

FARCE ABOUT UYS

a riotous assembly in two acts

**by
PIETER-DIRK UYS**

The action is set in the Embassy of the Republic of South Africa in one of the new homelands of Southern Africa – Bapetikosweti.

As the reception-room is in a state of renovation, everything is covered with white sheets, concealing the valuable stinkwood and yellowwood furniture. The priceless persian carpet is rolled to the side, just out of sight.

The table and four chairs are simple and practical.

A large travelling trunk stands open with clothes hanging out of the drawers. A black wreath indicates that it was the property of the late Ouma.

A large painting of Evita Bezuidenhout in official clothes dominates the room. Tretchikoff paintings in heavy gold frames lean against the furniture.

Two flags stand on either side of the centre entrance, one with a picture of the leader of the RSA and the other the President of Bapetikosweti.

THE ORIGINAL 1983 CAST:

Pieter-Dirk Uys as De Kock Bezuidenhout, Evita's son – who in turn portrays his brother Izan, his father Oom Hasie, his sister Billie-Jeanne and eventually his own famous mother Evita Bezuidenhout.

Thoko Ntshinga as Sophie, the maid who also portrays Ouma Ossewania and Madame Quazilezi.

Chris Galloway as Sersant Uys

Directed by Dawie Malan

Designed by Nicholas de Klerk

ACT ONE

(Primitive drumming and rhythm on blackout, with spots on the large imperial portrait of Evita Bezuidenhout and the smaller pictures of the South African PM and President Makoeloeli. The drumming stops.)

VOICE: This is Radio Bapetikosweti Channel 776 with the sound of Africa's past. And now, the sound of today!

(Modern African pop i.e. Joy's 'Ain't goin' to stop till I get to the top'. Lights up on reception-room. Sophie in blonde wig and elbow-length gloves sits with her back to the audience, a glass of champagne held high. De Kock enters clad in legwarmers, jogging shorts and sweatband, carrying a suitcase, a framed picture of Liza Minnelli (signed) and a slingbag. He puts down his luggage and switches off her radio.)

DE KOCK: I've just heard Oom Chris Heunis on my radio trying to explain the government's new constitutional proposals. Shame, he really does the work of two men: Laurel and Hardy. Hey, you go to the casino in that blonde wig people will think Anneline's been in the Sol too long!

SOPHIE: Socks, shirts, pants, ties, Tyhini Thixo wamazulu nomhlaba. *(She lifts out a large bra)* Not badly packed for a white boy. But considering you had the best teacher – moi.

DE KOCK: I knew you drank during the day! I remember say that to Ma destyds: oppas, Ma, sy drink. You can see it in your eyes.

SOPHIE: You can see in my glass. Not a very good year, but when plurals become boozers, the poor buggers can't be choosers. Cheers, darling.

DE KOCK: For heaven's sake, Sophie, you never know who might come to the door. This is an embassy. People come to embassies for political asylum!

SOPHIE: This **is** a political asylum!
(She addresses the audience grandly)
 Welcome to Blanche-Noir, the new South African embassy to
 the Independent Homeland of Bapetikosweti.

DE KOCK: We represent the South African government

SOPHIE: In other words

DE KOCK: met ander woorde, democracy

SOPHIE: and white supremacy. On my right is the Transvaal.

DE KOCK: On my left is Bapetikosweti.

SOPHIE: The border runs across the patio, past the swimming pool

DE KOCK: between the legs of this yellowwood table

SOPHIE: and on Sundays between the babotie

DE KOCK: en die tamatiesous. So you can imagine: to read a *Playboy*
 magazine on that side of the table is legal

SOPHIE: while to own it on that side means bread and water for a
 month.

DE KOCK: On this side of the table we can hold hands

SOPHIE: On this side of the table they can hold us in detention without
 trial.

DE KOCK: On this side of the table we can gamble

SOPHIE: On this side of the table life is a gamble!

DE KOCK: On this side of the table I'm a blêrrie Boer!

SOPHIE: On this side of the table I'm a donnerse Kaffir! De Kock, let's swop. Kaffirs will never dream to drink champagne in South Africa, even on their day off. Cheers, darling!

(De Kock inspects the clothes in his suitcase.)

DE KOCK: Nothing is washed, nothing is ironed.

SOPHIE: I'm supposed to be on holiday.

DE KOCK: You're supposed to help me!

SOPHIE: Up to when your family left a few hours ago I have been the local blackamatic: Sophia, waar is Madam se kouse, Sophie where's my shirt, Soph' do this, Soph' do that . . .

DE KOCK: That's what you get well paid for.

SOPHIE: I'm off duty. Even the Pope reads comics!

DE KOCK: Make me some coffee . . .

SOPHIE: Ag hell no, De Kock, give me a break, man. The last few weeks have been hell here – Chester Crocker arguing with all the Bothas, Jane Fonda trying to get *into* solitary confinement, that West German arms merchant who called me 'liebchen' – spent all the time trying to grab my gedoentes. I never moved across this border for those three days – at least I was safe from him in South Africa . . . Then your blêrrie grandmother goes and dies, then we celebrate that public holiday and no one can find the flag, then the family goes off on holiday and what about me?

DE KOCK: What about you? Now have I got everything ballet-tights, jockstrap, ballet-shoes? Now where's my audition-cassette? Ag nee magtig

SOPHIE: Must you do some exam for them or what?

DE KOCK: Audition's in Pretoria tomorrow morning. I've prepared a special number all by myself. PACT Ballet doesn't just take anyone, you know!

SOPHIE: You're too old, man. Those people who do ballet are all young and slim. You? End up by dancing all the old fairies.

DE KOCK: Ag, what do you know?

SOPHIE: I just know that Haar Edele the Ambassador of the Republic of South Africa will have a blêrrie fit when she finds out her boy is a ballet dancer. Your brother will follow you to Pretoria and bugger you up in a parking garage – you know how he likes doing that to 'sensitive' people!

DE KOCK: Kyk, ek is klaar met die kweekskool. There are good reasons for swopping the pulpit for Petrushka!

SOPHIE: Your mother will phone up Magnus and have you called up and sent to the Border for ten years!

DE KOCK: I'll jeté all the way to Luanda! Don't I get something to eat before I go? Don't tell me there's nothing to eat in this house!

SOPHIE: This is a poor homeland.

DE KOCK: Ja, it's difficult to eat a Mercedes Benz. So, now that the facelift people are coming for the house what will it be this time: Randburg Roccoco or Brakpan Baroque?

SOPHIE: Your mother wants something more subdued to fit in with the economic climate.

DE KOCK: Grootfontein Gothic! Waar is my koffie?

SOPHIE: In die kombuis! But then how must a white boy know these things? If I'm not back within a day, have my lawyer read my will – I left you all my clothes!

(She exits.)

DE KOCK: Bitch! *(He takes out a large card for MOTHER and reads)* 'Liewe Mama, ek weet hoe Ma nou moet voel, maar ek wil dit alles vir Ma verduidelik voor Ma dit in Sondag se *Rapport* lees. Ma, ek is nou oud genoeg om te doen wat ek wil. Ma het nie omgee dat Izan lid word van die Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging nie: Ma't vir hom a motorfiets en leerbaadjie gekoop . . . ' *(Aside)* 'n blikkie teer en sak vol vere . . . *(Reads)* 'en Ma gee nie om dat Billie-Jeanne 'n drill-dril danseres is nie. Ek vra nie vir iets groots nie, net Ma se liefde en Ma se geloof. Ma? Ek weet ek sal 'n groot loopbaan kan oopdans met TRUK Balet: môre die Staatsteater, oormôre Sadlers Wells of dalk Moskou . . . ' wrong, los uit die kommuniste. *(Sighs)* Keuses, keuses, dominee of danser. Lief Moeder, ek gaan liewers op point as op my knieë!

(He does some ballet steps. Sophie enters with a smirk).

SOPHIE: Margot Fonteyn!

DE KOCK: You see, no one is ever too old for the fifth position.

SOPHIE: Tell that to the judge. *(She has a mug of coffee. He holds out his hand for it)* Make your own koffie. Die meid is moeg. *(She slurps at it, then sweetly holds it out for him. He sits disgusted)*

Your ma is going to explode without help from the ANC. ‘SA AMBASSADOR’S SON IN SWAN LYK’.

DE KOCK: Billie-Jeanne dances on the stage.

SOPHIE: Your sister does ‘interpretative movements’ at the casino. That doesn’t count. White men sleep with black girls at the casino – that also doesn’t count; they can still go to heaven. But a nice Afrikaans boy who hangs up his rugby skoene to go on point? Kleinbaas de Kock, jou Ma gaan in haar pantihose tjorts!

DE KOCK: Ronald Reagan’s son was a ballet dancer!

SOPHIE: Ja, and you can imagine how it kept *that* White House awake at night. You’re worse than a traitor – you’re sensitive – very un-Afrikaans!

DE KOCK: Be thankful I’m not like Izan. Can you imagine my butch boet doing ballet?

SOPHIE: De Kock, who’s going to take you seriously in Pretoria? You’re the son of an ambassador, so they won’t throw you out or laugh in your face, but you’re just going to get hurt. You’re Evita Bezuidenhout’s son. Use your connections, man, join Sanlam.

DE KOCK: That’s exactly why I’m going to do it my way.

SOPHIE: You’ll make a fool of yourself. You can’t make costumes, you can’t love your neighbour, you can’t do anything. You’re a successful product of your society. You can just be a Kleinbaas.

DE KOCK: I can help backstage with hair. My holiday job at Salon Hilda taught me something.

SOPHIE: And to think you never even offered to *my* hair when President Makoeloeli came to tea.

DE KOCK: I said I worked for a hairdresser, not a hardware store. (*He pulls off the blonde wig and points to her own hair*) In two hours they'll be safely on a plane to the Seychelles and I'll be free to do what I want. (*Sophie has put on another wig*) Ag no man, Sophie, leave my wigs. I must go! (*He turns to the big trunk*) Haai, every time I see Ouma's things here I feel so sad

SOPHIE: Are you going to take all your Ouma's drek with you? Don't you think they've got enough old-lady rubbish there in Pretoria? (*She puts on a black kappie*) What's this?

DE KOCK: Ouma Ossewania's jolling outfit.

SOPHIE: Don't believe it, she took that to heaven with her.

DE KOCK: Depending which heaven she went to! In the theatre they say it's a good thing to build up one's personal equipment.

SOPHIE: That's not what they said to my father when he was locked up for 'building up his own equipment.'

DE KOCK: I didn't know your pa also collected things?

SOPHIE: Russian handgrenades and AK47's!

DE KOCK: Maybe the commies can straighten your hair. (*Pulls off the wig*) What if they miss that plane

SOPHIE: Hey man, they're your family. Why do they make you so nervous?

DE KOCK: Who's nervous?

SOPHIE: Scared they'll find the diamonds?

DE KOCK: Sophie, you've been watching too much SATV!

SOPHIE: No gems on SATV, I can assure you. I'll keep your secret, De Kock, I'm good at that.

DE KOCK: I

SOPHIE: You hid your diamonds in Madam's high-heels, nê?

DE KOCK: Sophie, you're drunk!

SOPHIE: Izan is taking out Krugerrands in his leather belt, your father cut a square out of his Bible – Levitikus or Hooglied van Salomo, I think, to smuggle out something illegal, Billie-Jeanne has dagga in her blonde wig. Don't feel special. They all did it, too.

DE KOCK: Shhh, careful what you say, remember the brooch in Ma's picture

SOPHIE: Toemaar, I covered the microphone with bubblegum. We can talk. So, what will happen to your diamonds?

DE KOCK: Well, I've got a friend on the same flight, een van die koffiemoffies. He'll book into the same hotel, steal Ma's shoes and keep the diamonds safely for me . . . You mean Pa and Izan . . . ?

SOPHIE: also want to survive. You're not the only crook in the Bezuidenhout family.

DE KOCK: Hey, Meid, jy praat van my familie!

SOPHIE: Jammer, Kleinbaas.

DE KOCK: So, what are you going to do here in Blanche-Noir while we're away?

SOPHIE: Keep an eye on the interior decorators so that they don't steal, have some pals over from the ANC, wear you mother's clothes, you know, the usual.

(The front door chimes elaborately.)

DE KOCK: Now who the hell could that be?

SOPHIE: Probably Jaap Marais asking for political asylum. *(She exits. De Kock has already put on a curly blonde wig out of his SALON HILDA wig box. He fiddles in the trunk. Sophie enters with Uys)* This man wants to see your mother, Kleinbaas.

UYS: Uys. SAP

SOPHIE: Uys. SAP.

DE KOCK: SAP? Where's your uniform?

UYS: I'm not here on official business.

DE KOCK: Want a drink?

UYS: Not when I'm on duty.

SOPHIE: He wants to see Evita Bezuidenhout.

DE KOCK: She's not here.

UYS: Don't tell me you people are moving out?

SOPHIE: Renovations. Keeping up with the Bothas.

DE KOCK: Can I take a message?

UYS: You are Izan Bezuidenhout.

DE KOCK: De Kock Bezuidenhout!

UYS: Oh? (*Looks at a picture*) You look younger than your picture.
(*Sophie indicates that it's the wig. De Kock is pleased*) Ja, De Kock. Mmmmm. Mmmmm!

DE KOCK: Mmmmm?

UYS: Mmmmm!

DE KOCK: (*Sexily*) Wat is in jou boekie?

UYS: Confidential. Allewêreld (*They peep over his shoulder*) I said it's confidential. Your track record is about as messy as a cat's sandbox!

DE KOCK: I thought you wanted to see my mother?

UYS: Ja. (*Reads*) Mrs Evita Bezuidenhout, former member of the President's Council, Ambassador to the

SOPHIE: Independent Homeland of Bapetikosweti.

UYS: Why is she so forward?

SOPHIE: She is standing in the Independent Homeland of Bapetikosweti. She is independent.

UYS: Jisis (*Reads*) Independent Homeland of Bepti...babekis...Ba-whateverse dinges is A. Then Professor Dr Hasie Bezuidenhout, retired MP for the consistency of

Laagerfontein, that is B. C is Izan Bezuidenhout, Son. D is De Kock Bezuidenhout, Son. That's you, hey, D.

DE KOCK: D?

SOPHIE: D.

UYS: And Billie-Jean Bezuidenhout, Daughter: E.

DE KOCK: Jeanne.

UYS: Hey?

DE KOCK: Billie-Jeanne!

UYS: That's what I said, Billie-Jean. OK. I don't mind who I start with, as the top cop said to the terrorist. *(Laughs)* A Joke. *(Nudges De Kock who laughs)*

SOPHIE: Forgive me for not laughing, but it breaks the image of my intense professionalism.

UYS: Waar kry julle vir haar? Via some fancy leftwing organisations?

SOPHIE: UNISA. I'm a qualified person.

UYS: You mean you know how to use a washing machine?

SOPHIE: After I've designed and built it, yes.

UYS: This will give you trouble, Mr Bezuidenhout. Believe me, I've been around. OK. Let's start with you.

DE KOCK: Could I ask what this is all about? I mean, this is a free country!

SOPHIE: Depending which side of this table you're on!

UYS: It's very serious. There are allegations. There are insinuations. There are intimations.

DE KOCK: Of what?

UYS: It's confidential. Now De Kock Bezuidenhout D. Please sit.
(De Kock slides onto a chair with a sigh) On the seventeenth of last month you were seen involved with IDB.

DE KOCK: IDB?

UYS: We have photographs to prove it.

DE KOCK: We're just good friends.

UYS: Who?

DE KOCK: Me and IDB.

UYS: Good friends?

DE KOCK: We were at school together.

UYS: Who?

DE KOCK: Me and IDB photographs?

SOPHIE: You know what IDB stands for, De Kock?

DE KOCK: Of course, ou Isak David Botha! You can't prove anything!

SOPHIE: Illicit diamond buying!

DE KOCK: Diamonds!

UYS: Net so. Did anyone see where I put my briefcase?

DE KOCK: IDB? I . . . don't know what you're talking about

UYS: I must've left it in the car. Don't go anywhere, please! It will save us all a lot of trouble if we can just get this over with as soon as possible. De Kock, will you tell your mother that I'm here?

(He exits. De Kock jumps into action and races to his baggage. Takes off the wig.)

SOPHIE: You get them IDB?

DE KOCK: Ja. This man is from the Diamond Squad.

SOPHIE: My nose smells Security. Maybe it's me he's after. My brother's in the ANC, my father's in prison and I'm washing your jockstraps – anything is possible!

DE KOCK: I'm getting the hell out of here. If he wants the rest of the family, tell him to get them at Jan Smuts Airport.

SOPHIE: And hand him the diamonds?

DE KOCK: Hey?

SOPHIE: And the Krugerrands and the dagga and whatever Pa has in his Bible, and it's not a picture of the Voortrekker Monument. Do you want to ruin your family? End up in jail on IDB?

DE KOCK: I thought you didn't like us?

SOPHIE: Compared to Hallowe'en 4 I love you all. Now, if he wants to see the Bezuidenhout family, let him see them all, but here, where we stay in charge. Put this on. *(Hands him a short black wig)*

DE KOCK: What are you doing?

SOPHIE: How well do you know your brother?

DE KOCK: I'm his twin.

SOPHIE: You could've fooled me. You're too thin . . .

DE KOCK: You've just said I was too fat!

SOPHIE: For Swan Lake. For the Third Reich you're too thin. The Moustache. *(She hands him a prop moustache out of the wig box)*

DE KOCK: This will never work . . .

SOPHIE: That's what they said about apartheid! Go upstairs, Mister Big Star and prove you're not just a pretty face.

DE KOCK: Me play butch? How?

SOPHIE: Think thick. Hurry. *(He starts off)* . . . And De Kock. IDB means fifteen years inside. Good luck! *(He exits)* They'll never believe this in court!

(Uys enters with his briefcase.)

UYS: You're not on my list? How come?

SOPHIE: Do you have all the stinkwood furniture on your list? No, of course not, you take furniture for granted.

UYS: Don't get mixed up in this, OK?

SOPHIE: I'll just keep saying 'Ja, Baas' and save for my old age.

UYS: Where's the boy?

SOPHIE: Madam gave him off.

UYS: Not the houseboy, the Bezuidenhout boy!

SOPHIE: Ag pardon. Master de Kock went to fetch Master Izan. Master Izan's just finished another session in the army. Aw, he loves it – skiet, skop en donner die terries. Of course, on your side of the table they're called terrorists, on my side they're freedom fighters. Semantics.

UYS: Sam wie? Mmmm. *(Points at the blonde wig on the table)* Wie s'n is dit?

SOPHIE: Dit? Belongs to Billie-Jeanne. She's a go-go dancer. Not mine, sir. I stopped passing for white in a blonde wig after somebody said 'Haai, daar's Sonja Heroldt' . . . joking, joking. *(Calls)* Master Izan!

IZAN: *(Off)* Ag hou jou bek, man, jy's nie nou op straat nie!

SOPHIE: Thank God, I'd recognise that voice anywhere!

(De Kock as Izan enters in leather pants, leather boots, a leather studded jacket, short black hair and moustache. He lumbers in carrying a wrench in his hand and reading Playboy.)

IZAN: Watsit man, I'm busy. Hey, ' your Cortina out there? I can get you some fancy hubcaps from the casino carpark – no sweat.

SOPHIE: Sersant Uys. SAP.

IZAN: SAP? I get you the hubcaps for a small donation to the Southern Cross Fund! *(They shake hands. De Kock winces)*
Ahhhh

UYS: Do you know why I'm here, Mr Bezuidenhout? *(He opens his jacket and De Kock sees the pistol in his belt. Reacts)*

SOPHIE: You see, they saw you go through the red light on your bike . . .

IZAN: Hey shut up, man. Het jy nie werk nie? Maak skoon hier, man!

SOPHIE: Ja, Baas. *(She clears off and exits)*

IZAN: So OK, maybe the bike's not licensed. I just got back from the Border, man. What you want to do, give me a ticket for defending your country? Sort it out with Ma. *(He starts off with a swagger.)*

UYS: I'm not here just because of the bike, and the broken windows in the town, and

IZAN: Hang on, hang on . . . let's start at the beginning, OK?

UYS: OK. *(Looks at the file)* Izan? Funny name.

IZAN: Izan. Gatkantvoor vir Nazi. Ouma wanted to call me Adolf but Ma didn't think it was a good idea. You see, I think Ma saw the film.

UYS: OK. Since you got back from the army, can you give me your movements on Wednesday between 3 pm and 4 am?

IZAN: Why?

UYS: Don't say 'why' to a policeman! *(He pulls out the gun. De Kock immediately limply raises his hands, then remembers to get back into Izan)*

IZAN: I got back Monday. Was bored Tuesday and Wednesday, man.

UYS: Ja?

IZAN: Ja man, I was here. What can you do here – this is the small, wrinkled, brown hole of the world. I went to the casino, that Satan's nest. Not illegal. Played the fruit machines, not illegal. Checked my sister dance, not illegal. Chaffed some chicks, not illegal. Got back here at 3.00. End of story.

UYS: 4.47.

IZAN: Says who?

UYS: The file.

IZAN: Ja, toemaar, everyone knows about the brooch in Ma's picture. OK, 4.47. So what?

UYS: What did you do, in your own words, at the casino?

IZAN: I told you.

UYS: Ja. You gambled and grooved.

DE KOCK: Jisis

UYS: Mmmm. Buddies aren't what they used to be.

IZAN: What buddies?

UYS: Boesman Bruwer, Koevoet Swil, Sak-Sarel Bothma, Goegie Carpenter. They all gave sworn statements that will stand up in court.

DE KOCK: Hey?

UYS: Hey?

IZAN: Hey?

UYS: They say it was your idea. You wanted to demonstrate how to stalk terries. They say you like showing off.

IZAN: Ja?

UYS: Ja. It seems you waited for the girl to lock up and then led your platoon in a stalking exercise. You didn't give your prey much of a chance before you pounced.

IZAN: Talk properly, man. What prey? What pounce?

UYS: The said victim, Joyce, was found behind the squash courts next to the car park. (*Sophie has entered unnoticed and listens*) Her jaw was broken, she'd lost some teeth and she'd been beaten with a heavy belt – that is, before being assaulted and I mean Assaulted with a big F.

IZAN: No, man! I don't know any Joyce.

UYS: Well, maybe she wasn't very important, nothing glamorous.

IZAN: Are you suggesting that I had something to do with this business?

UYS: Your buddies swear to it.

IZAN: But they're not my buddies. *(De Kock starts panicking, and Sophie comes to the rescue with a sharp whistle)*

SOPHIE: Master *Izan*! I know you would have nothing to do with anything like that. Sis, Sersant! And anyway, how could he? He was here.

IZAN: Here?

UYS: Where?

SOPHIE: Here, in the South African Embassy to the Independent Homeland of Bapetikosweti. Here.

IZAN: Here!

SOPHIE: All the time. I swear on my passbook!

(Izan looks smug. Pause. Uys takes out a polaroid picture)

UYS: Do you recognise this object?

IZAN: A belt? A photo of a blêrrie studded belt?

SOPHIE: This is becoming a fotoverhaal.

UYS: Do you mind leaving us, please?

DE KOCK: No

SOPHIE: Master Izan!

IZAN: Ja man, bugger off, but not too far*(She exits)*

UYS: So this is one of your belts. Don't deny it, it's already been identified by your buddies. There's blood on it. And fingerprints.

IZAN: Ja, fingerprints of the rest of the world.

UYS: Your prints are on file, Mister Bezuidenhout. After that incident in the Operational Area.

IZAN: Oh? I don't remember . . .

UYS: Drugs were involved up there. Assault.

IZAN: You can't prove anything!

UYS: Yes, well we never have to.

(Sophie enters with a mug of coffee.)

SOPHIE: Nice, strong, very hot koffie, Sersant.

(He takes it. It burns his hand. He is in agony.)

UYS: Eina, my hand! Dammit man . . . waar's water . . . ?

SOPHIE: In the kitchen. Follow the smell of the koeksusters. *(He exits. She turns quickly to De Kock.)* Hey, De Kock, you're doing OK.

DE KOCK: Assault . . . *(He takes off the wig)* I beat up a girl!

SOPHIE: Hey come on, you're De Kock, you couldn't beat up an egg!

DE KOCK: But if Izan was here on Wednesday like you said . . .

SOPHIE: I lied.

DE KOCK: And the studded belt?

SOPHIE: Ja, part of his kaffirbashing gear.

DE KOCK: Oh no *(Takes off the moustache and jacket)*

SOPHIE: What are you doing?

DE KOCK: I'm not going to play a brute!

SOPHIE: Pull yourself together, man. This Uys mustn't catch you out till Izan is safely in the Seychelles.

DE KOCK: How can you help him, Sophie. He's a bastard!

SOPHIE: Here comes the law!

DE KOCK: Who am I now! *(He is half Izan and half De Kock)*

SOPHIE: Back to Margot Fonteyn. *(She throws him an afro-wig)*

DE KOCK: This is Miriam Makeba! *(He throws it back, she throws him his blonde 'De Kock' wig. He ducks behind the trunk as Uys enters, his hand wrapped in a handkerchief)*

UYS: Tjoe, what a relief. But where's

SOPHIE: Master Izan? He's gone upstairs to fetch Die Dokter.

(De Kock appears coyly and waves, but keeps his Izan bottom half well hidden from Uys behind the trunk.)

DE KOCK: Hallo. I just went upstairs to powder my . . . velskoene! Sophie tells me you're going to lock up my brother!

UYS: Am I? If we locked up everyone we suspected of crimes in this country

SOPHIE: Then all our jails would be for whites only.

UYS: Jong, waar kom julle aan dié persoon? Trouble hey.

DE KOCK: But, just say you pressed charges, what would Izan get for what he did?

UYS: Reprimand. Maybe a fine.

DE KOCK: For beating up a girl?

UYS: Be thankful she wasn't white. For that he would get ten years. Could you ask your father to come down please?

DE KOCK: Me as Pa? How *(Sophie rushes across and hands him a pair of specs from the trunk)* Hey?

UYS: Never you mind, it's all here in the file.
(Sophie grabs off De Kock's blonde wig and forces him to exit hurriedly, unseen by Uys.)

SOPHIE: That's a thick file. Is there a chapter on me, too? Sophie Nomgqabhuzo Magqudu. No maybe that's not there. No one can spell it, let alone pronounce it. I'm written into UNISA as 'Sophie Bezuidenhout'. No wonder they pass me. God help Andries Treurnicht on graduation day when he has to kap me on the head and say 'Arise B.Comm. Miss Sophie Nomgqabhuzo Magqudu'!

UYS: There was no need to lie on Baas Izan's behalf. And will you just shut up! I don't want to sit and listen to your educated geneul. Magtig! I've got my standard nine, so don't try and impress me, Miss Sophie (*He tries her real name and fails*) . . . Sophie Bezuidenhout! OK, tell me about Dr J J de V Bezuidenhout. Oubaas Hasie.

SOPHIE: Look him up in *The Super-Afrikaners*.

UYS: He's not a very big fish.

SOPHIE: Nor is a piranha.

UYS: Hey, cool it on the jokes. Ek is nie lus vir jou Biltong en Mieliepap grappe nie. Is this what independence gave you? Cheek?

SOPHIE: Common sense.

UYS: That's the word. Common. You're very forward for a job like this, so near the thrones of power.

SOPHIE: But clowns always sit at the foot of the throne, Sersant. That's why they are the first to see it shake.

UYS: So you have political ambitions?

SOPHIE: Jisis, what is this? What more do you want to know about me? That I keep a shebeen in my room? A volume of Karl Marx under my bed? Orange, white and blue toilet paper? That I laugh at your PW on TV? (*She gives an impersonation of PW Botha*) Suid-Afrika is . . . Suid-Afrika is . . . Suid Afrika is . . .

UYS: Hou jou in! Suid-Afrika is . . . *(Reads)* Dr Hasie Bezuidenhout, retired businessman, Director on the Board of etc etc, reads like an obituary. Ja-nee, hulle klink maar almal dieselfde aan die einde, die ou boggers met die geheime. This other boy – De Kock.

SOPHIE: What about him?

UYS: He's a bit funny.

SOPHIE: Really?

UYS: He wants to dance?

SOPHIE: We all want to dance. It's in the blood. We're all Africans under the skin. Give the boy a chance. He'll surprise you all.

UYS: And the girl?

SOPHIE: You'll smaak her. Your type of goose. Very chick!

UYS: OK, OK. Just clear this stuff and stay in the kitchen. I have work to do. I don't want to see you in here, verstaan jy?

(Sophie exits. Uys adds glasses and a carnation to his appearance and puts his pistol in the briefcase. Prepares for Oom Hasie.)

HASIE: *(Off)* Sophie? *(Pronounced Sofi)* Tyd vir die oubaas se medikasie.

SOPHIE: Goed, Dokter.

(De Kock as Oom Hasie enters in a dressing-gown, slippers and pyjamas. He wears glasses and a small Hitler-moustache, hair flat to the back of the bald head.)

HASIE: O, ek weet nie waar Mevrou die Ambassadeur is nie. Sy is gewoonlik nie laat vir 'n bestelling nie. U moet maar self rondkyk en sien waar u wil begin. Ek weet Mevrou die Ambassadeur het al wel die materiale en patrone vir die muurpapier ensovoorts gekies, maar ag, nou ja, u weet seker meer as ek. Ek is maar net die Dennis Thatcher in hierdie huis. Sophie?

SOPHIE: *(Off)* Ek kom, Dokter.

(She enters with a small tray and pills. Seeing him she immediately starts laughing. Exits.)

HASIE: Ag tog, die plaaslike volk is regtig nie van die beste intellektuele gehalte nie. En nou kry hulle alles op 'n skinkbord! As politikus het ek altyd volstaan: hulle moet op hulle plek gehou word. Vir my is daar net een ding erger as 'n kaffer, en dis twee kaffers. Dié huis het mos vroeër behoort aan 'n jagse boer met 'n voorliefde vir bokke – al die bokkoppe teen die mure met horings, horings, horings. En die oë wat so staar. Toe word dit uiteindelik 'n ambassade. Evita, my vrou, moes wag vir haar tuisland. Die burokrate in Pretoria kon net nie besluit nie. Een dag gee hulle vir haar Kangwane, dan die volgende dag neem hulle dit weg van haar en gee dit aan Swaziland, dan weer dit, dan weer dat, dan daag die Koornhofs nie op vir ete nie en ons weet nie waar ons is nie. Is u al lank in die besigheid, jong man?

(He takes a peep into the briefcase. Sees the pistol.)

UYS: Nogal lang, ja . . .

HASIE: Ja-nee! 'Ja nee.' Dit is soos die Engelse sê: die 'epitaph' van ons kultuur: ja-nee! 'Afrikaner was jy hier?' 'Ja-nee!' *(He snorts with laughter)*

UYS: Dokter, ek is Sersant Uys.

HASIE: My aarde, 'n Uys? Van die Paarl se Uyse of Heidelberg, Transvaal?

UYS: Grobblershoop.

HASIE: Foeitog. Sersant? Maar dan is u nie hier om die muurpapier te verhang nie?

UYS: Ek is hier op versoek van die Minister.

HASIE: Watter Minister? Volgens SATV Nuus is daar beslis meer as een!

UYS: Volgens afskrifte van dokumente in my besit, het u in die afgelope tyd amper twee en 'n half miljoen rand in valuta uit ons land gestuur. Dit blyk dat u groot bedrae in 'n uitgeholde Bybel na verskeie buitelandse banke uitsmokkel.

HASIE: U maak 'n grap!

(He tries to see the papers)

UYS: Geheime dokumente, Dokter. Onder andere die volgende telekse: 'Aan Luiperd Groen van Bruin Haas. Die Kossies is op Pad.'

HASIE: Kossies?

UYS: Is valuta.

HASIE: Valuta?

UYS: U staan blykbaar bekend as 'Bruin Haas'.

HASIE: Bruin Haas! En die Luiperd Groen?

UYS: Kom, kom, Dokter, laat ons nie ander persoonlikhede hier insleep nie. (*Checks file*) U het blykbaar persoonlike besittings in vreemde lande, Dr Bezuidenhout?

HASIE: Eh . . . ja. Ja! Skoene, hemde, truie en my drie golfsakke is bo in my kamer in a vreemde land, ja!

UYS: ‘n Plaas in Paraguay?

HASIE: Dis amper onmoontlik om ‘n plaas in Paraguay te koop sedert Sanlam die hele plek oorgeneem het. Jy moet maar toustaan saam met die ander patriote.

UYS: ‘n Switserse bankrekening?

HASIE: Ag nee, wat is jy? ‘n Sondagskoolonderwyser of die Man van Staal? Moet dinge nie so vereenvoudig nie! Ons toekoms lê nie in Paraguay of ‘n geslote blikkie met ‘n nommer in Geneve. Net materiële dinge, soos ons ook van die PFP sê, ‘Here today, gone tonight.’ Kan ek die dokumente bestudeer?
(*Uys hands him the papers. De Kock is shocked by what he sees*)
Poephhol!

UYS: Wat?

HASIE: Wat? O, nee wat, dis . . . ‘n ou Paraguayse woord. Beteken ‘aitsa’. Aitsa! (*Demonstrates*) Poephhol! Poephhol! Watter Minister het dan hier geteken?

UYS: Blou Bal. U weet, Luiperd Groen, Bruin Haas, Pink Panther, Blou Bal.

HASIE: Ek ken g'n Blou Bal nie!

UYS: Wel, dit hang af.

HASIE: Kind, moenie hier kom rondkrap op Olympus nie. Die pers vygies het dorings en die oulike skoenlappers is noodlottig giftig. Die koele drinkwater het lankal opgedroog en die gode is moeg en lus om te skiet. Los ons uit en gaan terug na jou PAC-man videospeletjies.

UYS: Met ander woorde

HASIE: Met ander woorde 'you're treading on dangerous ground' soos die Engelse sê, en hulle weet waarvan hulle praat.
(He is close to Uys; de Kock sniffs deeply)
 Mmmmm. Lekker naskeerparfuum.

UYS: Lekker wat?

HASIE: Naskeerparfuum aftershave!

UYS: O, dankie.

HASIE: Jou Brut?

UYS: *(Aggressive)* Hoekom dan?

HASIE: Brut. Naskeerparfuum.

UYS: Nee. Gigolo.

HASIE: Praat Afrikaans man! Huurhoer!

UYS: Hey?
(Pause. De Kock has the giggles. He recovers just in time not to be caught out by Uys.)
 Dokter, u gaan minstens een keer per week na Pretoria.

HASIE: Alle goeie Broeders gaan minstens één keer per week na Pretoria.

UYS: U vertrek op 'n Vrydag en kom terug Maandag-middag.

HASIE: Besigheid.

UYS: Oor 'n naweek? In Pretoria? Hoe en waar?

HASIE: Ag, so tussen biere op Loftus Versveld, so tussen gebede in die Kerk, so tussen koeksusters by Libertas

UYS: Of tussen knippies in die bed?

HASIE: U bed? Van wie praat ons dan nou?

UYS: Dokter. Die naam Alison Burbridge.

HASIE: Burbridge? Daardie ou vrou wat romans skryf . . . O nee, dis Barbara Cartland.

UYS: Ons weet van u geheim, Dokter. Ons weet Alison Burbridge is u 'mistress', soos die Engelse sê.

DE KOCK: Mistress!

UYS: Elke naweek is julle saam, sedert die laaste internasionale toetswedstryd op Loftus, en ons tel nie die een teen die Transkei nie.

HASIE: So lank al? Vertel my meer?

UYS: Is dit so maklik om te vergeet, Dr Bezuidenhout?

HASIE: Nee, nee, nee – maar hoeveel weet u? Ek verklap nie my geheime buitens beddens nie!

UYS: Alison Burbridge . . . 23 jaar oud . . .

HASIE: Blondine?

UYS: Donkerkop.

HASIE: Tien uit tien. Nou, beskryf die lyf?

UYS: Dr Bezuidenhout, asseblief

HASIE: Ag nou kom, kêrel, ons is mos net mans saam. Mans! O, u huurhoer laat my oë traan! Laat die idee van ‘n wulpse jong vrou nie u . . . wat is die woorde . . .? (*Indicates an erection*)

UYS: Hare krul nie?

HASIE: Vir julle wat het, seker. Die buuste? So groot?

UYS: Ek weet nie

HASIE: O nee, maar julle wil hê ek moet alles verklap, nê? Van die moesie net bo haar(*indicates pubis*) wat is die aanvaarde woord?

UYS: Die woord staan nie hier in my ZA23B nie.

HASIE: Natuurlik nie. Die ZA23B gaan oor kriminele dinge en verraad teen die Staat en ek is daaraan geensins skuldig nie! Maar ek is nou blykbaar ‘easy game’ soos die Engelse sê! Onderhandel? Was dit die woord? Sersant Uys, ek is ‘n man aan die einde van ‘n politieke loopbaan, in die skaduwee van ‘n magtige staatsvrou. Ek het drie kinders wat daaglik maar twee woorde met my wissel ‘Jis, Pa’ of ‘Ja, Pa’. O ja, ek het ‘n verlede – ‘n trotse verlede as Afrikaner waaroor julle jong vetgoed nou grappe maak. Die Broederbond. Die wortels van ons wording. Die gelofte van ‘n Bloedrivier. Die drome van ‘n Malan, ‘n Strydom, ‘n Verwoerd . . . en ‘n (*searches for the name*) Vorster. Ons het ons hande saam in die vaevuur van nasionalisme gehou en ‘n samelewing en ‘n trots geskep wat sulke gelag kan beskerm. Ons het grootgeword . . . sela.

UYS: Dr *Oom*, ek doen net my werk

HASIE: En wat is jou werk? Ons land val uitmekaar en jy dra rond patetiese stories van ‘n ou man se laaste plesiertjies? Alison Burbridge is goed vir Hasie Bezuidenhout. Ek is bly oor haar. En ek dink my kinders sou ook bly wees. My seun De Kock sou bly wees: ‘Aitsa, Pa,’ sou hy sê, ‘Aitsa, Pa!’ (*Latter as De Kock*)

UYS: Ek het slegte nuus, Oom. Alison Burbridge het eergister die storie van u ‘blydschap’ gaan verklap by die Sondag koerante, and I quote: ‘I am more than just a typist and deserve better than just being the fancy girl of a notorious Fascist.’ Unquote.

HASIE: O my tyd! Wie kan ek bel?

UYS: Ek het ‘n aanbod. Blou Bal. Die Minister sal die koerante se monde betyds snoer. Sy wette is beskikbaar daarvoor.

HASIE: As?

UYS: As u hierdie dokument in triplikaat teken.
(Produces the papers from the file)
 Die Switserse bankrekening en die een plaas in Paraguay
 genoem 'Mampoer' word daardeur die eiendom van die
 maatskappy soos aangedui op die dokument.

HASIE: *(Reads)* Hou-Den-Bek Inc.

UYS: Natuurlik net 'n front vir die Departement van Welsyn.

HASIE: O spaar my Na my jare van vriendskap met Connie
 Mulder ken ek die resepte vir hierdie politieke koekerasie. En as
 ek weier?

UYS: Dit spyt ons

HASIE: Uys jou luis, jy pers my af, hier, in my eie huis! Dankie Vader
 my vader is nie hier om dit te hoor nie. So, dis Hasie
 Bezuidenhout se geheime in ruil vir sy reputasie.
(De Kock is uncomfortable at having to sign)
 Goed, gee terug sy lewe. Ons familie is werd meer as ponde of
 Paraguay se plase.

UYS: U teken hier. Dan is die storie dood. Ons perswette is daar vir
 'n goeie rede.

HASIE: Maar wat van dié Alison Burbridge.

UYS: Ons sit haar op 'n vliegtuig na Londen. Onder al die groot
 beppe wat daar bulk, sal haar ge-miauw maar klein klink.
 Teken, Dokter!

(De Kock dithers. Then Ouma is heard off. It is actually Sofie in disguise.)

OUMA: *(Off)* Hasie!

HASIE: Ouma?

OUMA: *(Off)* Hasie!

UYS: U vrou se moeder? Ouma Ossewania de Kock? Maar sy is dan oorlede!

(Sophie enters as Ouma, black kappie, black outfit, walking bent over a cane.)

HASIE: Ja-nee, Ouma is dood...*(Sees her)*....doodgelukkig. Ag Ouma, hoe bly is ek om Ouma skielik weer op die been te sien!

UYS: Wel . . . kan ons voor haar praat?

HASIE: Sy's doof, half-blind en haar kleur sou die dooies verwek, maar nou dat sy hier is, is ons onderhandelings verby.

UYS: Maar ek is nog nie klaar nie. Wat van u vrou? U dogter? Daar lê nog helfde van my werk voor.

HASIE: Vrou? Dogter? Maar wat is die doel van hierdie onderhandelings? Wat soek my jet ons?

UYS: Konfidensieël en geklassifiseerd. Is Juffrou Billie-Jean Bezuidenhout tuis?

DE KOCK: Billie-Jeanne???

OUMA: Ja.

HASIE: Nee!

OUMA: Ja, Hasie, sy kom.

HASIE: Nee, Ouma, Billie-Jeanne werk tot laat by die casino. U sal haar nie hier sien nie, Sersant.

OUMA: Ja, Hasie. Sy's op pad!

HASIE: Onmoontlik, Ouma. Onmoontlik!

OUMA: Moontlik. Moontlik. Sy't gebel!

HASIE: Ek het niks gehoor nie!

OUMA: Ja

HASIE: Ouma! Hou den bek!

UYS: Dit sal my help as ek haar hier kan spreek

HASIE: Nee, maar sien, dis

UYS: Ek sal haar lêer in die motor haal.

(He exits)

DE KOCK: Are you blêrrie mad! Dragging Billie-Jeanne into this!

SOPHIE: I've made some enquiries. He's been snooping round the casino for some time now. God knows what he's got on BJ.

DE KOCK: It's impossible

SOPHIE: He's expecting to see Billie-Jeanne. He must see her!

(She holds out a pair of glittery high-heels from the trunk to him.)

DE KOCK: It's impossible and in these heels suicidal! Anyway, it'll take me at least an hour to get ready.

SOPHIE: B-J needs an hour because she's a girl. You must be here in five minutes!

DE KOCK: Because I'm a boy?

SOPHIE: Because you're desperate! Now voetsek!

DE KOCK: *(He starts to exit)* Sophie?

(She turns)

Bitch!

(He exits)

(Sophie takes off Ouma quickly.)

SOPHIE: Why am I doing all this? Hey? Why don't I sit outside on the pavement in the sun with my radio, like any other self-respecting black woman? Me as Ouma Ossewania? That's a laugh, but then the dead easily change their political beliefs. Ja, Dr Hasie, I suppose it's easier to forgive a nation for being wrong than to forgive a man for being right. And you're ultra-right! And Sophie Bezuidenhout? Remember what your mother told you: love your enemy, it will ruin his reputation!

(Uys enters with a file.)

UYS: Ag no, now where's the old tannie? According to my file she's dead. Dood. Oorlede. Late. Deceased. Having tea with Dokter Verwoerd. There's something here that doesn't feel right. I'd like to see them all together.

SOPHIE: One by one, Sersant. You know what they say about a bird in the hand?

UYS: Ja, a bird in the hand does it on your wrist.
(Suddenly they both laugh, then realising they shouldn't, they stop)
We shouldn't be laughing, this is serious business.

SOPHIE: Sersant Uys, where laughter is forbidden they won't let you cry either. Miss Billie-Jeanne is on her way. Just a word of friendly advice

UYS: Advice from you?

(She crosses to the other side of the table)

SOPHIE: Friendly 'foreign' advice – I'm on my side. Miss B-J gets very nervous when police start to feature. She's progressive, you see, not used to the realities of a police state but enjoying all the benefits. One has to treat them with special care or else they just, emigrate. Don't let on you're a cop. Pretend a bit.

UYS: I don't know what you mean.

SOPHIE: Play a game. Like politics – pretend.

UYS: Jisis, this UNISA really has got a lot to answer for. You must know more than is decent about this family, hey?

SOPHIE: After you've washed a white man's underwear, what secrets are left? I've been in Mrs Bezuidenhout's employ for some years, yes. I was in charge of the main house when she and the then MP for Laagerfontein, Die Dokter, were down in Cape Town for Parliament.

UYS: You never went down with them? Why?

SOPHIE: I couldn't get a permit. But after Madam became a member of the President's Council I did get a special nanny's passport to go with her to Taiwan. O jinne no, those Chinese all look alike, and to think they've got a vote over in your part of the room and us salt of the earth don't! Thixo! Life with a capital F!

UYS: Now who said that? Karl Marx?

SOPHIE: Athol Fugard. Then when Madam eventually got a homeland to run, she naturally took me along to run her home. Of course, off the record, Madam was hoping for something a bit more glamorous – Port St Johns or Kangwane – but shame, they keep on giving away homelands like sweeties to King Kong. But, here we now have our little place in the sun. Ja, Sersant Uys, I know a lot about this family.

UYS: Political details?

SOPHIE: They don't make a mystery of their obsessions. Oom Hasie, Die Dokter, now thinks HNP, Izan is Conservative, the Madam is National Party, Billie-Jeanne is a Prog and De Kock is a moffie. Ja, they let it all hang out, as the Yanks say. They tend to call a spade a spade, and as a spade I know where I stand.

UYS: Always safely on your side of the border, I see.

SOPHIE: I think you want me to spill the beans? To spy for you? Will I be granted immunity from your laws after you have blackmailed the mighty House of Bezuidenhout to its knees?
(He starts for her)
 Don't come near me! You cross the border and I'll have you picked up for assault. On the gravel and dust roads of Bapetikosweti we are still in charge!

B-J: *(Off)* Yoohoo hallo? Mama? Sophie?

UYS: Is this her?

SOPHIE: Anything is possible. Now remember, man, no police tricks. I'll say you're a talent scout or with the TV, maybe.

UYS: *(Pleased)* You mean like Cliff Saunders? OK, just leave the talking to me. Magtig man, why am I making chat with you? Gaan kombuis toe!

B-J: *(Off)* Sophie?

(De Kock as Billie-Jeanne enters in showgirl feather harness, high heels, blond wig and full make-up)

SOPHIE: Miss B-J . . . You look like a bird!

B-J: *(Wiggles her feathers at Uys)* Miskien ja, maar ek voel soos 'n voël!

SOPHIE: Then let me introduce you? A talent scout from Disneyland.

B-J: Disneyland?

SOPHIE: SABC.

B-J: Oh, are you from 'Follow that Star'? O hel, ek is so moeg . . . People think it's so easy, you know, standing around under spotlights in feathers and half-kaal – that's what they said about me in *Huisgenoot*: 'Billie-Jeanne Bezuidenhout – half-kaal!' Am I halfkaal? Wollie-Bollie? Am I half-kaal?

SOPHIE: B-J, where are they?

B-J: Hey?
(Sophie indicates she's got no bosom)
O moer, waar is my têtete!
(She exits in a scream of common laughter)

SOPHIE: Always on a diet. One day she's out to here, the next day gone with the wind. Anyway, that was Billie-Jeanne. She dances on the stage in feathers and talent, that's all. Not even a . . . what you call it?

UYS: A tietkiet – nipplecap?

SOPHIE: Ja, whatever. One of their numbers is called 'The Dance of the Seven Valiums'. A freak-out, man!

(With loud birdsong B-J enters, plus a healthy bust.)

B-J: OK?

SOPHIE: Definitely outstanding. Excuse me, Miss B-J.
(Curtsies)
Sir.
(Smiles at B-J)
And to think you shook Frank Sinatra's own hand.
(Exits)

UYS: Did you?

B-J: What else can you shake.
(She screams with laughter)
Haai sies!
(She goes into stock showgirl poses)

UYS: No, come on, Miss Bezuidenhout
(He is embarrassed)
 You get me here on a wrong footing. I mean, here you are, half . . . half in costume and me just doing my job. I've heard a lot about your talent. Let's get the formalities over with and then we can get down to brass tacks.
(She poses)
 Now, after you were expelled from school you were a semi-finalist in the Miss South Africa contest
(She starts shaking her top so that the tassles on her bosom start whirling like propellers. UYS is fascinated)
 Eh . . . eh . . . you really wear no tietkiet?

B-J: Hey?

UYS: Nipplecaps. All kaal?

B-J: Hey, hey, hey, are you some sort of heavy breather from Roodepoort? Sex-starved?

UYS: Ag, man, sex is like a bank account: once you withdraw you lose interest.

(She screams with laughter and shoves him)

B-J: Haai sies, jou blêrrie vark. That's on the wall of the toilet at the casino. That and: 'What is a Xhosa virgin? She who can run faster than the master!'
(She screams with laughter)
 Haai sies, jy's 'n vark!

UYS: What do you do in the toilets?

B-J: What do you think I do in the toilets?

UYS: You've got me. A girl in a man's lavatory?

B-J: Oh . . . me? Graffiti! I collect the writings on the wall! What cubicle is this one: 'If pornography relieves sexual frustration, why don't they give cookbooks to the hungry?'
(Pause. He doesn't get it)
 Good hey?

UYS: Ja. Fourth cubicle under 'My wife's run away with my best friend. Hell I miss him.'
(He nudges her boob out of place. She screams with laughter again and adjusts it)
 Still up to your old tricks, Miss Bezuidenhout?

B-J: Hey?

UYS: Toemaar, I know about the little Hillbrow drama.

B-J: In a man's lavatory?

UYS: Isn't that where it happened?

B-J: Listen, who are we talking about? De Kock?

UYS: No, you. What your brother does in public lavatories doesn't interest us.

B-J: What Hillbrow drama?

UYS: Was there more than one? Your weekend in jail on the drug charge.

B-J: *(Laughs)* Ag moenie laf wees nie. Wollie-Bollie. B-J doesn't smoke or drink.

UYS: Coke.

B-J: Tab.

UYS: Cocaine!

DE KOCK: Cocaine???

UYS: I take it your family don't know.

DE KOCK: Nee. O stille waters diepe grond, daaronder lê my ou sussie in die stront . . .
(Into B-J)
 What else do you know about me? No wait a moment . . . I don't need to be interrogated by a poepgat talent scout! Write my agent a letter!
(She starts off)

UYS: Miss Bezuidenhout, I'm sorry . . . really . . .
(She stops and then stalks him, feathers and bosom pointed, pouting and coming on strong)
 I don't have a family. I had no right to attack yours. I'm just doing my job. You're very beautiful . . . It's so difficult . . . I'm just a normal man

B-J: Shame, no one's perfect. Beautiful? Me?

UYS: You look better offstage . . . I mean more sensitive . . . I mean more

B-J: Feminine?

UYS: Ja.

B-J: Say it.

UYS: Why?

B-J: I don't hear it said to me every day – say it.

UYS: You look more feminine and . . .

B-J: And?

UYS: Sexy.

B-J: Haai, are you making a pass at me? Nice change from gryp, rape en rook 'n pyp. How do you know I don't have a boyfriend?

UYS: I know about him.

B-J: Oh? Oh! Don't you think he might be jealous?

UYS: Let him try!
(His tone of voice worries De Kock)
Billie-Jeanne? I want you to do something special.

B-J: How special?

UYS: People must ask you to do this all the time.

B-J: Not all the time. How special?

UYS: Say yes.

B-J: Ok, but baby oil makes me sneeze and leather gives me a rash!

UYS: Dance for me.

(Pause.)

B-J: Dance!!!

UYS: I saw the show six times. I love your exotic duet you do with that Coloured dancer. To the music of the Ravel's 'Bolero'.
(Indicates the tape; De Kock is now really worried.)

B-J: You're mad, I don't bring my work back home.

UYS: Good dancer, that Coloured boy from Cape Town. At least the homeland gives him a chance to show all his many talents.

(Pause.)

B-J: Eh . . . yes, he's good, we're all good in the show. Ag, moenie verspot wees nie, skattebol, how can I dance here in an Africana Monument.
(Screams) Sophie?

(Sophie appears from behind the statue.)

SOPHIE: You screamed, Miss?

B-J: Ag, Sophie, tell this balletomaniac that I can't possibly dance on our Republic's yellowwood floors in these heels. Tell him.

SOPHIE: But you're mos a dancer, Kleinnooi? Haven't you told me over and over 'Sophie, I'm a dancer'? So show us. She's got her audition tape handy. I'll druk it into the hi-fi and then, Miss B-J, the yellowwood floor is yours!

(The dance: she mouths to words and basically vamps Uys throughout with her feathers and all the glittery dangles on the costume. Dramatic final pose. They applaud.)

Bravo.

UYS: Encore. Very good.

B-J: Of course, it needs more lights and smoke and colours and a lot more Brickhill and a lot less Burke, but do you think I'll pass the audition in Pretoria?

UYS: Ja, amazing how you did it, Miss Bezuidenhout, considering you're four months pregnant!

SOPHIE: No, come on!
(To De Kock)
 Pull in your maag.

B-J: On stage one is always thinner . . . ask Gé Korsten!

UYS: Four months pregnant. I have a copy here of the doctor's report. *(Hands it to her)*

B-J: But this is nonsense, nê Sophie?

UYS: Do your ma's image a lot of good. Unless of course the father of the child will marry you.

B-J: Of course he will marry me . . .
(Pushes out her tummy – motherly)

UYS: Congratulations. And where will you live, you and your husband and your child?

B-J: I can live anywhere I like!

UYS: Not with a Coloured husband and a basterkind! Or have you forgotten the watertight laws your father helped to draft. The Mixed Marriages Act, the Immorality Act, the Group Areas Act . . .

SOPHIE: *(Shocked)* Tyhini Thixo man B-J! That Coloured dancer at the casino? But he's a skollie. He's brown trash. Sies man, B-J! Hey, suka maan suka!

(She exits)

B-J: But Sophie . . . how can I be pregnant? I wasn't even there! Listen . . .

(turns to Uys)

I don't know about it

UYS: We've been watching you two for some time.

B-J: Ja, but it's not illegal here. *Everyone* done it here. That's what the homelands are for!

UYS: The daughter of Evita Bezuidenhout with a black child. What are you going to do?

B-J: *(Little voice)* Ek weet nie

UYS: I don't know either. Ek doen net my werk.

(B-J finds a large woodcarving of a figure and prepares to hit him on the head with it. He turns to her and it becomes a baby in her arms)

I'm not enjoying any of this. I'm sorry for you all. You especially I like. But how could you go with a Coloured when there's decent people around like me?

(She lifts the statue again to hit him)

Do you know who I really am? I'm not a policeman or a talent scout. In fact

(The blow is arrested by the sound of Evita's voice off.)

SOPHIE: *(Off as Evita)* Billie-Jeanne?
 *(B-J again lifts the statue to hit him when 'Evita' arrives in
 large hat and veil in the doorway and sees it.)*
 Nee! Nee! Nee!

B-J: Mama? Mama? Mama!!

BLACKOUT

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

(A bit later in the Embassy. Sergeant Uys enters searching frantically for Evita Bezuidenhout. He calls:)

UYS: Mrs Bezuidenhout?
(He exits. Sophie, still dressed as Evita, runs on and hides under the sheets covering the statue. He enters again)
Mrs Bezuidenhout?
(He leans on the draped statue and mops his brow. We see her give slightly. He moves away and she sighs audibly with relief. He turns to statue, but it doesn't move)
Mrs Bezuidenhout?
(He exits searching)

(Sophie comes out from under the sheet as De Kock enters in Evita Bezuidenhout's opening-of-Parliament outfit – wide-brimmed hat with net and flowers, matching blue dress. Sophie is wearing the coat and gloves. Sophie sees her.)

SOPHIE: *(Shock)* Madam!

(Evita holds out her hand for her clothes. Guiltily, Sophie takes off the coat and hands it to her. Evita takes it with the tips of her fingers.)

EVITA: Waar is daardie klein drol!

(Relieved, Sophie hits De Kock with her handbag.)

SOPHIE: No, man, I thought you were here!

DE KOCK: Then how can you call me 'man', when you think I'm a madam! Thanks for keeping him busy. I couldn't find all Ma's clothes. I'm not surprised, though, you've been wearing half of them.

SOPHIE: That man must be as blind as a Nat not to see my true colours.

DE KOCK: And what's all this black? Just been to a Kappie Kommando meeting? Ouma is still alive, remember?

SOPHIE: Oh yes? That hat is wrong. And you never wear blue shoes with a white handbag.

DE KOCK: Well, skattie, Evita Bezuidenhout wore it to the opening of Parliament.

(He walks across the room 'elegantly')

SOPHIE: Jisis, De Kock, stop walking like a man in drag, man. Your mother is a woman of experience. You walk like you're holding something between your knees.

DE KOCK: Ja well, they don't call me De Kock for nothing!
(She hits him with her handbag)
Wait, Sophie, I'm so confused. One moment I'm butch, then I'm old, then I'm pregnant and now I'm a legend! Who am I really?

SOPHIE: You won't get any more second chances!

DE KOCK: I don't even know where I'm supposed to have been!

SOPHIE: President Makoeloeli's first wife's just arrived from Paris. You've gone to visit her.

DE KOCK: You mean Marjorie, Ma's old maid?

SOPHIE: Old maids always make the best alibis. That's all he has to know; tell him the rest is confidential.

UYS: *(Off)* Hallo?

(De Kock and Sophie rush and hide)

DE KOCK: But listen, if we bang him on the head and steal the file

SOPHIE: Ja, and *if* pigs could fly!

DE KOCK: If pigs could fly, John Vorster Square would be an airport.

SOPHIE: Shut up, man. You forget why we're doing all this.

DE KOCK: We're doing it for my diamonds.

SOPHIE: A charge of first degree assault, a scandal, a bastard, IDB, the fall of the House of Bezuidenhout, losing a good maid – that's what we're doing this for. They can still be stopped at Jan Smuts Airport. Stopped, searched and arrested, De Kock!

DE KOCK: Ag no man, Sophie, I can't do Ma. She's too strong anyway she never stops talking – what am I going to say? Hell, I'm poep-scared! All those terrible things this Uys has said about Pa and Izan and B-J – what's he got on Evita Bezuidenhout?

SOPHIE: We'll cross that cheque when we come to it. Now pull yourself together. Get ready. I'll find some dramatic music to help you with your entrance.

DE KOCK: Well, I hope your dramatic music is 'God save the Queen'. She needs every bit of help she can get!

SOPHIE: And remember who you are – the Ambassador to the Independent Homeland of Bapetikosweti.

DE KOCK: Ambassadeur? Ek voel soos 'n ambassadoos!
(He exits, one shoe in hand, bedraggled)

(Sophie quickly gets out of her disguise.)

SOPHIE: Ai, Madam, this is one time I'm glad to be black and beautiful,
or else your son will be doing me all over town and get into the
best parties.

(Uys enters.)

UYS: A party?

SOPHIE: Not the National Party!

UYS: I have a feeling Mrs Bezuidenhout's trying to avoid me. She
led me on the most deurmekaar tour all over the house and then
vanished. With a pouf! Like that.

SOPHIE: Madam does not like to be forced into confrontations, Sersant.
She will receive you here when she is ready. Please wait.

(Pause.)

UYS: Hell, it's hot.

SOPHIE: Ja-nee.

UYS: This is quite a house.

SOPHIE: Yebo. Impressive and hell to keep clean and functional *and* an
example of fine South African living for all the flotsam and
jetsam that wash up against our doors. Eh . . . have you ever
met Mrs Evita Bezuidenhout?

UYS: Ja, but she won't remember me after all these years.

SOPHIE: But you remember her?

UYS: O ja, very well. A very beautiful woman.

SOPHIE: Mmmm, well she might look a bit different when you see her today.

UYS: I know she had a facelift.

SOPHIE: Hey? Where you get that from?

UYS: It's confidential.

SOPHIE: So what, all cars have their tyres changed. Madam has been through more than a white woman of culture should have to take – that stupid Info Scandal had her walking a tightrope.

UYS: Toemaar, I've got it all down here, her audience with the Pope, her husband's defecation to the HNP.

SOPHIE: Madam? Someone to see you. Without an appointment.

EVITA: *(Off)* Ja dankie, Sophie.

(Sophie puts a cassette into the hi-fi which is covered with a cloth. Wagner booms forth. De Kock again as Evita Bezuidenhout enters in her working outfit: a light-blue crimplene suit, her glasses round her neck on a chain, and wearing pearls and earrings. She has on her hair with the grey streaks in the front and she holds a file. The music fills her with inspiration.)

EVITA:

Rudolf Wagner. Ek is mal vir sy musiek. Dit is vir my soos 'n katedraal van klank wat sag en amper impressionisties begin en dan opbou tot 'n surrealistiese klimaks. O, ek kan so voor my oë sien hoe die donderende klanke van 'n Wagner die Fasisme kon inspireer tot die vreesaanjaende hoogtes van 'n Derde Ryk – vlae, vaandels, vuur. En wat het ons om ons tot groot hoogtes aan te spoor? Het ons 'n Wagner, 'n Strauss? Nee helaas, Gerrie Bosman. Nou ja, as die arend en die valk buitestedelik is, moet die kokkewiet en die wipstertjie ook inspirasie bied. Hallo, ek is die ambassadeur. Oh, but maybe you don't yet understand Afrikaans? Well, you'll have to learn Afrikaans if you're to become a force to be reckoned with. Now I have a very nice cheap little boekie here – 'Afrikaans for White Immigrants' – it was authored by my husband, Dr JJ de V Bezuidenhout, and autographed by me. It won the Herzogprys vir Kinder-literatuur. Now, I don't know how much you have read or what you have heard about our country. Either/or it's not true and just part of the Total Onslaught against us and God.

South Africa, as you know, welcomes immigrants regardless of race i.e. nationality, creed i.e. rich or poor, and culture i.e. yes or no. Your contribution to the survival of our anti-communist society will be considerable. Now, can you fire a gun?

(He nods)

Ag, Magnus will be pleased. Goed, now you must remember that politics has never been simple. I mean look at Rome, look at Greece. We must remember that evil, also, just wants to make us happy. Happy

Ja-nee, as I said to Andries Treurnicht a few days before he resigned to become one of those bobbejane climbing the Soutpansberg, I said: 'Ag A.P. what happy political system will greet the end of the world? Tog nie jou Konserwatiewe party nie?' Hy't nie eers gelag nie, raai. Even today I got a phone call from Cape Town from one of those Labour Party leaders. You know the Coloureds now also have a little vote, shame. Die

Kleurling is so ontstoke oor P W Botha se referendum. Hy's so bang dit reënt. Seker bang hy word nat! Do you know what he said to me on the phone? 'Ja-nee, Miesies Bezuidenhout,' he said, 'all men are equal, but only after you make them!' Hy verdien elke stoel teen die kop. So you see equality breeds subversity, and therefore here in South Africa we've learnt: democracy is too good to share with just anyone!

UYS: Ja!

EVITA: Ja. So to you we say – welcome to our laager. Goed.
(De Kock then sticks her tongue out at Sophie, unseen by him)
Now, there are a few things we have to look into first. Have you been examined? Oh, you must. It's just a formality, but we can't afford any siektes and glibberige gedoentes being introduced into our society to weaken it for that communist take-over.
Then there is the Krafft-Ebbing test for the psychological system: Pretoria has given us strict instructions to let in anyone who is more or less white and not quite insane. Also jou bankrekening en sulke goed . . .
Really I shouldn't be doing all this. I usually leave it in the capable hands of my personal secretary, Bokkie Bam. Ou Dominee Bam se dogter, so 'n oulike klein Bam. She's also gone off to the Seychelles

SOPHIE: Boutique!

EVITA: Eh? O ja, Seychelles Boutique just down the road, to buy a present for her sick mama. I, of course, carry on doing all the things expected of an ambassador in the service of her country. Why only this morning I saw President Ignatious Makoeloele on a

SOPHIE: On a very important confidential matter.

EVITA: On a very important confidential matter, and later today I have some other very exciting confidential things on my agenda Wat is hulle, Sophia?

SOPHIE: Dinner with the Vendanese Minister without Casino, President Makoeloeli and his first wife

EVITA: O ja, ons ou meid Marjorie.

SOPHIE: And that old American film star.

EVITA: Toemaar, it's not Ronald Reagan. Yet. And then tonight I will present the Evita Bezuidenhout Scholarship prize at the University of Bapetikosweti.

SOPHIE: Nee, madam, Modderdam Primary School.

EVITA: Same thing. We are having a wonderful time here in the middle of nowhere. At last the world has started to realize that the homelands have got nothing to do with South Africa and so all our dreams come true, bit by bit. One day, the whole of the Cape, Natal and the Transvaal will be black and independent with fruit machines in every White Rabbit restroom, while we Nats will be safely in the Free State pulling all the strings. O, dis konfidentieël! Chris Heunis slaat my dood met 'n koenynknaater!

Well, now that I have given you one of our Official Secrets, tell me truly, are you running away from Interpol? You don't have to be ashamed of anything in SA as long as your skin is nice and white. Toemaar, we have many people hiding here in South Africa from their governments.

Sophia? Wat is daardie vet Italiaanse miljoenêr se naam? And

we have Americans and Britishers and of course Rhodesians like a sandstorm. That British Lord everyone thinks is dead is living in Brakpan under a pseudoplume, and even Richard Nixon bought a house at Oubosstrand, to be near Oom John so they could compare what they looked like on the coins, ex-pres to ex-pres.

(Sophie gives her a look)

OK, now just fill in your ZA445 in triplicate. Leave me the blue copy which we will stamp for our embassy files, take the yellow copy to Pretoria which they will stamp for their files, leave them the white copy which they will send down to Cape Town in case the yellow copy gets lost in Pretoria. You keep the pink copy for your files . . . and ag what, throw the rest away. And in the meantime, I'll look at your Book of Life.

(She takes his confidential file, but he stops her)

Mmmm, toemaar, ons sal later daarna kyk . . .

(She looks around the room)

Maar waar is my nuwe décor? Allewêreld, Sophia, where are my beautiful antiekues? Sies, dié plek lyk soos 'n squatter camp after the bulldozers. Sophia, please see that all my Ethnic Art is properly covered and stored.

(De Kock indicates Uys's file. Tries to distract him so that Sophie can get to it)

By the way have you seen my beautiful work of art? This one .

. (Sophie has tried to take the file, but he stops her)

Toemaar, Sophia, ons probeer weer later. Look at this masterpiece by Vladidrek Kitchikoff, one of South Africa's foremost expletevist painters. I found this black and blue ousie on the left wing of the Apiesrivier destyds. Nowadays, of course, one is just swamped with all this modern kitch, all plastic and stimulated leather . . .

Oh, but I do chat on, hey. My uncle always used to say to me, my oom, oudregter Hangman Booysens, het altyd gesê: 'Ai Eva, jy kan die poot van 'n tafel afpraat!' So now every time I see a piece with three legs I think it's my fault!

UYS: I've got all my legs.

EVITA: Ja-nee

SOPHIE: Madam! Remember to get changed in time for the dinner with Madame Makoeloeli. Don't let this interview go on for too long. You know what these reporters are like.

EVITA: Reporter? But I thought you were a horrible little immigrant with your mouth watering for all the benefits of our apartheid. O, hulle laat my tog so gril, but
(She takes his file but he stops her)
 O, ekskuus You'll be amazed how many thousands of white people flock to SA for our cheap black labour and excellent television. A reporter?

SOPHIE: Ja, Madam.

EVITA: Is jy nou seker, Sophia? Ek is bly. OK, now what can I tell you about myself that you already haven't read in the *Lantern*. I met Die Dokter while he was still campaigning in Laagerfontein. Of course, those were the days when black was black and white was Baas. The days when the gardenboy was in the garden, the houseboy in the house and the *Playboy* under the bed. Of course, as chief librarian I wrote all his famous speeches: die Gevaar Toesprake – die swart gevaar, die rooi gevaar, die geel gevaar, die simietiese gevaar, die Roomse gevaar – O, gevare vir Afrika!

I designed his political posters: STEM NASIONAAL MET HASIE IN DIE SAAL! Ek het self al die koffie en koeksusters gemaak en bedien in al die kerksale waar hy gepraat het. I even corrected his English grammar when he was forced to use it. Of course, the language as we had to speak it then, those days of the Queen's English, thank God, is went.

Then Hasie became MP and we were married. Then one thing led to another and here I am today, a proud member of our own diplomatic corpse. And of course, as Ambassador the next logical step in my career would be head of the SABC! Oppas Riaan Eksteen, Evita Bezuidenhout is op pad! Hou jou kantoor skoon!

Maar Sophia, hoekom herhaal ek myself weereens. Ek het dan dit alles verlede week aan 'n kind van Perskor vertel.

UYS: Ek is nie van Perskor nie.

EVITA: Nee, maar wie is? You're not from one of those other papers, are you?

UYS: Other papers, Mrs Bezuidenhout?

EVITA: The English-language press who take what we say and embroider a border war. The liberal press?

SOPHIE: He's just a journalist, Madam.

EVITA: Ah, a defender of the freedom of the press?

UYS: If you like

EVITA: No, I don't like. We know the freedom of the press too often ends at your editor's desk.

(Sophie taps her on the shoulder)

Sophia? I don't mind talking to an opposition newspaper. After all, all good, strong, confident governments enjoy ignoring another opinion. As Owen Horwood said recently: 'The only people we oppose are those who oppose opposition,' and clearer than that you'll not get it from anyone else!

(Another tap)

Maar Sophia, ons het dan niks om weg te steek nie. Kyk net hoe goed gaan alles met ons, mmm? Is there anything we must protect from your all-seeing eyes? Life in South Africa is open, my boy, so open that on a clear day you can see the police everywhere? You press must realise P W Botha has made up his mind, don't confuse him with facts. But then you liberal newspapers love to make fun of the Government irrelevantly. Toemaar, we also read: 'If voting could change anything it would be illegal!' Baie snaaks. Koornhof says, 'Apartheid is just a pigment of the imagination.'

Look we used to depend on cliches, but now we avoid them like the plague. We are on the crest of the wave, ons is nou die cherrie bo op ons eie koek. That's why, when a young man like you from the other side of the political coin comes to me and takes an interest in the good work we do, I am so thankful. Of course, you realise that the National Party is the cream of our society.

SOPHIE: Ja-nee. Thick and rich and full of clots.

EVITA: Sophia, ek dink jy's nou amper witgesit. Het jy nie werk vir jou ledige swart pote nie?

SOPHIE: Ek dog Madam het my nodig?

EVITA: Jy dog verkeerd. Madam sal jou roep as Madam you nodig het. Gaan stof iets af in die foyer!

SOPHIE: Madam se diplomatieke paspoort?

EVITA: En Sophia, gee vir Ouma haar pan, net ingeval.
(*Indicates Uys*)

SOPHIE: Ja, Madam. Dankie, Madam.

(Starts exiting then turns)

Bitch!

(She exits)

EVITA: Ek is so bly ek verstaan nie Xhosa nie. Oh what would I do without her, though? Me, a mere defenceless woman? But now, be honest with me. What did you expect to see when you came to Blanche-Noir today? Some middle-aged dikbus tannie? Kameeldrolhaarkapsel? Wall-to-wall hips and wobbling ankles? Just because I'm a typical Afrikaans housewife and mother doesn't mean that I must look like one of your cartoon characters and sound like an airport flight announcer? The days of those old jokes are over, young man – the days that we knew we didn't dare put an idea into Van der Merwe's head because it would die of loneliness!

We are the New Afrikaners! We have swopped the ossewa for the Audi! We have replaced the kappie with courtour! We have lifted ourselves, and often our faces, out of the doldrums of Calvinist hypocrisy and splashed our streamlined facades with the primary colours of life! We can now laugh at ourselves because, for once, we are making the jokes. O, dis lekker om te lag, want Baas maak die grappe en Baas bly Baas!

Just a little speech I made last week at Wits University. Jy weet daardie kinders hou van 'n bietjie skiet, skop en snot. But maybe that's not what you want to put across in your article. Rather show me as a modern housewife and mother? Now what did I say to Donna Wurzel the other day when she came to interview me for her 'Open End' – I said 'Ag, Donnertjie, I believe in being a Modern Woman. I believe in bringing up my children as Modern Children . . .

(De Kock spies the file unguarded on the table and grabs it triumphantly, and sits on the table clutching it)

....and not as the little koeksuster I was brought up as –

allewêreld, ek het my tienderjare deurgebring met gekruisde bene. Seks en cinema was deel van die aaklige Satanssonde, vergeet van rook en drink en kaffirs en Jode en kaalswem . . . dit was alles taboe. All taboo when I was young. Of course, nowadays anything goes, nê, as long as you don't get caught. By the way, have you met my children?

UYS: Mrs Bezuidenhout

EVITA: En wat is die formaliteit? Ek is mos Tannie Evita . . .
(She lifts her hands to boff her hair. The moment he has been waiting for – he grabs back the file)

UYS: Tell me about your children, Tannie Evita.

EVITA: Evita se kleingoed . . . well, there's Billie-Jeanne, my little butterfly, my drop of mercury dancing on a rainbow. Then my firstborns, Izan and De Kock. Oh, Izan is like the wind and the rain, rugged and rare. Then there's De Kock – O, daar's nou 'n agtermekaar-kêrel. He'll be just like his mother. He loves music and art and ballet and wearing my clothes

UYS: Hey?

EVITA: Hey? Oh, I just said that to show what a modern mother I am.

UYS: Is that all? I mean, no other children?

EVITA: Daar's Helen Suzman die chiwawa en Buthelezi die kat!

UYS: No other children? According to unimpeccable evidence in my files

EVITA: Can I see all this unimpeccable evidence!

UYS: Official Secrets Act. Let's leave the children for a moment. The casino of Lunaville. The gambling, the nudity, the immorality

EVITA: All quite legal now! According to the Homelands Consolidation Act of 19

UYS: You have a deep personal interest in that establishment, Tannie Evita?

EVITA: Well, they did name their little honeymoon suite after me, and after all I am the only real ambassador here, bar Paraguay, Taiwan en daardie swart laslap-landjies. So I pop into the casino every now and then to show them a bit of true Boere Kultuur. But I don't play with those silly one-armed bandits. And blackjack sounds like a gardenboy. Well, I suppose the language of the gambler must remain English. After all, how does one translate 'crap table' into Afrikaans?

UYS: Of course, it takes only one fruit machine nearer to Pretoria and the casino of Lunaville is finished.

EVITA: Fruit machines are not allowed in South Africa. Jy weet mos!

UYS: And by keeping it that way you are being handsomely rewarded.

EVITA: Waarvan praat jy?

UYS: You have already received two and a half million dollars for your services.

EVITA: Services? Dollars? Allewêreld, jy laat my klink soos 'n foonsnol! Are you suggesting that a South African statesperson takes bribes from a black government? How decadent!

UYS: It is also a fact that thirty percent of the aid received here from the South African Government has been diverted into the Evita Bezuidenhout Foundation

EVITA: Wag 'n bietjie the Evita Bezuidenhout Foundation, as you know and as everyone knows, creates bursaries for the underprivileged of all races, all creeds, all cultures. It assists in education, it clothes and feeds the poor, it buys jacuzzies for the needy and skateboards for the crippled. It sends to every young man proudly fighting on our borders a signed and smiling photo of our Prime Minister, plus a cassette of all his speeches in both official languages. Now what more can one ask of a Christian organisation?

UYS: Selling locally-made arms to terrorist organisations to be used against our own!

DE KOCK: Oh my God.

(Oumas is heard off. Then in comes Sophie in her disguise.)

OUMA: Evita Evita

EVITA: Oumatjie! Weer net betyds . . . wat is dit, skat?
(Ouma is having a bad coughing fit)
O, sy's glad nie lekker nie . . . get her pills and water in the kitchen. Die Bob Martin tablette!
(Uys exits)

SOPHIE: The file! Get the file!
(De Kock jumps up to get it but Uys comes in and he has to hand the file over. Uys exits with it.)
Damn!

EVITA: Do you know what this little communist has just suggested? He says my Foundation buys and sells arms to terrorist organisations! What is the world coming to?

SOPHIE: There has been talk of it

EVITA: Communist propaganda. It's just part of the Total Onslaught.

SOPHIE: OK, you can stop being Evita Bezuidenhout now.

EVITA: This little traitor

SOPHIE: Stop it, De Kock!

(Pause. De Kock realizes that Evita has nearly taken him over. He is shaken by it)

De Kock! OK! Now, find out what he knows about your mother. Then we get that file and take it all from there, OK?

(He nods)

You're doing very well, De Kock. Get into something more glamorous, more stately. It will soften his approach. I'll stand by to help.

DE KOCK: How can you help. Put cyanide in his coffee?

SOPHIE: Don't worry, I have a plan. We must fight him, De Kock, not play with him.

DE KOCK: How? I'm not strong.

SOPHIE: Then fight dirty! What do you usually do when your back's up against the wall?

DE KOCK: Turn round.

(She hits at him in frustration. He laughs.)

SOPHIE: Stupid boy. You've never been in jail, hey? You think it's all a big grap, nê? You think you can just stand up in court and say: 'I'm sorry, Oom PW'? Well, I'm scared, man. I want to live in public, not in exile. I want to be happy here, not hunted! I want to keep my job. I like it here!

DE KOCK: OK, OK.

SOPHIE: No more games, De Kock, or I'll give you away. Remember, on this side of the table, I'm safe. I'm black. You are the terrorist here!

EVITA: Ouma, sit op jou gat!
(Uys enters with tray and glass plus pills. Goes to Ouma)
Wait, don't go too close to her, you never know what she's got.
(Takes the tray)
Oumatjie, die oulike jong man het vir Ouma die Bob Martin tablette gebring. Hier. Sluk. Dit sal Ouma se stert gou laat waai. Shame. Poor Ouma Ossewania de Kock. Many people think she's dead but that's not quite true. Of course, nowadays she's living in the Gerrit Viljoen Residensie vir Moeders van Broeders in Windhoek, but she won't go back. She says she's scared of SWAPO, but personally Hasie and me thinks she's hooked on the casino's soft porn and fruit machines. Last year we took her there to celebrate her birthday, and as we wheeled her into the glittering foyer she saw a sign which said WET FLOOR and she did.

UYS: But what's wrong with her?

EVITA: It's difficult to say. Chris Barnard popped in the other day and rejected all her organs offhand.
(Ouma gives a raspy cough)
Whooping cough.

UYS: Whooping cough?

EVITA: Halitosis. Herpes. Anything is possible in a homeland like that. Mumps!

UYS: Mumps? Oh, hell man please, not mumps – an old lady like that?

EVITA: It's in the Windhoek water. Nou goed, let me just go and get into something less comfortable.

UYS: Maybe you shouldn't leave me

EVITA: You are taking up a lot of my valuable time. Ek is 'n belangrike staatsvrou in diens van Land, Volk en Pangaman. Why don't you leave me your questions
(She pulls at the files; he resists)
 Nou goed dan, in daardie geval gesels met Ouma.

UYS: Gesels met Ouma????

EVITA: Ja wat. Tell her something nice about her life. Toe, you seem to know everything about everyone.
(She gets him to sit)
 Ouma skat, hierdie fraai jong man gaan vir Ouma 'n paar lekker stories lees uit die *Playboy* – Ouma? Die Speels-seun.
(Throws the Playboy in front of him)
 Oh, and promise me one thing.

UYS: Yes?

EVITA: Don't let her get near you. It would be terrible if you caught mumps at your age. Mumps laat jou hier so opswel
(she indicates the throat)

. . . .en jou gedoentes!!

(As she exits brilliantly.)

You know, nê? Mumps makes you very well hung!

(Uys opens the Playboy and starts to read)

UYS: 'Her big tits . . . '

(Embarrassed, he turns a page)

Ag nee sies . . . ah, here's a nice story . . . 'The room was dark. It was murky and hot. As the cowboy entered . . . ' Cowboy story, Ouma, ' . . .as the cowboy entered, tired and angry, a wild flash of lightning filled the room with illumination and then he saw her lying on the floor. Her voluptuous pink buttocks and big tits . . . ' Ag nee man . . .

(Turns a page. The centre spread. His eyes widen.)

Jisis . . . sis!

(Turns a page)

Hey? 'The erection took six weeks'??? 'Once they had completed the ornate log cabin, the Professor brought Diana for a weekend. Her large tits . . . ' Ag nee hell!

(De Kock as Ouma giggles lustily)

Ouma Ossewania? Surely you remember me? Ouma? Ek weet dit was lank terug, maar ek onthou nog die heerlike koekies wat Ouma gemaak het.

(We see Sophie listening in her Ouma disguise)

Dis lank gelede, ek weet . . . Ouma? I still have a picture of me in a little Elvis Presley suit and you with a big umbrella and Ma . . . Ma looked already like a film star. That was just after she made 'Meisie van my Drome'. She was so beautiful . . . I've waited for this for a long time, Ouma. Many years of hard work and dreams. But this time it's going to be OK. I tell you now, this fancy Mrs Evita Bezuidenhout is in for a hell of a surprise after what she did to us . . . Ouma?

(But Sophie rushes out of the room after Evita. But Uys has seen her face – it's black???)

OUMA: Evita! Evita?

(Exits)

UYS: Her colour's definitely not good. Must be the Bob Martins.
(De Kock as Evita enters in full ambassadorial drag and a coronet. Poses.)
Mrs Bezuidenhout, you look like a queen.
(De Kock reacts accordingly)

EVITA: And you stand here exposed. It just took me one telex to an old colleague like General van den Berg to find out anything about you. You have dug up vicious rumours and lies and gossips about us and I know why you are here. Spare me your intrigue, boy. Evita Bezuidenhout van nie kak van kabouters nie. You can't blackmail me! Better than you have tried and failed, so unless you want my autograph, this interrogation is over. Give me that file!

UYS: Evangelie Poggenpoel!

EVITA: Gee vir my die lêer en verlaat my huis!

UYS: Evangelie Poggenpoel? Is die naam bekend?

EVITA: Wie?

UYS: Evangelie Poggenpoel! Born near Bethlehem in the Vrystaat. Evangelie Poggenpoel never finished school. No money. She fell pregnant and was forced to find work. We don't know what happened to her till three years later when she and her mother and the baby turned up in Johannesburg. You remember the boarding house, Tannie Evita?

EVITA: Hoe moet ek weet?

UYS: Evangelie Poggenpoel found a job as a waitress. In spite of her quaint Afrikaans ways, she was attractive. She met some nice men who helped her along with money and food – clothes for the little baby – a little boy. And as time went by, Ambassador, she earned her fancy clothes and numerous invitations to the right parties. These men set her up in a flat in Hillbrow. Her mother left her job in the OK Bazaars and babysat, while Evangelie Poggenpoel danced till dawn.

EVITA: Ja, I've seen this film.

UYS: But do you remember some of the other drive-in Afrikaans movies of the '50s? 'Boggel en die Akkedis?' 'Duiwelsvallei', 'Meisie van my Drome'?

EVITA: Rubbish.

UYS: Evangelie Poggenpoel starred in those films. Of course she had changed her name by then. Poggenpoel didn't have the class.

EVITA: Ja-nee. 'Boggel en die Sprinkaan' starring Evangelie Poggenpoel!

UYS: So she became Eva de Kock!

EVITA: (*Reacts*) Eva de Kock!

UYS: It was then that she was up for a small part in Jamie Uys's 'Die Professor en die Prikkelpop'. She thought her little son would be bad for her image. She gave him away and never saw him again.

EVITA: What is your first name?

UYS: Jamie.

EVITA: Jamie Uys???

UYS: O nee, my pa was onbekend. Ma so much wanted a big part in the film that she had me renamed after the director. Before that my name was Elvis Poggenpoel.

EVITA: I don't know what this nonsense has to do with me!

UYS: I was six when she left Joburg. They say she became a librarian somewhere up north. Then secretary of the local National Party.

EVITA: Laagerfontein!

UYS: So you do remember! It was there that you discovered a better cause.

EVITA: God.

UYS: No. Politics.

EVITA: I will not listen to this slander!

UYS: I have the facts here. I can destroy you.

EVITA: (*An aria*) Ag toe nou, jong man. Na alles wat Evita Bezuidenhout deurgemaak het met skandaal en bedrog in die naam van Land, Volk en Taal, sal dit meer as you B-fliekflerrie vat om haar op haar knieë te dwing! Hoe durf jy hier kom, in die skadu van ons Vlag, en 'n staatsvrou afpers? 'Evangelië Poggenpoel'!?

Kyk mense weet wie ek is, want ek weet wie ek is! And besides all that, I don't believe you – you're a liar! I am not your lost mother and I can swear that on the FAK.

UYS: Then I have no alternative but to make this public!

EVITA: Which I will deny, which I will have declared *sub judice* and have you placed under a long banning restriction. You and your little story will just cease to exist. So, Evita Bezuidenhout has a secret s-o-n in the SAP – Sersant Jamie Uys Elvis Poggenpoel! I don't know if I should laugh or cry.

UYS: That's what you used to say about his films.

EVITA: Ja-nee, the gods must definitely be crazy. Nou goed, Jamie, why don't you put your cards on the diplomatic table? Where did you find all that communist-inspired garbage about us?

UYS: It took years, Mama . . .
(*She groans*)
I grew up with Tannie . . .

EVITA: Come to the point.

UYS: To get facts and figures out of the confidential files in Pretoria takes more than just a pretty face and a handful of ten rand notes.

EVITA: Tell that to the Rhodies

UYS: I had to bribe, lie, plan – I had to hope that one day I'd say to you: it's all here, Ma.
(*He holds out the file to her*)

EVITA: *(Pleased)* Not bad for family. Dankie, skat.

(She goes for the file, but he gets up and walks away and she collides with the table)

UYS: I remember being driven to Grobblershoop in that old green Opel with my little suitcase and my teddy bear with one eye. I remember seeing pictures of you in the *Landstem* and the old *Dagbreek* – posing with Miemsie Retief and Madeleine Usher and June Neethling. I cut them out and kept them . . . here look.
(Shows her his file)

Tannie Fiela told me when I was nine – ‘she is your ma,’ she said. I wrote you letters. I got no reply, so I started finding things out about you. I never knew there would be so much.

EVITA: Nor did I

UYS: There was only one way I could do it.

EVITA: Ja, you joined the Police Force!

UYS: No, I joined the Post Office. Every time you moved, from Laagerfontein to Waterkloof, from Brintirion to Akasiapark, from Linden to Bapetikosweti, there I was to put a bug in your phone. I read all your letters, I recorded all your calls. It took time, money

EVITA: So you want money

UYS: Nee . . .
(He takes off his false moustache)
Ma!

EVITA: Wat is verkeerd met jou?
(Screams. Then De Kock starts taking over)
Hoekom val jou gesig so uitmekaar uit?

(Uys comes towards her and she runs away)

Don't come near me . . .

(Calls)

Sophie! Listen, OK, if you want money for all that information, I'm sure Ma's accountant can arrange it in dollars. She can get you an Irish passport . . . you can have my picture of Liza Minnelli we'll get Oom Gary to give you free golf lessons . . . wat wil jy hê?

UYS: Ma!

(The phone starts ringing)

EVITA: *(In order to get untrapped)* Nou goed, doen wat Mama sê: antwoord daardie donderse foon!

(He does. De Kock goes from door to door trying to find Sophie.)

UYS: Hallo? Yes this is the embassy. Interior decorator? Who do you want to speak to? De Kock?

DE KOCK: Ja?

UYS: Hey?

EVITA: Hey?

UYS: It's for your son. Who's speaking? It's from Jan Smuts Airport. It's important.

EVITA: Who is it?

UYS: She won't say. She just said Evita Bezuidenhout.

(De Kock takes the phone.)

DE KOCK: Hallo? Ma? Ma! Ma...Marjorie!
(Covers the phone and says as Evita)
Dis konfidentieël. Druk jou fingers in jou ore en dink aan seks.
(Uys does)
Hallo, Mama, ek kan nie nou praat nie . . . ja, een van die interior decorators. Ma, wat soek julle nog op Jan Smuts? Het die polisie? . . . nee, Ma, ek speel net. Hoe gaan dit met Ma se skoene? . . . nee ek speel net. Ma, hoe laat vertrek die plane? Ek bedoel die vliegtuig. In tien minute? Nee, alles hier gaan fine . . . fyn. Ja, Ma, Natuurlik gaan ek terug na die kweekskool. Ek staan dan hier in my kerkklere. Ma, wie is Evangelie Poggenpoel? Hallo? . . .
(Puts down the phone)
OK, you can come out now. Hey!

(Sophie enters grandly as Marjorie Makoeloeli.)

UYS: Now who is Marjorie?

SOPHIE: Evita darling, bonjour cherie. I came as soon as I could. Now don't worry about anything. I'm here. How can you forget your best plural pal, Marjorie. . . .

EVITA: Marjorie Makoeloeli! Ma se ou meid.

SOPHIE: Careful, careful. The Embassy is surrounded by soldiers of the Bapetikosweti Defence Unit.

UYS: Soldiers?

SOPHIE: Why, there is this terrorist masquerading as a man of the law and blackmailing you . . .

UYS: Terrorist?

SOPHIE: Pompies gave orders to shoot this terrorist on sight!

UYS: Shoot!

(Evita gives a performance of dramatic intensity.)

EVITA: That won't be necessary. This boy has been a tower of strength.
Hy sou mos nooit toelaat dat 'n nare terroris sy ou moedertjie
vasvat nie, nê my kind?

UYS: Nee, Ma.

EVITA: Gee my die goed!
(He doesn't and she turns to Sophie for more)
Vat hom, Fluffie!

SOPHIE: I nearly forgot. Pompies wanted you to allow his troops
permission to search the house.

EVITA: Swart soldate in 'n wit vrou se slaapkamer, O, die skande! Jy
sal dit mos nooit aan jou ma doen nie, nê my kind?

UYS: Nee, Ma.

EVITA: Gee my die goed.
(He doesn't. She turns to Sophie for more)

SOPHIE: He's actually toying with the idea of proclaiming martial law
and locking up everyone who is white!

UYS: *(Panics)* No, but this was just to prove to you that I am one of
the family. That I care about you. Al is ek 'n Poggenpoel, voel
ek soos 'n Bezuidenhout!

EVITA: Baie dankie, hoor. Nou gee die goed. Mama raak moerig.

(He hands over the file. Evita hands it triumphantly to Sophie)

UYS: And now what?

EVITA: So Jamie . . . Elvis . . . skattie, move into the embassy with your Ma, or why don't you go back to Pretoria to help LAPA Munnik run his Post Office on R20 a month.

SOPHIE: Ja, why doesn't he go and live with your other son, De Kock? They can share a flat!

UYS: Nee, asseblief . . .

DE KOCK: Don't push it, skattie . . .
(Turns to Uys with a smile)
Kom nader aan Mama.
(He does)
Gaan haal jou motor en bring dit na die voordeur.

UYS: My motor?

EVITA: Ja, jou Cortina. Just take the orange off the aerial! Mama kom saam met you na Pretoria. Ons kan mekaar daar onder the jakaranda bome vind. Gou nou.
(He kisses her on the forehead and exits)
Mmmmmcheeky!
(De Kock and Sophie jump up and page through the file)
Sophie, look at this! It's dynamite! It's worse than the TV 'Police File'.
(He starts taking off Evita – jewellery, wig, dress, shoes. He is wearing jogging shorts and his t-shirt underneath)

I don't know what to believe. My brother beats up blacks, my father is a bitterbroeder and a crook, my sister has a coloured baby and my mother turns out to be a real politician and Evangelie Poggenpoel? I was always told Ma came from a vooraanstaande Bolandse wyn-familie from the right side of the Breërvier. And yet look what it says about me: 'De Kock Bezuidenhout. IDB.' Well, I'm going to lock all this up in a safe place before it falls into the wrong hands.

(He hands his Evita clothes to Sophie to hide)

SOPHIE: And what about Rosemary's baby?

(De Kock takes his rugby socks out of his bra and puts them on his feet.)

DE KOCK: Can you imagine when Ma gets back from the Seychelles and this stranger says, Hallo, Moeder!

SOPHIE: And imagine his face when he sees her face and it's not quite your face.

(Sophie manages to swop all the files in the folder for the Playboy and keeps the files hidden under her scarf.)

DE KOCK: The most important thing is not to miss my audition tomorrow morning.

SOPHIE: And what if the ballet people don't take you?

DE KOCK: I've got the file now.
(He goes to the folder)

Maybe it's time De Kock Bezuidenhout started pulling more strings and less wires!

SOPHIE: Remember, anything is possible now.

DE KOCK: Sophie Bezuidenhout, you're a real pal.

SOPHIE: De Kock, don't let appearances fool you.

(Uys enters enthusiastically. He has changed into a safari suit.)

UYS: OK, Ma, I've got the car . . . where's your mother?

DE KOCK: Hallo . . . she had to see to an urgent matter of state. She sends her love. She told me about you. Small world. Anyway she said you wouldn't mind giving me a lift to Pretoria. You see I have an audition tomorrow for the ballet company. OK bye, Tannie Marjorie.

(Starts to exit. Stops next to Uys)

Kom Ouboet! If you don't see me in Swan Lake within six months I'll eat my tutu and I don't mean the Bishop either.

(Exits)

UYS: OK, bye . . . Madame . . . ag, Tannie Marjorie. Tell Mrs Bezuidenhout I'll be back tomorrow with a surprise for her.

SOPHIE: Now what?

UYS: Mimi, my twin sister.

(He exits)

SOPHIE: Tyhini Thixo wamazulu buqalile ke u thuvi bamagxagxa. Bayawafuna siqikaqikeke ethuvini into engapheliyo wowu - and it never stops!

(The phone rings. She answers it.)

Hallo, South African Embassy to the Independent Homeland of Bapetikosweti, Suid-Afrikaanse Ambassade, this is the maid speaking, die plurette wat praat . . . no, the madam's not here, hold on please.

(She puts the phone down and with the files visibly clutched in hand, crosses the table to the other side. Sits and answers the phone with a flourish)

Hallo, this is The Madam speaking . . .

BLACKOUT

THE END

© PIETER-DIRK UYS 1983