

A C T 3.

(A few weeks later)

A C T 3

(Three weeks later.)

Eden?
Same room

(SCENE:- Mess Kya at Broomfield's hunting headquarters in the African Bush. This is a large 'Rondavel' or round hut built out of poles and mud. The rough walls are decorated with the heads and skins of wild animals. Main door is in the curve right of centre, and opens on to a thatched porch, beyond which is a glimpse of semi-tropical foliage. A few feet from door, following the curve down right is a long bench or couch, curved to fit the wall. Below this down right is the door leading to Denis' and Lilith's room. Another door, equi-distant from the main door is up left, this is Broomfield and Hugh's room. A rough rectangular table runs down stage a little to left of centre, with chairs at back and either side. Another table down left against wall. Window about height of four feet from floor is set in wall below table left. There are odd benches in native carving here and there, and various cases, ammunition, etc.

The whole place suggests masculine activities. It is redolent of tobacco and gunpowder. There is a fine disregard for effect, though the huge kaross on the couch and the rich skins on the floor lend a primitive sort of luxury.

not mention of blacks

At rise the stage is dim and empty. The changing lights of lurid dawn are creeping in at the window. At interval during the act there is the sound of native laughter a little distance away, and far off native calls. Also the monotonous rhythmic singing of natives at work.

HUGH enters from left, he goes and throws open the door letting in the first rays of the sun. He stands for a moment looking out. He is white and haggard. Broomfield enters from left, yawning. Gives a glance towards HUGH and proceeds to fill his pipe)

Broomfield

Got the Jumps, haven't you?

Hugh

(starts)

What?

Broomfield

You have been prowling in and out half the night. Might as well have a sick panther in the room.

Hugh

Couldn't sleep. Too hot, I suppose.

Broomfield
Those friends of yours don't seem to have a soothing effect.

Hugh
What do you mean?

Broomfield
This sleeplessness dates from their joining up.
(during this scene, BROOMFIELD, having lighted his pipe, examines his gun, polishes it in a placid leisurely manner. fills cartridge belt, etc. While HUGH move about restless and nervous)

Hugh
What rot.

Broomfield
It used to be I who was up first, but now whatever time I wake, you're up before me.

Hugh
I'm going to ride over for the mail before it gets too hot

Broomfield
Why this sudden interest in the mails? The charm about you used to be your freedom from ties. Now you're watching the mails like a lovesick girl.

Hugh
Oh, shut up. Go back to bed.

Broomfield
(picks up his gun)
No, I'm up now. I think I'll try for one of those duiker buck before breakfast. Coming?

Hugh
(irritably)
No, I told you I was going for the mail.

Broomfield
(raises his brows quizzically)
All right, all right.
(looks toward door down left)
I wonder if Winmouth - He's a pretty good shot. Didn't think he had it in him.

Hugh
He's had plenty of practice.

Broomfield
In England? They never get a chance at anything bigger than a rabbit.

Hugh
Deer in Scotland.

Tame ones? Broomfield

No, you fool. Hugh

Broomfield
He isn't a bad chap. I wouldn't mind keeping him along. He's turned out a born sportsman. When you brought him up, I thought you were trying to turn my place into a home for inebriates and fallen women.

Lilith

Hugh
Denis only needed this sort of chance to pull him up. He'd been through a pretty bad time.

Broomfield
You mean Lilith.

Hugh
Yes, and he's not out of the wood yet.

Broomfield
Well, she seems fairly bored with him.

Hugh
Oh, she'll stick.

Broomfield
Does he still want her?

Hugh
I don't know, but she'll stick anyway.

Broomfield
What for?

Hugh
What else can she do?

Broomfield
I should say she could do almost anything she set her mind to.

Hugh
Well, she's set her mind on being the Duchess of Winmouth.

Broomfield
What are the chances?

Hugh
None. if I can help it.

Broomfield
You?

Hugh
I'm hoping Joan will take Denis back.

Broomfield
Joan?

Hugh
His wife - the Duchess of Winmouth.

Broomfield
Oh, I see. Well, would she after-

Hugh
I don't know. She's awfully fond of Den~~s~~s.

Broomfield
Which Denis doesn't appreciate.

Hugh
Of course he does.

Broomfield novel way of showing it
He has a novel way of showing it.

Manipulated (Oh, Denis got tangled through his fool chivalry. He's clay in the hands of any woman who plays on his protective sense.

Broomfield
Then why didn't his wife - Wasn't she clever enough.

Hugh
Not against the weapons Lilith uses. Besides she was too honest herself to suspect. It probably never occurred to her that she had to fight Lilith for Denis.

Broomfield
She doesn't sound like a woman who would take him back now.

Hugh
I wrote her anyway.

Broomfield
Oh! Hence the anxiety about the mails. I suppose your interest is quite unselfish.

Hugh
What the devil do you mean?

Broomfield
I have an idea you wouldn't be averse to taking Lilith off his hands yourself.

Hugh
Don't be a damn fool.

Broomfield

I know it sounds a bit wild in the face of the deadly politeness you are so careful to show each other, and the poison darts that fly to and fro underneath it all. But I've also seen your eyes on her when no one was looking.

Hugh

What of it?

Broomfield

I know hunger. But I've never seen such hunger as yours save in the eyes of a wild beast.

Hugh

(laughs scornfully)

Bah, you're developing a romantic imagination all of a sudden. We're as friendly as cat and dog.

Broomfield

(thoughtfully)

I don't know about her. She's as deep as Hell. It may be hate - it may be the other thing. You've done something to her-

Hugh

You seem to be very interested in the matter.

Broomfield

(laughs)

Diverted, is the word.

Hugh

I don't see what is so damn funny.

Broomfield

You're losing your sense of humour. Don't let her turn you into a captious crab. I don't want the expedition ruined.

Hugh

(For a man who despises women, you seem to ^{be} find her attracted ~~enough~~ enough.)

Broomfield

(with his slow enigmatic smile)

Again 'diverted' is the word.

Hugh

(turns away impatiently)

If I can only get Denis back to Joan, I don't care what happens.

Broomfield

Well. I do. I don't want a raving maniac on my hands.

Hugh

Who?

*Turns man
into animals
hunger for
her*

Broomfield

You!

Hugh

Oh, I'm all right. I've had a good fever the last few days, but -

Broomfield

It's not fever. The trouble with you is you've been celibate too long. Better go to the town for a bit.

Hugh

(angrily)

I suppose you think sleeping with any woman would help me. It's a wonder you didn't suggest a nigger.

Broomfield

I would if there were another about like my M'lala, with the utmost confidence.

Hugh

Oh, M'lala!

Broomfield

Well?

Hugh

Oh I've nothing against M'lala.

Broomfield

I should say not. She's like a tonic. Laughing, healthy, natural, full of life and spirits. Five years now - she's kept me amused.

Hugh

Coloured girls don't appeal to me.

Broomfield

Mistake to mix up idealism with love. Take what you can get. There are some beautiful girls in the village - fine vital animals. Any one of them would restore your balance in a jiffy.

Hugh

Bah, you put everything on the animal plane.

Broomfield

Only women. It's where they belong - the more so when I see the results of your distorted civilization. A man is a fool to let them interfere with his life.

Hugh

You talk like a blase' schoolboy.

Broomfield

Well, that's better than a peevish pup.

(laughs shortly)

We brought a white woman up, and the camp's as jumpy and*Men's need**B's ideal woman**Women less civilized*

Broomfield (cont.)

hysterical as a girl's school. Why damn it man, she only sticks in your gullet because you've never looked at another woman. I tell you it's the unnatural life you lead. Better come along and work off your temper on the buck. Send your boy for the mail.

Hugh

No, he takes all day.

Broomfield

(stopping on his way to the door)

Mind, if you take on Lillith, we dissolve.

Hugh

Don't be a fool.

Broomfield

Well, if Denis goes back, she's liable to flop on to one of us.

Hugh

I tell you I wouldn't touch her if she were the last woman left alive.

Broomfield

I'm not so sure. If you take my advice, you'll keep out of the whole thing. Let Denis fix his own affairs.
(exit)

(HUGH completes the lacing of his boots. Takes his revolver, examines it, and takes some cartridges. The door down left opens very cautiously. DENIS comes in very quietly and closes the door softly behind him. He is well tanned and looking very fit)

Denis

She's still asleep.

(looks round enquiringly)

I thought I heard voices. Broomfield up?

Hugh

Yes, he's gone to try for those ~~duiker~~ buck we saw yesterday.

Denis

Before breakfast. Jove, he's keen. Might let the poor beasts have their breakfast in peace.

Hugh

(near door)

I'm going to ~~meet~~ meet the mail boy. If you're hungry call one of the boys.

Denis

I can't.

Hugh

Why not?

Hugh does not recognize her power any more than the others

Denis
 Can't pronounce their beastly names.
 (laughs)
 They get my tongue into knots.

Hugh
 (looks out and gives a long call)
 Waaee! Asoclegan. Wena - hamba checha.
 (there is a deep answering call)
 Checha!
 (impatiantly)

Denis
 (repeating stumblingly, as a lesson)
 Aso - Aso - Asoclegan. Aso - clegan, Aso clegan. Got to
 learn em' if I don't want to starve.
 (ASOCLEGAN enters, fine type of native 'boy'. Greets them
 with raised hand)

Asoclegan
 Good morning Baas.

Hugh
 Baas Winmouth hungry, bring plenty skoff - meninge skoff.

Asoclegan
 (laughs a deep hearty laugh)
 Yah, Baas, meninge skoff. Baas Winmouth hungry. Wow.
 (exit chuckling)

Hugh
 See you later, old man.

Denis
 Aren't you going to eat?

Hugh
 When I get back. Don't wait for me.

Denis
 All right.

(exit HUGH.
 Denis whistles softly to himself. Takes a gun from
 wall and proceeds to take it to pieces.

M'Lala
 M'LALA looks in shyly. She is a young native girl,
 very beautiful, delicately formed, slim and graceful.
 Soft and charming in manner but full of laughter,
 bubbling over at the least pretext, as though life
 were a huge joke. She carries a reed basket
 lined with green leaves, upon which repose some
 fruit and wild honey. Her gaze travels eagerly
 round the room and comes to rest upon Denis)

M'lala
 Ah, Baas Winmouth. Good morning. You verry busy.
 (she smiles on him graciously. Her voice is soft and musical)

Denis
 (turning)
 Hello, M'lala! What have you brought me?

M'lala
 (laughs and shakes her head)
 Yes, for Inkosi Broomfield. He sleep?

Denis
 No, he was hungry. He went out to shoot a buck for breakfast.

M'lala
 (disappointed)
 Oh, he go so soon?

Denis
 Never mind, won't I do?

M'lala
 (concerned)
 Inkosi Broomfield no eat?

Denis
 He will.

M'lala
 Yes. See, M'lala bring him first mangoes and wild honey.
 Inkosi like wild honey.

Denis
 You're a great little forager. Where did you get the mangoes?

M'lala
 Yes. M'lala rise before the sun, go down by river.

Denis
 Before sun. Jove, what devotion. Where did you find the honey?

M'lala
 Skisson bird lead me. Where Inkosi Broomfield go?

Denis
 Don't know. He went before I was awake. Cheer up and stay here and talk to me.

M'lala
 (laughs roguishly and indicates Lilith's door)
 What Long White Lily say, her Baas talking to M'lala?

Denis
 She say very good Baas.

*Native
 name
 ✓ Lily symbolism
 (death?)*

M'lala
(laughs heartily. Watches the gun cleaning with interest)
The little gun is baby of big gun.
(indicates revolver and rifle respectively)
Yes. Soon little gun grow into big gun and have baby gun.

Denis
Great idea.

M'lala
(politely)
Baas Winmouth have many babies?

Denis
No.

M'lala
(as a matter of course)
Oh, then Baas take more wife.

Denis
No, we don't work it that way.

M'lala
Long White Lily cross if Baas not take more wife.

Denis
Quite the contrary.

M'lala
(very energetically)
One wife have too much work. Many wife very good.

Denis
Many wife too much work for husband.

M'lala
Ha! Black woman work for black man, White woman work for white woman.
(she goes off into peals of laughter at the idea)

Denis
Pretty good joke, eh?

M'lala
(solemnly)
Long White Lily very sad to be only one wife.

Denis
Afraid you've got the wrong end of the stick.

M'lala
(laughs again, though she does not quite understand)
Yes. I think I go find Inkosi Broomfield.

"Native"
perspective

Denis

(teasing)
You're afraid he'll be lost or starved or something.

M'lala

(very earnestly, with absolute conviction)
Oh no, Inkosi never lost.

Denis

Oh no, he's your God isn't her?

M'lala

Yes. Inkosi Broomfield most big Chief in all Africa. All black man obey Inkosi Broomfield, and all the white man. Inkosi strongest man in all the world. He kill lion with one hand.

Denis

H'm, I'd like to see that.

M'lala

Yes. I see. Lion spring so
(gestures excitedly)
Break Inkosi arm, so Inkosi strike with other arm - so. Yes.
And the lion fall dead.

Denis

Very neat.

M'lala

(now happily launched on her one great subject)
Yes. Inkosi Broomfield do anything he want. Most wise. He make the wicked to be good, and the good to be strong. When fight between black tribes, Black Chiefs come to Inkosi, and he say 'Do this', and Black Chiefs say 'Yah Inkosi', we do' and then no more fight.

Denis

That seems simple.

M'lala

Yes. My father King of the Kasutos. He give me present to Inkosi. My father take no cows for me. King Assomali offer one hundred cows for me. But my father say No, great honour if Inkosi Broomfield accept his daughter for present.

Denis

So he accept.

M'lala

Oh yes. I his woman always. I live for Inkosi, if Inkosi die I die.

Denis

No wonder you are anxious for his safety.

Bung's
wife

M'lala

(with serene conviction)

Oh no, nothing happen to Inkosi. Him too strong.
 (suddenly remembering her manners, politely)
 Baas Winmouth very great man too.

Denis

How do you tell?

M'lala

(as though stating a self evident fact)
 You friend of Inkosi Broomfield.

Denis

Oh, is that all?

M'lala

Yes. I go now find Inkosi. He very hungry. When Inkosi
 hungry him make roar like lion.
 (laughs deliciously)

Denis

Why not leave me the mangoes and honey. I can roar like a lion.

M'lala

(roguishly)

Ah, Baas Winmouth have Long White Lily to find him Mangoes and
 wild honey.

Denis

Oh -er - yes, of course, but -

2nd negligee
 (LILITH enters in an exotic negligee, in striking
 contrast to the crude surroundings. She looks languid
 and sleepy, Stares hard at M'lala.)

M'lala

Ah, Inkosikaasi, good morning. Very nice morning.

Lilith

Good morning. M'lala.

(M'lala withdraws with shy grace)

Denis

Well Goodbye, M'lala.

M'lala

Goodbye.
 (exit)

Lilith

What did she want?

Denis

She's looking for Broomfield.

Lilith

She's like his shadow. I don't know how he can endure a nigger always about.

Denis

Don't call her a nigger, she's a great lady. Her father was a King. She saved Broomfield's life twice - though she wouldn't admit that, she thinks he's immortal. She's the only thing I've ever heard Broomfield show any~~km~~ enthusiasm about.

Lilith

(shrugs with distaste)

I can't see why he had his camp so close to the native village. The noise - the endless singing and laughing.

Denis

I think it's rather jolly. Besides they need the labour. The Kasutos are one of the finest tribes there is.

Lilith

They don't sound very fine - from what Broomfield said of the tortures they -

Denis

Yes, they seem pretty severe in their punishments - keen sense of justice.

LILITH ~~man~~ who poisoned her husband

That woman who poisoned her husband - they put her through the vilest tortures and left her to die a lingering death. Beasts!

Denis

It's their law. I thought you rather admired the natives.

Lilith

I?

Denis

Yes. How about that young Chief, Zan- what's his name.

Lilith

Zanalele?

Denis

Yes. He seemed to make quite a hit. Where's the necklace he gave you?

Lilith

You didn't expect me to wear it. That was only a courtesy to Broomfield's guest.

*Foreshadows
end*

*Even native
men are
paying
attention*

Denis

They are great on courtesy Still, I think you impressed him. He always displays the gold chain you gave him in return with great pride. And the flowers and fruit he brings - quite in the style of a fashionable beau, what?

(ASOCLEGAN enters with breakfast on a large tray. Murmurs a greeting to the 'Inkosikaasi' (Lilith) and proceeds to lay the table chatting amiably)

Asoclegan

Asoclegan, make meninge skoff. Mealie pap, moochla, very good.

Denis

(looking at the stuff in disgust)
Ikauna mealie pap. Take the dman stuff away. Bring me my eggs.
Mealie pap for piccanin.

Asoclegan

(holding his sides with laughter)
Mealie pap for piccanin! Wow!
(runs off a string of native as he takes out the offending food, chuckling irrepressibly)

Lilith

Has Hugh gone out too?

Denis

Yes, gone to meet the mail boy.

Lilith

Must you clean your gun in here?

Denis

Sorry. I'll take it outside.

Lilith

Never mind, it's too late now.

Denis

(looks at her anxiously)
Are you bored here, Lilith? Would you like to be moving on?

Lilith

(quickly)
Why do you ask that?
(ASOCLEGAN enters with more food)
It's doing you good isn't it?
(Asoclegan places food on table and exits)

Denis

Never felt better.

Lilith

Then why-

Denis

I only thought you seemed sort of edgy. It is a bit slow here for anyone who doesn't shoot.

Lilith

As long as it does you so much good we ought to stay.

Denis

You're a brick, Lilith. We'll go in another week, eh?

Lilith

(shrugs)

We'll see. Oh this stale gunpowder - it chokes me. Tell Mafoota to bring my breakfast in my room.

Denis

Righto!

(LILITH exits. DENIS goes to door and makes a trumpet of his hands and gives a long call)

Ma - foo -oota!

(the answer is unexpectedly close, MAFOOTA had evidently been waiting for orders. She laughs and comes in chattering. She is an old native woman, very loquacious. Fat wrinkled and shapeless)

Mafoota

Good morning Baas. Mafoota here all time. Mafoota waiting long piece for Long White Lily.

Denis

(laboriously trying to speak some native)

Skoff for Long White Lily, see? Good skoff - moochla and er- meninge, see. Lapa - understand?

(Maffota laughs at his violent efforts)

Take lapa - Oh, hang it all. Take breakfast to your mistress in her room.

Mafoota

Ah yah, Baas, Yah.

(she burst into a stream of high pitched native and goes out, talking busily.

DENIS proceeds to pour himself some coffee. Muttering to himself some native words, such as 'Ikauna, hamba chetha, moochla, etc.

HUGH enters, he is looking preOccupied.

Denis

Hello, how did you get back so soon?

Hugh

They sent a special messenger from Polukwi. I met him.

Denis

Something urgent?

Yes. Hugh

Not bad news. Denis

No. Hugh

That's good. Denis

(after a pause)
It's from England. Hugh

(alert)
England? Denis

From Joan. Hugh

From Joan - does she know - Denis

I wrote to her. Hugh

(diffidently)
Oh! Is she - is she all right? Denis

She's wonderful. Hugh

Well Tell me about her can't you? Denis

There's not much to tell. It's a cable. Hugh

(fearful)
A cable? Then she - she's divorced me. Is that it? Denis

No, she hasn't - yet. Hugh

She's going to - she's found someone else. Denis

Hugh
Do you seriously believe that - of Joan?

Denis
She'd have every right.

Hugh
You don't know Joan as well as I do, for all you were married to her.

Denis
I know one thing - I wasn't fit to black her boots, so does she by now.

Hugh
She doesn't seem to feel that way.

Denis
I spoiled her life.

Hugh
Perhaps not.

Denis
What the devil are you getting at? There is someone else.

Hugh
No, you've still got a chance. She wants you back.

Denis
Wants me back? Joan wants me back, after all I've -

Hugh
She's ready to sponge it off - begin again with a clean slate.

Denis
Do you mean that? You're not - Here what does she say -
Let me see can't you?

(Hugh hands him telegram)

Denis
(reads it greedily, bends his head low to hide his feelings. He speaks brokenly - half to himself)
Home! Back to Joan.

(incredulous)
I can't - I can't - Home! Hugh, old man, home.... to go back - back to England.... It's like - like finding yourself alive after dreaming you were dead. She's a saint. I don't deserve it but I'll make it up to her.... A clean slate, she says. It's my chance. I mean to do things now... no more drifting. I shall go in for politics - Joan always wanted me to. I'll make her proud of me.... she shall never regret...

Denis (brokenly to Hugh)

Joan as ev?

Denis (cont.)

(puts his hand affectionately on Hugh's shoulder)
Come back with me, old man. Joan would want you to.
We could do things - Joan, you and I. We'll set the old
Thames on fire between us.

(he is moving from place to place, exultant, nervous
half laughing, his voice a little choked)

Hugh

No, leave me out of it. Go back to Joan - make her forget,
that's all I want.

Denis

I will, I swear I will. I'll devote my life to her. I ask
nothing more on earth but the peace of her arms. God, I never
dreamed that she would - that she could ever -

(MAFOOTA enters with Lilith's breakfast on a tray)

Mafoota

(as she goes to Lilith's door)

Mafoota make moochla skoff for Long White Lily. Mafoota
very quick - very good cook.

(exit into Lilith's room closing door behind her.
Denis has faltered at her entrance. He watches her
in a sort of daze. As the door closes her passes
his hand over his forehead. All the joy gone out
of his bearing. He turns away slowly, heavily,
half stunned with the sudden rush of remembrance
and realisation.)

Hugh

(after a slight pause)
What's the trouble?

Denis

I - I can't go.

Hugh

Good Lord, you're not afraid to face it are you?

Denis

Of course not.

Hugh

Then what the devil's on your mind?

Denis

I can't leave Lilith.

Hugh

(harshly)
Why not?

Denis
She can't go back.

Hugh
 Why should she?

Denis
 What's going to become of her?

Hugh
 That's her affair

Denis
No, she chucked everything for me, I can't sneak off and leave her flat.

Hugh
 (hotly)
 do you mean -

Denis
 Don't let's talk about it.

Hugh
 Look here, Denis. For God's sake don't play the fool now. Pack your things and catch the first boat home. You can't shirk your responsibilities for ever. Who's been looking after all your affairs?

Denis
 Joan, I suppose.

Hugh
 Well, think of her keeping things going all this time. And not a word, but 'tell him to come home' Think of it, man, all the places you love, Sunningbourne, Yorkshire, your place in town, your -

Denis
 Shut up can't you.

(MAFOOTA crosses the stage and goes out. There is a slight pause)

Hugh
 I don't get you. After all you can't make Lilith a settlement.

Denis
I couldn't do that. I tell you I'm responsible for her. I've got to do the decent thing.

Hugh
The decent thing! Tell me, who deserves the decent thing -
Lilith who has dragged you down into the mud, or Joan who
has borne everything and stood by you through thick and
thin?

Denis
That's not fair.

Hugh
Why, Lilith will only stick to you as long as it suits her,
then it'll be too late for you to -

Denis
I'll have to take my chance of that

Hugh
But what can you do? You can't marry her.

Denis
I know - but you must see what a rotten position she would be
in if I left her. People blame her as it is. Joan even
doesn't understand -

Hugh
Joan does understand, that's why-

Denis
Oh, stop. It's no good arguing. I only know I can't leave
Lilith to - Don't think I don't want to go back to Joan.
I'd give my eyes to - but I don't believe she'd want me
if I did such a low down thing.

Hugh
(with a sudden resolve)
Look here, Denis, Lilith doesn't care for you, nor you for
her. Why be quixotic? If you'll go back to Joan, I'll give
you my solemn word that I will look after Lilith - marry her -
if that will set your mind at rest.

Denis
(stares at him)
You! But I thought you hated her.

Hugh
What makes you think that?

Denis
The way you always dig at each other. You go it hammer and
tongs on the least provocation.

Hugh

Well you could hardly have expected me to be very pleasant under the circumstances.

Denis

(bewildered)

Well, but I don't see - You and Lilith!

(with a faint smile)

Perhaps you want her for yourself, that's why you -

Hugh

(irritably)

Don't be an ass. I was trying to make it easier for you to go back to Joan.

Denis

I know, old man, it's jolly decent of you.

Hugh

And anyway you needn't worry about her. Lilith will soon console herself. Why not put it up to her? If she has one spark of decency she won't hold you back from Joan.

Denis

No, she has suffered enough, I don't want her to know about this.

Hugh

Tchah! You're welcome to make a martyr of yourself, but you've no right to make one of Joan. I'm going to put up to Lilith.

(starts for Lilith's door)

Denis

(stopping him)

You will not. You mind your own business. This is my affair, and I won't have Lilith put in such a position.

(Door down right opens and LILITH appears. She looks quizzically from one to the other)

Lilith

You're not talking of me, by any chance ?

Hugh

We were, as it happens.

Lilith

Delightful! May I hear?

Denis

No, Lilith. This was between Hugh and myself.

jealous

Lilith
You'd better tell me. I'm sure Hugh has been saying charming things.

Hugh
No, a few facts.

Lilith
Facts! How dull, but of course you gave them wonderful colours. Do tell me.

Hugh
Denis has a very high opinion of you.

Lilith
Which of course you tell him is undeserved.

Hugh
You have a chance to deserve it.

Denis
(angrily to Hugh)
Can't you keep out of this?

Lilith
Wait, Denis. I would rather hear. What am I supposed to do, Hugh.

Hugh
Justify Denis' belief in you.

Lilith
(gives a pathetic little shrug)
Can I do more than - this?
(make an embracing gesture of the surroundings)

Denis
No, Lilith. And I don't want you to. Keep quiet, Hugh. The thing is all settled.

Lilith
You had better let Hugh go on, he has made up his mind.

Denis
I don't care if he has - so have I.

Hugh
Then it won't do any harm to tell her.
(quickly to Lilith)
Joan is willing to take Denis back. Are you going to stand in the way of his return?

Lilith

(stares at him with narrowed lids and a faint mocking smile)

So, the little peace ~~maker~~. I suppose you have been sending wild tales about his dreadful plight, and imploring her to save him. Did Denis tell you to?

Hugh

Denis knew nothing about it. And now he has some twisted ideas of honour, and his obligations to you.

Lilith

(looking coolly and speculatively from one to the other)
Denis has no obligations to me. He is absolutely free to do as he chooses.

Denis

Well, I have chosen.

Hugh

Are you going to stand in his way? To keep him sneaking about the backwaters of the world, instead of taking up his rightful place.

(very deliberately)

Do you want to keep him from the wife he loves, and who loves him?

Lilith

I have no wish but Denis's happiness. He must do as he pleases.

Hugh

Oh, yes, we know what you mean by that - Denis ^{must} please to stick by you.

Lilith

Not at all. I want Denis to do the right thing.

Hugh

(with stern persistence)

Meaning the right thing by you?

Lilith

You rather miss the point. If Denis thinks it is ~~the~~ right to go ba^{ck} to Joan, then of course he should go.

Hugh

Clever, very clever! But couldn't you leave out the 'if' for once and admit that he should go back?

*How she
twists the
truth & puts
it to others*

Lilith

(pauses a moment thoughtfully, and then as though
having made up her mind)

Yes, Denis, I think you should go back. Take the chance
Joan has offered you. She is very generous and forgiving.

Denis

But what would become of you?

Lilith

Never mind me, Denis. What do I matter? I've only brought
you unhappiness. I'm sorry, very sorry. It was all so
unintentional & yet so inevitable. I want so much for
you to be happy.

Denis

Do you think I'd be happy if I deserted you to God's knows
what?

Lilith

Don't think of that. Do what is right, Denis.

Denis

Do you really mean that?

Lilith

I do mean it, Denis. You are not the man to be happy
doing otherwise. And I care for you too much to stand in your
way.

(There is a pause. DENIS is obviously touched.
HUGH is impressed)

Hugh

(a little diffidently)

Look here, Lilith, I want to apologise. I misjudged you.

Lilith

(with a faint shrug and a little sad smile)

Not the first time, is it?

Denis

Lilith you're a - God, I feel a brute.

Lilith

It's all right. Doesn't the Bible say that to him who
hath much shall be given?

Denis

I'll see that you don't suffer for your generosity.

Lilith

It also tells how the prodigal son was welcomed with the
fatted calf. But the prodigal daughter - they fed her to
the dogs, didn't they?

(laughs a little bitterly)

*Bitter
woman*

Denis

Lilith, what do you mean?

Lilith

Oh, nothing. Women who take big chances must be prepared to face big losses.

Denis

There shall be no losses, Lilith. I shall always look after you.

Hugh

You have done a big thing, Lilith. A thing you will never regret.

Lilith

Oh, I'm not complaining. It's life, isn't it? The weak and defenceless must go to the wall. From him who hath not shall be taken even that which he hath. Joan has home, money, position - it is fitting that she should have Denis too.

Denis

Life is rather damnable in some ways.

Hugh

Look here, Denis. I hate to butt in, but wouldn't it be better to get off at once, and save yourself and Lilith all this unhappiness?

Denis

I must see that Lilith is properly looked after.

Hugh

I'll undertake all that. I'll see that she has everything she wants, and is landed wherever she wishes.

(DENIS looks helplessly from one to the other)

Lilith

You had better do as Hugh says.

Denis

But it seems so - Damn it I feel as if -

Lilith

You must have no regrets. Why should you? You're a man -
The world will receive you with open arms.

Denis

That's just -

Feminist

Lilith

But I *-- I can never return.
(shakes her head)

Denis

But you must. It was all my fault.

Lilith

No, it was both our faults. But I committed the greater sin - the one unpardonable sin of being a woman.

(pauses and goes on with a little cynical smile)
I should have thought of all that before, shouldn't I?
Not that it would have made any difference. I played -
and lost. I forfeited all rights when I chose love and -
you. If I thought that love would prove a stronger bond
than marriage - that was my mistake.

Hugh

(breaking in harshly)

Is this necessary. Were you sincere when you told Denis
to go back to Joa n - or not?

Lilith

I think I have convinced Denis of my sincerity, but you -
I never hope to convince you.

Hugh

Well why this play for his sympathy. You know very well
that is the way to make Denis refuse to go.

Lilith

(looks at Denis, hurt and helpless)

Oh, Denis, I didn't mean - Oh why must I be misunderstood
at every -

(her voice chokes, and she turns away)

Denis

(indignantly to Hugh)

Why the devil can't you keep quiet?

Lilith

(brokenly to Hugh)

I have begged him to go. You can't ask me to be happy
about parting with him. Denis you do believe me. I
want you to do what is right.

Denis

(bewildered)

I'm not so sure it is right.

Lilith

But Hugh says it is.

Denis
But do you honestly -

Lilith
How can I tell? What right have I to decide for you. It's only from yourself the conviction can come. I least of all should dare to dictate. But Hugh is different - he sees all so clearly. And the world will agree with him. But a woman who has sinned against society can have no opinion - no right to be considered.

*Undermining
societies
position*

Denis
That's all rot, I won't agree to that.

Lilith
But you must. I am nothing now. Outside the pale - thrown to the dogs. There is no place in the world for such as I. Oh, I understand, and I submit. Only don't ask me to play the hypocrite and be glad.
(her voices trembles pathetically)

Denis
No, by God, I won't go. I won't leave you. I knew all along I couldn't do it.

Hugh
(laughs harshly)
I knew it. Lilith has been working up for this from the first. She never meant you to go.

Denis
That's damned unfair. Lilith is perfectly sincere - she wants me to do the right thing as much as you do, but you and I don't agree as to the right thing, that's all.

Hugh
Lilith is perfectly sincere about one thing - getting her own way.

Lilith
How dare you judge sincerity, when you are so utterly absorbed in your own aims.

Hugh
Don't let us evade the issue. Are you sincere in pretending to care for Denis? Come be frank. Why stand in his way? So long as there was a chance of being the Duchess, he was all right, but what good is he to you now - except as a way station, until you can find someone who can give you everything you want. It might have been me - if I had been a millionaire.

Lilith
Don't flatter yourself.

Hugh

There's Broomfield. He's very eligible, with his gold mines. He could give you more than Denis, even if he hasn't a title. No doubt you could induce him to buy you one.

Denis

Shut up, Hugh, you're raving. I wish you'd clear out. This thing is between Lilith and me.

Hugh

Oh no, not entirely. Joan comes into this too. I represent Joan. She is not here to play the martyr, and wouldn't if she were. Oh, I know she hasn't a chance against the clinging vine. Of course you will do as Lilith wants. The only chance was that she'd have a decent impulse for once.

More garden imagery

Lilith

(scathingly)

It seems that you are the only one teeming with chivalry, the rest of us are either fools or knaves.

Denis

Don't let's have a row. You two are always misunderstanding each other.

(to Lilith, gently)

You mustn't get angry with Hugh. He's thinking of Joan.

Lilith

I wouldn't undeceive you for the world. Personally, the fact that he has his own axe to grind, is at least some justification for his meddling - otherwise I should think you'd find it quite unpardonable.

Denis

Why, what do you mean?

Lilith

Why do you think Hugh is so anxious to get rid of you?

Denis

Get rid of me?

Lilith

Doesn't it strike you that Hugh is extraordinarily anxious to part us. He tried it in Johannesburg, you remember.

Denis

(mystified)

Yes, but -

Lilith

And now - do you think it is only his concern for Joan that makes him urge your departure so passionately?

Denis
Oh, I can see his side. He and Joan were great pals and -

Lilith
Of course you think everyone is as straightforward as yourself.

Denis
(impatiently)
Oh, Hugh is all right.

Hugh
Why don't you ~~ask~~ what she is hinting at?

Denis
Oh, I hate all this. Let's drop it.

Lilith
All the same I think you ought to know what a very disinterested friend you have in Hugh.

Denis
Why do you - This is all beyond me.

Hugh
Lilith is merely suggesting that my reason for sending you home is to have a clear field where she is concerned.

Denis
Oh, that's absurd of course.

Lilith
To you, yes. It would never occur to you that anyone would go such a roundabout way to gain their ends.

Hugh (to Denis who is staring at him)
It is exactly the interpretation I should have expected from her, but I didn't suppose it would impress you.

Denis
But I don't see - Look here, this is beastly.

Hugh
Do you believe that -

Denis
No, of course not, but -

Lilith
This is not his first attempt to part us remember.

Denis
(to Hugh troubled)
It's not true is it?

Hugh

(at the end of his tether)
Why you damned fool, of course it's true, but not for the reason Lillith suggests.

(DENIS and HUGH confront each other angrily. LILITH gives a little triumphant smile as she moves to the door of her room)

Lilith

Of course Hugh will tell you that it is all for the sake of Joan. But there was also a time when he tried to part me from Harvey. Can he say it was all for the sake of Joan then?

(exit)

(The two men stand glaring at each other for a moment)

Denis

(coldly)
So that's it is it?

Hugh

(controlling himself)
Do you believe what she said?

Denis

I don't blame you wanting her, but you go a damn queer way to get her.

Hugh

Do you think I would make love to your - your -

Denis

From what she -

Hugh

Are you going to take her word before mine, after all she's -

Denis

I don't want to hear any more abuse of Lillith, if you don't mind.

Hugh

But think, man, all the years you've known me -

Denis

I know all about that, but when it's a question of women men get different somehow.

Hugh

I did try to get you away from her. It was through her you took to drink. You were a wreck and will be again if -
(Denis shrugs)

If you refuse to go back now, Joan will have no alternative but to divorce you. She will believe that you love Lilith.
(pause)

What else can she think?

Denis

I've told you what I'm going to do.

Hugh

Are you going to fall for that stuff of Lilith's? She has turned men round her little finger all her life. Why it was she who engineered the whole trouble from the first. Who do you think sent Harvey that anonymous letter?

Denis

How the devil do I know?

Hugh

It was Lilith herself.

Denis

That's a damned lie.

Hugh

Think a moment. Who else knew - who else wanted the divorce?

Denis

(in disgust and desperation)
I'm sick of your damned interference.

Hugh

All right. I only wanted you to know everything before you sacrificed Joan to her.

Denis

(fast losing control of himself)
It's all lies. All this concern for Joan is a blind. God, and I believed in you.

Hugh

(also losing his temper)
Believed in me! Bah, and at one word from that - that - and the friendship of a lifetime goes by the board.

Denis

Friendship! Heaven save me from such friendship. Lilith was right, you have your own axe to grind. You go writing to Joan behind my back, you sneak round trying to make Lilith leave me - all the while pretending to despise her. You want to separate us so you can have her and you -

Hugh

If I'd wanted her I'd have told you, and by God, I'd have got her.

Denis

(with a sneer)
Looks likely doesn't it?

Hugh

Why you poor fool, she was my mistress before she married Harvey.

Denis

(makes a threatening step towards HUGH)
You -

Hugh

I'd have told you all that night at Sunningbourne, if Joan hadn't stopped me.

Denis

(blindly, desperately, beside himself with rage)
You're lying, you're lying.

Hugh

Are you so under her influence you-

Denis

I'm not under anyone's influence, least of all yours, and that's why' I'll stick to Lilith despite all the mud you fling.

Hugh

Can't you see she laughs at you for a dupe?

Denis

All right, let her laugh. And you can laugh - laugh yourself sick. But I know damned well what is right and I'm going to do it for all your sneers.

Hugh

(seething with bitterness)
Right! To hell with your pigheaded codes. There's not a man worth the name who wouldn't condemn you for your treachery to Joan. But you're still infatuated with Lilith, all your love for Joan was a fake.

Denis

(lashed to ungovernable fury)
You lying beast! You're so mad with jealousy you don't care what you say. You want Lilith for yourself, you don't care how you get her. All you can see is that I'm in your blasted way. You want me to act like a skunk and leave her to you - you that she hates the sight of. And then you accuse me of having the same vile ends as yourself. Well,

Denis (cont.)

Thank God, I can see through you now. All this marvellous consideration for Joan, and all the time it was for yourself - yourself. And I, like a fool, believed in you - believed in you as I believed in God.

(the words choke in his throat, with a sob he makes blindly for the door)

Hugh

(intercepting him)

Have you gone mad?

Denis

No, I see straight for once, and I'm through with you. Lillith and I will clear out.

(he opens the door, HUGH grasps him by the shoulder)

Hugh

Listen, Denis, Listen to me -

Denis

(violently shaking him off)

Get away from me. I'm fed up.

(he rushes out)

Hugh

Denis, come back, don't be a fool -

(there is no reply. He stares after him with an angry frown, and then turns away baffled and exasperated. His eye lights on Lillith's door and he gives a short bitter laugh.

BROOMFIELD enters looking back over his shoulder)

Broomfield

What's the matter with Winmouth. He butted into me with his head down, swearing a blue streak. Nearly winded me.

(places gun against wall and goes to table)

Hugh

Poor devil, he's up against it.

Broomfield

(helping himself liberally to food)

What's the trouble now?

Hugh

He's trying to bluster himself into thinking he's doing the right thing.

Broomfield

Oh! Has it come to a show down?

Hugh

Yes, Joan wants him back. Whatever he does, he's got to hurt one or the other.

Broomfield

Which is it to be?

Hugh

Clever & Scheming
Oh, Lilith has the advantage of course. She's the martyr - clever as the deuce. He'll stand by her now if it kills him. And the devil of it is he doesn't care for her - if he did I believe he might feel it was right to leave her - he'd be sacrificing himself.

himself and Broomfield

Now he's sacrificin~~g~~g/his wife too. Your higher ethics are beyond me.

Hugh

If only she'd quit. If there were someone with equal prospects -

Broomfield

Why the devil don't you take her off his hands?

Hugh

I tried.

Broomfield

Well?

Hugh

No go.

Broomfield

Take her, you fool

Hugh

You might do it that way -

Broomfield

You fellows are damned fools when it comes to women.

Hugh

Why don't you take her yourself.

Broomfield

(laughs)

And have you cutting my throat. I'd as soon take a bone from a starving wolf.

Hugh
You needn't worry about me.

Broomfield
No? Confess, in your mind there's a lingering hope that one day you'll get her back.

Hugh
(in quick anger)
That's a damned lie.

Broomfield
Come, own up. It's unhealthy to bottle up a thing like that. It'll only fester.

Hugh
I loathe her, I wish to God she were dead.

Broomfield
The usual reaction to frustrated passion.

Hugh
Oh, for God's sake, shut up. You sit there posing as omnipotent, infallible, all wise -

Broomfield
Pooh, any old woman could read the signs. Your disposition's all gone to pieces. You're quarrelling with everyone within six feet of you. You -

Hugh
(overtried, his control gives way completely)
Old woman is right. You poke and pry into other peoples' affairs like some gossiping old hag.
(strides to door)
Why the devil can't you mind your own damned business?
(flings angrily out)

(Broomfield laughs and goes on eating his breakfast. After a moment he pauses and looks with a slight frown after HUGH, and then thoughtfully towards Lilith's door. He dismisses the matter finally with a slight lift of the eyebrows, and proceeds to ~~make~~ a hearty meal.)

LILITH glides in softly and stands smiling at him)

Lilith
Good morning!

(Broomfield barely glances at her and gives little more than a grunt in reply. Though she undoubtedly interests him, he has no illusions about her. He admires her beauty and cleverness, she amuses him, and to a certain extent attracts, though he never quite loses his good tempered wariness of her.)

Lilith
 (coming to his side)
 Shall I pour you some more coffee?

Broomfield
 Thanks, I'm not paralysed.

Lilith
 (smiles indulgently. Looking at unused place at table)
 Who hasn't had breakfast?

Broomfield
 Hugh suddenly lost his appetite.

Lilith
 (laughs shortly, proceeds to pour Broomfield's coffee,
 bending rather close)
 Where are they now?

Broomfield
 Out venting their feelings on the other wild beasts.

Lilith
 Did you shoot anything?

Broomfield
 A couple of diuker buck for dinner.

Lilith
Poor things! How ruthless you are. Destroying, always
 destroying.

Broomfield
At least my destruction is not wanton.

Lilith
 Just what do you mean?

Broomfield
Don't you go through life like a basilisk, blasting everything
 you breathe upon.

Lilith
 You seem to remain unscathed.

Broomfield
 Not by any omission of yours.

Lilith
 (laughs and sits at the table with him)
 You are wrong about my destructiveness. I never deliberately
 wanted to hurt anyone. But you - I should like to hurt you.
 Just to see if you can really feel. I was right when I compared
 you to the North Pole - you are even less accessible, and
 almost as cold.

seductress

Broomfield
It is mortifying to find a man who can resist your charms.

Lilith
 (smiling, softly)
 I don't admit I have met one - yet.

Broomfield
 No - you wouldn't.

Lilith
 For all your vaunted strength - you are afraid.

Broomfield
 Of whom ?

Lilith
 Of me. All the strongest men are timidest in love.

Broomfield
I suppose every man to you is a potential lover.

Lilith
 (rising with a little desperate gesture)
Oh no, so few - so few! And I was made for love.
 (she looks at him languorously)

Broomfield
 Love! Pooh! Love was given for a purpose. Only humans
have degraded it to lust without fruit of young.
 (rises, and taking his gun, proceeds to clean it)

Lilith
 (impatiently)
Why will you degrade everything to the bestial. I was talking
 of love not -

Broomfield
 What is the difference - save that humans are less temperate.

Lilith
 (looking at him very earnestly)
 What are you, human or beast?

Broomfield
 (smiles grimly)
 Unclassified.

Lilith
 You have all the sophistication of the civilised and all the passions of the primitive. But you wear a mask - an immobility..... That vaunted indifference to women is only a pose, but you cling to it. You would rather die than admit defeat..... You are not the invulnerable giant you appear, you have all the weaknesses of other men. Beneath your hardness there is a softness of which you are ashamed, but can't conceal.

Lilith on men

Broomfield
What marvellous imagination.

Lilith
Ohno, I've seen it - ~~it~~ peeps out. With Hugh, for instance - you are ridiculously fond of Hugh.

Broomfield
And you see in that weakness a hope for you?

Lilith
Oh no, that is my biggest obstacle. He has prejudiced you against me.

Broomfield
Perhaps a bigger obstacle is - your fondness for him.

Lilith
(starts violently)
My - I fond of Hugh!
(she stares at him startled, then recovers herself and laughs a little bitterly)
Oh, I may have been once. But he took care to kill all that. Now, I hate him - hate him.
(she turns away to hide her disturbance. BROOMFIELD laughs. She turns on him quickly)
Why do you laugh?

Broomfield
At the involutions of the human mind. Aren't your attentions to me prompted by a desire to torture him?

Lilith
I had no idea you were so modest.

Broomfield
I'm not.

Lilith
Then what prompted such a silly question?

Broomfield
Knowledge of human nature.

Lilith
And you are so far above it all - superior, calm. Someday I shall find your weak spot, and that mask will fall - I would give much to see it off.

Broomfield
You would give more to see it on again.

Lilith

(mockingly)

wild
 Are you so terrible. You can't frighten me. I would love to see you in a rage. I'm tired of peace, I want storm. It's the life up here - wild - free, it gets into the blood. All the instincts of the savage surge up in me)

(BROOMFIELD, busy with his work, does not reply.)

LILITH studies him thoughtfully. She touches his hand)

How strong your hand is, and brown, and the hairs on your arms -
 (she is stroking his wrist. He quietly grips her hand and holds it away from him. She gives a little cry of pain and looks at her bruised hand)

You are so rough.

(He is watching her with a grim smile. Her eyes meet his in sensuous appeal. Holds her hand toward him like a hurt child)

Look, you bruised it.

Broomfield

(takes her hand and regards it curiously)

So small, so soft, so white, and so useless, like -

Lilith

Like?

Broomfield

Like you.

Lilith

Me!

(suddenly, with a snake like movement, she swings herself round against his breast)

Soft and white, yes, but not useless. Made for love - for your love.

(whispering passionately)

Hold me, hold me. You are strong - like iron. I want to feel your arms.

(for the moment her proximity fires him. His hands pass caressingly over her shoulders)

Kiss me, kiss me.

(For the moment he seems tempted to do so. Then suddenly his caresses stop. He stiffens and putting her coldly from him, moves away)

Broomfield

(quietly)

So, you are the woman two men have wrecked their lives for.

Lilith

Are you afraid?

Broomfield

No.
(resumes his gun cleaning)

Lilith

(watching him thoughtfully)
I wonder why you - What is in your mind?

Broomfield

Why don't you send Denis back to his wife?

Lilith

(gives a little smile of enlightenment)
I would - if I could be sure that -
(she watches him obliquely)

Broomfield

Well?

Lilith

That I should not be lonely.

Broomfield

Wouldn't Hugh console you?

Lilith

He would be as consoling as the Inquisition.

Broomfield

You have Denis better trained.

Lilith

Trained animals are not very thrilling do you think? Denis
~~conscientious scruples make him as thrilling as cold tea.~~

Broomfield

Then why hold on to him?

Lilith

(with a little shrug)
Self preservation. The first law of that nature you are so
keen about.

Broomfield

You mean you are not clever enough to get along without some man.

Lilith

I was never taught any other way. Queer how frank I am with you.

Broomfield

You realise I see through you.

Lilith

I realise that we are en rapport.

Broomfield

Don't mistake understanding for sympathy. Your long suit is to foster illusion. Illusion as to your delicacy, your mystery, your fineness, depth and charm, your feminine helplessness, your power to love.

Lilith

No, not with you. You have a curious effect. I believe you could make whatever you liked of me.

Broomfield

I wouldn't attempt to improve on such a work of art.

Lilith

(laughs. Softly)

Are you really anxious for Denis to go back?

Broomfield

I am anxious for the comfort of my camp.

Lilith

Comfort! There are better things than comfort.

Broomfield

What, for instance?

Lilith

Things - I could give.

Broomfield

I am inclined to put comfort first.

Lilith

Could you not put us together.

Broomfield

Comfort and you do not synchronise.

Lilith

Thanks. Quite the nicest thing you've said.

Broomfield

You would squeeze a compliment out of a stone.

Lilith

(laughing)

I have.

(pause, then softly, insinuatingly)

I'll send Denis home if you ask me.

Broomfield

(studying her)

If I ask you?

*Do all women
need a man
to define them?*

Lilith

(smiling softly into his eyes)
Yes..... Shall I?

(There is a loud measured knock on the door)

Broomfield

Who's there?

Zanalele

(without, excitedly)
Zanalele, Inkosi. Want palaver. Checha.

Broomfield

Come in Zanalele. Hamba Sachle.

(the door is opened and ZANALELE appears. He is a fine, straight young giant - a native Chief, rather a dandy in his way, with a certain nobility of bearing. He raises his right hand and makes his salutation in a deep rich voice)

Zanalele

Sakubona Baba Inkosi Mnumzan.
)Turning to Lilith)
Inkosikaasi!

Broomfield

Yebo, Zanalele.

Zanalele

(speaking with great urgency)
Chief Umlazzi come from Potami. Lions - man eater - take their boys, every night one boy. All the Potami afraid. Chief Umlazzi say now lion coming to take Kasutos. They find bones of Potami boys near Loangwei Pool. Between Potami and Kasuto.

Broomfield

Loangwei Pool! That's only a couple of miles from here.

Zanalele

Yah, Inkosi. Soon they take Kasuto boys. Umlazzi say two lions, maybe three. Very big - always take biggest boys, now they take biggest Kasuto boys. Ikanua! Potami very afraid, stay in kraaal all day.

Broomfield

Has Umlazzi seen?

Zanalele

No, they hunt many days. They hear, see spoor, but no see lions. Chief Umlazzi bring much presents, he beg Great White Chief Broomfield kill lions - he say only Inkosi Broomfield can kill. Inkosi see Umlazzi?

Broomfield
No, not now. Go, tell Umlazzi I hunt lion at sundown.

Zanalele
At sundown, **INKOSI?**

Broomfield
Yes. Get the boys together. Find Baas Hugh and Baas Winmouth.
Say we go hunt lion at Loangwei Pool.

Zanalele
Boys all ready now, Inkosi.

Broomfield
Too hot now, and lion will be sleeping. At sundown they
will come forth. Go, I wish to sleep - mena hamba lala.
Do not come to me again. At sundown. Be ready.

Zanalele
(humbly)
Yah. Inkosi. I tell Umlazzi. We stay ready till you come.
(salutes)
Inkosi, Baba.
(turns respectfully to Lilith)
Long White Lily stay in house - no walk to-day.

Lilith
(smiles graciously at his concern)
All right, Zanalele.

Zanalele
(saluting her)
Inkosikaasi!
(turns and departs with great dignity)

Lilith
At the Loangwei Pool. That's horrible. Will they come here?

Broomfield
When they're hungry.

Lilith
Do they really eat men?

Broomfield
Not as a rule, but some old epicures acquire the taste.

Lilith
And women?

Broomfield
I don't think they discriminate between the sexes. Though
they much prefer dark meat to light.

ugh!

Lilith
You mean they prefer the natives. Why?

Broomfield
Whites too highly seasoned.

Lilith
Zanalele seems to think that with you enlisted the lions are as good as dead.

(BROOMFIELD occupied, makes no reply)

I love to watch a man cleaning his gun. There's something so virile and thrilling about the smell of gunpowder.

(pause, she goes on softly)

Well - Am I to send Denis home?

Broomfield
What?

Lilith
Am I to send Denis home?

Broomfield
Why ask me?

Lilith
You yourself suggested it.

Broomfield
My suggestion was quite impersonal.

Lilith
I wonder.
(she studies him through veiled eyes)
Is there some other woman in your life?

Broomfield
Must there be?

Lilith
You are not the man to avoid love.

Broomfield
I know you'd like to have me boiled in oil for trying to avoid yours.

Lilith
Oh no, there is always to-morrow.
(there is another pause, she goes on thoughtfully)
Of course there is M'lala. I have heard all about her.
(scornfully)
But a nigger could hardly -

*Opposite
of earlier*

Broomfield

Is it incredible that a wholesome native girl might have an appeal that rivals your own?

Lilith

(lightly)

A typically chastening query from you. I have too much admiration for you to take it seriously.

Broomfield

No doubt you gauge men's taste by their susceptibility to you?

Lilith

(with a charmingly deprecatory shrug)

Experience has confirmed it.

Broomfield

Perhaps a new experience might be refreshing. M'lala has many qualities which you might do worse than cultivate - devotion, bravery, loyalty, warmth and generosity.

Lilith

(her eyes hardening, but still smiling)

All very excellent qualities for a pet dog, but hardly satisfying to a man of your type.

Broomfield

Further she has a nobility and fineness -

Lilith

Oh, I know niggers make excellent servants. But of course one could hardly regard them as human beings. A sort of stepping stone between man and monkey.

Broomfield

(quietly)

I should not be too contemptuous, since the attractions of this 'stepping stone' so far outshine your own.

Lilith

(passionately, coming to him)

You don't mean that - I know you don't. You say 't to hurt me - to bruise my pride. You can be cruel - I love your cruelty, it whips up the savage in me, just as when you crushed my hand just now. I want you to hurt me - strike me, crush me.

(she presses herself against him. He looks down at her with his enigmatic smile)

Broomfield

Yes, I could crush you - just as one crushes a venomous insect. You are like some pale snake that glides in the grass and strikes in the dark.

Evolutionary

Eben?

Lilith

(whispering passionately)

Go on then, crush me, do what you will. I love you, I love you, even your blows would be sweet.

Broomfield

(thrusting her from roughly, in violent distaste)

The Key
You slut! You understand men no better than a beast understands the prey it is stalking. You use your tricks and sex to sap their manhood. You watch like a vulture for weakness and decay, then swoop down and devour. Nauseating, poisonous..... dangerous as the plague.

(he strides over to his door)

I tell you, for all her colour, I would rather have M'lala than a thousand of you.

(enters his room and closes door)

(LILITH stares after him incredulously. Then the blind rage of frustration seizes her. She moves about feverishly. blind and impotent, her hands at her throat as though in physical pain.

(there is a gentle knock at the door. In her violence LILITH does not hear. The door opens cautiously and M'lala appears)

M'lala

Oh excuse me. I knock many time, but no one speak.

Lilith

(turns sharply, starts at the sight of M'lala and stares at her with concentrated malevolence. Harshly)

What do you want?

M'lala

(pathetically and apologetic)

I want Inkosi Broomfield. I not see him all morning. See, I rise before sun to find him mango and wild honey he like so much. But he not here. I go seek for him - not find. Mafoota say he come back now.

Lilith

He's not here.

M'lala

Oh, yes. Mafoota say he bring duiker buck. Perhaps he sleep now.

(with finger on lip she starts towards door left. LILITH intercepts her)

Lilith

Hush. Don't make a noise. Baas Hugh asleep in there.

But Inkosi - M'lala

He went out again. Lilith

M'lala
 (laughs softly)
 Again he go. Yes? It is a game, hide and find. But I will find him. Where Inkosi go please?

Lilith
 (an idea has struck her. She stares at M'lala, hesitates, then very deliberately)
 He went to the Loangwei Pool.

M'lala
 What for he go there?

Lilith
 To - to shoot antelope. Zanalele come and tell him - very fine antelope by the Loangwei Pool. So he go very quick.

M'lala
 Inkosi have breakfast?

Lilith
 No. No time for breakfast. See.
 (she indicates place at table unused by Hugh. Looks at M'lala's basket)
 Inkosi will be hungry.

M'lala
 Oh yes, Inkosi very hungry. Him go alone to Loangwei Pool?

Lilith
 Yes, alone.

M'lala
 (with resolve)
 I go find him. Inkosi hungry - very glad see M'lala.

Lilith
 You would be afraid to go there alone.

M'lala
 (surprised)
 Where Inkosi go - M'lala go. M'lala never afraid. I take mango and honey, make surprise. Inkosi say very good M'lala how you find me?
 (laughs gleefully)
 M'lala always find Inkosi.

Lilith
 Perhaps if you go quick you catch him.

M'lala

(delighted and confident)

Yes. I run. Long white Lily very good.

(with an impulsive gesture)

You like Mango?

(offers basket)

LILITH stares at her hesitating)

Very nice mango. Please take.

Lilith

(unwillingly taking a mango)

Very well.

M'lala

Thank you. Now I run like springbok, all the way. Goodbye.

(M'LALA runs gaily out. LILITH looks furtively towards Broomfield's door, then goes to the entrance and watches M'lala disappear. She is on the alert for any sign from the other room. Her face is twisted in a smile of vengefulness and hate as the

CURTAIN

Slowly

Falls.

A C T 4

(The next day)

A C T 4

(The next day)

A CT 4

(MORNING.

SCENE:- Same as Act 3.

MAFOOTA discovered. She is sitting on the floor near the door, rocking herself to and fro, and wailing in a monotonous dreary rhythm.

LILITH enters in one of her dainty morning wrappers.*3rd
neglige*

Lilith

(sharply)

Mafoota!

(Mafoota starts and stops)

Where's my breakfast?

(For reply MAFOOTA bursts into a long string of unintelligible complaint, in which the words 'M'lala' and 'lost' recur frequently)

Lilith

(impatiently)

What is the matter? What are you making all that noise about?

Mafoota

M'lala, M'lala! M'lala lost. M'lala no come. AH, M'lala, the little lost one. M'lala come back no more.

(continues to wail)

Lilith

Don't be silly. Of course she'll come back .

Mafoota

Ikauna, misus. Mafoota watch all day, Mafoota watch all night. M'lala no come. Afternoon, Inkosi Broomfield say where M'lala? Everyone say where M'lala. They call from the hill. But she no come.

Lilith

Perhaps she's gone to another village.

Mafoota

Ikauna. M'lala never go from Inkosi. He like M'lala always near. He take all the boys and go to find M'lala. At sundown they go into the bush, all the time calling M'lala. All night they are gone, and morning they no come. If M'lala lost Inkosi very much mad.

Lilith

Have the others had breakfast?

2.

Mafoota

No. Baas Hugh say him no eat, he go find M'lala.

Lilith

Where Baas Winmouth?

Mafoota

When I tell him, he go quick. Everyone want find M'lala. Only Mafoota left. Baas Hugh he tell Mafoota stay all time with Long White Lily. AH M'lala, M'lala.

Lilith

Where did Inkosi Broomfield go yesterday?

Mafoota

He go Loangwei Pool.

Lilith

(sharply)
Loangwei Pool! Why?

Maffota

Because M'lala, she go Loangwei Pool.

Lilith

How do you know?

Mafoota

She tell so. At noon she pass by Mafoota. Mafoota say where you go so quick? She say me take mango and honey and find Inkosi at Loangwei Pool. Mafoota say Ikauna, Inkosi home, he no go Loangwei Pool. M'lala laugh, say she know where Inkosi gone. She say Long White Lily tell where Inkosi go.

Lilith

She said that?

Mafoota

Yah, and she run very quick, laughing and singing. Mafoota never see more. Ahee-ee. Everyone say where M'lala. Mafoota only one who know. Inkosi Broomfield call Mafoota and say tell everything quick. When I tell, he swell out big and red -,like I think he kill me. Not my fault M'lala go to Loangwei Pool.

Lilith

You told him that she -

Mafoota

I tell him everything, and he shake me and roar very loud. And he call to all the boys of the village, and they all run into bush calling M'lala, M'lala. They no come back till they find. Only Mafoote and Long White Lily in all camp.

Lilith
M'lala tell you lie. Long White Lily no tell her that
Inkosi go to Loangwei Pool .

Mafoota
(resentfully)
Ikauna, missus. M'lala no tell lie. M'lala Inkosikaasi.

Lilith
I don't care what she is. She lied, I tell you.

Mafoota
(muttering doggedly)
Ikauna, Ikauna. The seed waits for the ground.
(she looks with furtive animosity towards Lilith)

Lilith
Be quiet.

Mafoota
(moaning)
I am old and the light has gone out. Ah ee-ee.

Lilith
Stop that noise, I tell you. Get me coffee. Chetcha.

(Mafoota rises unwillingly and drags herself to the table, where she does some aimless touches, still moaning under her breath. Lilith moves restlessly about, looking first out of the window and then out of the door. It is strangely quiet after the laughter and singing without of the previous act. She goes to the table which is set for breakfast and motions Mafoota away impatiently)

Lilith
Go fetch Coffee.

(As Mafoota starts drearily for the door, the sudden wailing of many voices is heard in the distance. Mafoots stops with an exclamation of dismay and listens fearfully)

Lilith
(With a nervous start)
What's that?
(Mafoota suddenly gives a wild heartrending wail, and crying 'Ah, lo Islilo, lo islilo', flings herself down and beats her head on the floor in a paroxysm of grief)

Lilith
Get up. get up at once. What are you doing.

Mafoota

Hear, hear! The lament of death. Death! Ah, M'lala,
little M'lala. Dead, dead.

(she renews her violent expression of grief)

(Lilith goes to the door, looks out and closes it sharply.
Turns and watches Mafoota in impotent rage. The outer
lament is growing nearer, it is a rhythmic chant without
melody, wild and despairing. Mafoota's shrill cries
now blend subtly in with it. Lilith gives Mafoota
an impatient push with her foot)

Lilith

Get up, get up and don't be a such a fool!

(she moves over to the breakfast table thinking in
evident perturbation.

The door is flung violently open and Broomfield lurches
in heavily, he is as though drunk with weariness. His
gun is in his hand. He stands glaring with bloodshot
eyes at Lilith. Hate and menace are concentrated in his
stare. Mafoota crawls up to him and tumbles out a
string of native mixed with English, from which emerge
a few intelligible words)

Mafoota

(her voice pathetically urgent)

Inkosi find M'lala. Yes... .. Bring back all safe. M'lala
no more lost. Inkosi find -

Broomfield

(Does not notice her, his eyes fastened on Lilith. Jerks
his gun to Mafoota)

Fugga lo la.

Mafoota

(trembling and fearful takes the gun, put it in its
place against the wall. Plaintively)

Where M'lala please?

(Lilith who has instinctively recoiled from his
glare is desperately trying to recover some of her
poise.

Broomfield without moving his eyes from her, stumbles
toward the nearest chair, drags it to him and falls
heavily into it.)

Broomfield

(in a heavy, thick voice)

So, you're here..... been here all the time... sleeping and
eating. Just out of your comfortable bed. Slept soundly
all night.

Lilith

Why do you -

Broomfield
 Never a thought to little M'lala out there, alone, defenceless
 fighting - fighting for her life..... and calling - calling
 for me whom, trustfully, joyously, she had come to meet.

Lilith
 Have you found her?

Broomfield
 Yes..... I found her.

Lilith
 Is she - was she -

(Mafoota is listening quivering with anxiety)

Broomfield
 (raucously)
A little heap of torn and mangled flesh!

(Lilith gives a little gasp, Mafoota falls prostrate,
 beating herself in a fresh paroxysm of grief. She
 continues to wail intermittently throughout the scene
 pausing only to listen intently to Broomfield's words.
 Outside the natives, some distance off, keep up a
 steady melancholy chant, now intensified by the
 accompaniment of wailing stringed instruments and
 the mournful beat of drums)

Broomfield
 (continues in his heavy tones)
Little M'lala - soft and gentle as a flower - now crushed and
lifeless, mingled with the earth. So tender she could never
hurt a living thing..... lured to her death, a death of torture
and terror. And you slept.. untroubled, indifferent to her
cries of fear and agony.... slept. You slept.

Lilith
 Why do you - I'm sorry, but what -

Broomfield
 (ignoring her interruption, goes on in his tired
 tragic, but relentless tone)
M'lala, always laughing, always dancing - like sunshine,
giving all, asking nothing. M'lala the little
savage, who grew up as a wild thing, with only her instincts.
Brave as she was gentle, loyal, generous. Who endured
pain with a laugh, and wept only for others hurts. And you -
the great lady, cultured, pampered, who by the mere accident
of beauty could command anything in life..... What did
little M'lala have? - Life in the bush and her one love.
Life and love - all she ever asked, and even that begrudged
her, and by whom? The great lady.

Lilith

You have no right to -

Broomfield

The great lady - to whom love meant only lust, endless insatiable lust. Who used her beauty to steal money, titles and even men's honour.

Lilith

This is insufferable. You shall not -

Broomfield

(relentlessly breaking in, his eyes never leaving her face)

But it was not enough. M'lala had won what she could not win.

(with sudden violence)

Go out and look at your handiwork. Go out and gloat over your rival.

Lilith

I simply don't understand you. You must be mad.

Broomfield

There she lies. Little M'lala, who admired and trusted you. Go and see how well you have done your work. You needn't be afraid of her ~~as~~ now.

(Lilith stares at him in growing fear)

Well, why don't you go? Go and hear her peoples' horror, go and enjoy their tears and despair. It must be music to such as you.

Lilith

(with a tremendous effort at conviction and authority)

You have no right to speak to me so.

Broomfield

I am speaking to her murderess.

Lilith

Murderess! How dare you?

Broomfield

Her murderess, just as surely as if you had torn that quivering flesh with your own hands.

Lilith

You don't know what you are saying.

(Mafoota is listening, eager, tense, furtive, looking from one to the other, suspicious, but not fully understanding)

Broomfield

You traded on her love and devotion to me, to lure her into that ghastly trap.

Lilith

I tell you it is not true - not true.

Broomfield

(sharp and stern)

You told M'lala I was at the Loangwei Pool.

Lilith

No, no -

Mafoota

(breaking in excitedly)

Yah, yah, she tell M'lala.

Broomfield

(not taking his eyes from Lilith)

You knew lions were prowling there, and she didn't. You sent her there with but one object - to get her out of your way.

(his control breaking)

You she devil.

(Mafoota has finally understood. She rushes at Lilith making denouncing gestures, and uttering wild cries of vengeance)

Mafoota

You she devil - you white she devil. You make kill M'lala.

(she turns with sudden purpose, gesticulating wildly and rushes out crying aloud)

White she devil, make kill M'lala. Long White Lily, witch, she devil. She make kill. Ah M'lala, M'lala!

(The door slams behind her and her voice is heard dying away, until once more only the wailing of the natives can be heard in the distance)

Lilith

(stirred to fierce vehemence)

The woman is raving. I never sent M'lala to the Pool. It's all lies, lies, lies. Are you going to condemn me on the word of an ignorant superstitious hag? Are you so mad about the natives that you'll take their word before a white woman's?

Broomfield

(Broomfield is silent for a moment. Then very quietly)
Black or white - I'll have the truth.

Lilith

(with a harsh laugh)
Then don't look to black for it. You know what liars they are.
(with gaining confidence)
Really the whole thing is too monstrous. Why on earth should I harm M'lala?

Broomfield

You were mad with hate and jealousy. You wanted her out of your way.

Lilith

(scornfully)
Do you think I would trouble myself about a nigger?

Broomfield

She stood in the way of your filthy lust. You had no chance against her except by treachery.

Lilith

(scathingly)
Really! Isn't it rather conceited to think I would go such lengths on your account?

Broomfield

(throughout maintaining his deadly quiet and watchfulness)
Not after yesterday.

Lilith

(with a laugh to cover her nervous tension)
Oh, you shouldn't take that so seriously. You see I was a little bored. The amusements here are so limited. One flirts to pass the time.

Broomfield

Does flirting mean flinging yourself at a man body and soul?

Lilith

(with growing confidence)
Well, you were a little difficult. Perhaps I overplayed, I evidently did. I should have remembered that you are not used to society's pastimes.

Broomfield

I am used to men and woman. It is not the first time I have seen a woman crazed with passion.

Lilith

(with forced lightness)
You flatter me. I assure you I didn't want you, except to prove that you were not invincible, and then fling you back to M'lala. I had no idea I could be so convincing!

Broomfield

(as though not hearing)

And you vented your frustration on M'lala.

Lilith

(startled that she has not made an impression, dropping her attempt at lightness)

That's a lie. You won't listen to me. Is that your idea of justice. Why don't you hear my side before you jump to conclusions?

Broomfield

(coldly stern)

Very well. I'm waiting.

Lilith

(nervous and hurried)

When M'lala came you were sleeping, and of course she didn't want to disturb you.

Broomfield

So you sent her to the Loangwei Pool.

Lilith

No, I told her you were going there later.

Broomfield

Why did you mention the Loangwei Pool?

Lilith

(plausibly)

Because, don't you see, that way why you were sleeping. So that -

Broomfield

Did you tell her that lion were prowling there?

Lilith

I may have. I never thought about it. You see I was on my way to me room when she came. And all I remember saying was You were sleeping because you were going to hunt later at the Loangwei Pool. You can see how the mistake occurred. She does not understand English very well.

Broomfield

She understands perfectly. Why, later, when the camp was alive with anxiety, did you say you hadn't seen her?

Lilith

I thought no more about it. She is always about the place - she left no impression. I am not interested in the coming and going of natives - they swarm like flies, M'lala was merely one of the swarm.

(Broomfield stares steadily at her, but does not speak. Lilith is triumphant, taking it for granted that she has convinced him. Nevertheless something compels her to go on speaking)

Lilith

I'm sorry of course that she is dead, if it means so much to you. But it was too ridiculous to come accusing me. The whole thing is fantastic.

(she pauses, but still he does not speak, his eyes never leave her face. Little by little her nerves begin to get the better of her. Her voice grows hurried and unsteady)

You have had a nerve wracking night. Everything appears distorted. Though I must say you are the last man I should have expected to lose balance over a thing like this. I thought you were the embodiment of stern strength - free from all human weaknesses, utterly indifferent to women. And then - a little native girl Really the weakest sentimentalist would not be so absurd. It's almost laughable - if it were not so tragic. And then to seize blindly on someone - no matter who - to vent your rage and misery. But why me?

(her voice grows shrill, she moves restlessly under his gaze)

Is that your fairness? To pick a defenceless woman, to bully her - accuse her of murder, and anything else you can think of, just to ease your own pain?

(she is working herself into an hysterical rage.

Outside the natives keep up their devastating wail)

Oh, that hideous howling! Can't you stop it?

(there is a pause. Broomfield keeps his baleful stares implacably fixed on her. She looks desperately away, but finds herself inevitably drawn back)

Why don't you say something? You sit there grinning like some vengeful devil. . . . Why don't you speak? Admit that you were wrong. Even if I did do it - what can you do?

Broomfield

An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.

Lilith

(her fear of him growing, goes to the door looking desperately for help, but closes it quickly when the sound of the native wailing strikes with fuller force. She runs to the window and gives a wild cry of 'Hugh, Hugh'. The only reply is the native wail)

Broomfield

Your lovers are miles away. You have only me to deal with now. This time you have struck the wrong man.

Lilith

(her control slipping)
You speak as though I really did it. You can't prove anything.

Broomfield

You are going to prove it.

Lilith

I knew it, you are trying to scare me into saying I did it. You the strong brave man trying to terrify a woman, alone and helpless. You coward, you bully. You shan't do it, you shan't..... Take your eyes off me.

(her voice is rising to a scream, she struggles to regain control)

I didn't do it, I tell you. I didn't

(hypnotised by his eyes she begins to stammer)

I didn't do it. I - I -

(with a sudden burst of hysterical defiance)

Very well then, I did. I did. I sent her to the Loangwei Pool. I meant her to be killed. And I'd do it again. I hated her, and I hated you, with your smug conceit. You insulted me as no man dared - and for that nigger. I am glad - yes glad, she is dead. And I wish to God you were dead with her.

Confession

Broomfield

(rising slowly to his feet)
That's all I wanted.

Lilith

(shrilly)

You don't insult me for nothing.

(He slowly approaches her, she backs away, her voice sinking to a terrified whisper)

What are you going to do?

Broomfield

I am going to kill you.

Lilith

(laughs wildly)

Kill me - just for a nigger! You wouldn't dare. Hugh and Denis -

Broomfield

Strange accidents can happen up here. Your death will be a relief to both.

Lilith

You have gone mad. What is the life of one nigger?

Broomfield

In this case it means the life of one white woman.

Lilith

You fool! You're crazed for the black M'lala.

(laughs harshly)

Why she wasn't even faithful to you. She made overtures to Denis under my very eyes. She laughed at you behind your back, and offered herself to Denis over and over -

Broomfield

(seeing blood)

You bitch! Shut your poisonous mouth.

(he seizes her, his hand grips her throat)

Snake I'll stop your foul lies - and for good. Swallow your own venom you -

(his fingers close round her throat, strangling her agonised shriek of 'Hugh'. She struggles choking in his tightening grasp.

Suddenly there rises a tremendous howl outside from the natives. There had been a slight lull in their wail, but Mafoota has told all, and their lament has sharply changed, with a howl of rage, into a chant of vengeance, wild, implacable, ominous.

Broomfield is halted. Still holding Lilith who struggles to tear his hands from her throat, he listens keenly to the approaching sound. A cruel smile creeps into his face. He turns a sinister look upon Lilith, and laughs - a harsh, brutal, almost maniacal sound - and flings her from him)

Broomfield

No need for me to soil my hands. The natives know all. I won't cheat them of their just vengeance.

(He moves to the door. Lilith terrified by the menacing sound, calls to him to stop)

Lilith

What is it? What is that noise?

Broomfield

Their hymn of blood. They are coming here - for vengeance on the slayer of their sister.

Lilith

Stop, stop, where are you going?

Broomfield

To leave a clear field for their justice.

Lilith

No, no, don't let them.... Don't leave me to - You can't - you -

Broomfield

Now you know how M'lala felt when attacked by lions.

(The chant grows nearer, wild and ruthless)

Lilith

(running to the door to bar his way)

You fiend. Stop. stop. You can't leave me to those -

Broomfield

I can - just as easily as you sent that child to the lions.

Lilith

But a white woman - you wouldn't dare. You a white man..
Think, think. Have mercy.

)outside the voices grow more ominous, gruesome and insatiabk

Broomfield

(with a hard laugh, takes his revolver from his belt
and flings it on the table to her)

That's my mercy - more than you deserve. If you object to
native justice - there's your remedy.

(He strides relentlessly out)

(Lilith recoils at the sight of the revolver. The
approaching chant drives her to frenzy. She rushes to
the window and looks swiftly and furtively about. Then
draws back in terror. She rushes over and bars the
door. Then goes back to the table and puts out her
hand to take up the revolver, but shrinks from it
with a shudder.

There is a knock on the door. Three strokes at
measured intervals. Then ZANALELE's voice in
mournful command)

Zanalele

(without)

Missus, open door.

(The chant appears to be all round, it is low tragic,
solemn, inexorable.

In renewed desperation Lilith snatches up the
revolver. But drops it again in violent revulsion.

The three knocks are repeated. She stands struggling
between her fear of the revolver and her fear of the
natives. Suddenly a spear is thrust through the door
and the latch raised. Zanalele strides in looking
very dignified in his leopard skins, with a spear in
his hand.

They stare at each other. Zanalele solemnly motions
Lilith to go out. She shrinks.

suicide

Zanalele

(stern and sad)
Missus, Come.

Lilith

(in a whisper)
Zanalele. What do you want?

Zanalele

Kasutos want white woman.

Lilith

Why - what for?

Zanalele

White woman kill M'lala. Kasutos punish white woman.
(the chant outside continues low and relentless)

Lilith

No, no, no, Zanalele! Not true. You know Long White Lily
no kill M'lala. I love M'lala. I sorry M'lala die.

Zanalele

(quiet and inexorable)
Kasutos want white woman. Come.

Lilith

Listen, Zanalele. If Kasutos harm white woman, big white
Chiefs come from across the water and kill all the Kasutos.

Zanalele

(doggedly)
White woman kill M'lala. White woman must die. Law of Kasutos.

Lilith

No, Zanalele, don't you understand. I no kill. See - you
great Chief, very wise. You know white woman no kill M'lala.
You go tell Kasutos. White woman love M'lala. Mafoota tell
lies. You tell. Kasutos believe. See. And Long White Lily
give you much money, buy plenty cattle, plenty wives.

Zanalele

Kasutos want white woman.

Lilith

(softly persuasive)
Why Zanalele, we're great friends, you and I. You not want
to hurt Long White Lily. You like. You give beautiful beads.
And see, you wear gold chain I give you.

Zanalele

(shakes his head mournfully)
Long white Lily must die.

Lilith

No, no, You woudn't let them hurt me, Zanalele. You strong big Chief. You save Long White Lily.
(she glides between him and the door, closes it softly and stands between it and him.)

Zanalele

(distressed)
Zanalele no want Long White Lily die. Kasutos want. It is the law. Hear!
(holds up his hand to listen to the chant outside, low, siniste and charged with doom.)

Lilith

(summoning all her wiles and feminine charm)
Ah, Zanalele sad. He like Long White Lily, he save her. Long White Lily give Zanalele anything he ask.

Zanalele

Ikauna, missus. Kasuto want you. Come.
(he makes a move toward the door)

Lilith

(losing all discretion in her fear and anxiety, bars his way)
Zanalele, you so strong, fine big Chief. You save white womam

Zanalele

(desperatly)
Zanalele sad - no can save. Law of Kasutos very strong. Come.

Lilith

Yes, yes. you sad for poor Long White Lily. You send Kasutos away. Zanalele you very nice, very kind. You send Kasutosa away.

(in her overmastering fear she comes very close to him, softly presses his arm, whispering urgently)
Zanalele save Long White Lily.

Zanalele

(torn and unhappy)
Can't do, Missus. Zanalele want save, but law of -

Lilith

(pressing closer)
Yes, yes. You can save me, Zanalele. You must.
(she clasps his arms)

Zanalele

(is stirred by her closeness and the pressure of her hands. He passes his tongue across his lips and a lustful look comes into his face. His voice is soft and husky)

Long White Lily very beautiful.

Lilith

(not realising the new danger for the moment whispers eagerly)

Yes, too beautiful to die, Zanalele. You will not let me die.

Zanalele

(The animal in him roused past control by her caresses, flings away his spear and places his hand on her shoulder)
No, Long White Lily no die. Zanalele save...

Lilith

(realising his import too late, recoils, he follows her greedily. She tries to check him)

Yes, yes, Zanalele. All right. You go tell Kasutos.

Zanalele

(getting closer)

Zanalele love Long White Lily. He send away Kasutos.

Lilith

(nervously retreating before his panther like advance, up left)

Yes, you go send away quick.

Zanalele

(catching her hungrily by the shoulder)

Zanalele pick Long White Lily for himself. If she belong Zanalele, Kasutos no can touch.

Lilith

(shuddering under his hold)

Let me go.

(as his hold tightens, she cries out sharply in horror.

Zanalele!

(Zanalele is oblivious to all but his desire. He picks her up, crushing her against him, and carries her swiftly off through door left. Her cry of 'Hugh' is smothered as the door swings to behind them.

Outside the chant of the Kasutos continues in sinister monotony for a moment. Then the rhythm is suddenly broken. There is a confusion of cries and shouts. 'HUGH'S voice rings out in angry enquiry, and is answered by confused cries and shouts, about which HUGH'S voice is heard growing more angry and more peremptory. The voices of the Kasutos sound in

(fierce remonstrance. Then HUGH again shouting in rage and fury, and the angry babel of all speaking at once. Shots ring out one after another, there are yells of pain and shouts of terror, as HUGH's shots find their mark. Again HUGH's voice and more shots. The shouts grow fewer and more distant as the natives scatter. A final shot and answering yell. Then HUGH cursing and swearing beats on the door.)

Hugh

(without)

Lilith, Lilith, where are you? Open the door. Lilith, Lilith.

(there is the furious battering as of a madman, then the splintering of the door as he uses his gun as a battering ram. He bursts in calling 'Lilith, Lilith'. Sees Zanalele's spear, picks it up and looks sharply about. Again calls 'Lilith'. There is no reply. He rushes to the door of Lilith's room down right, forces it open looks in and comes out quickly. His voice as he calls is hoarse with anxiety and foreboding. He makes for door left, but before he reaches it, Zanalele glides swiftly out and starts for the door.

Hugh

(with a hoarse shout)

Zanalele! Stop!

(Zanalele crouched and terrified only rolls his eyes and rushes on)

Stop. or I shoot.

(Zanalele slinks on in blind terror. As he reaches the door HUGH fires. Zanalele leaps high in the air, stiffens and falls dead, his body half outside the door. A piece of Lilith's negligee flutters from his clenched hand.

HUGH goes and looks at the body, stoops and snatches the bit of silk and lace. With a muttered exclamation he turns sharply to door left. He is arrested by the sound of Lilith's long drawn moans and sobbing breaths. His face twists with horror and foreboding as he goes on. He looks into the room and recoils with a gasp of revulsion. LILITH stumbles out, panting and dishevelled, clutching what is left of her garments about her. She is shamefaced and dazed. She looks everywhere but at Hugh. He stands motionless with white distorted face and averted eyes. She sees the body of Zanalele)

Lilith

Is he dead?

(her voice is low and vengeful)

Hugh

Yes.

Lilith

Thank God.

(she goes over and looks at the body, kicks it)

Beast, beast beast!

(her voice rises to a hysterical scream, she checks herself and looks fearfully toward Hugh)

Hugh

(his face terrible contorted)

You - you -

Lilith

(putting out her hand to silence him)

Don't, don't I can't bear any more -

Hugh

You - to let that black swine - Oh God!

Lilith

(in a low voice)

I couldn't - I couldn't help it.

Hugh

You couldn't help it? Was there no way to -

Lilith

No, I was alone there was no one. I called for you but you had gone. I was left to those black beasts. What could I do?

Hugh

Do? Anything rather than -

Lilith

There was that howling pack outside. He

(indicating Zanalele)

came for me. They would have tortured me, torn me to pieces. I tried to reason with him, to gain time. I thought he might be able to -

Hugh

You used your sex to persuade him - just as you have used it all your life - made love to that filthy brute to -

Lilith

No, no, I never meant, I never thought -

Hugh

You gave yourself, sold your body - bargained it to save your life. Oh, God, if only you had died first.

Lilith
I would have died first, but I - there was no way.

Hugh
No way?
(he looks sharply about)
Wasn't there a -
(his eyes light on the revolver left by Broomfield.
He stares at it, picks it up. LILITH starts.
He examines to see whether it is loaded. Still
holding it in his hand he raises his eyes slowly
accusingly to hers.) Very quietly)
No way?

Lilith
(after a pause, breaks out nervously)
I * - I couldn't.

Hugh
You couldn't! Good God, you would rather -

Lilith
I - ~~I was~~ afraid. I meant to - I tried to, and then - I
I * couldn't.

Hugh
You meant to?

Lilith
Yes, Yes, I swear it.

Hugh
(coldly)
Then do it now.
(proffers the revolver, she recoils)
Take it.

Lilith
Hugh! You - you wouldn't let me -

Hugh
It's the only thing left for you.

Lilith
I can't I can't.

Hugh
You must. Come, take it

Lilith

(impelled by the force and authority of his tone puts out her hand, slowly and tremblingly. Hugh watches her sternly. Her eyes wander beseechingly from the revolver to his face but there is no sign of relenting there. Her hand touches the weapon, she draws away shuddering and covers her face with her hands. In a terrified whisper)
I can't do it. I can't I can't.

Hugh

(his voice harsh and pitiless)
Take it.

Lilith

Don't, Hugh, don't make me do it. I want to live, I want to live.

Hugh

(in unutterable disgust)
You want to live - now?

Lilith

Yes, yes, I'm afraid. I want to live. I must live.

Hugh

(through his clenched teeth)
You can't live. You are not fit. Take it.

Lilith

(retreating with a cry)
No, I won't, I won't.

Hugh

Then, by God, I'll do it myself.

Lilith

(with a cry of terror, flings herself upon him)
No, no, don't kill me. Hugh, don't kill me. I want to live - to live. I'll come back to you - I'll be your slave. I'll do anything you wish. I love you Hugh, I have always loved you - only you, always, through everything. And you love me. You can't kill me, Hugh, you can't. You love me too much. Think of our first love - those days when -

Hugh

Get away from me - get away.
(tries to free himself from her)

Lilith

(clinging desperately, goes on frenziedly)
Those days at Sunvale, Hugh. We'll go back. I'll love you, Hugh, love you. more than ever before. We'll forget everything in between and go back to our love as it used to be. I'll be yours for ever Hugh, yours body and soul.

Hugh

(shouting her down)
 Stop! You make it worse with every word you say. To speak of our love now - now when you've - Oh God, get away from me, get away you --

(His voice is almost maniacal with rage and agony. involuntarily she recoils)

Lilith

(trembling, holding out her arms to him, abject and pleading
 Hugh, Hugh, don't you love me, Hugh?

Hugh

(with a half sob)
 Yes, I do love you, God help me, and that is why -

(As LILITH moves toward him with outstretched arms
he aims the revolver and fires at her heart)

Lilith

(rears up with her hands to her heart and looks at him with a sort of puzzled wonder)

But you - Hugh!

(she sways. HUGH flings away the revolver and catches her tenderly in his arms. She droops against him, her head on his shoulder. Their positions are the same as in their embrace of the first act. Vague elusive strains of the same tune float on the air, conceivably played on a native stringed instrument in the distance.

Lilith

(her voice is growing weak)
 I'm cold. Hold me close, Hugh.

Hugh

Always, my beloved.

Lilith

(only half conscious)
 And will you love me always.

Hugh

Always, my beloved.

(Her head droops lifeless against him. He looks down on her, his face tense with suffering. Then lifting her tenderly lays her gently on the couch, folding her hands softly over her breast. He sinks on the foot of the couch, his head bent, his shoulders heaving with silent sobs.

(DENIS is heard calling outside. As he reaches the door, HUGH rises and stands between him and the form of Lilith. DENIS at the door stops short at the sight of Zanalele's body. And looks a sharp enquiry at HUGH)

It's Zanalele. Denis

Hugh
(in a lifeless voice, looking at the body)
I caught him just as he was sneaking out.

But why - Denis

(HUGH move slightly so that Lilith's body is visible to Denis

Denis
(with a gasp of horror)
Lilith!

Hugh
(his voice harsh and stern, as he looks at her)
~~She died - to save her honour.~~
She chose death rather than
(DENIS gives a great start of horror and rage. He glares down at Zanalele with hate and disgust. Then his glance wanders back slowly to the form of Lilith. His face softens. As he looks at HUGH a great pity sweeps over him. He puts his hand on HUGH's shoulder in a grip of silent sympathy. HUGH stands motionless looking down at Lilith and does not seem to notice)

C U R T A I N
