't respect.

NATHAN : You what ?

ZOE : You heard.

NATHAN : This is our honeymoon !

ZOE : So ?

NATHAN : So ? What d' you mean, so ?

ZOE : So at least consider it.

NATHAN : That's blackmail !

ZOE : Is it now ? Well there's an old saying, Nathan - where there's a willie, there's a way. *(leaving)* Excuse me ...

NATHAN : *(following)* Zoe !

ZOE : Good night.

NATHAN : ... Zoe !

ZOE : I said goodnight.
Now alone, Nathan sighs, drains his glass, mutters ...

NATHAN : ... bastard ... fucking black bastard.
Blackout
End of Act One

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