

PC 11/18/17



ACT ONE - SCENE FIVE
PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE.

There are Christmas decorations in the Principal's office. WALTER'S belt is on the table. Mr. MABASO comes in with SPONONO, with his eye bandaged, and WALTER. The PRINCIPAL stands up and goes to SPONONO, and touches him gently over the eye. One can see SPONONO is pleased.

MAB & PRINC on their MINE seated

~~Scene 5~~
MAB

Principal, the boys are here (PRINC needs) MR MAB clap his hands

like a subject
no
effects

#80
40



PRINCIPAL

How is it doing, Sponono?

SPONONO

Well, meneer.

PRINCIPAL

When will the bandage come off?

SPONONO

The doctor says one more day, meneer.

PRINCIPAL

Good.

(He goes back to his chair, sits down, looks at WALTER and he says to him)

This is a very serious thing.

WALTER

(who speaks throughout with his usual spinx-like inscrutability. He is chewing gum which gives him an indifferent air)

I know, meneer. That is why I got permission to go to the hospital, so that I could ask SPONONO to forgive me.

PRINCIPAL

What are you chewing?

WALTER

Gum, meneer.

PRINCIPAL

Take it out.

(WALTER takes it out. (to SPONONO))

Did you forgive him?

SPONONO

Yes, meneer. He did not mean to hurt my eye. I might have hurt his eye too if I had had such a belt. It was his bad luck, meneer.

PRINCIPAL

(to WALTER)

You know it is against the law to have such a belt?

WALTER

Yes, meneer.

MABASO

(distressed)

Principal, I look every day for these belts, but I missed this one.

PRINCIPAL
(soothing his distress with a wave of his hand
and speaking to SPONONO)
You forgave him - completely?

SPONONO
Yes, meneer.

PRINCIPAL
What made you do that?

SPONONO
It is the teaching of Jesus, meneer.
(he speaks to PRINCIPAL almost as though he were
instructing him)
Jesus said we must forgive those who sin against us, even
to seventy times seven.

PRINCIPAL
So that if tomorrow Walter struck you in the other eye,
you would forgive him for that also?

SPONONO
I cannot say, meneer, for it has not happened. We are
speaking about this, that has already happened.

PRINCIPAL
And you have no hatred for Walter, although he might have
destroyed your eye altogether?

SPONONO
I decided to forgive him ~~this~~, meneer, so I cannot hate
him. You cannot forgive a person and go on hating him.

PRINCIPAL
(sincerely)
You are a wonderful fellow, Sponono.

SPONONO
No Manner I am not wonderful.

PRINCIPAL
(turning to WALTER)
You are lucky Sponono did not lose his eye.

WALTER
Yes Meneer.

PRINCIPAL
If he had lost his eye, I would have asked for you to go
to prison. (No reply)
You are twenty, a man not a boy. When will you learn
that you cannot strike just when you want to?
(no reply. The PRINCIPAL speaks sharply) I am
asking you a question)

WALTER
(unwillingly)
I am learning.

PRINCIPAL
(sharply)
You are not learning fast enough.

WALTER
(angered by the sharp note, and speaking almost
insultingly)
I am learning.

PRINCIPAL

(very coldly)

I am thinking of a way to teach you faster.

perhaps it will help you to learn faster if I say you are not allowed to go to the games for six months.

SPONONO

But meneer, I have forgiven him.

PRINCIPAL

(still Sharply)

That was generous of you, Sponono. But your forgiveness is between you and him. Between him and me is another matter.

SPONONO

You should find it easier to forgive him, meneer, for it was my eye that was hurt, not yours.

(the scandalised MR. MABASC wants to intervene but PRINCIPAL waves him aside).

PRINCIPAL

(to SPONONO)

You should have been the Principal.

SPONONO

You are playing with me, meneer.

PRINCIPAL

Sponono, you may forgive a person and I may forgive him also, but he may still have to bear the consequences of his act.

(SPONONO looks disbelieving)

Do you think if a person is forgiven, the whole thing is wiped out as though it had never happened?

SPONONO

(decisively)

Yes.

(the PRINCIPAL thinks it over)

Meneer, what good is it to forgive a person if you mean to punish him afterwards?

(the PRINCIPAL thinks it over. SPONONO speaks to him softly)

That is not forgiveness, meneer.

(A Boy trips in a tray with tea) & places it on the table)

PRINCIPAL

(who is affected by SPONONO'S reasoning, to WALTER)

You are lucky Sponono is so generous. He believes that if you are forgiven, you cannot be punished. ~~But~~ that is not the reason why I am not punishing you. I am not punishing you because I still hope you will learn that you cannot strike whenever you want to. Therefore you are dismissed with a reprimand. ~~Your belt will be taken away from you, and a softer one will be given to you. If you will take my advice, you will never wear such a belt. for the rest of your life. Is there anything you would like to say?~~ *(WAL starts to go) PRINC Have you nothing to say?*

WALTER

No.

MABASO

No, meneer.

WALTER

No, meneer.

Handwritten scribble

Handwritten scribble

STET

STET

PRINCIPAL
You have nothing to say to Sponono?

WALTER
No (a pause just perceptible) meneer.

PRINCIPAL
Not even to thank him?

WALTER (*turns to SPO. SPO. offers his hand*)
~~(offers his hand to SPONONO)~~ ~~WALTER has not take it)~~
Thanks, ~~you~~ Sponono.

~~(WALTER'S gesture is cold and perfunctory. He does not smile or relax his inscrutability. He is in the intolerable position of having to do what he is told. But SPONONO bows to him in thanks. WALTER goes.)~~ *He goes. PRINC sits at the tea-table down stage)*

MABASO
All right, Sponono, you can go.

SPONONO
(loftily)
I have business with the Principal.

(MABASO is scandalised. PRINCIPAL waves soothingly)

PRINCIPAL
Are you a Christian, Sponono?

SPONONO
No meneer. I am not good enough. But I like to obey the commandments.

~~All the commandments. Or do you like to obey some commandments, more than others?~~ *just*
~~(no reply)~~ ~~PRINCIPAL~~
~~(no reply)~~ ~~PRINCIPAL~~

All right, what's your business?

SPONONO
(earnest at once)
It's Ha'penny, meneer.

PRINCIPAL
He's dying, Sponono. ~~In one day, two days, three days,~~ *In one day, 2 days, 3 days, in a few days*
hell ~~will~~ be gone, ~~the doctor says~~

SPONONO
We can save him, meneer.

How? ~~How?~~ ~~The doctor says No. It's meningitis - a fever of the brain.~~
~~we can't do anything. Sponono~~

SPONONO
We can get Mrs. Maarman here. He's ~~is~~ not dying of sickness, meneer. He's ~~is~~ dying because the boys laughed at him. He's ~~is~~ dying because Walter said his mother was a lie.

PRINCIPAL
You know what Mrs. Maarman said, that she would not be mother to a boy like that?

SPONONO
(coming closer)
She does ~~not~~ know him, meneer. She does ~~not~~ know how obedient he is. She thinks he would be naughty. She doesn't know how quiet he is.

SPONONO (cont.)

Handwritten scribbles and numbers: 2, 3, 4, 5

~~(pleadingly)~~

~~You know he's not naughty, meneer.~~

STET

(urgently)

Let me go to Klipfontein, meneer. I'll bring her back with me.

PRINCIPAL

Mr. Mabaso has been to Klipfontein twice. Mrs. Maarman says ~~she says~~ she wants nothing to do with Ha'penny.

SPONONO

Let me go, meneer. She'll listen to me.
(he looks antagonistically at MABASO)

PRINCIPAL

She says she's a coloured woman, and she cannot take a Mosutho boy.

SPONONO

Coloured! Mosutho! Meneer, *Ag* that's nothing.
(he kneels and takes the PRINCIPAL'S hand)
~~Do that for him, meneer, so that the boys can see he didn't lie.~~

PRINCIPAL

Don't you understand? He's dying. ~~Doctor~~ *It's a fever of the brain.*
We can't do anything.

SPONONO

Even if he's dying, meneer, can't the boys see he didn't lie.

(he still has the PRINCIPAL'S hand, and MABASO does not approve of this, and tries to get SPONONO to release it and stand up)

Leave me alone, do you hear?

PRINCIPAL

Sponono! *Stand up at once!*

~~SPONONO~~

~~Yes, meneer.~~

~~PRINCIPAL~~

~~Stand up at once.~~

(SPONONO stands up, sullen and resentful. He looks at MABASO with hostility)

I'm sorry, Sponono, but I can't let you go to see Mrs. Maarman. What Mr. Mabaso can't do, I do, ~~not~~ think you could do.

SPONONO

(bursting out)
~~We could try! Let me try!~~

Handwritten scribble

PRINCIPAL

I'm sorry, but you can't try.
(SPONONO with an insolent gesture, starts to leave the office before he has been dismissed. At the door he offers a last piece of insolence)

SPONONO

(to MABASO)
My business is finished.

~~PRINCIPAL~~

~~Sponono!~~

~~SPONONO~~

~~Yes.~~

PRINCIPAL

Sponono, Come back here.

(SPONONO comes back sullenly)

Who gave you the right to behave like this?

(no reply)

Was it your court?

(no reply)

Answer me.

SPONONO.

Yes! It was my court.

PRINCIPAL

Listen to me. There's only one court here, and that's in this office. I hear you have prefects in your court. Well tell them there's only one law here, and that is mine. Do you hear?

SPONONO

I hear.

PRINCIPAL

There's a boy in the hospital who went through your boiling water test. The Doctor says he is seriously burned. ~~They say Sponono's gave him~~ ~~could give him the~~ ~~boiling water test.~~

MABASO ~~went~~ *through Sponono's boiling water test.*

The doctor says he is

SPONONO

The water wasn't boiling!

PRINCIPAL

I don't care if it was boiling or ~~cold!~~ ^{not.} I won't have it, that's all. Do you understand me? ~~that's all. Do you understand me?~~

SPONONO

(he first debates with himself if he will answer)

I understand.

PRINCIPAL

Then you may go.

~~(Sullenly)~~ ^(Sullenly) (SPONONO goes) ~~accompanied by an angry MABASO. Lights dim)~~ accompanied by an angry

MABASO comes a bit by the PRINC at the tea table. *MABASO* smiles to thank his judgment of SPO is vindicated. PRINC takes a cup of tea looks meaningfully at the PRINC. *Chorus* deepens the mood. ^{by singing MALASULABU.} (lights dim)



ACT ONE - SCENE SIX
VISITOR'S ROOM.

The lights come up in the Visitor's Room. The furniture is a table with a backless bench at each long side. There is even a little Christmas decoration here. Sitting on one side of the table is a MAN and on the other a WOMAN. They are MR. & MRS. MAKATINI. Between them on the table are coloured soft drinks, bananas, cakes and other Christmas fare for their son. A funeral hymn can be heard in the distance; otherwise they are alone. They talk in subdued voices, impressed by the size of the place, impressed also because it is an evidence of the power of Law and the State. Mr. Makatini is slightly tipsy.

WOMAN

It seems a nice place.

MAN

Yes

(SPONONO'S face, with the patch over one eye, and unseen by them, appears at the window of the Visitors' Room. He looks at them both).

MAN

I'm not sure though. There's something I don't quite like.

WOMAN

Have you got the present?

(The MAN pulls the present out of his inside coat pocket, and a bundle of notes falls to the floor. He does not notice this until she picks them up and shakes them in his face.)

Now just look at that. How many times have I told you?

(She puts the notes in her bag)

That's where they stay!

(The MAN smiles foolishly and apologetically.)

You've had too much to drink, that's the trouble.

(MAN looks at her amiably. SPONONO enters.)

SPONONO

(at his most charming)

Auntie! Uncle! Happy Xmas to you! Has anyone attended to you?

WOMAN

No my boy. We rang the bell but no one heard us.

SPONONO

No, No. I heard you. Everyone's busy today, with games and fireworks. Now they're all in the chapel. Auntie, who are you wanting?

WOMAN

Henry Makatini. It's our son. Do you know him?