

SCORCHED EARTH

**A PLAY
BY
PIETER-DIRK UYS**

The action of **SCORCHED EARTH** takes place on the patio outside the house in the hills of KwaZulu – Natal.

The time is 1985.

It is another warm perfect day.

CHARACTERS

LADY DEBORAH CARTWRIGHT – widow of Sir Jonathan Cartwright

HELEN BRUWER – her eldest daughter, married to:

DR PAUL BRUWER - politician

CATHERINE CUMBERLAND – her other daughter

CHRISTOPHER CARTWRIGHT – her youngest child

JOANNA GRAY - a television interviewer

DONNIE – the television cameraman

There are two acts.

First performed at the Market Theatre, Johannesburg in 1989 directed by PIETER-DIRK UYS, designed by SARAH ROBERTS.

Deborah	-	MARGARET INGLIS
Helen	-	VAL DONALD BELL
Paul	-	PIERRE KNOESSEN
Catherine	-	FIONA RAMSAY
Christopher	-	DAVID BUTLER
Joanna	-	GAYNOR YOUNG
Donnie	-	ARTHUR MOLEPO

ACT ONE

It is a late morning on a perfect sunny day.

The patio is deserted.

JOANNA GRAY enters from the pathway that leads from the house to the garden.

She sees the view. Comes onto the patio and looks out at the scenery.

From the house we hear HELEN:

HELEN (*off*) Please be careful not to damage anything. Do those lights get very hot? It's all wood in here, you know, very old and dry. And the floor . . . be careful of the carpets.

SHE ENTERS

If you people must smoke out here, please use an ashtray.

JOANNA Yes, don't worry.

SHE USES A PLATE ON A SMALL TABLE

HELEN No, for God's sake, not one of these – this is a plate from the old Dutch East India company. Oh, I know my mother tends to forget the value of things and then they inevitably end up as ashtrays. I even had to rescue one from the kitchen; she was feeding her cats off a sixteenth century antique.

DONNIE HAS ENTERED

DONNIE Seventeenth century, if it's supposed to be the Dutch East India Company. My daughter used to get me to help with her homework.

HELEN And just let me know when you people are ready and I'll bring Mother down. This will be broadcast within the next few days, I hope?

DONNIE I'm just the cameraman, I don't know.

PAUSE. DONNIE LOOKS AT THE VIEW

DONNIE Could you really live here?

JOANNA Of course. Couldn't you.

DONNIE It's all too much: too much colour, too much space . . .

PAUSE

. . . too much silence.

JOANNA Ja, it's called South Africa

HELEN ENTERS WITH A LIST

HELEN Miss Gray, I've compiled a list of some of the paintings you could film – you know, some of our paintings . . . we also have a Dutch Bible worth a fortune somewhere. Oh yes, you'll see here . . . these teaspoons were collected by my great-Grandmother who was a little girl when they arrived here in 1820. From Britain.

DONNIE Ah, the Settlers?

JOANNA So, your family has roots that go back to those days?

HELEN Well, my father's family included a famous British Commando during the War.

DONNIE The Great War?

HELEN The Boer War!

JOANNA Donnie, get on with it . . .

HELEN It's all in the synopsis I had prepared by my husband's secretary on the Family History, the background to the Estate. Now, this house . . .

JOANNA Actually, I really don't know how much we can cover in the interview. The time I've been given is very short. You see, it's a woman's magazine programme. The in-depth news items are usually snatched up by the News Department.

HELEN Well, I don't watch television, so I wouldn't know.

HER BABY IS HEARD CRYING INSIDE

Oh, he's awake again . . . excuse me . . .

SHE EXITS

DONNIE

That's why she didn't recognise you! She doesn't watch the Box! And here we were, all waiting for you to be asked to make a speech at the local supermarket? Shame . . .

HE LAUGHS

JOANNA

Go and play with your zoom lens, Donnie!

SHE READS FROM HER FILE

"According to the Borders of Particular States Extension Amendment Bill, the land north of the Umfu . . . Umfa . . . the Um-something River up to the Border is to be transferred to the control of the office of the Chief Minister . . ." Oh God, what can I get out of this crap?

DONNIE

I just hope this works for you, or else you'll be back on "Aunty Joey's Little People Playtime"!

JOANNA

What the hell do you mean?

DONNIE

Calm down, Joanna. Look, they asked me to come on this shoot with you, thinking I'd refuse: last week I shot the President, next week I'm doing the Awards. Right now I might be missing a juicy terrorist attack in Springs or a colourful suicide in Hillbrow! But I didn't say no, because I think you need a chance to prove yourself. Listen, I know this is your first real job, since that live transmission we did from Durban . . .

HE LAUGHS

What a mess . . .

JOANNA

But, you're always making fun of me . . .

DONNIE

Does making fun hurt that much? Come on, what's your best side?

JOANNA

I don't know, they've never used a profile before.

DONNIE I'd say your left.

JOANNA You would?

DONNIE Oh yes.

JOANNA OK . . .

HE IS PLAYFUL WITH HER AS HELEN ENTERS AND WATCHES COLDLY

HELEN Can we please start?

JOANNA Donnie, can't we start the interview out here?

DONNIE I'm set up inside, Joanna . . .

HELEN No, that's an excellent idea. Let's put a chair against the edge. I think it will help if the public actually saw the beautiful view while she spoke.

DONNIE Difficult lighting-wise.

HELEN Then change the lighting.

DONNIE Would if I could, but the sun's not an easy one to move at will!

JOANNA OK, OK, we'll do separate shots of the view.

HELEN There's not that much time!

SHE EXITS

JOANNA I'm suddenly quite nervous.

DONNIE They're usually more nervous than you. Relax, we're the S.A.B.C.!

JOANNA Don't tell a soul, you know how suspicious people get.

THEY LAUGH

Do you think she'll need make-up?

DONNIE I'll tell you if her face shines. Just powder her down. Nothing fancy.

HE STARTS OFF TO GET HIS EQUIPMENT

How old is she?

JOANNA It doesn't say . . .

MRS CARTWRIGHT ENTERS WITH HELEN

SHE SPEAKS WITH A GENTLE SCOTS ACCENT

MRS CARTWRIGHT It most certainly does not say. That's one little secret I intend to carry with me for a few more centuries. Hello, I'm Deborah Cartwright. You're Joanna Gray – I know you from the TV.

JOANNA Oh. Thank you.

MRS CARTWRIGHT I realise how busy you people are. I'm really very grateful you could come.

DONNIE HAS ENTERED WITH TRIPOD AND REFLECTOR

And who is this?

DONNIE Donnie. I'm the cameraman.

THEY SHAKE HANDS

MRS CARTWRIGHT Of course, the real power behind the picture, as it were. I must say, I don't have a clue how it all works. I once read an article in that magazine your people gave out, but could never make sense of all the technicalities of television.

HELEN Should we start, Mother?

MRS CARTWRIGHT Yes, of course. This is my daughter, Helen Bruwer. She's married to Paul Bruwer.

JOANNA The politician?

HELEN The Deputy Minister.

JOANNA I didn't know . . . it's not in the blurb . . .

HELEN No, Miss Gray, because you're here to interview my mother, not me. Sit down here, please, Mother?

DONNIE No, I'd rather you sat here . . .

HE SETS A CHAIR FOR HER

SHE SITS

HE SETS THE REFLECTOR

MRS CARTWRIGHT Goodness me, reminds me of the dentist.

HELEN I'd like to sit in on this, if you don't mind.

JOANNA No. Lady Deborah, I'm going to sit just here, next to the camera and ask you questions. You answer me as if we two were alone – don't worry about him and his silly lens. Just pretend they don't exist. It's really not difficult.

MRS CARTWRIGHT I wouldn't dream of it. Such a charming young man, and so important too!

DONNIE I love you Ma'am!

HELEN Mother, please allow Miss Gray to finish!

MRS CARTWRIGHT Of course.

JOANNA No, that's it. I'll ask the question, then you answer.

MRS CARTWRIGHT Is that all?

JOANNA Yes.

MRS CARTWRIGHT So like real life? What a disappointment. I always imagined television to be so clever. Oh well, it won't be difficult being ordinary.

PAUSE

Eh . . . do I need any make-up?

JOANNA Donnie?

DONNIE You look fine. Just carry on as if nothing is happening.

MRS CARTWRIGHT As if nothing is happening? If that were so you wouldn't be here. You see, unfortunately something has happened. The house has been part of our family life for . . .

JOANNA Not yet, Lady Deborah, I'll tell you when.

MRS CARTWRIGHT Oh.

PAUSE

HELEN GOES TO HER AND FUSSES OVER HER HAIR

I'm suddenly quite frightened . . .

HELEN It'll be alright. This is important. People must be told.

MRS CARTWRIGHT Must they? Is it necessary to drag this mess into public? Into everyone's home? I don't want their pity, Helen.

HELEN Mother, we've discussed this a hundred times. This is not the place to do it again. Now please start, Miss Gray. We're expecting the rest of the family shortly.

JOANNA Are you alright, Lady Deborah?

MRS CARTWRIGHT No, but I'll be careful enough to hide that, my dear. They say the camera does not lie. I'll prove them wrong.

DONNIE HAS HIS CAMERA READY. ADJUSTS JOANNA'S MIKE-CABLE ETC.

JOANNA I heard a baby cry just now.

MRS CARTWRIGHT Little Jonathan, my only grandchild. Helen's little boy.

JOANNA Oh, do you . . .

HELEN No, my first.

JOANNA I mean, have you . . .

HELEN Yes, I had him quite late.

JOANNA That's not what I meant . . .

PAUSE

DONNIE OK, Joanna, standing by. Running . . .

JOANNA Sound.

DONNIE Mark it.

JOANNA Cartwright by Gray Slate 1 Take 1.

CLAPS THE BOARD IN FRONT OF MRS CARTWRIGHT.

SITS WITH THE MIKE

Lady Deborah Cartwright, you are the owner of "World's End", this beautiful, this famous Estate. Could you tell us more about it?

MRS CARTWRIGHT Eh . . . do I talk now? Yes, I've lived here most of my married life, in fact, after our wedding, my husband Jonathan Cartwright and I settled down on the Estate,

and when his father died, my husband took over the running of the business. Since his death of course, the Estate has been administered by the Trust, set up during his lifetime and presently headed by my son-in-law Dr Paul Bruwer. Is that what you wanted to know?

JOANNA

Yes.

MRS CARTWRIGHT

The ground was given to the Cartwright Family . . . or rather, to the first Jonathan Cartwright, who came out here before the other British Settlers. He spent some time down at the coast, but soon moved up north and made a home here on the river. Then, of course, you'll remember there were the many wars with the Kaffir Tribes . . . oh, I don't suppose you can say that anymore . . . the Native Tribes . . . anyway, after all the wars had been won and Peace somehow happened, Queen Victoria personally awarded him this land as a reward for his services to the Crown against the Kaffirs.

JOANNA

The Zulus.

MRS CARTWRIGHT

I don't know exactly who they were.

JOANNA

So, since then, the Cartwrights have lived and prospered on this land.

MRS CARTWRIGHT

My husband was born here. My daughter Helen was born here, my daughter Katie, my son Christopher. My husband is buried out there . . . you might take a picture of the graveyard; it's very pretty and peaceful. Yes, well I suppose we are here – like the trees and rocks and wind.

JOANNA

And what has happened to change that?

PAUSE

Lady Deborah?

MRS CARTWRIGHT	Could we stop for a moment?
DONNIE	Cut!
HELEN	Mother, we must finish!
MRS CARTWRIGHT	I'd like a glass of water, please. My mouth feels very dry. I don't think it sounds convincing to say things with a dry mouth, Miss Gray.
JOANNA	Shame, this is obviously very inconvenient, Lady Deborah.
MRS CARTWRIGHT	My poor Helen is very nervy. Her baby won't let her sleep. The novelty of motherhood doesn't seem to last long in middle-age. I loved it of course, but then that was another era when time was an ally. Don't feel you have to rush. We all want the best results.
<i>PAUSE</i>	
JOANNA	What a breathtaking view.
MRS CARTWRIGHT	Yes. It's so part of my life I thank God for it every day. Makes one quite dizzy to look down. My husband always said this was the true Olympus and we the only real Gods. He was quite sentimental sometimes.
JOANNA	It's like nobody else existed.
MRS CARTWRIGHT	They do, alas. Their camouflage is so good, you don't see them till they're on you with their teeth embedded in your veins, sucking your blood and then complaining about the taste.
<i>SHE LAUGHS</i>	
	Goodness me, I've been watching too many soap operas on your TV. Actually you're much prettier in real life. Are you married?
JOANNA	Heavens no, I don't have the time.
MRS CARTWRIGHT	No time for love? You might as well be dead. And you, Mr Cameraman?

DONNIE Divorced some years back. My work became a beautiful rival and won.

MRS CARTWRIGHT Children?

DONNIE A daughter, growing up somewhere else.

MRS CARTWRIGHT Oh, I'm sorry. I'm happy for Helen and Paul. They've talked about it for so long. Just in time too. She'll be 43 next year . . . oh, I've gone and given you a clue! Now I can't pretend I'm fifty, can I!

HELEN ENTERS WITH A GLASS OF WATER

Thank you, dear.

SHE DRINKS

And don't worry about using the Lady Deborah bit. Just plain old Mrs Cartwright will do. I only pull rank with relish when they persist in calling me 'Tannie Debbie'!

DONNIE Standing by. Running.

JOANNA Sound.

DONNIE Mark it.

JOANNA Cartwright by Gray slate 2 Take ! Mrs Cartwright, what has happened to change your life?

MRS CARTWRIGHT Well, as I said, my husband's family has lived here for some generations, through all the wars, then the fifties, the sixties, the seventies. We were of course aware of the political implications of the policies of our Government – separate development as it was planned in the fifties and made a reality in the later years . . . you know, all those little pieces of homeland: Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and so on . . . and now . . . I find myself . . .

SHE SWEEPS HER ARM ACROSS THE VIEW

DONNIE CHANGES ANGLE

Well, it's not what we were promised for our support. I mean, all the pledges of security and independence as far as we're concerned just haven't made any sense. The natives want more and more and now because of change and fear and . . . oh I don't know what to say . . . Mother . . .

HELEN

DONNIE

JOANNA

Ask her what is to happen to her!

What is going to happen to your home, Mrs Cartwright?

MRS CARTWRIGHT

It's being given away.

JOANNA

Sold?

MRS CARTWRIGHT

It's being taken from us by the people we helped put into power. It's to be hastily given to the servants and garage attendants to appease their angry demands. My home stands in the way of the homeland shepherd and his flock, so I must move, patriotically contributing my existence, my achievements, my memories to bolster the tatty remains of dead men's dreams.

HELEN

Mother, really I think . . .

DONNIE

Go on . . .

JOANNA

Are you in fact saying that you, a supporter of the party in power, have now fallen victim to your own system?

MRS CARTWRIGHT

We used to give them parties here once, when it was necessary to publicise the fact that they needed English-speaking supporters; maybe to prove to all that they didn't carry a contagious plague; that these boer Guerillas knew what knife and fork to use in cultured combat. Remember Helen? We entertained them, helped them, we supported them, you married one of them – and this is the thanks we get.

JOANNA	Are there any other whites in this area who have also been displaced because of government policy?
MRS CARTWRIGHT	They say I can go into a nice little place in Town, that I'll be able to travel all over the world with the money they'll give me for the privilege of allowing them to tear down the foundations of our lives. They want to give me money for my love. They want to make a . . . a whore of me!
HELEN	That's enough!
JOANNA	Shh! Please! Mrs Cartwright, what do you intend to do about your rights?
MRS CARTWRIGHT	What rights do I have? I'm an old woman in a young man's world. It's really not important what I intend to do about my rights. But I know what I'll do about my rights. But I know what I'll do about their wrongs!
HELEN	Oh Mother, this is so terribly serious.
JOANNA	Yes, go on?
MRS CARTWRIGHT	Now I'll have to enjoy my garden from snapshots, because they'll have destroyed it while hastily posing for press pictures, black arm around white waist, trampling on my daffodils and hollyhox and daisies, dirtying the petals with their jackboots, crushing the violets with broken promises!
HELEN	I think we should stop!
JOANNA	No, I have more questions. Mrs Cartwright, who were the politicians who helped you in the past?
HELEN	You'll never be able to use this material!
DONNIE	BBC wouldn't mind.
HELEN	BBC? Mother, stop!
JOANNA	Mrs Cartwright, what is your attitude to blacks?
PAUL (<i>Off</i>)	Can someone come and help me with the cases? Yes?
DONNIE	Cut.

JOANNA Look, do you mind . . .

PAUL BRUWER ENTERS

HELEN Paul, these TV people have agreed to . . .

PAUL Yes, come and give me a hand please . . .

JOANNA I really object . . .

DONNIE And what can I do for you, Dr Bruwer?

JOANNA Oh . . .

HELEN He's my husband.

JOANNA Oh!

PAUL What on earth is going on here? Are we supposed to pose for the family album or something? Hello Deborah.

MRS CARTWRIGHT Hello Paul.

PAUL Don't I know you from somewhere?

HE REFERS TO DONNIE

JOANNA Yes, I'm occasionally on TV.

PAUL Never watch it.

HELEN Paul these people have agreed to . . .

PAUL Katie is here.

MRS CARTWRIGHT Are you finished with me?

HELEN Katie's here?

MRS CARTWRIGHT Are we finished already?

DONNIE We'll pick it up later, Mrs Cartwright.

HELEN Katie's come?

PAUL What is going on here?

JOANNA I'm Joanna Gray and this is Donnie, and we're from the SABC to interview your mother-in-law, Dr Bruwer.

PAUL Interview Deborah? Why?

MRS CARTWRIGHT Don't look so worried, Paul. We're not giving away any of your secrets.

CATHERINE ENTERS

CATHERINE Hello . . .

PAUL 'Pussy Putenda'? I wouldn't know, it was dubbed into Afrikaans.

JOANNA Yes, the series was renamed 'Afdeling Vyf' and your character 'Bokkie Willemse' was very popular!

CATHERINE 'Bokkie Willemse'? Thank God, now they won't stone me at the N G Kerk Bazaar! I hope there's one about somewhere. I can't wait to sink my teeth into a koeksister or a piece of melkert . . .

PAUL I suppose you'd want to rest.

CATHERINE Paul, you're so predictable. No, I don't want to rest, but yes, do take my suitcases to my room. No, I don't want food, but yes, I'd love a drink. Yes, I still smoke. No, I'm not married again. Yes, I'm happy to be home, and no, I don't want anyone to know.

JOANNA You don't want anyone to know?

CATHERINE This is a very private visit. Mother, you look so beautiful.

MRS CARTWRIGHT I'm quite giddy. You look like one of your pictures come to life. I can't believe you're home.

CATHERINE And you look . . . lovely!

MRS CARTWRIGHT Yes, I heard you the first time, Katie. I'm not deaf, you know. These sweet people have been talking to me about our home. I had my hair done, a new frock. You're thin.

CATHERINE I'm too busy to be careless now, Mother. Must stay within the disciplines of the film camera. You know you pick up ten pounds on screen . . .

MRS CARTWRIGHT You looked healthier on television, although I didn't like the Afrikaans voice they gave you. It made you sound so . . . real, I mean, so . . . Oh Katie, I can't bear to hear that language anymore. After what they've done to me.

PAUL Ag nee kom nou Deborah!

MRS CARTWRIGHT After what they've done to me!

SHE CONFRONTS HIM. CATHERINE GENTLY TAKES HER ASIDE

CATHERINE We'll all stand together and give them hell, darling.
I'll march on Parliament in my 'Pussy Putenda' leather
knickers and frighten them into submission – not
impossible I'm sure . . . My god, look at that view....

PAUSE

HELEN Little Jonathan said a real word this morning.

PAUL Deborah, excuse me, I'm expecting an important call
from my Department.
TO HELEN
I wished your mother would keep her opinions for the
family alone. Who are these people?

HELEN I'll explain . . .
WITH FORCED ENTHUSIASM
He said 'Papa' . . .

PAUL I have to return to Pretoria tomorrow. Cancel the
dinner with the Urghuarts.

HELEN But it's been specially given for us . . . Paul . . .

PAUL EXITS

MRS CARTWRIGHT I thought you'd become too important to even
remember me.

CATHERINE I now even look like you when you were my age.

MRS CARTWRIGHT More make-up.

CATHERINE Och, you don't miss a thing . . .
IN COD-SCOTS ACCENT

HELEN I'll have to put you in Jonathan's room, Katie. The
baby's in yours. That means Christopher will have to
sleep in one of the sparerooms . . . oh I don't know
what to do anymore . . .

CATHERINE I thought Christopher was in the Army.

MRS CARTWRIGHT Endless camps, in and out.

CATHERINE Sounds like jail. Don't fuss, Hellie, Chris and I can share a room, we've done it before. When's he coming?

HELEN You take his room. Johnnie?

DONNIE Donnie

HELEN INDICATES AND HE FOLLOWS HER

THEY BOTH EXIT TO THE HOUSE

CATHERINE Hellie's gone old.

MRS CARTWRIGHT And you're so beautiful and everyone knows about you and talks about you and asks me about you. All the ladies at the bowling club tell me what the newspapers write about you, even before I get to cut them out.

CATHERINE Don't believe a word you read, I'm at war with the media.

MRS CARTWRIGHT At war with yourself, Katie? There's even a café in town called Catherine's Café.

CATHERINE Katie's Keffie? Do you think they meant me?

MRS CARTWRIGHT Of course, you're so famous.

PAUSE

What am I to do, Katie? They're going to take our home away from us.

CATHERINE Over our dead bodies!

MRS CARTWRIGHT That's what worries me more than anything else. The rules have changed since they all came and had tea here to listen to you play the piano – remember the Sarabande?

CATHERINE And all the hideous variations.

MRS CARTWRIGHT They say one is spied on nowadays. They listen on the phone – I've heard them breathe at the other end. They look at my mail. They watch me through cameras like that.

CATHERINE REGISTERS THE VIDEO EQUIPMENT FOR THE FIRST TIME

CATHERINE What the hell's that doing here?

JOANNA It's me – I'm from the SABC.

CATHERINE Oh Jesus Christ, can't you leave a person alone? Well, sorry, I'm not available for interviews.

MRS CARTWRIGHT They came to see me.

CATHERINE I've had one marriage mangled by that constant phallic symbol. I'm not prepared to have my life chewed up by it again!

MRS CARTWRIGHT Katie, it's my publicity stunt!

CATHERINE I thought at least here I'd have some peace and quiet. Well, too bad, toughies ou toet, I'm not being the gracious award-winning actress today. I'm home. I want to take off my mascara, get into my jeans, walk in Mother's garden and explore our little treehouse, so just . . . buzz off!

JOANNA Miss Cumberland, we're not interested in you.

CATHERINE Hey?

MRS CARTWRIGHT They came to see me; talk to me!

CATHERINE Oh yes, I should've known. Trap an old woman into making some pathetic statements about her life, some wonderful tear-jerking crap for your TV fodder . . .

MRS CARTWRIGHT I'm not an old woman!

CATHERINE . . . I thought you lot were government controlled, if so, my dear, someone has made one hell of a boo-boo, because what mother has to say is not A-1 propaganda!

MRS CARTWRIGHT Katie, you've got it all wrong!

CATHERINE You've got five minutes to vacate this house or else I'll call the police!

MRS CARTWRIGHT You see, she doesn't listen . . .

CATHERINE Five minutes! Don't loiter, don't thief, don't answer, don't think! Out! I mean, dear God Mother, I thought at least here at the edge of the world I'd be safe from the eternal eye peering into my life!

MRS CARTWRIGHT My life!

CATHERINE Every smile I give a man it's an affair; every look I give a woman it's a scandal; every boy in jeans delivering milk to my door is my gigolo lover; every director my Svengali, every leading pouffe my rapist, every . . .

MRS CARTWRIGHT Katie, shut up! I'm very happy to see you, darling but really, you've got this all wrong. Joanna Gray is my friend. I asked her here to speak about my life, not yours. In fact, I didn't even expect you home. You hadn't bothered to come for so long, how was I to know this would be the exception? But now that you're here, welcome darling, but stay out of my arrangements. I want the camera here, because I have many things to say to it. Joanna my dear, I'm still in charge here, no matter what the children say, so you make yourself comfortable. I'll arrange lunch for you and Johnnie . . .

JOANNA Donnie.

MRS CARTWRIGHT . . . Donnie, and then once all this excitement is over we can finish our little chat.

JOANNA Thank you, that will be wonderful.

CATHERINE You – just stay out of my way. I'm not here.

JOANNA You don't have to convince me, Miss Cumberland.

CATHERINE EXITS INTO THE HOUSE

MRS CARTWRIGHT I somehow preferred her in Afdeling Vyf.

JOANNA None of us knew she was your daughter! That she's a South African?

MRS CARTWRIGHT

She's neither; she's Catherine Cumberland. She has her own stamps and coins and flags and anthem – and army and navy and air force, but it's still nice to know she occasionally remembers her old mother. I spend so much time worrying about them and keeping their roots healthy, but when they all arrive and give me so much misery, I wonder if it was worth having them in the first place. But that's just a momentary weakness, because they are my babies and they do so remind me of my husband, which is comforting because I still miss him so . . .

PAUSE

People spread stories about him now that he's not here to defend himself and make fools of them. Some make money writing about his life and I don't stop them, because no money can really wipe out his integrity, his humour, his reality. Some people still call him turncoat, traitor, but he saw truth way back, when they didn't even allow the people to speak their Afrikaans on the trams or in the shops. "Don't write them off, Debbie", he'd say, "when you trap a hungry animal in a corner, he can only come back towards you ready to kill, and when he does, I want to be waiting there as a friend."

I was there with him when the animal turned. We poured money into the coffers of the party that won the 1948 Election and stayed there to this day – my society background and the Cartwright 'Rooinek' money.

Oh, we laughed at them a bit in the beginning because they were too good to be true: funny page fashion, no finesse, no glamour, no pretence - That was the one thing we envied them for: their nearly naïve honesty –

honest in their gaucheness, their needs, their ambitions, their prejudices, their hates. And so we gave them the benefit of the doubt and a blank cheque, and within a decade of power, my husband was in Parliament and even at one stage considered for the post of State President, although we all knew he was still too English to be that so soon. And when he died, they all came and wept with me and prayed and some brought poems they had written and other baskets of food – for to eat with friends is to forget your sorrow. And I loved them, even though I'd drifted away from their culture and language, because they loved my family and gave us benefit of their doubts . . .

PAUSE

I'm an old fighter, Joanna. I'm also tired and deserve my bit of rest. But by God and all who deem themselves greater than man, I will not rest until I am satisfied that we have been revenged. What is today?

JOANNA

Saturday.

MRS CARTWRIGHT

In two days I'm expected in Town to take tea with the Deputy Minister, my son-in-law and hand over the keys to my life for the world to see. And smile. And vanish.

JOANNA

Will you?

MRS CARTWRIGHT

To smile is no extra burden. Have you taken any snaps of my garden?

JOANNA

We hope to, when Donnie gets back . . .

MRS CARTWRIGHT

Then let me show you my garden. It's been my best friend for many years . . . many years . . .

THEY EXIT TO THE GARDEN

*PAUL BRUWER APPEARS FROM THE HOUSE. HE HAS BEEN LISTENING
HE IS WAITING FOR A PHONE CALL. LOOKS AT HIS WATCH*

THE BABY CRIES INSIDE THE HOUSE

THE PHONE RINGS

HE EXITS TO THE HOUSE

PICKS UP THE PHONE

PAUL (*Off*)

Hallo? Yes, Paul Bruwer speaking . . . Are you out of your mind?

HE APPEARS QUICKLY

Are you out of your mind? The place is crawling with newsmen . . . well, you've just got to keep my name out of it. Listen, to phone me here in the first place was damn stupid. There's no reason for me to get involved . . . I'm just small fry. Really, once the Minister is implicated as he should be, they won't look in my direction. Just sift the information and withhold my name . . . What do you mean, it's a Parliamentary Commission of Enquiry? Did anything stop David from picking up a stone and downing the Giant? And what do you mean, God was on his side! Idiot! Don't call me here again!

(AFRIKAANS TRANSLATION OF THE ABOVE SPEECH)

Hallo? Ja, Paul Bruwer wat praat . . . is jy heeltemaal gek?

HE APPEARS QUICKLY

Is jy heeltemaal van jou verstand af? Die plek krioel van nuusmanne. Wel, julle hou net my naam daaruit. Luister man, om vir my hier in die eerste plek te bel was onnosel . . . Daar's geen rede dat ek betrokke raak nie. Ek is net 'n Adjunk . . . as die Minister aangekla word – en hy sit daaragter, hoor – dan sal niemand in my rigting kyk nie. Wat bedoel jy: dis 'n Parlementêre Kommissie van Ondersoek? Het David geskroom om Goliath met 'n klippie neer te vel? En wat

bedoel jy: God was aan sy kant? Bledde fool, jy bel my nie weer hier nie . . .

HE PUTS DOWN THE PHONE

Bloody fool!

TAKES OUT HIS NOTEBOOK TO CHECK A NUMBER

DONNIE ENTERS FROM THE HOUSE

Ah, my sister-in-law will be down in a moment, then you can interview her and go.

DONNIE

Your sister-in-law?

PAUL

Catherine Cumberland. Surely you lot won't pass up the chance to get an exposé on one of our more famous exiles?

DONNIE

Maybe we can talk to you too.

PAUL

I'm not as pretty as Catherine.

DONNIE

We're interested in your involvement with the Grenville-Du Toit Contract.

PAUSE

PAUL

What are you insinuating?

DONNIE

There have been rumours.

PAUL

I've always said there should be more laws against rumours.

DONNIE

And laws against corruption.

PAUL

Take my advice: stick to the like of Catherine Cumberland, it's safer.

HELEN ENTERS

HELEN

Why wasn't I told that Catherine had been sent for?

SHE SEES DONNIE AND COMPOSES HERSELF

Paul, I'd like to talk to you in private please.

PAUL

Later. What did you come here to talk to Lady Deborah about?

HELEN I can explain. Johnny . . .

DONNIE Donnie.

HELEN . . . Donnie, just please find some nice things to film elsewhere. The gardens maybe?

PAUL I think you'll find your pretty little friend went in that direction.

DONNIE TAKES HIS CAMERA AND EXITS

This is the last thing I need! A hungry news team right under my nose at a time like this.

HELEN They were supposed to leave before you came back, Paul.

PAUL They're here to snoop around.

HELEN No, just to speak to Mother.

PAUL And what is Mother going to say to them? "My leaders are taking away my land and giving it back to the slaves." That might no doubt read well in the history books, but certainly not in our press or on the voter's returns! All these things should happen through my office! Who's idea was this?

HELEN Mother phoned them. She thought it would help her case.

PAUL Case? For God's sake, there is no case!

HELEN Actually I phoned your brother at the SABC and managed to get them to send a team from a womens magazine programme . . .

PAUL They're a news team. I recognise the cameraman.

HELEN No, Paul - recipes, yuppies, film stars. I managed to do that for you. Your business is of no interest to them: believe me, Paul, they're here to film Mother.

PAUL Not if they have something better to focus on.

HELEN I don't know if I want pictures of our little Jonathan on TV.

PAUL For heaven's sake, Helen, stop being the 'constant mother'. I meant Catherine Cumberland.

HELEN Why always her!

PAUL We'll give the media an interview with the Film Star, warts and all . . .

HELEN Always Catherine . . .

PAUL Then no one will have the time to waste over an old woman giving her home to the garden boy and his brood.

HELEN Little Jonathan . . .

PAUL The less I hear about little Jonathan the better . . .

HELEN Don't start again Paul . . .

PAUL Let me remind you, my dear wife, that little Jonathan . . .

HELEN . . . I refuse to hear any more!

PAUL Your 'laatlammetjie' was more of a surprise than . . . than a snap election, and as disastrous!

HELEN And more important than all your politics!

PAUL At this stage of my life, the last thing I need is a little son!

HELEN He's our future . . .

PAUL Too many of my colleagues have small sons to dangle on the knee for the grieving parents and widows of dead soldiers to see. Not me: our 'future' stays a secret.

HELEN Then why did we have him?

PAUL Who'll ever know. One hopes you had a good reason.

PAUSE. HE KISSES HER ON THE CHEEK

PAUL We'll engineer a nice juicy interview with the Great Catherine.

HELEN But why always her?

PAUL No one knows she's from good old conservative South African stock. Imagine what a dose of the truth will do to her standing with the anti-apartheid movement, not to mention that United Nations Azania Association of which she's an honorary member.

HELEN How do you know these things?

PAUL It's my job. Let's do things my way, Helen. You don't want your son to grow up with his father in prison, do you?

HELEN You said we could get out in time.

PAUL Yes, then there were still two of us. I intended to travel light, if the need ever arose. Help me.

HELEN Me? How?

PAUL My plans do not involve a child.

HELEN What plans? You got where you are through me and the family and our money. You've always been the little balloon, but we hold the strings.

PAUL And when this balloon bursts, you'll all go with me!

HELEN But what if someone tells the TV people about your involvement with the Grenville-Du Toit Contract?

PAUL Open your mouth and little Jonathan will be looking for a new father.

HELEN You wouldn't dare.

PAUL Try me, Helen, try me.

CHRISTOPHER HAS APPEARED AND HAS HEARD. HE IS IN ARMY UNIFORM

CHRIS Nice. There's nothing like a warm little intimate family gathering to make me run screaming into the arms of my shrink. You both sound deliriously happy.

PAUL I waited for you at the station for an hour.

CHRIS Because I chose to miss my train. One of the few choices still left to me. Hello, I'm late.

HELEN We were talking about . . .

CHRIS Yes, I also saw it on TV last night. Brutal. Vicious. She opened her mouth and he stuffed cottonwool down the throat of his paralysed daughter. I believe they're letting us see as much violence as we can, so that we're used to it when it stops just being a movie.

LOOKS OVER THE VIEW

Hell, it's lekker to be home. One forgets what it feels like to belong. What are those new houses down there?

HELEN Mother built them for the servants.

CHRIS Mm, still giving them cake. You look prosperous, Paul. I read a lot about you: your Government Press love you to death: the anti-Government Press think you're a fool and laugh themselves to death – dead bodies all round. Congratulations, we should clone you off and send you to our enemies for Xmas. Helen? Don't I even get a kiss?

HELEN KISSES HIM STIFFLY

Nice change to feel the touch of a woman's moustache against my cheek. OK, I'm home, where's the corpse?

PAUL You certainly haven't changed.

CHRIS Nor have you, in spite of your bluster and promises.

PAUL Catherine's here.

HELEN You could've dressed properly, Christopher.

CHRIS I've come straight from work keeping you safe. I'm home. Remember I was also born here. I do what I like here. I'm the baby, the son, the heir, the soldier. If you hit me, I'll tell my Daddy. Where's Katie?

PAUL Lurking in the wings.

HELEN 'Tell Daddy'? Daddy's dead!

your pal, don't lie and say you're on diet when you get caught with your fingers in the cookie jar, ou broeder .

..

PAUL Don't talk such rubbish.

CHRIS . . . and that's only the beginning . . .

HELEN I'm not going to stay here and listen to this. Now, if you two want to fight again, go and do it in front of the photographers; beat each other even more senseless, but not in this house. I still have my rights here. I won't have violence in this house!

CHRIS My darling, violence got its name in this house!

HELEN I must feed my baby. Mother's in the garden. And put on something decent. The TV people are here.

CHRIS Well now, if I put on my jogging shorts, they'll be stuck for a usable angle.

HELEN Grow up Christopher, for God's sake. Trying to look like a seventeen year old surfer, while your hair is falling out and your appearance defies description. You're pathetic!

HELEN EXITS TO THE HOUSE

CHRIS At least I'm still alive!

PAUL So are zombies!

HE EXITS AFTER HELEN

I have important things to do.

CHRIS Arsehole!

BY NOW HE HAS CHANGED FROM HIS UNIFORM INTO JOGGING SHORTS, T-SHIRT, BAREFEET.

CATHERINE HAS ENTERED, ALSO IN JEANS AND BAREFEET

Camera! Action!

HE MAKES FANFARE SOUNDS AND PULLS HER INTO MOVIESTAR EMBRACE

Cut!

THEY KISS HAPPILY

CATHERINE You dizzy bugger! I haven't heard from you since you asked me to send you that filthy magazine.

CHRIS Never mind.

CATHERINE I don't think it was called that.

CHRIS It wasn't. I never got it.

CATHERINE Probably ended up in some file somewhere, well-thumbed.

CHRIS Fat file

CATHERINE Among other files our files read thin. Do you still write subversive things for their file, darling?

CHRIS Writing is my living.

CATHERINE But not your life

CHRIS You mean, my money or my life? No, it's my money.

CATHERINE What's your life?

CHRIS Spending my money.

CATHERINE On what?

CHRIS Do I ask about your sex-life?

CATHERINE O, darling you deserve better.

CHRIS No one deserves better, Katie. You might pay for better, but you always deserve what you get.

CATHERINE What do you write? Do you expose them?

CHRIS Who?

CATHERINE This government, clot? Why haven't I read anything overseas?

CHRIS What have you read?

CATHERINE Ma sent me your article on some has been actress who came out here to open a casino.

CHRIS Ah yes, well . . . they don't allow my other stuff to be used.

CATHERINE Political stuff?

CHRIS They ban my work.

CATHERINE	So you must be telling the truth.
CHRIS	I try.
CATHERINE	Will you show me some of your things?
CHRIS	How was your last movie?
<i>PAUSE</i>	
CATHERINE	Exhausting. I did get that funny little book you sent me for Xmas.
CHRIS	And you hated it.
CATHERINE	No, it was amusing.
CHRIS	It did very well here.
CATHERINE	No doubt it did. What else have you done?
CHRIS	I was arrested in a public toilet.
CATHERINE	Don't rub my nose in it, Chris. I really don't care if you have a swastika tattooed on your twat. I really don't care!
CHRIS	I don't have a twat!
CATHERINE	No? God, I can't bear it! I remember your anger, your tears of frustration. What happened to the pain and the caring? You can see what's happening here! Write about it!
CHRIS	Truth doesn't pay well.
CATHERINE	Balls!
CHRIS	That too.
CATHERINE	You write campy jokes under other people's cartoons and call it a comment on your society?
CHRIS	There was a time for pissing on the flag. I did it. Boring. What else is new?
CATHERINE	Come now. Your undergraduate growls were like potty training, darling brother. I don't count squeals from the po as the cry for freedom!
CHRIS	You talk like an English actress.

CATHERINE I am an English actress. Believe me, there were many times I stomped the streets with my card carrying colleagues, holding up the banners and screaming ‘down with the Boers’ and meaning it in close-up for the Channel 4 News. But somehow I knew I could at least depend on you to do something that mattered. I really depended on you.

CHRIS For me to die to save you from your sins?

CATHERINE For you to save your skins – you and Mother and Hellie and this bit of madness on the edge of hell that we call home . . .

CHRIS Now you sound just like one of your pulpy characters.

CATHERINE The pulpies I play don’t smile fondly when they recite obituaries.

PAUSE

Are you happy?

CHRIS No, are you?

CATHERINE I have quite a successful career.

CHRIS An award nomination isn’t bad for a start.

CATHERINE A win would’ve been a progression.

CHRIS Next time.

CATHERINE Write something important, Chris. If you ignore this reality and cover it with tinsel and shit, you’ll never forgive yourself.

CHRIS Have you forgiven yourself? After your ambitions towards the ‘purity of a Sybil Thorndike’; isn’t that what you said? ‘The honesty of an Edith Evans’? What happened between that and ‘Pussy Putenda’, miss Catherine Cumberland?

CATHERINE I have to eat.

CHRIS Tinsel and shit?

CATHERINE OK, so we’re both clever flops.

CHRIS At least I'm a prettier flop than you.

CATHERINE With your make-up on, maybe.

PAUSE

I can't bear standing on the edge of the cliff and looking into the blackness where they're waiting to drag me down. Jesus, if I don't believe mine's a life to remember, who else need care . . . don't push me off the cliff, darling.

PAUSE. THEY KISS

CHRIS Let's drink ourselves young and pretty again.

CATHERINE Shall we like quietly in a gin and tonic?

SHE GOES INTO THE HOUSE

CHRIS STANDS ON THE EDGE OF THE PATIO

CHRIS (*Mutters*) I'm the king of the castle

I'm the dirty rascal . . .

CATHERINE COMES OUT WITH THE DRINKS

CATHERINE There's a little shop in Shepherd's Market that smells like that drawing room. I always buy needles there just for the smell.

CHRIS Are you sorry it's all going?

CATHERINE It has always been the most beautiful place I remembered in my dreams. The white walls always glowed in the eternal sun, the bees on the flowers . . . the joss-stick smell of honeysuckle and roses. When I'd pass little postage-stamp gardens in Clapham and Putney with their little green fingers bravely open to the dirty sky and smell the weak honeysuckle and roses, I'd cry and ask God for three wishes: I want to go home, I want to go home, I want to go home . . .

CHRIS You got your wishes.

CATHERINE Yes, I'm sorry it's going.

CHRIS I'm pleased. I hate this place. It's like an umbilical cord round my windpipe getting tighter as I grow taller. I have to come back everytime and be twelve again to breathe. Nothing changes. I resent that. I want people to ask me about my scars. I want to tell them what I've rehearsed to perfection for thirty-odd years. The pat on the head used to be reserved for the kids of the gardenboys and housemaids, but now I still guiltily wipe my knees in case they're black from the earth outside.

CATHERINE Remember your little Dinky cars? You never let me play.

CHRIS You never played, you destroyed. You'd grab hold of an Army truck, open your mouth and let roar with a terrible sound, that only a nine-year old busso-profundo could make before its lunch. Then you'd hoot, screech on your brakes, shoot off your guns, boom explosives, wail tyres on tar, tinkle splintered glass and when it was all over twenty seconds later ..

CATHERINE *(IN A CHILD'S VOICE)* You going to cry, hey? I'll tell everyone you're a sissy!

CHRIS You remember?

CATHERINE I was right.

PAUSE, SHE TAKES HIS HAND

CATHERINE I'm scared that when we cut ourselves adrift of this old hulk, we'll never get together again.

CHRIS Maybe it's better that way. We just remind each other of forgotten dreams. It's too sore being together.

PAUSE, THEY BREAK AWAY

CATHERINE Is this land take-over purely political or is there another swindle?

CHRIS	High tide . . . what does Ma always say: that old king who tried to stop the tide by shouting at it?
CATHERINE	King Canute.
CHRIS	He also failed. Shame.
<i>HELEN ENTERS</i>	
HELEN	Lunch should be ready soon.
CATHERINE	I'm not hungry.
HELEN	Oh God, I'm tired.
CATHERINE	Want a drink?
HELEN	I don't usually, but please – lots of Coke.
CATHERINE	You'll kill it.
HELEN	Disguise it.
CHRIS	Scared the TV people will see the Adjunk-Minister se vrou dead-drunk in the pansypatch?
<i>PAUSE. DRINKS</i>	
HELEN	Cheers family. Nice to have you back, Katie.
CATHERINE	A long time.
CHRIS	Ditto.
HELEN	A lot of water under the bridge and all that.
CATHERINE	So it seems.
CHRIS	How's your little boy, Helen? Or won't I be allowed near him till he's fat and forty and fermenting?
HELEN	He's still very small. Well, he doesn't do much. Says nothing really. Wees a lot. Burps. Kicks his feet. Eats. Looks at things for ages with a worried expression on his face. I think he'll be a politician, like his father.
CATHERINE	Already he eats and burps and wees!
<i>THEY ALL LAUGH</i>	
CHRIS	Do you know when last we were all together like this?
CATHERINE	Oh, come on darling, don't dig up all the old pets.
HELEN	Daddy's funeral.

CHRIS No, just after that.

CATHERINE Wait a moment, I never made the funeral.

CHRIS No, you had a film in Greece.

CATHERINE Among other things.

CHRIS No, it was that Christmas. Mother was still so ill after the funeral and chaos, we didn't think she'd make the New Year.

CATHERINE God yes, and we had the Christmas Tree, like in the old days, there at the edge against the stars . . .

HELEN And Paul dressed up as Father Christmas and mother sat in a wheelchair while we sang all the old songs and pretended nothing was wrong – Daddy was just out for a moment delivering whisky to the staff and would come back and smell of that pipe tobacco and we'd wait inside until they'd set all the presents and lit the candles. And then the doors would open and we'd come out – I'd lead being the oldest with the bell . . . remember the bell? . . . then Katie and then Chris and then the black kids with the sweet parcels they got in the kitchen. And we'd all sit around the tree as calm as if it happened every night, but dying with impatience inside, knowing that every second had to stretch as long as possible so that happiness would last forever.

(PAUSE. THEY ARE ALL REMEMBERING)

But the good moments always ended too quickly. You all laughed at me for collecting the wrappings and ribbons when it was all over. I'd try and guess what each paper had hidden and somehow it was a second chance to enjoy it all . . . a second chance . . . that's what we've got to pretend now. That nothing's really happened to spoil anything. It must be like Christmas

– for Mother, for me. Please, no fighting, no nasty jokes, no disappointments and no politics. Please lets pretend . . .

CATHERINE I do that for a living, Hellie. I get paid to pretend.

HELEN If we all pretend that it's quite ordinary – I mean people leave their homes all the time and move to other places. If we try to act normally, it could all be over without more sadness and publicity and life can go on. It's just one of those things, I suppose, moving on.

CATHERINE I don't think there's anything ordinary about this, Helen.

CHRIS Sorry to correct you sister, but it happens all the time. In this case, unfortunately, Baas has become Klaas.

HELEN No politics, Chris please!

CATHERINE What's going to happen to Mother?

HELEN We found her a nice flat.

CATHERINE Oh my God.

HELEN Everyone lives in flats.

CHRIS Who decided about the flat?

HELEN Paul has shares in a very nice place in the City.

CHRIS So, he decided!

HELEN Just trying to help. You're never around to do your bit!

CHRIS If you bothered to let me know . . .

HELEN You don't even answer my calls!

CHRIS I have my life to lead, you know.

CATHERINE And what does Mother have to say about this flat?

HELEN She doesn't want to be a burden.

CHRIS Don't make out again as if I don't care.

HELEN But you don't care, you never have.

CATHERINE "Doesn't want to be a burden . . ."

HELEN There he is now . . . Paul?

SHE WAVES AT PAUL INSIDE. HE ENTERS.

HELEN Tell them about Mummie's flat.

PAUL It's a very nice flat.

CATHERINE A very nice flat? How nice?

CHRIS And what happens to this monument, once she's been shelved in her nice flat, I ask myself. I can't imagine your bosses sending in the bulldozers while the Thomas Baines are still hanging on the walls.

PAUL The estate reverts back to its original owners, that's all.

CATHERINE Who are these gods?

PAUL The ethnic gods.

CHRIS And the house?

PAUL Well, we don't want to overdo it, do we? The house will be safely demolished before the land becomes part of the ancient tribal homeland. It is our policy to give, not to sacrifice.

CHRIS A wasteland.

PAUL If forced into a corner, yes, possibly.

CATHERINE A hint of compassion's and honesty. Oh, I am stunned, Paul. We have such a bitterly black picture of this country overseas. Tell me more.

HELEN Don't Katie . . .

SHE GOES TO REFILL HER DRINK

CHRIS I'd like to know more. After all, my roots are here too. Where's Ma?

HELEN In the garden, with the TV people.

PAUL Which reminds me Helen . . .

CATHERINE No, don't divert. Tell me about the sharing of my heritage, I'm interested.

PAUL A rather sudden interest? Anyway, it's never been a secret that there were certain sections of the country that were put aside to house the original ethnic tribes as

independent nations, not in any way dependant on us,
but proud and . . .

CATHERINE . . . independent.

CHRIS Oh! Independent!

HELEN Katie!

PAUL And because of our understanding of change and the
need to compromise . . .

CHRIS Oh hello, there's a new word.

CATHERINE "Compromise"? The dead ones won't like that!

PAUL . . . certain adjustments must be made to the existing
structure of the various homelands. Am I going too
fast for you?

CHRIS If I was an ultra-conservative, I'd say yes, you filthy
communist, yes! But otherwise, no dear, I get the gist.

CATHERINE Me too – just.

PAUL This estate borders on three sides with the homeland
and in exchange for various assurances, but more than
that, in an attempt to prove to the world . . .

CATHERINE I knew that was coming – "the world . . ."

PAUL . . . the world that we are not inflexible, certain
sacrifices have to be demanded from our own people in
the consolidation of the various sections of land that
make up the intrinsic whole.

PAUSE

CATHERINE Of what?

PAUL What?

CATHERINE Make up the intrinsic whole . . . of what?

PAUL Of the homeland. Didn't I say that?

CATHERINE No. Did you hear "homeland" Chris?

CHRIS I didn't hear that word, Katie. Maybe when he used
the word "bribery" he meant homeland, or did I just
hear "death" when he said sacrifices?

HELEN Lunch should be ready . . .

CATHERINE Are you also involved with all this bribery and corruption in high places, Paul? The Observer ran a juicy piece.

CHRIS Banned here.

CATHERINE Fancy that.

PAUL When you stand in the sun, you usually get a tan.

CATHERINE Meaning?

CHRIS Yes, he's a crook.

PAUL Meaning, that if you stand proud in the glare of publicity, any stray dirt unfortunately sticks to your clothes.

CATHERINE Meaning what!

CHRIS Yes, he's a crook!

HELEN Meaning he's playing games with both of you. Now can we . . .

SHE SEES MRS CARTWRIGHT APPROACH

HELEN Here comes Mother . . . change the subject Paul . . .
 everyone pretend!

MRS CARTWRIGHT ENTERS WITH JOANNA AND DONNIE CHATTING

MRS CARTWRIGHT Of course, a television film about the family and this house would be a wonderful idea. Did you see the Great Gatsby? I mean, wouldn't it be wonderful to see us in that period, Helen?

HELEN Yes, wonderful.

CHRIS Hello, Ma!

MRS CARTWRIGHT Chris! Why didn't you come and say hello.

CHRIS I'm only on a weekend pass . . .

THEY KISS, JOANNA HOLDS SOME DAFFODILS

HELEN Those are my mother's favourite flowers . . .

JOANNA Mrs Cartwright said I could pick some.

DONNIE Give it to her . . .

JOANNA	Catherine, for you.
CATHERINE	Daffodils make me think of funerals.
CHRIS	Pretend they don't . . .
MRS CARTWRIGHT	We've had a wonderful idea, can I tell them Donnie?
DONNIE	If you like, Mrs Cartwright.
MRS CARTWRIGHT	We're going to make a film about the house, about everything. We're going to talk, not just me. It will go out as a full programme, not just a little insert on the women's programme, squashed in between sex and violence.
JOANNA	(<i>CORRECTS HER</i>) Yuppies and fashion . . .
CATHERINE	Same thing . . .
MRS CARTWRIGHT	Just a little joke, Katie . . .
PAUL	A full programme?
DONNIE	Yes, we'd appreciate your comments too, Dr Bruwer.
PAUL	I have nothing to add.
MRS CARTWRIGHT	Nonsense Paul. You're our trump card. Your presence will give it all substance.
CHRIS	Think, you could wear a fresh carnation.
PAUL	I will not be involved in a TV publicity stunt.
CATHERINE	You'd rather appear on the news.
PAUL	If necessary.
CHRIS	Same thing, my dear.
HELEN	I thought this was all going to be so simple: just a little chat to Mother, nothing more. (<i>JOKES</i>) We don't want commemorative stamps, you know.
JOANNA	Mrs Cartwright suggested it.
HELEN (<i>HISSES</i>)	She doesn't count anymore.
<i>PAUSE. EVERYONE HEARD</i>	
MRS CARTWRIGHT	Why wasn't I supposed to hear that?
HELEN	(<i>FLUSTERED</i>) It's time to eat . . .

MRS CARTWRIGHT	This is my house, Helen, my view, my flowers, my life – my husband in our grave, waiting for me. Once I’m in the earth at his side, you can count me out and do what you like.
CATHERINE	With knobs on.
MRS CARTWRIGHT	With knobs on! Katie, you’ll be the star of the film. Have you brought your make-up?
CATHERINE	I beg your pardon, Mother?
CHRIS	She wants you to look like an actress, not a nuclear scientist.
MRS CARTWRIGHT	Chris, you can write the script if you promise not to use swearwords. Donnie will run the camera, Joanna will ask pertinent questions and narrate. We’ll keep politics out of it; I’ll find the old snapshots – the ones with all the old friends now in high places drinking tea on our lawns. Paul, you can pose next to your new Mercedes, Helen you with the New Generation screaming in your arms. It can’t fail.
PAUL	Fail to do what, Deborah?
MRS CARTWRIGHT	Fail to drive the point home to where it will stick, Paul.
PAUL	The point being?
MRS CARTWRIGHT	That Deborah Cartwright has no intention whatsoever, not now or even in the most distant future, of leaving her house for the sake of either politics, money or – God forbid for the time being – death. Let the Homeland consolidate elsewhere. My land is not up for grabs!
CATHERINE	(APPLAUDS) Well said Portia.
DONNIE	Shall we sit down and start planning?
JOANNA	I’ll get my file . . .
CATHERINE	I’ll get my eyelashes . . .
CHRIS	What’s the deadline?

JOANNA	An hour ago.
CHRIS	Hey, psst, maybe we'll get our Oscars yet.
CATHERINE	Mine for female lead.
CHRIS	Bitch . . . Well, Paul, go and dust of your tuxedo and hat and that little medal they gave you for judging Cat of the Year in Volksrust.
PAUL	Thank you Christopher, but unfortunately I don't have time to play games. Helen, I'm going back to the hotel. I'm expecting various phone calls.
CHRIS	Won't take calls here.
CATHERINE	Knows the phone is tapped . . .
MRS CARTWRIGHT	But this isn't a game, Paul. This is war. Granted it's probably a little more civilised.
CATHERINE	One's British passport comes out in strange ways . . .
MRS CARTWRIGHT	. . . but it's as real as anything our history has ever seen. This land was awarded to us in blood, I intend to retain with guts!
CATHERINE	Did you two give Mother a little puff of something in the garden?
PAUL	Will everyone just calm down? Please, I think I should explain a small point.
HELEN	Paul, please not now!
PAUL	And you can switch off that microphone, young lady, I'm not such a fool.
DONNIE	We're well aware of that, Dr Bruwer. Switch off Joanna . . .
JOANNA	But . . .
DONNIE	Off Joanna!
HELEN	Paul, for God's sake . . . please . . .
PAUL	Sit down Helen. Now, I don't want to spoil your fun. If you want to make a little film about yourselves, I

	think it would make a lovely momento to keep. Helen and I love watching the films we have of our life together.
CHRIS	Yawn.
CATHERINE	Ditto
PAUL	Deborah, I still don't think you understand. It has been decided by the government that this part of land is to be ceded by the Trust to the black homeland . . .
MRS CARTWRIGHT	I'm not interested.
PAUL	Please don't interrupt! Allow me the floor!
CATHERINE	Excuse me for breathing.
CHRIS	Ditto
PAUL	<i>(EXPLODES)</i> This is no laughing matter, you . . . you filth!
CHRIS	Now now, don't get over poetic, ou broeder.
PAUL	It's thanks to vermin like you that we're in the mess we're in!
MRS CARTWRIGHT	Finish with the floor, Paul.
HELEN	Please Paul, let's go . . .
PAUL	I will not be made a mockery by this . . . this . . .
CHRIS	Free spirit?
PAUL	Your sarcasm might sound clever at some of your parties, my friend, but what has your negative attitude ever done to improve your ambitions or standard of life? You're a tramp, intellectual flotsam, liberal jetsam – nothing.
CHRIS	I collect your punchlines.
PAUL	And doctor's bills. Unspeakable treatment for unspeakable diseases.
HELEN	For God's sake!

CHRIS Did any of your supermen catch something while hiding under my bed, or did they actually creep in and give it to me when it was dark?

CATHERINE Enough, darling.

CHRIS No, come on. I don't need that sort of thing thrown at me by this holier-than-thou asshole!

MRS CARTWRIGHT If you are going to use language like that, I'm going to water the garden.

HELEN *Please!* I've had enough of all of you being clever at trying to slide in the poison knives. And that goes for everyone!

MRS CARTWRIGHT You too Paul.

PAUSE. THEY ALL CALM DOWN

MRS CARTWRIGHT Now, say what you have to say, Paul. We're all listening.

PAUL No, Deborah, don't do me any favours. Please, I just tried to help. Forget it!

HE STARTS TOWARDS THE HOUSE

HELEN The land is gone already! That's what!

PAUL STOPS

HELEN It was signed and sealed in the Minister's office months ago, before even we knew anything. Oh Mummy, I'm sorry, but how could I tell you? When you had that little summer house built and the cottages painted, I knew but couldn't tell you the truth.

MRS CARTWRIGHT What is the truth?

HELEN They're going to build a hotel here . . .

PAUL Helen!

HELEN Let me say it: a huge glittering five-star monster with whirling casinos and fruitmachines and topless waitresses serving noisy couples. There are plans for a multi-cinema complex where our family graveyard is!

PAUL Helen, jy praat weer onsin!

HELEN But I saw the plans on your desk – a year ago!

MRS CARTWRIGHT Our graveyard?

HELEN They'll rip open our graves and cart away our father and grandfather and that little baby that died in 1901 and grandmother and old Black Gladys and her husband and their two children who died of the flu and throw them on the muckheap with beer cans and contraceptives and pornography!

CHRIS Jesus!

HELEN And he knew . . . from the start he knew everything . . .

PAUSE

CATHERINE You bastard. You ambitious bastard . . .

PAUL It's not that simple . . .

MRS CARTWRIGHT SEEMS CALM. GETS UP SLOWLY AND PICKS UP THE FLOWERS

MRS CARTWRIGHT They need water.

SHE EXITS INTO THE HOUSE. AFTER A MOMENT CATHERINE FOLLOWS HER

CATHERINE Mother? Ma?

SHE EXITS

HELEN SNARLS AT DONNIE AND JOANNA

HELEN Leave us!

JOANNA EXITS INTO THE GARDEN. DONNIE LINGERS

CHRIS You knew?

PAUL Its my job.

CHRIS And your family?

PAUL I'm a professional.

CHRIS One day I'll kill you for this, Paul Bruwer. Not now or tomorrow when it would be pointless, but one day when you're right on top, because that's where the sewerage usually drifts, I'll be waiting for you.

(DONNIE EXITS QUIETLY)

And when they put the crown on your head and the laurels in your hand, I'll splatter your guts across the orange, white and blue for the little black ants to eat!

HE EXITS

PAUSE

PAUL

O Here . . . as hierdie mense nou praat, dan's ek klaar .

HELEN

Don't worry, we'll get a lawyer. That will help . . .

PAUL

My name on memos . . . photocopies in circulation . . . it just needs one newspaper to successfully challenge the Regulations again and I'm finished.

HELEN

It's only money! We'll get a lawyer.

PAUL

Not only money: lives. I gave them this land in return for official protection. Without that what do I have left?

HELEN

Me. *(HE LAUGHS)* And our son. We love you. We love you.

HE LAUGHS LOUDER

BLACKOUT

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EARLY AFTERNOON

DONNIE ENTERS FROM THE HOUSE, PURSUED BY CHRIS

CHRIS But I can prove it! It's not just the usual swindle with taxpayers money. Hell, that's just smallfry. I'm talking about real politics. Murder even. It's not all about shoplifting, Johnnie, there's enough stuff to blow up the whole great Boere Dream.

DONNIE We can't depend on speculation and rumour.

CHRIS I'll get proof!

DONNIE You said you had proof!

CHRIS Yes, like a tin of beans at the supermarket. Stop being such a professional. This isn't just news, this is my life, mother's life, Helen's life, Katie's life . . .

DONNIE My life?

CHRIS Indirectly yes. We're talking about power. Power corrupts. Absolute power corrupts absolutely.

DONNIE And today is the first day of the rest of your life.

CHRIS What?

DONNIE Mr Cartwright, if you've got something to tell me, please do. If you want to involve me in some palace revolt, forget it. I've got my job of work to do.

CHRIS So do I.

DONNIE EXITS

CHRIS So do I, you . . . you sell-out!

HE SHOUTS ACROSS THE VALLEY

CHRIS South Africa! Wake up!

CATHERINE ENTERS DRESSED FOR HER INTERVIEW. MAKE-UP IN HAND.

TIPSY

CATHERINE You'll disturb the gods, darling.

CHRIS I doubt it. They've all been given a golden handshake by the government.

CATHERINE Calm down Chris, you'll have a stroke . . .

CHRIS No one will listen to me! They're all so careful with the truth! I phoned a contact on the Sunday Times – they're too busy with child molesters; the Afrikaans press praise rugby and don't want to cross the Party line. No one cares.

CATHERINE I care.

CHRIS Oh? So what do I do? He's admitted to corruption. He's sold us out for his own skin. I'll kill him!

CATHERINE So kill him.

CHRIS I swear to God, I'll kill him!

CATHERINE Then do it! Get on with it! Grab an antique and smash his brains in. I'll say it was self-defence.

PAUSE

CHRIS I think you would too.

CATHERINE Darling, you're fighting terminal cancer, not Thursday's flue.

CHRIS You mean there's nothing I can do?

CATHERINE Be clever. Don't be honest. Copy them. Play with them, smile for smile, lie for lie.

CHRIS I could destroy them all.

CATHERINE At what price? Be a mosquito round their heads, not the snake in the grass. A snake is too easy a target. Come and help me with my famous face.

SHE HANDS HIM THE MAKE-UP

CHRIS I now wish Dad was still here.

CATHERINE Dad? He played according to rules. He wouldn't survive today. Concentrate.

SHE SITS. HE WORKS AT HER HAIR

CHRIS I'll get Paul Bruwer for this.

CATHERINE	God doesn't sleep.
CHRIS	Nor do I. When I get my story in print . . .
CATHERINE	Forget about it now. Talk to me.
CHRIS	About what?
CATHERINE	Life. And where did you learn all this?
CHRIS	Since when do I ask you about your sex-life?
CATHERINE	I wished you would. Ow! You just put your finger in my ear! Some sex-life!
<i>THEY LAUGH</i>	
CHRIS	OK, so tell me some secrets.
CATHERINE	I'm not a virgin anymore.
CHRIS	Shame. Do you still see your ex-husband?
CATHERINE	Haven't a clue where poor Mr Cumberland is. He gave me British nationality and took my official virginity. Fair swop.
CHRIS	Ho ho ho.
CATHERINE	When last did we compare notes?
CHRIS	You were having the Greek, I chose four 'trapeze' artistes.
CATHERINE	What happened to them?
CHRIS	They flew away with my wallet, leather jacket and left me with a black eye and crabs.
CATHERINE	Fair swop. Ho ho ho . . .
CHRIS	What would happen to the family if I exposed Paul?
CATHERINE	Forget it. Actually I've started going for younger men.
CHRIS	Me too. He'll go to jail.
CATHERINE	You'll go to jail. Anyway, whose confessional is this?
CHRIS	Your floor Cassandra.
CATHERINE	Cassandra? God no, call me Ophelia – love drives me mad. I'm sick of love; it hops out at me from behind every door like a rabid mongrel and bites me in the

heart. I always need an anti-love injection after being so violently attacked by the Thing that offers me a home and a family and security and a future . . .

CATHERINE

CHRIS

CATHERINE

CHRIS

CATHERINE

CHRIS

CATHERINE

CHRIS

CATHERINE

CHRIS

CATHERINE

SHE APPLIES LIPSTICK

CHRIS

CATHERINE

CHRIS

CATHERINE

CHRIS

CATHERINE I'm a closet South African . . . "come into my closet, said the spider . . .

CHRIS . . . to the open fly." Maybe one day. I'm too used to this intensive care ward.

CATHERINE No, Chris, not one day. Now! Get yourself into gear!

CHRIS It's easy to give tips from outside the cage. Maybe one day I'll come and hide with you.

CATHERINE Come and work, write. You don't need to be employed, to tell you the truth. Get away from this anachronism.

CHRIS Home?

CATHERINE Once you pull this mat out from under your Gucci heels, what else is left?

CHRIS My Rolex Oyster, my St Laurent shirt, my Hilton Weiner trousers, my Eminence knickers, my Tiffany diamond ring, my Dior cologne, my Cape St Francis bracelet, my Greenwich village cockring . . .

CATHERINE Your what-ring?

CHRIS It doesn't even fit. Every time I put it on, it drops down my pants and rolls down the passage like a demented noodle going up its own arse. (PAUSE) Oh God, it hurts . . .

CHRIS Don't open your eyes, you'll smudge.

CATHERINE What hurts? Chris?

CHRIS Oh, us . . . family . . . being together, pretending it's just a normal nod in the right direction. I can live very unhappily without any of you . . . quite easily. But every time I see you lot, I feel guilty about the secrets.

CATHERINE Your sex life means buggerall to me.

CHRIS There's more to life than the trimmings.

CATHERINE Oh? What have I missed?

CHRIS The time I swallowed pills and some interfering fool woke me up for his money. Then I tried it in the car, but the damn hose was too short, it slipped out – story of my life. Once I wanted to jump off this patio, but I can't stand heights.

CATHERINE Try jumping off your platform heels. (*HE MOVES AWAY FROM HER*) Why are you still here?

CHRIS Cleopatra had her asp, I have this place.

CATHERINE But they only let you write shit.

CHRIS It's a shitty asp . . .

CATHERINE Don't cry . . . please my darling, don't cry . . . listen,
I'll look after you, I'll listen to you, I'll laugh with you,
I'll cry for you, anything . . .

CHRIS Promise?

CATHERINE With nobs on. (*KISSES HIM*) Just first get my
Catherine Cumberland together for Putsonderwater or
else they'll never go to her movies at the drive-in.

PAUSE

CHRIS By the way, drive-ins aren't what they used to be.

CATHERINE No more sex and dagga in the backseat?

CHRIS No more Bette Davis.

CATHERINE Why? Is she also boycotting you?

CHRIS She's just old. Doesn't make that many movies
 anymore . . .

PAUSE

CATHERINE What would we look like to us, if we were 12 and were watching through a crack in the fence? Mmm, you and me?

CATHERINE	Too big to conquer.
JOANNA	And went to England.
CATHERINE	Small enough to rule.
JOANNA	Catherine, this isn't a joke you know.
CATHERINE	You're damn right. Up there my mother is dying of heartbreak and I'm dancing on the tables with my feathers aglow, because that's all I can still do with dignity. As it happens, that's what you want to further your sordid little career. Fine, take it. I wished I could cry, but read my laughter for tears. You're right, there's no joke around here. And I'm only Catherine to my friends and fans, OK?
DONNIE (<i>ENTERS</i>)	Ready Miss Cumberland?
CATHERINE	Pour me a drink, Chris?
CHRIS	"Drink Chris . . . "
DONNIE	Joanna
JOANNA	Hang on.
<i>SHE CHANGES INTO A COLOURFUL JACKET</i>	
<i>CHRIS HANDS CATHERINE A DRINK</i>	
CATHERINE	"Happy days"
JOANNA	Daffodils Slate 1 Take 1.
CHRIS	Good Luck.
JOANNA	3-2-1- Action. Miss Catherine Cumberland, you're a well-known star to us all – a star of stage, but mainly screen. We remember your performances in Glitter, the Green Hoof, Suddenly Tomorrow and of course Greet the Gods for which you were nominated as best actress of the year.
CHRIS	In Taiwan.
JOANNA	(<i>HISSES</i>) Shh. Carry on.
CATHERINE	It's a joy to be interviewed by the SABC, and what the fuck do you mean, 'Taiwan', you prick!

JOANNA	Oh no - cut!
CATHERINE	Oh get out of my way, girl. Let's do it here, Donnie?
<i>SHE MOVES ACROSS STAGE</i>	
DONNIE	Little more to the left.
CATHERINE	Here?
DONNIE	That's it.
CATHERINE	Face OK?
DONNIE	Shiny left cheek and nose.
CATHERINE	Powder Chris.
CHRIS	"Powder Chris"
DONNIE	OK. Back a fraction. Hold it. Rollup. Sound?
JOANNA	I'm here. Marking. Daffodils Slate 1 Take 2.
CATHERINE	"In bocca al lupo."
DONNIE	Action.
JOANNA	Yes, action!
CATHERINE	Hello, I'm Catherine Cumberland and this is not a soap commercial. This isn't even a trailer to a movie of mine, and I'm not really Catherine Cumberland. I'm not even Bokkie Willemse. My real name is actually Katie Cartwright and I was born here in this country. I'm a South African. I went to school in Durban and my first boyfriend was so Afrikaans he couldn't spell the word 'heaven' . . . he used an a instead of an e . . . shit! Cut!
JOANNA	Cut!
CHRIS	I'm a writer and I spell heaven with an a!
CATHERINE	"So Afrikaans" . . . that sounds so racist! Can we edit?
DONNIE	Yes.
CATHERINE	Slate Joanna.
JOANNA	Daffodils Slate 1 Take 3! Action!

CATHERINE	If I were born black and said I was forced to move from my home, you'd shrug and say, so what. I've been living in Europe for many years, but this is my home. My mother lives in this beautiful house. She must move, to make way for other people - black people. Irony? OK, so it's the opposite side of the coin, but because it's my home, I want to say, "I protest!" You are used to being threatened by black consciousness. But look at this face, remember its whiteness and anger. I will be back with a gun and grenade and I will revenge myself because of what your laws are doing to an old lady in the twilight of her life. I don't even see the millions of other angry black sons and daughters who wait impatiently for a firm bite at your overfed arses – you fat racist pigs . . . you fucking . . . cut cut cut . . .who's got a cigarette . . . sorry sorry . . .
DONNIE	We can edit.
CATHERINE	I can't think! I just want to kill!
CHRIS	No one else can play "The Mother of the Nation", darling.
CATHERINE	And what the hell am I doing dressed up like a beauty queen for an obituary . . .No, I'm sorry, I don't want to go on . . . Chris darling, I can't make a fool of myself ..
CHRIS	Your make-up is running . . .
CATHERINE	I don't want to fight your lost battles. I want to go home to London and the snow and the strikes.
DONNIE	Can we go on please?
CHRIS	Look, film something else somewhere. Come Katie, let's get some air.
<i>THEY EXIT</i>	
DONNIE	Will air help, I wonder.

JOANNA God, and I thought this would just be a dreary little filler-interview!

DONNIE These people always look so much more convincing from far.

JOANNA An exclusive on Catherine Cumberland, an exposé on Paul Bruwer! Donnie, this could lead to my own Current Affairs slot!

DONNIE What happened to the nice little chat show hostess with clothes by Pasqual?

JOANNA We've got a major news scoop!

DONNIE Mrs Cartwright has a story to tell.

JOANNA What's wrong with you? Don't you have ambition?

DONNIE I do. Thanks to my SABC subsidy my ambition of my own house has been fulfilled. A new car is next. Then a video recorder. Already I can afford to put my child into a private school.

JOANNA Donnie, you're scared! Scared of making waves . . .

DONNIE Expose Paul Bruwer by all means, but with him goes the old lady.

JOANNA Not if we do it carefully.

DONNIE Carefully? Or truthfully?

JOANNA I don't have to ask your permission

DONNIE No, I'm just the cameraman . . .

JOANNA Can we do my cutaways now?

MRS CARTWRIGHT ENTERS, CARRYING SOME CLOTHES, SHE DOESN'T SEEM TO RECOGNISE THEM

MRS CARTWRIGHT Have these properly folded and sent into the town. I've only worn them once or twice . . . I remember this dress from some or other National Festival . . . my Jonathan liked it so much . . . as did the Minister of Justice of the time who kept staring at me . . . the books must all go to Christopher's old school . . . I

promised them the books in my will. The paintings go to that funny museum in Bloemfontein . . . I suppose they were the first to ask . . . I wouldn't know . . . the silver probably goes to taxes . . . (*LOOKS UP AT PORTRAIT OF HUSBAND*) Katie Cartwright wanted the big painting of her Daddy . . . or did Catherine Cumberland want Sir Jonathan . . . can't see Katie happy with him . . . more Catherine's style . . . I don't suppose you'll know who would want the carpets?

JOANNA

They're your carpets . . .

MRS CARTWRIGHT

Palavi gave Jonathan those carpets in the drawing room. Shah's father, remember? Maybe they want them back, things being what they are . . . (*A SMALL LAUGH*) . . . oh dear, we're all in a bit of a mess, I suppose. Do you think the removal people will be careful with my things?

JOANNA

We'll win, Mrs Cartwright. You won't have to move.

MRS CARTWRIGHT

People are so careless nowadays with old beautiful things, as if that didn't matter anymore. What could I take with me into that little flat . . . my pretty spoons, my precious tea service . . . the old snapshots . . . where is everybody?

DONNIE

Here a moment ago.

MRS CARTWRIGHT

A moment ago? Funny how much was still easy "a moment ago". We were going to win, isn't that what you promised me, Katie?

JOANNA

Joanna.

MRS CARTWRIGHT

The world does not look on small pain with much interest, child. Where are my children?

SHE LOOKS OUT ACROSS THE VALLEY

MRS CARTWRIGHT It isn't for myself that I fight. My life has been and here you see the monument to a great happiness and dedication. It's not just a home, it's a way of life. A dignified survival – beauty and truth and love and care . . . care . . . that's the worst pain of all. My children don't care. They make it look so easy . . .

SHE PICKS UP A TEACUP AND SMASHES IT

MRS CARTWRIGHT It is easy. Three hundred years of art and culture and beauty and who cares. Throw it on the garbage heap with the political pornography and say: look at my wonderful life. (PAUSE) There's nothing interesting left here for you to show a world. No real pain, no drama, no hope, no great future, no proud past. Evacuation has never been a noble exit . . .

SHE FINGERS THE CLOTHES

Are they giving away my things already?

SHE EXITS

JOANNA Oh shame, it's shocking.

DONNIE The first time always is.

JOANNA Did you have enough light?

DONNIE I don't know . . . at least she stayed pretty still . . .

JOANNA Who else has this happened to?

DONNIE A few million. It's not so much a policy, Joanna, more a way of life for most of us. I suppose the only reason you notice it here is because all the fancy trimmings catch the light and attract your attention. I must say, it's the first time I've seen the glossies caught out by their own team. Usually, where I come from, there's a faded picture of Jesus hanging against the corrugated iron wall. I remember the driver of a bulldozer

	listening to a cassette of Madonna's latest hits as he ripped up tin shacks and little gardens. Nearby was a big billboard that said: LIFE CAN BE BEAUTIFUL.
JOANNA	Then this story must also be told, Donnie.
DONNIE	It was everything to me once: my camera that was the eye on the dark secret of the world around me. I collected so many images of "Life being beautiful." I was down in Cape Town when all hell broke loose in Guguletu. That was before they banned us from the townships. I was the only cameraman on the spot. All the foreign boys were in Soweto and racing from one funeral to the next chasing the new Amandla culture. Get Donnie, someone said. So I got a lift in an Army Hippo with some Afrikaans kids, fresh from basics with their new uniforms smelling of mothballs. They didn't bother me. Didn't mind me, just made some nervous jokes about necklaces . . . I sat in the back looking at the sunset, red against the sky, then framed on an overturned van. Then a little black kid . . . nine, ten . . . cheeky little fighter looking for a story to tell his comrades, came into frame. He picked up a stone, no bigger than a fist. Like a ballgame. He smiled like any kid playing. I heard the shots and in the frame I saw the kid's head explode . . .
	<i>PAUSE</i>
	They confiscated my film and told me to forget anything I saw.
JOANNA	Oh, Donnie . . .
DONNIE	I had a nervous breakdown. Your white yuppie sickness.
JOANNA	I didn't know.

DONNIE Pathetic, hey? After recording the world on its knees, I fall apart because of a kid . . .

JOANNA You OK now?

DONNIE It doesn't matter now. It's just, I don't play in the waves anymore.

JOANNA I really didn't know. They just said you drank.

DONNIE Oh, I do.

HELEN (*OFF*) Mother? (*SHE ENTERS*) Are you people still here?

JOANNA We'd like an interview with your husband, Mrs Bruwer.

HELEN He's busy. (*SEES THE BROKEN TEACUP*) You clumsy fools! As if we didn't have enough problems without you coming here and smashing things . . . precious things . . . this ruins the whole set, they're irreplaceable. Mother mustn't know, it'll kill her . . . help me hide the pieces . . .

JOANNA HELPS HER

JOANNA We're not responsible for this . . .

HELEN Don't be predictable. That phrase is being used too regularly nowadays, it's almost become an admission of guilt. "We're not responsible" - look inside at those marks on the carpet from your light stand, but: You're not responsible. That camera case is creasing the velvet on the couch but you're not responsible. The lights are damaging the paintings, but you're not responsible.

DONNIE Your mother's having to give up, but you're not responsible.

HELEN Of course I'm responsible. I'm responsible for a smooth transition from one way of life to another. I'm solely responsible for this transaction staying within the family and being controlled by the family.

DONNIE Your husband, I presume?

HELEN My business, I'm afraid.

CATHERINE ENTERS QUICKLY, HOLDING UP SOME SLASHED CLOTHING

CATHERINE Where's Mother? Look at this – everything in her
room is in shambles. It must've been done with a knife
...

HELEN Oh my God . . .

CATHERINE Some paintings have been slashed . . .

HELEN *(TO DONNIE)* What do you want with us?

JOANNA We're not responsible!

CATHERINE Hellie, she's gone mad.

HELEN Oh, don't be so dramatic!

CATHERINE Where is she?

HELEN I don't know. I don't know! Will you people stop
asking me questions all the time! Where's your
husband? Where's your son? Where's your mother?
I'm not responsible.

DONNIE She went through into the garden.

JOANNA She wants these to be sent to some charity?

CATHERINE Why didn't you stop her?

HELEN A charity? Our beautiful things?

JOANNA She looked understandably upset.

DONNIE Because nowhere in the world will you find frocks that
are so completely 'you'.

PAUSE

CHRIS What did you say to me?

CATHERINE Leave it now.

CHRIS What did you say to me!

CATHERINE Exactly what you wanted him to say. Leave it now!

CHRIS Who the hell do you think you are?

JOANNA Miss Cumberland, can we start somewhere . . .

CHRIS I just need to make one phone call and you lose your job.

DONNIE Shall I dial the number for you?

JOANNA The garden seems a logical place. Donnie, I'll go and find her.

SHE EXITS

HELEN A smooth transition . . .

CATHERINE Chris?

CHRIS ENTERS WITH UPROOTED FLOWERS FROM THE GARDEN

CHRIS Someone's been at the garden . . .

HELEN Oh my God, who's doing this to us?

CHRIS Do you people know anything?

CATHERINE Mother was acting strangely.

CHRIS When was she here?

CATHERINE They said she was here.

CHRIS When?

CATHERINE She was here and now she isn't here, Chris, wake up for God's sake!

CHRIS Don't bellow at me, darling. I don't need a family drama . . .

HELEN Please don't fight!

CHRIS Well, just don't pick on me!

JOANNA Look, Mrs Cartwright came through with these clothes. She said to give it to charity.

CHRIS Charity? What the hell does she mean by 'charity'? The stuff in this house is worth a fortune . . . Nothing in this house goes anywhere at any time. I couldn't get the Trust to loan me the Majuba prints in Father's study! Nothing goes! And now suddenly a charity?

CATHERINE Let's sort this out once we've found mother.

CHRIS No, wait a minute, just wait a minute! I have to protect our heritage, Katie. *HE SHARES A JOINT WITH HER.* I mean, what have we all fought for all these years? For it to go to a charity? If that's the case, call me Charity. Mother has no right to give anything away!

JOANNA These are her clothes, Mr Cartwright!

CHRIS It doesn't matter, it all belongs to us!

DONNIE Yes, I'd say you were right.

CHRIS You do?

DONNIE Absolutely. It would be a shame to lose these garments to the indiscriminate needs of the old and sickly. What this? *(HOLDS UP DRESS)* Magnificent style. Keep them, Mr Cartwright, keep them.

CHRIS I will.

CHRIS We must sit her down and talk to her about this.

CATHERINE What nonsense, Chris, her survival?

CHRIS Just giving away our lives. I've been patiently hanging on for years. I don't want to be left dangling when my number comes up. You know what I mean, Katie. You'll inherit as well . . .

HELEN You left dangling? How can you say that! We're all in this together, you and me and that 'Catherine Cumberland' whatever she is when she remembers her roots. We're all involved.

DONNIE Responsible.

JOANNA *(ENTERS)* Your husband's just arrived. He says Mrs Cartwright's alright . . .

HELEN I'd better fetch the baby . . .

CATHERINE I want some explanations first. Paul!

CHRIS Me too. Who the hell gave him the right to play Monopoly with my life?

CATHERINE	Maybe we should get a lawyer.
CHRIS	I've got a lawyer.
CATHERINE	How close?
CHRIS	Close.
CATHERINE	Too close. Film this!
CHRIS	Don't be ridiculous.
HELEN (<i>CALLS</i>)	Paul?
CATHERINE	Switch on.
JOANNA	It is on.
CHRIS	Are we being recorded? I find this appalling!
	Watergate is a picnic in comparison to this!
DONNIE	It is.
<i>PAUL ENTERS</i>	
HELEN	I'm so glad you came. There's been trouble.
PAUL	Press?
HELEN	Mother. She tore her clothes. (<i>PAUL LAUGHS</i>) Why do you laugh?
PAUL	Shame on you all. You had a party behind my back!
HELEN	Mother's been ill.
PAUL	She looked fine to me.
CATHERINE	Where have you been, you sinister spaniel?
PAUL	I have good news.
CHRIS	We're going to be on the new stamps.
CATHERINE	Skunk.
PAUL	'Skunk'? Lost your colourful turn of phrase, Katie?
CATHERINE	Skunk, because I know a stink when I smell it. I remember you, when you started peeping in our direction. Hellie was in Standard Ten and I was in Eight . . . you hung around and became our excess baggage, didn't you Paul Bruwer? You even used to cheat at PT and then I knew you'd not become anything decent like a dominee or a teacher or a friend.

And I was right. Then you and dreary Hellie went steady when I turned you down, because I couldn't stand your eternal snivelling . . .

PAUL I had allergies.

HELEN You turned him down?

CATHERINE He wanted me for his 'meisie', his 'aster'. I said, "Nee!"

PAUL You said something else. You were never known for your subtlety.

CATHERINE And while he was going steady with Hellie, the Hardworker with A's in everything except men, while all this was happening . . .

PAUL I've not news.

CATHERINE While all this courtship was happening, he wanted to sleep with me!

CHRIS Boring.

HELEN Katie . . .

PAUL Yes, I vaguely remember you being quite attractive once.

CATHERINE Oh come on! You pleaded with me, begged me, threatened me! And I said no!

PAUL You were too busy with the bottle store people.

CATHERINE That's a filthy lie! I never went with the bottle store people!

DONNIE Were they black?

CATHERINE Are you mad? They were Catholic! It was bad enough having a Christian nationalist education and being brought up Presbyterian, hell all I needed was Mary's kiss on my cheek!

HELEN But remember the bottle store people. They were always very nice to me.

PAUL Are you finished wasting the present on the past?

HELEN	I think it's time we went back to the hotel, Paul. The baby needs to settle down.
CHRIS	Story of our lives, us babies.
CATHERINE	And when he couldn't bed me, after years of toil and grovel, he spread stories about me. He told nasty tales.
CHRIS	Shush now Katie. What's the good news?
CATHERINE	He called me a whore.
HELEN	Leave it now, Katie.
CATHERINE	He called me a hoer, although he didn't even know what the word meant.
PAUL	I was right.
CATHERINE	<i>I</i> didn't even know what the word meant, Paul.
PAUL	I still had the right word.
CATHERINE	God, you don't forgive.
PAUL	You don't forget.
CATHERINE	No, I remember everything!
PAUL	So do I!
HELEN	I'm going now.
CHRIS	What's the news?
PAUL	It's all been sorted out!
CHRIS	Hear that, Katie, it's all been sorted out.
CATHERINE	You wrote me a dirty letter too.
HELEN	What's been sorted out?
PAUL	I've been in touch with the Minister.
CHRIS	It better be at the highest level, because I'm not handing over my heritage to a charity.
PAUL	What's he talking about?
CATHERINE	He didn't even sign it. Made lewd little-boy suggestions in his obvious italic writing, the same script that condemns people to eternal wandering in the twilight zones of our technicolour confusions. My secret lover, Paul Bruwer, Deputy Minister and crook.

CATHERINE While in a radius of hundred miles from where you swagger, Paul Bruwer, they can't even spell your name on the lavatory wall. Shame, after all your years of slog and slaughter, there's still one last resort open to you to get into the small print of TIME magazine.

CHRIS When I shoot him.

CATHERINE I can tell the world you were my lover. You'll be semi-famous.

CHRIS He'll be more famous if I shoot him taking the oath of office.

PAUL Helen, tell your irritating family: I spent hours on the phone and finally managed to get the Minister from a very important meeting.

HELEN Tell them yourself, Paul.

PAUL Tell your mercenary family that their property stands secure under their feet. Tell them that they have their democratic South African right to contest the consolidation claim at the next session of our parliament. Tell them that again as always, I have saved their ungrateful skins for them. Tell them I say good-bye.

HE STARTS OFF

DONNIE Dr Bruwer, this land is now not to become part of the homeland?

PAUL No, it is not.

DONNIE After all this fuss?

PAUL When the people wish a change, they are entitled to demand it and implement it. Or vice-versa.

DONNIE The people being?

PAUL In this case, our family. After all, we are the world in small.

HELEN	We can keep this land?
CHRIS	Hang on . . . just a moment: what do you mean, keep this land?
CATHERINE	Bluster. Pompous bluster.
PAUL (<i>PATIENTLY</i>)	I spoke to the Minister involved. I explained the special circumstances surrounding this land, our family, the past, the sentiment. He agreed to a postponement of the transfer. He wants to “discuss” it. He wants to meet you, Katie.
CATHERINE	Oh?
PAUL	He saw the Green Hoof six times.
CATHERINE	And for my autograph, he’ll divert the Great Homeland Consolidation Plan for x-amount of weeks . . . months . . . years?
PAUL	He wants to have dinner with you. I said I was sure you’d be delighted.
CATHERINE	In my experience that means negligee, perfume, pants, papers, pornography, pleas and prayers. I’ve had political dinners like that before.
HELEN	It’ll save our home.
CHRIS	It’ll give us time.
JOANNA	I have to change tapes . . .
DONNIE	Quickly.
PAUL	You’re filming this?
DONNIE	We have Miss Cumberland’s permission.
CATHERINE	I don’t care anymore. I want to live in a cottage with seven cats. Take away my passport. Record. I don’t care.
PAUL	All I said is on video?
DONNIE	Yes.
PAUL	And you intend to release it publicly?
DONNIE	It’s my job.

PAUL Of course. Our jobs often demand more than is palatable or even human. I'll add some more wood to your pyre. Ready Miss?

JOANNA Yes.

HELEN *(STARES AT PAUL)* "Wolliewors"?

DONNIE Mark it. Sound?

JOANNA Yes . . .

CATHERINE Good morning.

PAUL Our policy is a final commitment. Without it we cease to exist.

CATHERINE Those words again.

CHRIS Listen and learn.

PAUL The blacks want this land that separates their unity like a sausage between rolls. They're supposedly independent, ignored by the world, lost in the diplomatic wilderness, so they must make a fuss. We're benevolent and can be seen to concede, while hiding our trumpcards. OK. It goes sour. There's a commotion and it could become a major election issue. White squatters don't make good reading on the pages of the local press.

DONNIE Get to the point please.

PAUL The point is that this land is no longer available for the pursuit of sex and gambling.

HELEN No hotel.

PAUL According to our sources, the homeland fathers have concluded an illegal agreement with a foreign power. Therefore we retain this land as a military installation. So nothing changes. We can go on as normal.

CHRIS In uniform?

PAUL I thought you'd like that, Chris.

CATHERINE Soldiers? And what about my mother?

PAUL	Mother goes into the flat as arranged. Come now, you were concerned about your heritage not about an old woman. Don't cheat now that you know the stinkwood is secure.
CATHERINE	Bastard.
DONNIE	And what will the new plan solve?
PAUL	Nothing really. It will steal a bit of time for us to arm the babies in the playpens and teach the old to throw grenades.
HELEN	This is on film, Paul, for goodness sake! They'll crucify you!
PAUL	No Helen. They know their place, these two honest brokers, bearers of screened news and one-sided views. They know I have at my disposal seventeen laws to prevent them from broadcasting their material, publishing their views, explaining their rumours to their friends as well as two amendments, twelve laws and a statute preventing them from leaving this house with their information: six years and twelve years respectively or collectively without reason; eight laws to invoke whereby they will be sent to prison for trite little labels like libel, grand larceny, fraud, soliciting - like you Chris, if I hadn't squashed it - seven laws and amendments protecting their human rights, but also mine and because of my impeccable reputation and wealth, I'll win. Then of course I'm not even talking about the fact that my brother is on the Board of their corporation and will give me the tapes and their futures in my hands within hours. What do you say to that?
<i>PAUSE</i>	
DONNIE	Give him the tape, Joanna.
JOANNA	No!

DONNIE I've had a breakdown before.

JOANNA Donnie, we can't it's our duty!

DONNIE Not mine. Give it to him.

SHE HANDS HIM THE TAPES. HE TAKES THEM

PAUL Dankie.

HELEN Where's Mother?

PAUL I spoke to her when I arrived . . .

CATHERINE Did you tell her about the new plan?

PAUL Doesn't really affect her.

HELEN Where did you see Mother?

PAUL Down at the graveyard. She was doing some gardening. I immediately accused her of having killed you all and searching for an open grave.

CATHERINE Ha-ha-ha . . .

PAUL She said: on the contrary.

CATHERINE Whoever said you lot don't have a sense of humour, was mad.

HELEN You lot? We're all in the same boat.

CHRIS I might have known. Then this whole emotional jamboree was for nothing. I had a heavy date tonight.

CATHERINE With a beauty queen, no doubt.

CHRIS A fit of both. Well, I don't know what else to say.

Good-bye, it was hell being home!

DONNIE Are you going into the town?

CHRIS Could do.

DONNIE Could we ask for a lift?

CHRIS Don't they give you a Mercedes when you start the job?

JOANNA We came by taxi.

DONNIE We'd hitch, but for the equipment.

PAUL (LAUGHS) That, I think, puts all into a nutshell. I too would hitch, but for the equipment. Get your bag and baby, Helen, the plane's waiting.

CHRIS I'd like a good lawyer to sort things out with the Trust first, Paul.

PAUL Don't you trust me?

CATHERINE Excuse me while I vomit.

HELEN I'll fetch the baby.

CHRIS Hang on Helen, I want to protect our inheritance against a recurrence of this nonsense. We're all busy elsewhere most of the time. Ma could give away the world and its moons and we'd never know till we saw the holes in the sky.

PAUL You should write you know. Very good with words.

CHRIS You saw to it that they stopped me.

PAUL No. In the whole rainbow of history no law has ever stopped the truth emerging in art.

CATHERINE Balls!

CHRIS They banned my work!

PAUL So thank me, or else you'd never have made the cover of that woman's magazine or received the scholarship to the USA.

CHRIS You killed my novel!

PAUL Euthanasia. But don't worry, Christopher Cartwright, I'll never tell anyone how we all laughed when we read it.

CHRIS And what assurances do we have that we'll have a place to come home to.

PAUL Me in power.

CHRIS We!

PAUL Support me. I'm your insurance.

CATHERINE You're involved in scandals up to your neck.

PAUL	That's politics. It's a scandal when you get caught.
CHRIS	I won't support you.
PAUL	Then good-bye heritage.
CATHERINE	You bastard.
HELEN	Don't make him angry . . .
CATHERINE	I'm not scared of him.
HELEN	I am!
CHRIS	I don't believe a word you're saying!
PAUL	It doesn't matter what you think. I'll grant you there's been a bit of fuss about public money and contracts and bribery, but then that depends on whose side you're on. One calls it corruption, the other brilliant strategy! Had Hitler won the war, Churchill would have been the evil one. History always hides the other cheek when she smiles at the winner.
HELEN	He knows about the Grenville-Du Toit contract.
PAUL	It's an open secret . . .
<i>MRS CARTWRIGHT ENTERS FROM OUTSIDE. HER HANDS FULL OF SOIL. HER CLOTHES ARE COVERED IN EARTH</i>	
PAUL	. . . and there's much more to it than you could possibly imagine . . .
MRS CARTWRIGHT	It's like yesterday when I asked you all to stand in a line for inspection – Katie, the scruffiest; Helen, the neatest and little Chrissie at the end. Hold out your hands and let Mamma see if they're clean. And they never were, but never mind, you still got what you didn't deserve and grew to expect mummy's little sweeties as a reward for just being ma's darling brats. Helen always wept to attract my attention, still does; Katie bought me trashy presents on my account and Chrissetjie just smiled and smiled and smiled.

Jonathan said you three would twist me round your fingers till my back would snap and my Jonathan was never wrong.

HELEN

Mother, you'll get mud on your clothes . . .

MRS CARTWRIGHT

Then hold out your hand and stop crying. Let mamma reward you with the sweetest gift she has, even though you don't deserve it. Here Helen, the old one, the neither here nor there one, the powerful chameleon with a skin of steel and a heart of custard – your reward. Take it!

HELEN TAKES THE EARTH

MRS CARTWRIGHT

My pretty Katie, hold out your famous claw. You who have always been so generous with your roneoed affection, your xeroxed smiles, your come-and-live-with-me-in-Surrey-Mummy. Home is where you slink back to, after every drop of location blood has dried in the sun, to calculate how much interest the system is paying you on your investment. Hold out your hand and take your percentage, daughter. Take it darling . . .

*CATHERINE DOESN'T MOVE, SO MRS CARTWRIGHT SMEARS THE EARTH
ACROSS CATHERINE'S FACE SLOWLY*

MRS CARTWRIGHT

. . . smell it and remember next time under your mudpacks and cry, for it will be gone forever and no pretending will ever bring it back for a take two!

CATHERINE

Jesus Christ, Mother . . .

CHRIS

Ma?

MRS CARTWRIGHT

Ah, the joys of any mother's overlong life: the secret apple of the sportmaster's eye, the loud entertainer in his ma's highheels and foxfurs, the predictable attraction at every dinnerdo, the faded balding star of the drinks party, the saddest clown of them all: here

MRS CARTWRIGHT It's over . . .

CATHERINE Oh mother, for God's sake, of course we care!

CHRIS (*SHOCKED*) And where did she get that bit about the sports teacher? Ma doesn't know about me!

CATHERINE My so-called investments in this country are small compared to what I feel..

HELEN (*TEARFUL*) How could you say things like that, Mother, hurtful hateful things . . .

DONNIE Here, Mrs Cartwright . . .

HE HANDS HER A GLASS OF WATER. SHE TAKES IT

MRS CARTWRIGHT I'd love it a bit stronger.

HELEN No drinks for mother!

MRS CARTWRIGHT A double drink on the rocks for mother!

PAUL Deborah. I've managed to get the Minister to concede.

MRS CARTWRIGHT Congratulations, after Canute failed. Well Donnie, we never got round to the nitty-gritty, did we? Have you filmed anything you can use?

JOANNA Oh yes . . .

DONNIE Nothing.

MRS CARTWRIGHT So, the world will never know.

DONNIE I don't think the world cares.

MRS CARTWRIGHT Good, then I can get on with my life.

PAUL Deborah, all I can suggest is that you come and stay with us and have a bit of a rest . . .

MRS CARTWRIGHT And sleep in your son's room?

HELEN He can sleep with me in my room?

MRS CARTWRIGHT That tiny little victim needs a bit of peace while he's still unaware of what's in store for him. God let him rest and enjoy his dreams, in spite of you two angels of death he has found for parents.

HELEN He's my son!

MRS CARTWRIGHT He's already lost. He will have to die for this handful of stinking compost. No one will ever say to him: "Here my son, this is yours . . ."

CATHERINE Mother please!

MRS CARTWRIGHT Surrey's out, Katie. I've already been there. (*DONNIE HANDS HER THE DRINK*) Thank you Donnie.

CHRIS You can come and stay with me, Ma.

MRS CARTWRIGHT Thank you angel, but your habits will offend me and then we'll shout at each other, like that time you harboured that ice-skater and I didn't like the way he treated the cat.

DONNIE Then tell them all to go.

MRS CARTWRIGHT Do you think they will?

DONNIE It's definitely worth a try. You're still the boss, Lady Deborah.

MRS CARTWRIGHT One forgets.

SHE SMILES AND COMMANDS

MRS CARTWRIGHT My family, you've got five minutes to evacuate my house in the most dignified way left open to you. Don't loiter, don't thief, don't answer, don't argue, don't wait, don't write, don't!

THEY STAND AND STARE AT HER. SHE SHAKES HER HEAD SLOWLY

MRS CARTWRIGHT And to think, I kept a perfect tear moist for a lifetime, waiting for someone to say: what a priceless diamond. For what . . .

TO CHRISTOPHER

MRS CARTWRIGHT There's an anonymous little brown packet in your room behind the old cupboard full of dreary pornography, Christopher, take it with you. I don't want to spend time in Paul's prisons because of your sad lack of imagination.

CATHERINE Mother, I came all the way from London to see you!
Don't do this to me!

MRS CARTWRIGHT You've been here in South Africa for over two weeks,
Katie. The organist's son saw you down on the
beaches.

CATHERINE That's a lie, Mother . . . (*URNS TO DONNIE*) It's you
lot again! Can't a person have any privacy!

DONNIE (*SMILES*) Not guilty.

MRS CARTWRIGHT There was also a call from your agent in London.
You've got "The Mad Mother", whatever that means.

CATHERINE "The Mad Mother"? Is that what he said? Are you
sure?

MRS CARTWRIGHT The message was: "Tell her to get her arse off the
beach! Granada TV wants to see her."

CATHERINE My God, I got the part! I've got "Medea".

CHRIS But you were going to stay and we'd do something
together!

CATHERINE You stay and do something together, darling. God, I
can't believe it . . . "Medea".

SHE EXITS EXCITED

CHRIS But what about me! Hang on Katie, what about me!
And what about my fucking life . . .

HE EXITS AFTER HER

HELEN Katie, you can't go . . .

MRS CARTWRIGHT Helen, you'd be happy to hear: on the news they
announced that the Secretary for Paul's department had
been arrested trying to leave the country for the mess
Paul made. Tell Paul: I'm not talking to him.

HELEN You framed him . . .

PAUL (*LAUGHS*) Helen, you watch too many soap operas!

HELEN They didn't mention your name?

JOANNA May we phone for a taxi?

MRS CARTWRIGHT DOESN'T REACT

HELEN AND PAUL ENTER. HE CARRIES THE BABYCOT

PAUL We'll drop you off. Lots of room. 'Company car'.

JOANNA No thanks.

PAUL Totsiens Deborah. (*TO BABY*) sê totsiens vir Ouma?

HELEN Bye Mother. I'll phone you tomorrow. (*REFERS TO BABY*) He's slept all day, tonight will be hell again. (*PAUSE*) I'm so glad it's all sorted out.

PAUL Kom skat.

HELEN Ja Paul, ek kom.

HELEN EXITS WITH PAUL. DONNIE COLLECTS EQUIPMENT

JOANNA Will you be alright?

MRS CARTWRIGHT I'm the only one who's safely at home.

JOANNA Watch out for me on TV. I'll wiggle my ear for you.

MRS CARTWRIGHT Thank you for coming.

JOANNA You're a really wonderful lady, really . . .
(*KISSES HER ON THE CHEEK*)

SHE EXITS WITH THINGS

DONNIE I also kept a tear moist for a lifetime, but when the sun shone nobody believed me.

MRS CARTWRIGHT So you gave up?

DONNIE No. At least *I* still remember it.

HE SHAKES HER HAND

HE EXITS

SHE LOOKS AROUND

MRS CARTWRIGHT At least I remember it . . .

CATHERINE AND CHRIS ENTER, HE IN UNIFORM

CATHERINE Cheers Mother. I'll phone you when I get to the other side. Sorry I can't stay longer but rehearsals start tomorrow. I'll just miss a day.

MRS CARTWRIGHT Of what?

CATHERINE Didn't I tell you? I'm playing Medea on television.

MRS CARTWRIGHT Ah . . . the mad mother.

CATHERINE You forget everything.

MRS CARTWRIGHT Not everything, Katie. Medea had children too.

CATHERINE I'll pretend I'm you. *(PAUSE)* Come Chris.

SHE EXITS

CHRIS I'll write an article exposing Paul Bruwer, I swear I will.

MRS CARTWRIGHT Yes darling, and destroy Helen and her baby and probably end up in jail for telling the truth.

CHRIS They wouldn't dare.

MRS CARTWRIGHT Wouldn't they? Dogs eat dogs and we're dog . . .

CHRIS Maybe you're right . . .

MRS CARTWRIGHT I'm your ma.

CHRIS So much for freedom of speech.

MRS CARTWRIGHT I knew you'd be sensible.

KISSES HIM. SNIFFS

MRS CARTWRIGHT You've been at my scent again.

CHRIS Reminds me of you.

HE EXITS

MRS CARTWRIGHT IS AWARE OF THE SILENCE

SHE GOES TO THE EDGE OF THE PATIO AND LOOKS ACROSS THE VISTA

MRS CARTWRIGHT It IS the world's end . . . oh Jonathan, what a waste, what a terrible waste . . .

PICKS UP THE FLOWERS GENTLY OFF THE PATIO

MRS CARTWRIGHT My little friends, I'll give you some nice water first.

SHE EXITS

E N D
