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Woza Albert!
Percy Mtwe, Mbongeni Ngema and Barney Simon

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Death and the King's Horseman
Wole Soyinka

Edited and introduced by
Martin Banham and Jane Plastow

Methuen Drama
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Percy Mtwa, Mbongeni Ngema
and Barney Simon
Characters

Two actors (Percy Mtwa and Mbonengi Ngema in the original productions) must play a number of characters – switching roles between and sometimes within scenes – with the bare minimum of costume and prop.

The stage is lit by the house-lights. The set consists of two up-ended tea-chests side by side about centre stage. Further upstage an old wooden plank, about ten feet long, is suspended horizontally on old ropes. From nails in the plank hang the ragged clothes that the actors will use for their transformations. The actors wear grey track-suit bottoms and running shoes. They are bare-chested. Around each actor’s neck is a piece of elastic, tied to which is half a squash ball painted pink – a clown’s nose, to be placed over his own nose when he plays a white man.

Scene One

The actors enter and take their positions quickly, simply. Mbonengi sits on the tea-chests at the point they meet in the middle. Percy squats between his legs. As they create their totem, the house-lights dim to blackout.

On the first note of their music, overhead lights come on, sculpting them. They become an instrumental jazz band, using only their bodies and their mouths – double bass, saxophone, flute, drums, bongos, trumpet, etc. At the climax of their performance, they transform into audience, applauding wildly.

Percy stands, disappears behind the clothes rail. Mbonengi goes on applauding. Percy reappears wearing his pink nose and a policeman’s cap. He is applauding patronisingly. Mbonengi stares at him, stops applauding.

Percy Hey! Beautiful audience, hey? Beautiful musician, né? Okay, now let us see how beautiful his pass-book is! (To appalled Mbonengi.) Your pass!

Mbonengi (playing for time) Excuse my boss, excuse? What?

Percy (snugly, to audience with his back to Mbonengi) Okay, I’ll start again. You know you’re a black man, don’t you?

Mbonengi Yes, my boss.

Percy And you live here in South Africa?

Mbonengi (attempting to sidle off-stage behind Percy’s back) Yes, my boss.
Percy So you know that you must always carry your pass.

Mbongeni Yes, my boss.

Percy Okay, now what happens if you don’t have your pass?

Mbongeni I go to jail, my boss.

Percy And what happens if your pass is not in order?

Mbongeni (nearly off-stage) I go to jail, my boss.

Percy (wheels on Mbongeni) H-E-E-E-Y! Your pass!!!

Mbongeni (effusively) OOOOhh, my pass, my constable! (Moves to Percy holding out his pass.) Here’s my pass my lieutenant.

Percy Okay, now let’s have a look. (Examines the pass.) Where do you work?

Mbongeni I work here, my Captain.

Percy You work here? If you worked here your passbook would be written ‘Market Theatre, Johannesburg’. But look, it is written ‘Kentucky Southern Fried’. Is this Kentucky Southern Fried? And look at the date. It tells me you haven’t worked in four years. This is vagrancy, you’re unemployed. (To audience) Ja, this is what I call ‘loafer-skap’!

Mbongeni No, my Colonel, I am a guitarist, I’ve been playing music for five years, my boss.

Percy Hey, you lie, you fuckin’ entertainer!

Mbongeni It’s true, it’s true, my boss.

Percy Can you show me where it is written ‘musician’? Hey? Where’s a guitar? Where’s a guitar! Where’s a guitar?

Mbongeni Ag, nee – my Brigadier, I am self-employed!

Percy Self-employed? (Chuckling collusively to audience.) Hell, but these kaffirs can lie, hey?

Mbongeni Maar, dis die waarheid, but it is true – my General!

Scene Two

Enter both actors with prison blankets wrapped around their shoulders. Both are singing a prison song, a prisoner’s fantasy of his woman’s longing for him:

Ha-ja-ka-rumba
Ha-ja-ka-rumba

(Solo.)

Bath’uyeza – uyez’uyeza?
Bath’uyeza – uyez’uyeza?
Kuthima ngizule kodwa mangicabanga
Yini s’handwa sithando sami ye –

(Chorus.)
Hajakarumba – hajakarumba.
Hajakarumba – hajakarumba.

[They say he is coming. Is he really coming?
I am mad when I think of it.
Come back my love, oh my love.]

Under the song, Mhongeni gives orders.

Mhongeni Modder-B Prison ... prisoners – line up! Body
Inspection. Hey wena cell number 16. Inspection cell number
16. Awusafuni na? Awusafunikuvula vula hey wena we-
eloda. Vul'inggwza sisonke. [Hey, you, cell number 16.
Inspection cell number 16. Are you hiding anything? Don’t
you want to show what is hidden – come on you men – show
me your arses!] Prisoners inspection!

Both (doing 'Tousa' dance, revealing empty orifices and
armpits) Ready for body inspection, my Basie! Blankets clear,
my Basie! No tobacco! No money! No watch! My Basie!
Mouth clear! Ears clear! (Open mouths wide.) Hooo! Hooo! (Pull
ear-lobes.) Haaa! Haaa! My Basie!

Percy Hands up!

Both (raise arms) Arms clear, my Basie! (Raise legs.) Everything
clear, my Basie! Also arse, my Basie!

Mhongeni Inspection! (They pull down their trousers, display bare
backslides.) See nothing hidden, my Basie! Prisoners! Lights out!
(Lights dim.)

Both (lying on the floor covering themselves with blankets)
Goodnight, Basie, goodnight. Dankie Baba, dankie. Beautiful
arse, my Baba. Nothing hidden, my Basie.

Lights dim on sleeping figures.

Scene Three

Percy (singing in his sleep) Morena walks with me all the way
/ Watching over me all the day / When the night time,
comes he's there with me / Watching over, loving me.

Mhongeni (restless, stirring from sleep) Hey man uyangxola
man – uyangxola man. [Hey man, you making noise man.]

The singing continues.

Hey! Hey, hey! Stop singing your bloody hymns man, you’re
singing in your bladdy sleep again! Morena! Morena hoo-hoo,
there's no Morena here!

Percy (dazed) I'm sorry. (Silence. He begins to hum again.)

Mhongeni (kicks Percy, who jumps up, is chased) Hayi man –
isejelela. [This is prison man.]

Percy (covering) Morena, the saviour, is watching over you
too, my friend.

Mhongeni Morena, the saviour, here in Modder-B Prison?
BULLSHIT!

Lights up bright. Work yard. Actors holding picks.

Mhongeni Prisoners! Work yard!

Both (working and singing a work-song)
Siboshiwe siboshel’wa mahala
Wen’utha senzenjani
Siboshiwe siboshel’wa mahala
Wen’utha senzenjani

[They arrested us for nothing
So what can we do?]

Mhongeni hurts his hand, nurses it.

Mhongeni It's this bladdy hard labour!

Percy (attempting comfort) Don’t worry my friend. Morena is
over there, he’s watching over us.

Mhongeni Morena. Here in prison?

Percy He’s watching over you too.

Mhongeni (kicking at him, chasing him) Morena here??
BULLSHIT!!
Scene Four

Mbongeni Prisoners! Supper!

Both (running) Supper! Supper! Supper!

Transforms to supper-time. Prisoners racing around in a circle, carrying plates, handing them in for food. Mbongeni bullies Percy out of the way.

Percy Thank you, soup, Baba. Thank you, Baba.

Mbongeni Soup, Baba. Thank you soup, Baba, thank you Baba.

Percy Porridge, Baba. Little bit of sugar, Baba.

Mbongeni Porridge, Baba! Porridge. A little bit of sugar, Baba. A little bit of sugar, Baba. Thank you, Baba.

Percy A little bit sugar, Baba. Please, little bit, Baba. Thank you, Baba, too much sugar, Baba.

Mbongeni Sugar… (Reaches for Percy’s food. Percy points to a guard, stopping Mbongeni who smiles to the guard.) No complaints, my boss. Geen klagte nie.

Percy No complaints, Baba.

Mbongeni eats in growing disgust; Percy with relish.

Mbongeni (spits on the floor) Ukudla kwemi godoyi lokhu [This is food for a dog] — No, a dog wouldn’t even piss on this food. Ikhabishi, amazambane, ushukela, ipapa, utamatisi endishini eyodwa — ini leyo? [Cabbage, potatoes, sugar, porridge, tomatoes in one dish — what is this?]

Percy (eating unconcerned) Thank you Morena for the food that you have given me. Amen.

Mbongeni (turns on him, furious) Hey uthini Amen? [What do you say Amen for?] — For this shit? Thank you Morena for this shit?

Percy crawls away. Mbongeni beckons him back.

Mbongeni Woza la! [Come here!]

Percy hesitates. Mbongeni moves threateningly; points to the ground at his feet.

Mbongeni Woza la!

Percy crawls over reluctantly.

Mbongeni On your knees!

Percy, terrified, gets down on his knees.

Mbongeni Pray! My Bullshit, I’m getting out of here tomorrow. Pray to your Morena, tell him thanks for me. I’ll never listen to your voice again!

Mbongeni pushes Percy forward on to the floor. Percy goes down with a scream that becomes a siren.

Blackout.

Scene Five

The siren transforms into train sounds. Lights up. Both men are sitting back-to-back on boxes, rocking as in a train. Mbongeni is reading a newspaper, Percy a Bible. Mbongeni spits out of the window, sits again.

Percy (evangelically) Blessed are those that are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile ye and persecute ye and shall send all manner of evil against ye falsely, for thy sake. Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad for great is the reward of heaven. For so persecuted they—

Mbongeni (turns on him, hits him on the head with newspaper) Hey! Persecuted? Prosecuted! Voetsak! Voetsak! (Recognises his former fellow prisoner.) Hey, brother Bullshit! When did you come out of prison? They promised me they would keep you in for life!

Percy Be careful, my friend, of the anger in your heart. For Morena will return and bear witness to our lives on earth and
there will be no place to hide. He will point his holy finger
and there will be those who rise to heaven and those who
burn in hell. Hallelujah! I hope you're not one of them!

Mbongeni  Rise to heaven? Where is heaven?
Percy    It is the Kingdom of God.
Mbongeni  Up there? Neil Armstrong has been there.
Percy    Neil Armstrong?
Mbongeni  Hallelujah! He's been right up to the moon and
          he found a desert, no god!
Percy    My brother, I don't care what you or your friend on
          the moon say, because I know that he will return to his
          father's kingdom on earth, even as I know that his father has
          heard your blasphemies and forgiven you!
Mbongeni  Where does his father live? In Jerusalem?
Percy    The Lord, our father, is everywhere.
Mbongeni  And Morena, the saviour, is coming to South
          Africa?
Percy    Hallelujah!

Mbongeni  How is he coming to South Africa? By South
          African Airways jumbo jet? (He transforms into a photographer
          photographing the audience.) And everybody will be waiting in
          Johannesburg at Jan Smuts airport. Pressmen, radio men,
          South African television, international television, ABC, NBC,
          CBS, BBC, and they will all gather around — (He turns to
          Percy, who has transformed into the Prime Minister with pink nose
          and spectacles.) — our honourable Prime Minister!

Scene Six

Percy (moving forward ingratiatingly into spotlight)  Thank you very
much, thank you very much. My people, Morena is back and
South Africa has got him! I hope that the free world will sit
up and notice whose bread is buttered and where! Let them
keep their boycotts, their boxers, rugby players, and tennis
racketeers. Stay home Larry Holmes! Stay home John
McEnroe! We have got Morena! But there is already rumours
going around that this is not the real Morena, but some
cheap impostor. And to those that spread such vicious
rumours I can only say, 'Tough luck friends! He chose us!'
(Raises his hands in V-signs, laughs.)

Blackout

Scene Seven

Lights up on Mbongeni wearing a Cuban army cap and smoking a
fat cigar.

Percy (as announcer)  And now ladies and gentlemen, on the
hotline straight from Havana — the comrade from Cuba —
Fidel Castro! Sir, have you got any comment to make on the
impending visit of Morena to South Africa?

Mbongeni (laughing)  Morena in South Africa? Who's playing
the part? Ronald Reagan?

Blackout.

Scene Eight

Lights up on Percy playing cool bongo on boxes.

Mbongeni (dancing flashily)  And now for you to see on Black
TV — the face of Black South Africa! (Enjoying the bongo, dancing
up to the player.) Beautiful music my brother, cool sound, man,
cool! Real cool! Beautiful music, oh yeah, oh yeah. Now tell
me, my brother — what would you say — if Morena — walks in
— right through that door?

Percy (making a rude finger-sign)  Aay, fok off man!

Blackout.
Scene Nine

Lights up bright on Percy, now a young street meat-vendor. The boxes are his stall. He is swatting flies with a newspaper held in one hand. His other hand holds a second newspaper as shade against the sun.

Mbonjeni (enters, singing, as a labourer-customer)
   Siyitshil'igusha sayiggqiba
   Siyitshil'igusha sayiggqiba
   Muhla sish'igusha.
   Wena wendoda wawuphina
   Wena wendoda wawuphina
   Muhla sish'igusha.
   [We ate and finished a big sheep the other day.
   Where were you when we blessed ourselves with a sheep?]

Mbonjeni Hullo, my boy.

Percy Hello, Baba.

Mbonjeni (not tempted by the display) Eh, what meat can you sell me today?

Percy I've got mutton, chicken, and nice sausages. (Swats a fly on the sausages.)

Mbonjeni Oh yeah ... the chicken does not smell nice, hey? Must get some cover, some shade from the sun, hey? (Deliberating) Eh, how much are those chops?

Percy It's two rand fifty, Baba.

Mbonjeni Two rand fifty? Are they mutton chops?

Percy Eh, it's mutton.

Mbonjeni No pork?

Percy No pork, Baba. I don't like pork.

Mbonjeni Okay my boy, give me mutton chops. Two rand fifty, hey? Where's your mother, my boy?

Percy She's at work.

Mbonjeni She's at work? Tell her I said 'tooka-tooka' on her nose. (Tickles the boy's nose.) She must visit me at the men's hostel, okay? Dube hostel, room number 126, block 'B', okay? Bye-bye, my boy. 'B', don't forget. (About to leave he turns astonished at sight of — invisible — TV interviewer.)

Percy (averted by TV-interviewer) Hello, Skulu. I'm fine, thanks.
   And you? (Listens.) Morena? Here in South Africa? What shall I ask from Morena if he comes to South Africa? Baba, I want him to bring me good luck. So that the people that come will buy all this meat. And then? I want him to take me to school. Sub-A, uh huh. (Watching the interviewer leave.) Thank you, Baba. Inkos'ibusise [God bless]. Yeah, Baba ... Au! TV!

Blackout.

Scene Ten

Lights up, dim, on Mbonjeni as Auntie Dudu, an old woman, wearing a white dustcoat as a shazul. She is searching a garbage bin (upturned box). She eats some food, chases flies, then notices the interviewer. She speaks very styly.

Mbonjeni Hey? My name is Auntie Dudu. No work my boy, I'm too old. Eh? (Listens.) If Morena comes to South Africa? That would be very good. Because everybody will be happy and there will be lots and lots of parties. And we'll find lots of food here — (Indicates bin) — cabbages, tomatoes, chicken, hot-dogs, all the nice things white people eat. Huh? (Receives t.p.) Oh, thank you, my boy. Thank you, Baba. Inkos'ibusise. [God bless.] God bless you. Bye bye, bye bye ...

A fly buzzes close. She chases it.

Fade.

Scene Eleven

Lights up bright on a barber's open-air stall. Percy — the barber — is sitting on a box, Mbonjeni — the customer — between his knees. Auntie Dudu's shazul is now the barber's sheet.
Percy  Eh, French cut? German cut? Cheese cut?
Mbongeni  Cheese cut.
Percy  Cheese cut – all off!
Mbongeni  (settling)  That’s nice . . . How much is a cheese cut?
Percy  Seventy-five cents.
Mbongeni  Aaay! Last week my cousin was here and it was fifty cents.
Percy  Hey, you’ve got very big hair my friend. (He begins cutting hair.)
Mbongeni  (squirming nervously during the – mimed – clipping, relaxing at the end of a run)  That’s nice. What machine is this?
Percy  Oh, it’s number ten . . .
Mbongeni  Number ten? Ohhh.
Percy  Though it’s a very old clipper.
Mbongeni  That’s nice. (More cutting, more squirming.) That’s nice. Where’s your daughter now?
Percy  Ohh, she’s in university.
Mbongeni  University? That’s nice. What standard is she doing in university?
Percy  (clipping)  Ohhh, she’s doing LLLLB. I don’t know, it’s some very high standard.
Mbongeni  Oh yeah, LLB.
Percy  (confirming with pleasure).  Uh huh, LLB.
Mbongeni  That’s nice! I remember my school principal failed seven times LLB!
Percy  Ohhh, I see! I understand it’s a very high standard.
Mbongeni  Tell me my friend, but why don’t you apply for a barbershop? Why do you work in the open air where everyone is looking?
Mbongeni Awuboni la uyakhona? [Don’t you see where you’re going?]

Percy He hasn’t got a licence.

Noise of the lorry revving. They discover the invisible interviewer below, turn to him impatiently.


Mbongeni Inkanda leyo-kwedini iyashisa he? [Your prick is hot, boy – heh?]

Percy looks back contemptuously and makes a rude sign with his finger as the lorry drives off.

Fade.

Scene Thirteen

Lights up on Mbongeni entering as a fragile, toothless old man. He sings throughout the following action. He settles on the boxes, attempts to thread a needle. His hands tremble but he perseveres. He succeeds on the third, laborious attempt and begins to sew a button on his coat.

Mbongeni (humming)

Bangka-lo-kondaba bayimpi
Heya we-bayimpi izwelonke
Ngonyama ye zizwe
Ohlab’izitha
UNdaba bamburgazizwe lonke okazulu
Amambuka nikozi
[The soldiers of our enemies have come to attack the king
They are coming from the four corners of the world to
attack the Lion
We must kill the enemies
They are attacking him from all over the world, the son of
Zulu
These strangers from another place attack our King.]

Mbongeni becomes aware of the (invisible) interviewer. Laughs knowingly.

Mbongeni (speaking) Eh? What would happen to Morena if he comes to South Africa? What would happen to Morena is what happened to Piet Retief! Do you know Piet Retief? The big leader of the white men long ago, the leader of the Afrikana! Ja! He visited Dingane, the great king of the Zulus! When Piet Retief came to Dingane, Dingane was sitting in his camp with all his men. And he thought, ‘Hey, these white men with their guns are wizards. They are dangerous!’ But he welcomed them with a big smile. He said, he said, ‘Hello, just leave your guns outside and come inside and eat meat and drink beer.’ Eeek! That is what will happen to Morena today! The Prime Minister will say, just leave your angels outside and the power of your father outside and come inside and enjoy the fruits of apartheid. And then, what will happen to Morena is what happened to Piet Retief when he got inside. Dingane was sitting with all his men in his camp, when Piet Retief came inside. All the Zulus were singing and dancing ... Bamya-lo-Kandaba payimpi ... (Repeats snatches of the song.) And all the time Dingane’s men were singing and dancing, (Proudly.) they were waiting for the signal from their king. And Dingane just stood up ... He spit on the ground. He hit his beshu and he shouted, Bulala’abathakathi. Kill the wizards! Kill the wizards! Kill the wizards! And Dingane’s men came with all their spears. (Mimes throat-slitting, throwing of bodies.) Suka! That is what will happen to Morena here in South Africa. Morena here? (Disgusted.) Eeek! Suka!

Blackout.

Scene Fourteen

Lights flash on: Percy, an airport announcer, is standing on a box, calling out.

Percy Attention, please! Attention, please! Now this is a great moment for South Africa! The Lord Morena has
arrived! The jumbo jet from Jerusalem has landed! Now lay down your blankets, sing hosanna, hosanna, lay down your presents. Hey, you over there, move away from the tarmac! (More urgently.) Move away from the runway! Move away!

Mbongeni (rushing in as a photographer) Hosanna! Hosanna! Son of God! ‘Hosanna nyana ka thixo!’ [‘Son of God.’] Hey, what will you say if Morena comes to you? (To a member of the audience.) Smile, smile! (He turns to Percy then back to the camera crew.) Sound! Rolling! Slate! Scene twenty-seven, take one. And action...

Scene Fifteen

Percy wearing his pink nose and flash sunglasses, alights from the plane (box).

Mbongeni (approaching him with a mimed microphone) Happy landings, sir.

Percy (flattered by this attention) Oh, thank you. Thank you.

Mbongeni Well sir, you’ve just landed from a jumbo jet!

Percy Eh, yes.

Mbongeni Any comments, sir?

Percy I beg your pardon?

Mbongeni (arch interviewer) Would you not say that a jumbo jet is faster than a donkey, sir?

Percy Eh, yes.

Mbongeni Aaahh. Now tell me, sir, where have you been all this time?

Percy Around and about.

Mbongeni And how is it up there in the heavens?

Percy Oh, it’s very cool.

Mbongeni Cool! (Laughs artificially loud.) So, I’m to understand that you’ve been studying our slang, too!

Percy Right on!

They laugh together.

Mbongeni Now tell me, sir, in the face of all boycotting moves, why did you choose South Africa for your grand return?

Percy I beg your pardon?

Mbongeni I mean, uuuuh, why did you come here, sir?

Percy To visit my Great-aunt Matilda.

Mbongeni Excuse me, sir?

Percy Yes?

Mbongeni Your name, sir?

Percy Patrick Alexander Smith.

Mbongeni You mean you’re not Morena, sir?

Percy Who?

Mbongeni Morena.

Percy Morena?

Mbongeni Are you not Morena? (To film-makers.) Cut!!! Morena! Where is Morena?

Percy minces off, insulted. Stage dim. Mbongeni wanders across stage, calling disconsolately.

Mbongeni Morena! Morena! Morena! M-o-o-o-r-e-e-e-n-a-a-a-a-a-a-a-k!...

Lights dim. Percy begins to join the call, alternating, from behind the clothes rail. He emerges, calling and addressing a high and distant Morena. As he talks, the lights come up.
Scene Sixteen

Percy  Morena! Morena-a-a! Where are you? Come to Albert Street! Come to the Pass Office! We need you here Morena! Ja, Morena, this is the most terrible street in the whole of Johannesburg! Ja, Morena, this is the street where we Black men must come and stand and wait and wait and wait just to get a permit to work in Johannesburg! And if you’re lucky enough to get the permit, what happens? You wait and wait and wait again for the white bosses to come in their cars to give you work. (Turns back to Mbongeni.) But I’m lucky! I’ve got six months special! (Shows his pass-book.) Qualified to work in Johannesburg for six months!

Mbongeni  How many months? Eh?

Percy  Six months!

Mbongeni  Six months? Congratulations. (Laughs, slaps Percy’s back, shakes his hand.) Eh! Six month special!

Percy  Three weeks in a queue!

Mbongeni  But you’re still their dog! (Moves upstage to urinate, with his back to the audience.)

Percy  Aahh, jealous! You jealous!

Mbongeni  Have you got a job? Have you got school fees for your children? Have you got money for rent? Have you got bus fare to come to the Pass Office? Oh, come on man, we’ve all got specials but we’re still their dogs!

Car sounds.

Percy (leaps up)  Hey! There’s a car! A white man! (Moves to the car at the front edge of the stage, follows it as it moves across.) Are you looking for workers, my boss? Ya, I’ve got six-month special, qualified to work in Johannesburg.

Mbongeni moves forward trying frantically to distract the driver. Car sounds continue, actors alternating.

Mbongeni  Boss, I’ve got fourteen-day special. This is my last chance. This is my last chance. Take two boys, my boss, two!


Mbongeni’s sound of a departing car transforms into a mocking laugh.

Mbongeni  I told you, you’re still their dog! (Laughs, mocks.) Standard three, bush tea, China tea – where do you get China tea in Soweto?

Percy  Aah voetsak! I’ve got six months special!

Mbongeni (shows Percy his pass-book)  Hey, look at my picture. I look beautiful, heh?

Percy (laughs bitterly)  How can you look beautiful in your pass-book?

Car sounds again. Mbongeni rushes forward to the stage edge, follows the car, Percy behind him.

Mbongeni  One! One, my boss! Everything! Sweeper, anything, everything, my boss! Give me anything. Carwash? Yeah, always smiling, my boss. Ag, have you got work for me, my boss? I’m a very good nanny. I look after small white children. I make them tomato sandwich. I take them to school, my boss. Please, my boss. Please.


Percy (laughing)  Ja! Who’s a dog? Don’t talk like that! This is South Africa! This is Albert Street. (Laughs.) Nanny, nanny, tomato sandwich!

Car sounds again.

...Both (confusion of requests from each)  Six-month special, my boss. Fourteen-day special, Baba. This is my last chance. Hey man, this is my corner! Very strong, Baas. Ek donder die kaffiers op die plaas. [I beat up the kaffirs on the farm.] One, my boss. Two, my boss. Anything, my boss. Have you got anything for me, Baba?
Percy	Basie, he's a thief, this one.
Mbongeni	He can't talk Afrikaans, this one, my boss.
Percy	He's lying, Basie. Hy lieg, my baas!

_The third car pulls away._

Percy (confronting Mbongeni angrily) Hey, this is my corner, these are my cars. I've got six months special.
Mbongeni Hey! Fuck off! I stand where I like, man.
Percy You've got fourteen-day special. There's your corner.
Mbongeni Hey! You don't tell me where to stand!
Percy You've got fourteen-day special. You're not even qualified to be on Albert Street.
Mbongeni kicks Percy. Percy turns on him.
Percy Baas Piet! Baas Piet! I'll tell Baas Piet you got forgery.
Mbongeni (mimes picking up stone) Okay, okay. Call your white boss! I've got friends too!
Percy Baas Piet!
Mbongeni (beckons his friends, wildly picking up stones) Hey Joe! We Joe! Zwakala - sigunu mf韦thu. (To Percy.) Angihlali eZola mina - angihlali eMdeni mina - Joe zwakala simenze njalo. [Joe come here - it's happening. I don't live in Zola - I'm not from Mdeni - Joe come here let's work on him.]
Mbongeni quietens, struck by something in the audience.
Percy (muttering sulkily) These are my cars, man. I've got six-month special, these are mine. This is my corner - That's the temporal corner! I'll tell Baas Piet!
Mbongeni (now totally stunned by what he is watching) Heeey, heeey! Ssh man, ssh.

Percy (cautious) What?
Mbongeni (indicating the audience) Morena ...
Percy Azay, fok off!
Mbongeni It's Morena – that one there with the white shirt.
Percy (doubtfully) Morena? Ay, nonsense ... Is it Morena?
Mbongeni It's him - I saw him in the Sunday Times with Bishop Tutu. It's him!

He sidles forward to the edge of the stage. Percy skyls eggs him on.
Percy Hey, speak to him.
Mbongeni (nods with the invisible Morena) Excuse. Are you not Morena? Yiiii! Hosanna! Morena!

_The actors embrace joyously. Then follow Morena, frantically showing their passes and pleading._

Both Actors Morena, look at my pass-book!
Percy I've got six-month special but I can't find work.
Mbongeni I've been looking here two months, no work. Take us to heaven, Morena, it's terrible here.
Mbongeni follows Morena. Percy falls behind.
Percy Temporary or permanent is okay Morena!

_Silence as Mbongeni converses with Morena. He comes back exhilarated._
Percy Hey, what does he say?
Mbongeni He says let us throw away our passes and follow him to Soweto!
Percy Hey! He's right! Morena! Morena!
Both (sing, exhorting the audience) Wozani nansi inkonyane ye ndlovu - APh' amadoda sibabambe sebhelele. Wozani madoda niyesaba na?
[Come on join this child of an elephant
Where are the men? Let us face them!
Come men, are you afraid?]

**Percy** (under the song) Morena says throw away your passes and follow him to Soweto.

**Mbongeni** We are not pieces of paper, man! We are men!

**Percy** Ja! Let them know our faces as Morena knows our faces!

**Mbongeni** Morena says no more passes!

**Percy** Ja!!

**Mbongeni** We don’t have numbers any more!

**Percy** Ja!

**Mbongeni** Let them look at our faces to know that we are men.

**Percy** Ja! When we follow Morena we walk as one!

*The actors throw away their passes and their song transforms into train sounds.*

**Scene Seventeen**

The actors mime standing beside each other at a train window. They wave to people outside.

**Percy** Hey madoda! Sanibona madoda! May God bless them! Ja, you’ve got a very good imagination. I really like your stories. But you must go to church sometimes – Hey, there’s a train coming! (Looks to one side.)

Flurry of their faces and noises as they mime watching adjoining train pass. Then they pull their windows up. Siren. **Mbongeni** moves down stage. **Percy** stands on a box, begins Regina Mundi Song:

Somlandela – somlandela u Morena  
Somlandela yonke indawo  
Somlandela – somlandela u Morena

Lapho eyakhona somlandela.

[We shall follow – we shall follow Morena
We shall follow him everywhere
We shall follow – we shall follow Morena
Where-ever he leads – we shall follow.]

While the song continues:

**Mbongeni** (joyous siren) Ja, madoda, hundreds of thousands will gather at the Regina Mundi Church in the heart of Soweto. And people will sing and dance. There will be bread for all. And wine for all. Our people will be left in peace, because there will be too many of us and the whole world will be watching. And people will go home to their beds. (He joins in the song for a few phrases.) These will be days of joy. Auntie Dudu will find chicken legs in her rubbish bin, and whole cabbages. And amadoda – our men – will be offered work at the Pass Office. The barber will be surrounded by white tiles. The young meat-seller will wear a nice new uniform and go to school, and we will all go to Morena for our blessings.

*Song subsides. Percy lies on boxes as sleeping woman. Lights dim.*

And then ... the government will begin to take courage again ... The police and the army will assemble from all parts of the country ... And one night, police dogs will move in as they have done before. There will be shouts at night and bangings on the door ...  

**Percy** (banging on a box) Hey! Open up, it’s the police! Maak die deur oop! Polisie!  

**Mbongeni** (ducking down by the boxes as if hiding beside a bed) There will be sounds of police vans and the crying of women and their babies.

**Percy** (turns over on the boxes as an old woman waking in bed, starts crying and calling in Zulu) We Jabulani, hayi-bo-hey-hey-we-Nonoza, akenivule bo nanka amaphoyisa eseshihlese, we Thoko akenivule bo. Auw-Nkosi-Yami, ezingane ze-Black Power! (Hey, Jabulani, Hey no, hey-hey, Nonoza, open the door can’t you hear the police are here. They’ve come to
attack us. Thoko, please open the door. Oh my God, these children of Black Power!

_He goes to open the door. Throughout Mbongeni tries to stop him._

**Mbongeni** Sshh Mama! Tula Mama! Mama! Mama! Leave the door! (_He gives up, stands silent, transfixed, hiding._) They'll start surrounding our homes at night. And some of our friends will be caught by stray bullets. There will be road-blocks at every entrance to Soweto, and Regina Mundi Church will be full of tear-gas smoke! Then life will go on as before.

_He throws his arms up in the air in disgust, cries out._

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**Scene Eighteen**

Lights flash on. Bright daylight. Coronation Brickyard. **Mbongeni,** as Zuluboy, is singing.

**Mbongeni** (singing) Akuntombi lokhu kwabulala ubhuti ngesibumbu kuyamsondeza. [This is no woman. She killed my brother with a fuck and she never lets him go.]

_(He calls out towards the street.)_ Hey Angelina – sweetheart! Why are you walking down the street? Come here to Coronation Brickyard! Zuluboy is waiting for you with a nice present!

_(Points to his genitals, laughing._)

**Percy** (enters as Bobbejaan – Baboon – Zuluboy's fellow brickyard worker) Hey! Zuluboy, forget about women. Start the machine!

**Mbongeni** sings on.

**Percy** Hey! The white man is watching us. Boss Kom is standing by the window! Start the machine.

_He makes machine sounds as he attempts to start it. He pulls the starter cord abortively, flies backwards across the yard._

**Mbongeni** (laughs) Hey Bobbejaan! Start the machine!

**Percy** You laugh and I must do all this work! I'll tell Baas Kom. Baas Kom! Basie! Baas Kom!

**Mbongeni** Sshhhhhhh! Bobbejaan! Bobbejaan... ssh – I want to tell you a secret.

**Percy** What secret?

**Mbongeni** (whispers) We don't have to work so hard any more. Because Morena, the saviour, is coming here.

**Percy** Huh? Morena here? Hau! Baas Kom!

**Mbongeni** Hau, no Bobbejaan! Listen – I was there on Thursday by the Jan Smuts Airport. We were delivering bricks. People were coming with taxis, bikes, trains, trucks, others on foot. There were many people, Bobbejaan. They were singing and crying and laughing and dancing and sweating and this other woman was shouting: Morena, give me bread for my baby. The other woman was shouting: Morena, my son is in detention. The other man: Morena, give me a special permit to work in Johannesburg city. The little girl, standing next to me: Morena, give me a lollipop. The big fat Zulu – the driver from Zola Hostel – Morena, give me a Chevrolet Impala! And me – I was there too——

**Percy** What did you say?

**Mbongeni** Morena, come to Coronation Brickyard tomorrow morning! And he's coming here.

**Percy** To Coronation Brickyard? Morena?

**Mbongeni** Hau – Bobbejaan, at the wedding, long ago – ten thousand years ago – he take a bucket of water, he make wine.

**Percy** (smugly) Ja, everybody knows that!

**Mbongeni** He take one fish, he make fish for everybody! Fried fish!

**Percy** Hau!

**Mbongeni** He take one loaf of brown bread, he make the whole bakery! Here at Coronation Brickyard, you will see wonders. He will take one brick, number one brick, and throw it up in the air. And it will fall down on our heads, a million
bricks like manna from heaven!

Percy Hey! You’re talking nonsense. Morena? Here at Coronation Bricks? Start the machine. I’ll tell Baas Kom!

Percy goes off. Mbongeni begins rolling a cigarette, singing his Zuluboy song. Percy, as Baas Kom with pink nose and white dustcoat, enters quietly from behind the clothes rail and creeps up on him.

Mbongeni spits, just missing Percy who leaps back.

Mbongeni Oh, sorry, Boss. Sorry, sorry... (He runs to start the machine.)

Percy Sis! Where were you brought up?

Mbongeni Sorry Boss!

Percy Ja Zuluboy! And what are you sitting around for?

Mbongeni Sorry, Boss. Sorry.

Percy Are you waiting for Morena?

Mbongeni No, Boss. No.

Percy Ja, I’ve been listening. I’ve been watching. You’re waiting for Morena. Ja. Did you not listen to the Prime Minister on the radio today?

Mbongeni I don’t have a radio, Boss.

Percy We don’t like Morena anymore. And everybody who’s waiting for Morena is getting fired.

Mbongeni Oh, very good, Boss. Me? I’m Zuluboy – ten thousand bricks in one day!

Percy Ja. Where’s Bobbejaan?

Mbongeni (attempting to start the machine) He’s gone to the toilet.

Percy Call him. Call him, quickly!

Mbongeni Hey! Bobbejaan! (He makes motor sounds as the machine kicks over but does not ‘take’.) Bobbejaan!

Percy (still as Baas Kom, with Mbongeni watching over his shoulder) Now listen. I want two thousand bricks for Boss Koekemoer. Two thousand bricks for Baas Pretorius. Two thousand bricks for Mrs Dawson.

Mbongeni indicates his pleasure in Mrs Dawson. Percy cautions him:

Percy Zuluboy! Six thousand bricks for Boss Van der Westhuizen. Two thousand bricks for Boss Koekemoer. Two thousand bricks for Baas Pretorius. Two thousand bricks for Mrs Dawson.

Mbongeni Baas, sorry, I’m confused.

Percy What confused? What confused? You’re bloody lazy, man! See to these orders and push the truck. (He indicates the truck on the side of the stage.)

Mbongeni Hey! This truck is too heavy, Baas!

Percy Get other people!

Mbongeni People have gone to lunch.

Percy Get Bobbejaan!

Mbongeni Ten thousand bricks, Boss!

Percy Hey! Get Bobbejaan!

Mbongeni Bobbejaan! Uyahamba laphe khaya. [They’ll fire you.] Bobbejaan! (Mumbling) Two thousand bricks Mrs Dawson... Hau! (Laughs with pleasure.) Mrs Dawson! Ten thousand brick Baas van Des-des-destuizen... Too much! (He starts the engine. Engine ‘takes’. Shouts.) Bobbejaan!

Percy (off-stage, as Bobbejaan) I’m coming, man! (He enters.) Hey, hey. Where’s Morena?

Mbongeni No Morena. Hey, shovel the sand, Baas Kom is firing everybody that’s waiting for Morena.

Percy (laughing) Ja! I’ve been telling you! Hey, bring down the pot.

They alternate shovel and motor sounds, as they mime shovelling.

Mbongeni begins to sing and dance his Zuluboy song.