



ACT ONE - SCENE THREE
THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

↑ Floor between the two portions of the dais.

The Principal's office is situated on the ~~dais~~. Besides his own chair there are ~~four~~ others, ~~two on either side, not placed symmetrically.~~ To the right of this table is a stand, and ~~on the table~~ this are prominently displayed at least two quite big books, the Punishment Book with red covers, and the Letter Book with green covers.

~~Descriptions are~~

On the table is another big book, the Special Leave Book. It is open. There are also papers, pen and ink, a lamp, a telephone, ~~photo of the PRINCIPAL'S wife and children.~~

When the scene opens, the PRINCIPAL is working at his table. WALTER is cleaning the PRINCIPAL'S office. He is chewing gum.

5.40

PRINCIPAL

(offhand)
How do you like it here, Walter?

WALTER

(He straightens up. His attitude is correct but unfathomable. He does not like the reformatory, and has no intention of liking it)
It's good meneer.

PRINCIPAL

(still offhand)
How do you like the free system?
(WALTER does not comprehend)
You know. The badges.

WALTER

It's good, meneer.

PRINCIPAL

Don't you think it's a bit silly?
(WALTER is not very intelligent, and he considers carefully before he answers questions. He does not know what traps are being set for him) ^{appears to}

Don't you think it's - well, risky - you know, dangerous - to take a boy's promise when you don't really know what he will do?

WALTER

It's all right, meneer.
(He wants to get on with the cleaning, but he realises the PRINCIPAL is powerful, and if he wants to ask questions, it is wise to answer them. But he starts to clean again)

PRINCIPAL

If you gave your promise, would you keep it?

WALTER
 (stopping cleaning)
 Yes, meneer.

PRINCIPAL
 Did you know Spike before?

WALTER
 (now fully on his guard)
 Yes, meneer.

PRINCIPAL
 And Sponono?

WALTER
 Yes, meneer.

PRINCIPAL
 Why are you here, Walter?

WALTER
 (he resents this questioning. His manner is nearly insolent as he dares to make it)
 I killed someone.

PRINCIPAL
 In Victoriatown?

WALTER
 Yes.

PRINCIPAL
 (offhand)
 Why did you kill him?

WALTER
 (he chews) ~~but he can find no satisfactory answer~~
 I just killed him

PRINCIPAL
 Because he took the small boy Charlie away?

WALTER
 Yes.

PRINCIPAL
 Why did you kill him for that?

WALTER
 Charlie had no people. Nothing. We took him in.

PRINCIPAL
 And this man took him away?

WALTER
 Yes.

PRINCIPAL
 I see
 (he thinks for a minute)
 You don't like questions, do you, Walter?

WALTER
 Meneer can ask any questions.

PRINCIPAL
 I hope you do well here, Walter.

WALTER

Shall I go on with the cleaning, meneer?

(PRINCIPAL nods. He returns to his work. WALTER returns to his cleaning. MR. MABASO enters with papers)

MABASO *Good morning Principal*
PRINC *Good morning Mabaso* (MABASO *etc*)

PRINCIPAL

(he shows MABASO an entry in the Special Leave Book)

You see that. Sponono's first leave. and he came back on the very minute.

MABASO

The Principal should feel gratified.

PRINCIPAL

So should you. Well did you see Mrs. Maarman?

MABASO

Yes, Principal, ~~I saw her.~~

~~PRINCIPAL~~

~~And what did she say?~~

MABASO

I'm afraid I've got a shock for you, ~~Principal.~~

PRINCIPAL

Why, is she no good?

~~very good~~ *all right*, MABASO

She's ~~very good~~, but she's ~~is~~ no relation to Ha'penny whatsoever. ~~The whole thing is a fantasy.~~ He adopted the family, but they never adopted him. *The whole thing is a fantasy.*

PRINCIPAL

How did the fantasy start?

MABASO

I suppose he wanted a family. According to Mrs. Maarman, he used to look in at the windows, and watch them at meals or playing. Many a time she drove him away.

So there's no hope she would PRINCIPAL
Would ~~she~~ take him as a foster-child?

MABASO

~~I~~ asked her. She says under no circumstances whatsoever. She doesn't wish to receive any further letters from him. She has never written to him, and she doesn't intend ever to write to him. What's more, she says, she's a coloured woman, and Ha'penny is a Mosuto, and she doesn't want any African child in her family. You know how it is, Principal. Some coloured people regard themselves as superior to African people, to compensate themselves for being regarded as inferior to white people.

(He delivers this statement with a barely perceptible edge to his voice)

PRINCIPAL

Tell me, what are the children's names?

MABASO

(looking at his papers)

Richard, Dickie, Anna and Mina.