

ACT TWO - SCENE TWO.
ELIZABETH'S ROOM.



There are a few simple Christmas decorations. ELIZABETH is at her sewing table, working on her wedding dress. ~~We do not~~ SPIKE at first, he is lying on the bed. ELIZABETH is happy and is singing a little song. *The CHORUS sing with her, the song FIELA* Sometimes she stops singing to talk. *The chorus accompanies her singing with the song Fiyella*

ELIZABETH

You know, Maria came, and caught me working on the wedding dress. I told her I was making it for a friend. She said I should be a dressmaker. She said the dress was beautiful. Do you hear that, Spike? She said the dress is beautiful.

(she sings)

Do you know what, Spike? This time tomorrow we'll be on our way to Father Francis. He said to me, why must you marry in secret? So I told him. He asked, is there any other reason, I said no other reason in the world. What did he say to you Spike?

(no answer)

Do you know what ^{Father Francis} he's going to say ~~me~~ tomorrow? He's going to say, ~~yes~~ will you take this man - that means you Spike - for your husband, and love him and comfort him, and keep him, not just when he is well, but when he is sick too. He's going to say, will you keep only to him, so long as you both shall live. And do you know what I'll say, I will, I will, I will. ~~Then~~ he'll say, once is enough. And then you'll give me the ring. I hope you've got it all safe? Then he'll say, you're married. But you mustn't kiss me then. You must wait till he says we are finished. Do you hear?

(there is no answer ^{but} and although she must try for an answer, she continues with her brave monologue)

You must kiss me properly, Spike. Not the kind of kiss you give me when you're not thinking of me at all. You must think of me, Spike, because it's my wedding day. So you must give me the kind of kiss that I like, do you hear?

(she stands up and goes to the mirror, where she holds the dress against her body and looks at it critically. She speaks wistfully)

Maria said this dress should be for a big wedding, so that many people could see it.

(she looks at it)

Sometimes I wish too it was going to be for a big wedding.

SPIKE

(sitting up on the edge of bed and almost shouting)

Well it can't be a big wedding, that's all!

(it looks to him as though she has put on the dress)

Take it off!

~~I'm not wearing it,~~ ELIZABETH
I haven't got it on, Spike. I'm only trying it.

SPIKE

Well stop trying it, that's all!

ELIZABETH

That's silly, when I'm wearing it tomorrow.

(she softens)

I'll stop trying it.

(she goes to the wardrobe and hangs up the dress)

SPIKE

Why can't you wear a black dress tomorrow?

ELIZABETH

You can't wear a black dress. Not to a wedding. Don't you know what you wear a black dress for?

(she goes to him)

Are you still worrying about the dream? Don't you know Spike, you're worrying for nothing? Don't you know I'll keep to you so long as we both shall live?

(she puts her arms round him)

Don't you know?

Of course

SPIKE

(~~repentantly, clinging to her~~)

Yes, I know, ~~I know~~. Don't take any notice of me, Elizabeth. I'm just a fool. *(he clings to her, almost like a child)*

~~ELIZABETH~~

~~You see that box over there? That's your wedding present.~~

~~SPIKE~~

~~What is it?~~

~~ELIZABETH~~

~~No I won't tell. You must wait, till tomorrow. And where's mine?~~

~~SPIKE~~

~~I've hidden it away.~~

ELIZABETH

You're not a fool, Spike. You just think too much. You just see every bad thing that can happen.

SPIKE

Well I'm lucky too. To have someone like you. If it weren't for you, I'd go mad, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH

That's what I'm for.

(brightly)

That's what I'm promising tomorrow. To love and to comfort and to keep, not only when you are well, but when you are sick too.

(they sit holding each other, but SPIKE'S face shows that he is going back to his obsession)

SPIKE

(pulling away from her embrace)

Let's not get married tomorrow. Let's get married soon, but not tomorrow.

(urgently)

Let's go away from Victoriatown first. Let's get away from here.

~~ELIZABETH~~

~~Where?~~

~~Eliz~~

What?

Orlando. SPIKE
You go to ~~Happyland~~. And I'll go to Germiston, Benoni,
anywhere, and when it's safe, I'll come back to you.

ELIZABETH
Oh Spike!

SPIKE
That's what Sponono says too.

ELIZABETH
Why must we listen to Sponono?

SPIKE
He's my friend, that's why!

ELIZABETH
~~(crying)~~
He's not your friend. He knows we're getting married,
but he writes again to me.

SPIKE
What did he write?

ELIZABETH
(tearfully)
He calls me his White Lily.

SPIKE
(smiles suddenly, and his whole face changes)
~~We all called you the White Lily!~~

ELIZABETH
(still tearfully)
He says I'm the most beautiful girl in Johannesburg.

SPIKE
(he smiles again)
That's terrible!

ELIZABETH
He ~~says~~ ^{says all} these things, and you just laugh, ~~that's all.~~

SPIKE *Ag, we all know Sponono.*
(consoles and kisses her)
Are you still angry?

ELIZABETH
(she smiles too)
Not when I see you smile. Oh Spike, it's so long since I saw
you smile.

(they embrace each other, and SPIKE is more loving
than he has been as yet)

SPIKE
You do comfort me.

ELIZABETH
Do I, Spike?

SPIKE
Yes, you do.
(They make a little love. But suddenly SPIKE
is on his feet in terror. He stares at the
door, and following his example, so does she.
He speaks in a low voice)

Did you hear?

ELIZABETH

No.

SPIKE

Someone knocked.

(He moves slowly to the door. When he reaches it he stands still a moment. Then he suddenly wrenches it open. But there is nothing there. Like a man under a spell he stands in the doorway. He looks to right and to left, but apparently sees nothing there. He shuts the door and comes back back to stand near the wardrobe.)

It's better to go back to the gang.

ELIZABETH

(on her feet)

No.

SPIKE

I would be safe, you would be safe.

ELIZABETH

I don't want to be safe. I just want to be with you. I just want to live like we said we were going to live. With our own house, and our own children, and no troubles.

SPIKE

Haven't you heard of the gang?

ELIZABETH

Yes, I've heard of them. But I'm not going to live with them. Why don't you say what Sponono says, to hell with them?

SPIKE

(very honestly)

I'm not Sponono, that's why.

ELIZABETH

You're as good as him.

SPIKE

I may be as good and may be not as good. But I'm not him, do you hear?

ELIZABETH

If you go back to the gang, then sooner or later you'll be caught. And what'll I do if they take you away again? Tell me, what'll I do?

SPIKE

(harshly)

You could marry Sponono. You could be his White Lily.

ELIZABETH

Can't you understand, I love you? I don't want any house without you. I don't want any children without you. I don't want any Sponono. He'll do what his father did, go off and leave the mother and the ~~children~~ ^{kids}. And a woman can't look after ~~children~~ ^{kids} without a man. But I don't love him, Spike, I love you.

(SPIKE'S attention is beginning to waver)

I remember the factory dance. You came there soon after you got your special leave. And you danced with me. And I said to myself, that's the one for me.

(SPIKE has not listened to her memories. He is listenig . He goes nearer the wardrobe. With a sudden movement he wrenches that open too. But he shrinks from the wedding dress)

ELIZABETH

(soothingly)
Spike, there's nothing there. There's nobody hiding there.
(she goes to the wardrobe)
Look, there's only my wedding dress.
(she demonstrates for him)
And behind that is your wedding suit.
(she demonstrates)
and behind that, there is ~~nothing~~. *nothing.* (She does not quite finish the word
nothing, ~~but~~ there is something there after all. For a moment
she stands quite still. Then she brings it out.
It is a leather sheath, and out from it she brings
a deadly knife. They both look at it)
Is that my wedding present?
(he does not answer)
Why didn't you tell me? We can't start off with secrets.

SPIKE

I knew you wouldn't agree.

ELIZABETH

I'll never agree. When you asked me to marry ^{you,} you promised me.

SPIKE

I promised you then. But things have changed.

ELIZABETH

Tomorrow I'm promising too. But I won't change.

SPIKE

But it's my life!

ELIZABETH

You can choose. Between your life and ours.

SPIKE

You're hard.

ELIZABETH

I won't give any child a father who carries a knife.

SPIKE

Not even if he's in danger of his life?

(ELIZABETH weeps)

Not even then?

ELIZABETH

Not even then.

(SPIKE takes up his cap. She pleads with him)

Spike, go and see the Principal.

SPIKE

The lanie! What can he do?

ELIZABETH

He helped you before. Didn't he help you to say you were finished with troubles? Wasn't that something?

SPIKE

I tell you, things have changed.

(Suddenly there is a knock on the door. Even ELIZABETH can hear it this time. Both she & SPIKE are afraid) SPIKE goes to the door. Now he thinks of the knife. He comes back for the knife. ELIZ Don't take the knife. Don't go to the door. (SPIKE wrests the knife from her. He

Who's there?

(But there is no reply. He takes the sheath from her and draws out the knife. Then he walks softly to the door. He opens it savagely as before. There is no one there. But on the step there is a letter. He picks it up and opens it. He reads it. He gives it to her. She reads it. He looks at her as though she might say something, but she says nothing) She takes it from him. She reads it.)

Do you see what I mean?

(she nods)

And you still say the same?

(she nods) (he shrugs his shoulders and goes out and shakes the door leaving ELIZABETH helpless. The situation is beyond her. SPIKE'S view and hers are irreconcilable. She feels exhausted. Then she pulls herself together. Quickly she throws off her apron, and goes to the wardrobe. What does she see there but the kerchief that SPONOMO bought her? With a shrug and a laugh she puts it on. The lights dim) (Chorus sings Fiyala) (The Chorus stops.)