

# COWARDS OF THE REPUBLIC

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©2022



**UTAFITI FOUNDATION**

*Cowards of the Republic*

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### **DEDICATION**

For many years, literary writers have been persistent in maintaining a balanced society through critical investigations, writing and publication of materials addressing various concerns at all levels of need. We want to dedicate this book to scholars, teachers, students, the general society and stakeholders who have the goodwill of justice, peaceful coexistence and leadership of growth and progression.

With gratitude, we unanimously dedicate this book to our families, without their love, presence and cordial understanding, perhaps this literature would have been not actualized. We are most grateful to God, his grace is sufficient.

Finally, we would like to dedicate this text to all young, aged, and talented performers who'll take a great enthusiasm in practicing this literature.

*Cowards of the Republic*

Kizito is a family man who despite his royal history, now lives in the village of Rurambi as a common peasant. At the village he shares a challenged matrimonial life with his wife Gisabo. He is sad for how the state of affairs in the republic state has cost them happiness. He recalls how his parents died trying to make his country better place, a question that his fast coming back to him like a plague

**Ruratema:** You have reminded me of my own father. He was slaughtered like a goat. His screams and wails as they chopped off his arms, part by part from head to toe haunts me too. *(He paces about in a fit then sits on the wooden rocking bench, gazing into the vast empty part of the compound)*

**Ruratema:** My mother was tied on a government cruiser for singing songs suspected to ridicule the government. She was hauled on the road for miles until only a strand of her hair was left dancing on the road.

**Kizito:** *(grudgingly)* Our parents perished liberating this country. It would be foolish of us to similarly go in the same quest. We cannot succumb the same manner!

Cowards of the republic is a play charged with an unprecedented coups d'état of at least two heads of state within an abnormal timeline. Betrayal of the people, leaders of questionable integrity. Escalating inflation, public confinement is among the contemporary subjects addressed in the play.

In attempt to overhaul the bad state of affairs in the nation, two friends Ruratema and Kizito, and his brother Rugero are scratching their heads one evening at Kizito's homestead located in an upcountry village Rurambi.

**Kizito:** My friend, life at present in this republic is worrying. Everything is grinding to a halt. Life is becoming barely manageable.

**Rugero:** Everything is so screwed up! A pungent stink emanates from our governance, religion, business, technology. Ethnicity has become the bane of our existence.

The young men are faced with a serious dilemma, since even though they have so much influence on their people historically, it is so uncertain if their dreams of fixing their state could really be hatched. The world has changed, leaders now use guns and human machineries to suppress their critics and rivals, will they survive this hostile, uncalled for form of leadership? They seem so haunted by spirits of many dead loved ones, that their solution is sort for a changed republic no matter the cost.

**Ruratema:** *(thoughtfully, tapping Rugero's back)* Rugero my brother's brother, this republic needs salvation not of the blood of Christ but the blood of men, women and children. All must get involved, including the weak, the strong, the sick and the healthy. People who are ready to die for a legacy of this country's peaceful coexistence. It's the only way, I tell you.

Will they Kizito and Ruratema overhaul their land? Are they toothless dogs barking at a mere darkness? Are they just cowards of a republic? Dig deep!

### **ABOUT THIS PLAY**

Cowards of the Republic is a play by Dr Jean Claude Zigama and Bonface Otieno, first published in 2023. Unlike many others, this play investigates contemporary tragedies of political unrest, coups d'état and politically aligned injustices on innocent members of a nation. It connects the colonial periods while focusing on modern political experiences through a powerful juxtaposition. Roughly five decades after independence, the Republic state is still characterised by an oligarchic form of governance where a relatively small privileged class comprised of those who had been presumed best gratified to rule continues to jeopardise the government's affairs as well as the general welfare of the people of the republic.

Contrary to the people's expectations of a free nation, a democratic country characterised by growth and consequential progress, fairness, the rule of law, justice, humanity, freedom of expression and security, the Republican state is a den of bloodshed, political exploitation, a country where hypocrisy and favouritism wheels the governance. Extrajudicial killings and social disparities, poor education, unemployment, high cost of living, misappropriation of public resources is among the top concerns of the people of the republic.

The play is charged with an unprecedented coups d'état of at least two heads of state within an abnormal timeline. Betrayal of the people, leaders of questionable integrity, eescalating inflation, public confinement are among the contemporary subjects addressed in the play.

In an attempt to overhaul the bad affairs of the nation, two friends Ruratema and Kizito are scratching their heads one evening at Kizito's homestead located in an upcountry village Rurambi. The two friends are faced with a serious dilemma, since even though they have so much influence on the people historically, it is so uncertain if their dreams of fixing their state could really be hatched. The world has changed, leaders now use guns, human machineries and smart devices to suppress their critics and rivals, will they survive this hostile, uncalled for form of leadership?

*Conards of the Republic*



## CHARACTERS

1. **Ruratema**- chief commander of Liberation forces, later president, village resident of Rurambi and Kizitos best friend.
2. **Rutemayeze**- president of the republic.
3. **Misigaro** - cabinet minister defence
4. **Misago**- cabinet minister of education
5. **Rugaza** - cabinet minister devolution
6. **Cyusa**- cabinet minister of finance
7. **Lilybeth Buranga**- cabinet minister of agriculture
7. **Kizito**- village farmer, Ruratema's best friend.
8. **Gisabo**- Kizito's wife
9. **Rugero** - Kizito's twin brother.
10. **The Crowd/Voices**- voices of the people of the republic state.



**ACT ONE**

**SCENE ONE**

*It is late evening in an upcountry compound in Rurumbi a small village in the republic state. The compound has two large grass-thatched houses sitting side by side, far north, stands another aged grass-thatched house in the most horrible shape. About three black cows can be seen grazing at the corners of the fence. A cactus fence all-round the spacious compound. A thick cloud of smoke plumes from one of the oldest huts in the village. loud silence arrests the geographical domain, which is broken by distant voices of playing children. Two brothers, a friend, and a woman are outside their hut by sunset. As they crack some Kola nuts on a sleek stone, they are talking about their republic. A very tall sycamore tree proudly stands in the middle of the homestead. Southwards, stretches of thousand acres of land tilled and planted are dimly visualized. The three men converse amid laughter and frown from time to time, they seem perplexed by the contemporary occurrences tracing way back to history in the republic state. It is the outrageous and the prevailing impoverished living conditions in the republic that gobble their minds. They want to overhaul the nation but the circumstances are too overwhelming. The scene opens with a vicious exchange between Kizito and his wife Gisabo.*

**Kizito:** *(Kizito is calling out to his wife Gisabo. He turns his head towards the other grass thatched house with cloud smoke disappearing into the thin atmosphere)* Gisabo are you not going to bring us anything to drink?

**Gisabo:** *(retorting from a distance. It's only a feminine voice that is heard)* I am so sorry, I will be out in a second my husband...

**Kizito:** *(sharply interrupting her)*. This is not the time for your little speeches Gisabo! You better be fast, because we can't wait any longer.

**Ruratema:** *(resuming their conversation)* Life has become overwhelming my friend Kizito. Nothing is working out in this wrecked economy! Prices commodities in this state are skyrocketing by the day!

**Kizito:** *(sadly)* It has become difficult to feed my own mouth, let alone my wife's. I wonder what sort of father I will make, just in case Gisabo conceives during this bad time.

**Ruratema:** *(smiles assuringly)*. You are responsible my friend.

**Kizito:** *(almost immediately)* You know very well that is not what I mean. Women are like children my friend. Even during these times of scarcity, my wife still manages to toss resources around, like a queen's daughter running a charity! Sometimes, Gisabo stupidly...



**Ruratema:** (*interrupting him*) Shhh... my friend, some words are not to be shouted. Some bad wind may blow them over like a stray strand of hair, which then turns into a disastrous nightmare on your face!

**Gisabo:** (*Carefully sets a stool before the men then places a jug of coffee on the stool and kneels down in greeting*) Good evening my husband, welcome back. Good evening Ruratema, and good evening to you my in-law Rugero?

**Ruratema:** (*Softly*). Good evening our wife.

*Rugero keenly observes Gisabo as she pours the steaming coffee into the cups.*

**Rugero:** (*Concerned*) Our wife, you look pale today. Is anything amiss? Are you okay?

**Gisabo:** (*feigning a hesitant smile*) All is well, and I am alright.

*Kizito picks his cup of coffee, blows into it to cool, takes in the aroma of the coffee and then takes a large sip. He spits out in disgust.*

**Kizito:** (*angrily*) All is not well woman! Why do you serve us coffee without any taste of sugar in it?

**Gisabo:** (*Calmly but betraying some fear*) My groom, the sugar is finished.

**Kizito:** (*surprised with raging anger*) Finished! How on earth is the sugar finished, when it's barely a week since I bought it in kilograms?

**Gisabo:**(*softly*) The sugar dish was emptied by this evening my husband.

**Kizito:** (*He looks her in the eye, his eyes are crimson red*) Don't even tell me that all the sugar I brought here is already depleted Gisabo. How on earth do you use sugar in this house? Or have you started your charity program again?

**Gisabo:** (*lowers her head and speaks more calmly*) My husband, how can you even say that? You take a drink of coffee or tea every dawn and dusk. How then do you expect sugar dish to remain full?

**Kizito:** (*furiously*) So now you have the audacity to stand there asking me questions eehh-Gisabo? Do I also cook in the kitchen? Do I prepare the tea or coffee you are talking about? Why haven't you reduced the amount of sugar you spend in your cooking?

**Gisabo:** (*still calm but steadily getting upset*) My husband we can't be exchanging bitter words over sugar. I am sorry but it is not my fault. Everything in this country is messed up!

**Commented [TK1]:** This statement gives a connotation of a close up view. It would work for a film script. For stage, this, unless spelt in the proceeding dialogues cannot be seen by the audience. Unless the intention is to keep the play as written drama for reading only. However, even with this, the parentheses should indicate emotional action, sound, gesticulation, poise, or movement. Eye colour is an interesting choice)

**Kizito:***(standing up halfway)* Oh Yes! We have to exchange and exchange we shall! What do you think you know about this country woman!

**Gisabo:***(bows her head)* I'm sorry my husband, but even the packaging seal of the sugar you brought here was broken. How was I to be sure the market people had not tampered with it?

**Kizito:** *(sitting down)* Do I look like a shop vendor Gisabo? I am a farmer, I repeat, farmer!

**Gisabo:** I apologise. It will not happen again.

**Kizito:***(sarcastically)* broken packaging...you tell me about broken packaging as if yourself came to me as a sealed package

**Gisabo:** *(heavily embarrassed)* I am sorry my dearest husband...

**Kizito:***(interrupting Gisabo)* You better change your cooking technique! Or else...

**Ruratema:***(interrupting)* Relax my friend. Let the poor woman be. She has apologized. *(He turns to face Gisabo then speaks to her with a broad smile)* It is okay our wife, you can leave us now...

**Gisabo:** Thank you, my husband.

*Gisabo bows and makes to leave*

**Ruratema:** *(as if he just remembered something instantly)* Wait! Please pass by my house and tell my wife to give you a kilogramme of sugar from the store.

**Gisabo:** Thank you my husband.

**Rugero:** It is well our wife. |

**Ruratema:** My brother Kizito, was it necessary to admonish her that way?

**Kizito:***(Authoritatively)* My brother, these women are just careless. Life is hazardous and a woman must be cautious with these scarce resources. These women don't know how to save a thing! Do they even have an idea how we suffer to provide for them?

**Ruratema:** I agree with you brother, but I still insist, it is not her fault. You should not have insulted her before us. | Please take time to apologize to her.

**Kizito:** *(remorsefully)* You are right my friend. I will speak to her. Also, thank you for the sugar...

**Commented [TK2]:** This is unnecessary unless it is supposed to provide a connotation of specific dangers within the compound

**Commented [TK3]:** This is already connoted in the preceding line

**Ruratema:** (*patting Kizito on his shoulder*) What are friends for?

*The two friends exchange knowing looks and Kizito pats Ruratema's shoulder in acknowledgement.*

**Kizito:** My friend, life at present in this republic is deeply worrying. Everything is grinding to a halt. Life is becoming unmanageable.

**Rugero:** Everything is screwed up! A pungent stink emanates from our governance, religion, business technology. Ethnicity has become the bane of our existence. (*supplicating*) This republic needs prayers.

**Kizito:** (*bewildered*) Prayers! What prayers? This Republic is beyond prayer. We need a revolution. We need liberation. Bold men and women to rise and overhaul this nation. That is what this republic needs. Not devotions!

**Rugero:** Our people have fought before, and no change was realised. Those gallant patriots who tried, sunk back to the deep oceans of depression, and the agony of inflicted torture and rejection. They died the most horrible way and dishonoured in their sleep. The republic was too hostile to their honourable quest.

**Ruratema:** (*thoughtfully, tapping Rugero's back*) Rugero! Rugero my brother's brother, this republic needs salvation, not of the blood of Christ, but the blood of men, women, and children. All must get involved, including the weak, the strong, the sick and the healthy. People who are ready to die for a legacy of this country's peaceful coexistence. It is the only way, I tell you.

**Kizito:** (*affirmatively*) Exactly! We need people who will address the wider social class disparity, and bridge the heightening gap. Men who will lead a revolution against our morally bankrupt government. This must be done for the sake of our children. We must bestow to them a tomorrow of fairness, justice, and improved livelihood.

**Ruratema:** Our people are scared. Not because they are cowards, but petrified by the toxicity of this society. In fact, men are afraid to walk freely in their own villages. Heists and extrajudicial killings are ravaging every corner of our nation. Who are the victims, you may ask. They are our parents, aunts, uncles, cousins, nephews, nieces, sisters, brothers and friends. Everyone is a victim.

**Kizito:** Children are suffering while others are homeless. Enduring the ever-lost hope! The hope for a better life, hope for parenthood, hope for food even it is from the pits. Some rags and fresh water from the village's stream. Deficiency is common knowledge to everybody. This country needs to be fixed!

**Rugero:** You must be forgetting about the ill-fated education sector in our republic. Learned people without jobs. Graduating just to embark on seeking non-existent job opportunities. What is the use of education?

**Kizito:** Brother I suppose you remembered education issues because you are a jobless graduate (*giggles sarcastically*) What about devolution? Our shining light promulgated a decade ago, after a resounding referendum that devolved governance to our provinces, constituencies, and wards. Let me ask you... have you met the devolved resources on your way here in this Rurambi? Have you met a job somewhere in the devolved government?

**Rugero:** (*seriously*) So, who is going to give me a job in this Rurambi? Don't the governor, the Member of Parliament, and the ward representative have enough relatives to fill every available vacancy in the job market. Forget that thing brother.

**Ruratema:** (*sadly*) My friends. The status of this nation eats up my mind. Our youth attempting suicide are reported daily. It's not because they love dying, death is not a game, they are all hopeless. It hurts a lot that no one cares.

**Kizito:** (*interrupting*) It is a very sad situation. It is impossible to survive in this hostile ecosystem of the republic. If one had the chance of leaving...

**Ruratema:** No Kizito! We were born here. This is our home and we are the people who have to fight and transform this republic to a better place. We have to force their ears to listen keenly to our grievances and to heed to our plea!

**Rugero:** Indeed! But we don't have to employ force. We can use dialogue.

**Kizito:** Men and women before us tried dialogue but it never worked.

**Rugero:** Well, many others used violence but it never worked either!

**Ruratema:** Then we have to use both, because we don't have another time to liberate our people and set this republic free from mediocrity, oppression, poverty, corruption, social injustices...you name it!

**Kizito:** I support you. But how do we do it? How is it possible to make your way through this republic?

**Ruratema:** We have a revolution!

**Kizito:** A revolution???

**Rugero:** A revolution!

**Ruratema:** (*absent-mindedly*) Yes! A revolution! (*Recalling sadly*) You remember where your father and my own father succumbed? They died fighting for this country!

**Commented [TK4]:** Was there an intention to add a line of dialogue here?

**Kizito:** *(exhales deeply and shakes his head)*

**Ruratema:** Then it is high time you stood up to that ugly history. Your father was a respected man Kizito. You are prince my friend. And the influence is being wasted guarding the farm from destructive monkeys and weaver birds.

**Kizito:** I have been thinking of liberating this country. I just don't know how or where to initiate the process.

**Rugero:** Our father died liberating this country, freeing his people, I'm not ready to lose my life or that of my only brother, so forget that liberation thing!

**Ruratema:** *(angrily)* Coward! A coward is who you are Rugero. It will be impossible to foment a revolution in this republic with your intimate matrimony to cowardice. Be a man! Be a man like your father!

**Rugero:** *(speedily standing up)* Just keep my father out of this! You hear me, keep my father out of this!

**Kizito:** I have told him several times that we are the people, we are the leaders, and we cannot allow manipulation, injustices, crime or oppression to devastate this republic under our watch. Our father perished liberating this country. His spirit will not rest if we do not complete what he started.

**Rugero:** Our father's spirit is at peace because we are alive Kizito. Should anything happen to us, our parents' spirits will not rest. All those who died will not smile in their graves if we died today trying liberate this useless republic.

**Ruratema:** *(shouting angrily)* Stop it Rugero. Stop it! Don't you see what's happening, don't you see...don't you see there is no life in this republic as it is? Your brother here almost fought his wife a few minutes ago because of sugar. Sugar! We cannot fight over food when there are tremendous concerns in this country. Wake up brother!

**Kizito:** *(with a sudden turn of conviction)* My brother is right. Our father died a shameful death. The images haunt me to this day. Our father was hanged by his testicles for fourteen days until he died. Our mother was assaulted for several days before her throat was slit. Despite her innocence her precious life was not spared. Those deaths are worth adopting peace.

**Ruratema:** That is the more reason for you to fight. In fact, you should lead this revolution. I know it is a dark tunnel, but by the end of the tunnel there will be light and we will walk free.

*He walks towards kizito who is turned away and taps him gently on his back.*

**Ruratema:** You have reminded me of my own father. He was slaughtered like a goat. His screams and wails as they chopped off his arms, part by part from head to toe haunts me too.

*(He paces about in a fit then sits on the wooden rocking bench gazing into the vast empty part of the compound)*

**Ruratema:** My mother was tied on a government cruiser for singing songs suspected to ridicule the government. She was hauled on the road for miles until only a strand of her hair was left dancing on the road.

**Kizito:** Our parents perished liberating this country. It would be foolish of us to go similarly in the same quest. We cannot succumb the same manner!

**Ruratema:** *(angrily)* You are a coward just like your brother Rugero

**Rugero:** He just said he is not doing it. Why must you coerce him into it? You should learn to honour other people's decisions for heaven's sake!

**Kizito:** *(Decisively)* I am sorry my friend but I cannot lead the liberation. I cannot honour my father's grave with another grave. It is better surviving on half a loaf than perishing for an elusive full.

**Ruratema:** *(angrily)* Oh! You foolish republicans! Who do you think can lead a liberation if we all play to cowardice? Who do you think is the leader here? Who will the Saviour be if you cannot face your problems and your peoples' tribulations? Who...

**Rugero:** *(Interrupting sharply)* Why can't you do it yourself?

*Bows to him in sarcasm.*

**Rugero:** Oh, Jesus of Nazareth, go ye and die to save our miserable cowardly lives.

**Kizito:** This is the 21st Century Ruratema. Whatever our forefathers, parents, and predecessors accomplished in their time is hardly conceivable now. There are machines designed to stop you before you even breathe the idea to another soul. Think brother! Think!

**Ruratema:** Success is only achievable through making big mistakes. I will make those mistakes you are scared of. I will liberate this country. In time, you cowards will salute me as the president of this nation.

**Rugero:** Good for you brother. I wish you well.

**Kizito:** Yes indeed! We wish you well our friend.

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*Ruratema grudgingly arises from the wooden rocking bench, spits heavily on the floor, and curses as he leaves*

**Ruratema:** *(Mutters under his breath)* Cowards! Hybrid cowardice! That is all that you are. Just watch me. *(Raising his voice)* I Ruratema will cause the greatest revolution ever witnessed on planet earth, Jupiter to the moon. I will mobilize...I will mobilize every man, woman and child, in creating a new phase for this republic. I will be president!

*Ruratema exits. Kizito and Rugero are left puzzled. The two then exit to their but for supper still baffled by that evening's turn of events.*

**Lights Fade Out**



## SCENE TWO

*In Rubande, the capital city of the republic, the President's office is situated in the tallest building of Rubande called Raamba Plaza. In the lavish office, there are elegantly arranged furniture. Bottles of red wine, snacks and bottles of drinking water are neatly arranged on an exquisite table. Cabinet minister for defence Hon. Misigaro, education cabinet minister Hon. Misago, finance cabinet minister Cyusa, and Hon. Rugaza the cabinet minister for devolution, arrive for a meeting one after the other. They help themselves to tea and snacks amidst small talks as they await the president's arrival.*

**Misigaro:** *(Gently massaging his drooping belly beaming with confidence)* Good morning gentlemen. I am happy to see you are here. You are all looking sharp!

**Cyusa:** *(Cheerful)* Good Morning Hon. Misigaro. You look happy today sir, what is the good news?

**Misigaro:** Nothing much. I am just working hard.

**Misago:** *(breaking silence and shedding his disturbed gaze)* Blessed are you my brother. Personally, I don't even know what I'm working on. Since we rolled out the new curriculum, it is always a problem here, another problem there, just endless problems. The problems are threatening to pluck off every strand of my hair *(touching his balding head)*. It is hectic I tell you.

**Rugaza:** *(concerned)* what is the problem Hon. Misago? share with us, maybe we can help.

**Misago:** *(resigned)* It is a personal problem.

**Cyusa:** A problem shared is a problem half-solved. Spill it here we may have a solution to it or you can keep mute until your head is clean and sleek!

**Misago:** *(Looking sad)* You don't understand, do you? Of course, you can't understand. Listen, there were some misappropriations, and I don't have all the facilities for the new curriculum roll out. It has terribly failed in a number of constituencies where we conducted the experiment. Only two constituencies emerged half-way successful. And the parents...

**Rugaza:** *(interrupting Misago)* What about them?

**Misago:** *(Animatedly)* They are vehemently opposing the program!



**Cyusa:** We all have problems. Your own problem is even susceptible. I can't relate that with what I have gone through. Anyway, what about you Hon. Misigaro, how is your ministry?

**Misigaro:** My brother, I cannot report anything soft in that ministry. You know how the defence ministry is, chaos here, chaos there. It's more troublesome that in addition to the mysterious enemies of this republic, her own citizens are becoming more hazardous. Sometimes the only option I have to restore peace and order is to use machines. I have to send forces far deep into the villages to calm the stormy atmosphere. It is a slimy mess my friend.

**Misigaro:** *(Nodding animatedly in agreement)* I saw it last week in the news bulletin. The violent confrontation between the citizens of that village and the forces. What could have prompted the incident because those claims didn't make sense to me?

**Misigaro:** Just like I told you my friend, this government is just one of its kind. The people will always remain the people, however good you are to them. I can tell you for free, we pleaded with them, persuaded them, negotiated, but all our efforts were useless and we had to use force.

**Cyusa:** *(Cyusa who has been listening joins inquisitively)* Honourable Misigaro, did this issue of unrest have to go so far? The alarm it raises does not visualize this country well even with the global community. What exactly happened Sir?

**Misigaro:** It's a long story sir. It's always been.

**Misago:** Then make it short!

**Cyusa:** *(affirmatively)* Yes! Summarise it for us. Are we safe in this country?

**Misigaro:** Gentlemen! Gentlemen! We are safe! That, I can ascertain without a grain doubt. Let's keep peace and preach peace. There is definitely work to do, but I am sure that many of our citizens are lazy cowards. They don't want to toil for this country but just to simply spread propaganda that only wrecks this republic apart. It is a great sign of weakness, pure cowardice.

**Misago:** You really speak in parables Honourable Misigaro, but still, I agree. The citizens of this republic are constantly blinded by foolish conspiracies that boil them to act against the government. How foolish! Parents don't even want their own children to get an education.

**Cyusa:** Oh, gentlemen I am unable to follow this discussion. Why don't you speak plainly? Hon. Misigaro satisfy my curiosity, tell me whether my country is safe.

**Misigaro:** We are safe. However, there is a small problem...

**Misago:** *(interrupting)* what sort of problem are you talking about? Spill it!

**Misago:** *(scratching his chin).* My brothers a revolution is coming. This hard-headed boy from Rurambi village thinks...

**Rugaza:** *(interrupting)* which boy, who is the boy?

**Misago:** *(waving Rugaza down)* Let him tell us.

**Misago:** His name is Ruratemala, son to the late Nyamunsi from Rurambi. Nyamunsi was a stubborn activist, a fierce critic of the government and a revolutionist. He was one of hardest tests for our government in history. From what I have gathered, Nyamunsi, Ruratemala's father, had a bosom friend Birame. Birame was...

*All the three surprised and shouting at once half standing*

**Cyusa/Rugaza/Rigaza:** *(They shout in surprise and terror)* BIRAME!

**Misago:** Yes, Birame. He left two sons, Kizito and Rugero. A couple of months ago, Ruratemala went persuading them join hands with him for a revolution against the government.

**Cyusa:***(inquisitively)* Did they agree?

**Rigaza:** Are Birame's sons involved?

**Lylibeth Buranga:** *(enters through the back door, catching the last words of Rigaza)* Birame? What sort of conversation is this that bears mention of the late Birame?

**Rutemayeze:** *(the president who's been eavesdropping from behind the back door for a couple of minutes enters almost breathless. He loosens his neck tie)* Can someone tell me what sort of a problem we have in this government. Why you are discussing those crazy lifeless men. *(He paces about restlessly)*

**Rugaza:** *(arising from his seat and advances towards the president)* Calm down Mr. President. Everything is under control.

**Rutemayeze:** *(turns around and hits the table so hard in a raging fit, terrifying everyone. He grabs the table cloth scattering the table's content all over the floor.)* Get out of my sight right now! Get out all of you!

**Lylibeth Buranga:** But Mr President, we have not sat for our meeting.

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**Cyusa:** *(pleading with him, his hands folded in his front like one in prayers)* Yes! His Excellency sir, today's agenda is so important that we cannot adjourn this....

**Misago:** *(he interrupts Cyusa while approaching the president)* Your excellency, we can't miss this meeting like last week's. The nation is out of order and for some time now we have not made any state rulings to redirect the people's confidence.

**Rutemayeze:** *(Asking no one specifically)* Who are you in this government?

**Misigaro:** We are ministers your excellency sir!

**Rutemayeze:** No! You are my ambassadors. My diplomats, my ears and eyes, you should be my workers. Are you fools?

**Misago:** No sir!


**Rutemayeze:** Don't I give you enough salary?

**Cyusa:** You do, Mr. President, but the allowances we receive from such kind of special sittings are equally very important. Please sir lets...

**Rutemayeze:** *(interrupting furiously, he orders authoritatively)* everyone out! Out at once! Hon. Buranga, remain behind.

*The cabinet ministers collect their documents and files, and scamper out quickly. Lylibeth Buranga leads the president and lowers him on the comfy couch and begins massaging him soothingly on the shoulders*

**Lights Fade Out**



**SCENE THREE**

*This scene happens in the president's office. With the cabinet ministers are gone, the room is in disarray with broken pieces of glasses all over the floor, spilled coffee and red wine forming small streams across the spacious sleek floor. President Rutemayeze is with Hon. Lylibeth Buranga the cabinet minister for agriculture, his confidant and lover. He places his head on Buranga's lap as she carefully wipes his forehead with a wet, white face towel.*

**Buranga:** Your Excellency, you should not have reacted that way. You jeopardized our meeting as well as the treat I had carefully organized for this meeting.

**Rutemayeze:** Please forget it Lylie. *(Touching her chin)* You can arrange for another meeting next week on Monday, same time!

**Buranga:** But sir we can still have this meeting today somewhere else an...

**Rutemayeze:** *(interrupting her)* No Buranga, I cannot concentrate right now! That man Birame was my greatest nightmare! *(sitting up)* He made me go insane. He practically made me do things that stained my entire system! This wickedness, thirst for blood and this iron fist dictatorship you see in me is because of him.

**Buranga:** *(calmly but concerned)* what did he do?

**Rutemayeze:** He was my father's friend, they planned and executed the revolution against the white man, and my father became the president and he, the deputy.

**Buranga:** It seems that they became good friends and worked hand in hand transforming this republic, eeh?

**Rutemayeze:** Actually No! That was not all. Birame was an eloquent speaker, a meticulous planner, a rigorous revolutionist, outspoken critic, a great leader and a man of the people. He was loved and regarded by everyone. I'm told, even a foetus felt his presence and leaped with joy in a mother's womb.

**Buranga:** *(reflectively)* Of course I know something about his popularity. From the stories I have read and historical recordings, I know who Birame was, but one thing I don't understand is why you always freak at the mention of his name. Why you never want us to speak about him Mayeze?

**Rutemayeze:** *(Holding his chin in sadness)* Birame became a nightmare to my father. There was a major fallout in their government, that was barely two years after they assumed office. My father stopped confiding in

anyone. He trusted no one. He always warned me against Birame. I was told he was a lethal man. My father was training to take over from him. He had to do something to create me a position in the government now that I was coming of age.

**Commented [TK5]:** This is incomplete. What meaning was intended here?

**Buranga:** That does not sound threatening to me. He sounds like a good leader who was concerned about the welfare of his people.

**Rutemayeze:** He formed a national party that became popular overnight. The country shouted his name endlessly that even at night, you would hear echoes of Birame. He created a movement. The movement that sought for a democratic form of governance, opposed to the incumbent aristocratic form.

**Buranga:** He must have been a powerful leader!

**Rutemayeze:** He was dreadfully influential. Birame lived a powerful life. He earned respect and honour from everyone in this state.

**Commented [TK6]:** Not too sure of the aptness of this metaphor

**Buranga:** But, that is not a reason enough to give you so much anxiety. Besides he is a dead man now.

**Commented [TK7]:** A bit colloquial based on the tone already set by author

**Rutemayeze:** Lily you are too old to be so ignorant. You should understand why I have to worry when his name is mentioned, especially in my meetings, in my capital city and within my government as long as I'm the President of this republic. Reincarnation is a theoretical belief I cannot turn a blind eye.

**Buranga:** *(gently massaging his neck, teasingly)* But Birame was a great leader, and I just think you and your father envied him.

**Rutemayeze:** *(he withdraws himself from Buranga's hands, leans away from her and then turns to look her in the face, he stretches his hands to her and holds and rubs gently within her palm).* Listen young woman, there are a lot of things you can never understand if you are that naive. And to be honest with you, who would not envy the people's leader especially if he is a threat to your interests? *(He drops her hands walks to the fridge, picks a bottle of scotch and pours in two glasses. He takes a tiny sip, grimaces from the taste and then gulps the contents of the glass in one flush. He picks the other glass and walks towards Buranga)* Let me tell you a story Lilybeth darling... *(He hands Buranga the glass of scotch, which she places on the stool next to the couch. He walks towards the wall of portraits and stops at the portrait of his father facing away from Buranga)* In this republic there are cities and villages, delightful places, churches and mosques, but there is a beautiful scenery that everyone forgets or sometimes just ignore. *(He turns to her)* The jungle! The jungle is the mysterious kingdom led by a magical structure. It is aristocratic...

**Commented [TK8]:** I have chosen, like in other instances to suggest a dramatic action to punctuate the dialogue.

**Buranga:** *( interrupting).* The lion is the king.

**Rutemayeze:** That is right but that is not all! In the jungle, there are many beautiful majestic trees swaying gently, born of the spacious stomach of the earth, randomly surviving weeds happily refrain the echoes of

the roaring Bushaka river. The small pathogenic compositions that sleep on their back to feed on the gracious rays of the morning sun. The elephant flapping his earlobes majestically. In the jungle, every fly sing to the mother-fly with respect. Toddlers of every creature are all taught categorically to live and exist harmoniously. Nobody must leave their niche: that can be an automatic incursion which is trespass. The animals all have mutually bonded from time immemorial.

*He walks towards Buranga, picks the glass of scotch he gave her and gulps it down. Unperturbed, she stays put as he walks towards the window and slightly draws the curtain peeps out and then closes it quickly.*

It is a unique and a mysterious existence, right? Sometimes scary of course, if the story my great grandfather told me is to go by. In his eloquent narrations he said, *(Mimicking an old man's voice, with a husky but lilting tone)* Long, long time ago, the animal kingdom decided to hold an election because the jungle had become turbulent. Animals killed and fed on others anyhow, and there was no control. Others migrated because of overpopulation, others wanted to drain the blood of their counterparts, some animals and birds wanted to control their space. When everything grew out of hand, all the members of the kingdom decided to pay attention to their peaceful coexistence. There was need for boundaries, and a unifying charismatic leader was deemed a useful necessity. A mega meeting was convened. This was the first meeting ever since the earth was founded. All the excited animals ran, flew, walked, crawled and swum into the venue in Mount Nyamweru at Rurambi village. The meeting attracted animal species from all corners of the world, the creeping and croaking, hopping and crawling and walking, tiny and huge animals attended. After thorough scrutiny and soul searching, Hare, the most intelligent, cunning and charismatic animal was proposed to be king. However, the hare was too tiny to lead the entire animal kingdom compared to the gigantic elephant, the fearless lion, the spirited hippopotamus, the glorious zebra or even the great python. The Lion was then proposed, since he was brave, fast, strong and intelligent. Most animals including the hare himself agreed that lion was the best option. The hare was chosen to deputize him and later on take over from him when he grew old. All the animals agreed unanimously with satisfaction that they celebrated on their way back to the villages. Their new leadership would free them from oppression, social injustices and settle their land back to normalcy...

**Buranga:** *(interrupts)* So, the animal's jungle was saved?

**Rutemayeze:** No! The new King ruled with an iron fist. He made the city still and horrific. Insecurity escalated. He tried ironing out all issues through force. There were more massacres, poverty, malnutrition, social crimes and atrocities that occurred under the kings watch.

**Buranga:** So, he didn't liberate them after all?

**Rutemayeze:** No. However, he thought he was doing it right, freeing his people and being the king he was to them. A rebellion resulted. Hare could not take it anymore, he could not associate himself with that kind

of devilish leadership. His friend and partner had changed and became drunk with power, he felt that the king had forgotten his noble mandate of service to the people, peace-making, protection of sovereign boundaries and law. He was fed up entertaining the king's mediocrity, and he found himself faulting his king all the time. He deviated from the lion's leadership and worked on his own. All the other animals noticed his noble move and embraced the challenge. They began to think that they had made a mistake for having not elected hare as king even though they initially knew he would make a good king.

**Buranga:** *(standing up)* So, what happened?

**Rutemayeze:** Led by the hare, the entire kingdom began rallying campaigns against the king. The king was infuriated. He killed all those who spoke against him or his government. He killed his deputy; the hare and other close associates were killed. Hare's wife too was killed though he had a family, two sons went missing during the operation and were never found. The king appointed his son to replace the hare. Soon after, then the king died mysteriously a few years later. The people celebrated but were still uncontrollable for the loss of their leader hare and his missing sons.

**Buranga:** Someone killed him?

**Rutemayeze:** *(absentmindedly, resuming his voice)* Who?

**Buranga:** The king?

**Rutemayeze:** No, it was a heart attack, he experienced severe anxiety that resulted to health complications. He suffered a stroke that affected his entire body and he succumbed.

**Buranga:** So, what happened after the king died. Couldn't they elect another leader?

**Rutemayeze:** No, the deputy, who was the late king's son ascended to office as King. He promised to be a good king. He convinced his people to forgive his late father that he would make things right.

**Buranga:** Wow! He was so lucky! He didn't have to struggle competing anyone. He would simply assume office and become the good king.

**Rutemayeze:** Yes

**Buranga:** Did he keep that promise? Did he make things right?

**Rutemayeze:** I don't know Lily. All I know is that loud complaints and tensions escalated afterwards, the new king remained guilty his entire life. He felt like he had grabbed someone else's rightful position as King. He lived in fear that his days were numbered. May be one day, the Hare's missing sons would mysteriously

come from nowhere and challenge his government. It's not been easy Lily. To date the king still dreads the late Hare or his sons coming after him.

**Buranga:** *(suspiciously)* So, you are the late king's son in the story?

**Rutemayeze:** It is not easy Lilly. Nothing is working out for me! It's been hell!

**Buranga:** Is that why you always panic at the mention Birame's name?

**Rutemayeze:** Enough Lily, that is enough! At least you now know why it bothers me.

**Buranga:** But, nothing like that is ever going to happen to you sir.

**Rutemayeze:** Don't be ridiculous Buranga, you heard the cabinet secretaries. Birame's sons are back like lightning when I least expected them. It is them causing problems in Rurambi. This will soon dissipate countrywide and I assure you, it will awake the sleeping wounded hearts. What then would I do after that? It will be suicidal to try to stop them.

**Buranga:** *(After noticing the desperation, Buranga walks to him and holds him in an embrace from behind)* Your Excellency darling, you don't have to be stressed about that. The people had trusted you and still do. There is nothing to worry about, least of all those historical rivalries. You are the president. You are powerful. You have the money from deals, that can feed you and your future generations.

**Rutemayeze:** *(Disgusted and walking away from her to the table with the scotch)* You don't understand a thing. Everyone is awake. Others are spying on us. My government is not safe as you may suppose Buranga.

**Buranga:** *(Walks after the president and stops him from picking the alcohol)* Sir, you don't have to be scared, you have handled these things before. *(adjusting his shirt collar flirtingly)* You have the cabinet minister for defence who'll silence all noise makers. But if you are sure you trust no one, at least you should trust me. You have me at your service sir. Remember we have been through a lot, and I have always been by your side. And We will always be together, way after you send away that stupid wife of yours. I don't even know why you are delaying the process.

**Rutemayeze:** *(bushing her, he places his finger over his mouth)* Shhh! Don't shout. I think someone has been eavesdropping all this time. *(He whispers in her ears)* Do you have your gun?

**Buranga:** Yes, sir but your own gun is right in your holster.

**Rutemayeze:** Oh sorry! *(he reaches for his gun)*



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**Buranga:** *(As the supposed stranger starts to run away, Buranga begins to shout)* He is escaping sir, please stop him. shoot! Shoot now!

**Rutemayeze:** *(He cocks the gun and aims towards the direction of the escaping intruder)* where is he?

**Buranga:** *(pointing)* there!

**Rutemayeze:** I can't see anyone. Is he gone?

**Buranga:** No! I can see him vaguely in the direction you are aiming. Right there. Just shoot already!

*Gun shots crack in the still air and a man falls dead on the pieces of broken glass scattered on the sleek floor. He turns out to be cabinet minister for finance Cyusa who was investigating the president and his mischievous activities.*

**Fade Lights Out**

**Commented [TK9]:** At this point one would ask; Does this president not have security officers? Is it realistic for gunshots to ring in the president's office and not attract any security attention?



#### SCENE FOUR

*This scene opens in the same place as the previous act, Cyusa the cabinet minister lies dead killed in cold blood by the president. Lilybeth Buranga and President Rutemayeze are so horrified, stuck in a room with the corpse. They are scared if there could be any fourth party who has witnessed the horrible experience. The two are confused about the next course of action.*

**Commented [TK10]:** This is not action. It is either written as action, or it can be spelt out in the dialogue.

**Rutemayeze:** *(holding the gun in his shaking hands, still pointing at the direction of the deceased, sweating profusely. He has also wet his trousers)* I have killed a man Buranga, I killed him! I have killed him! *(He drops the gun, runs towards the corpse and shakes it as if trying to wake him)* Please wake up son of a bitch! I had no idea it was you. I'm sorry Cyusa. Wake up! wake up man! *(He nails as he attempts to resuscitate Cyusa)*

**Buranga:** *(Lilybeth who has been silent all this while regains consciousness just to notice the president staining his suit with the deceased blood.)* No, Mayeze; please get off the body, you can't do that to yourself, please get off him now!

**Rutemayeze:** *(wailing)* I just killed a statesman Lily, what are we going to do? What should I do?

**Buranga:** Just get off that body now! And keep quiet so that I can think!

**Rutemayeze:** Think faster!

**Buranga:** Look at me sir. *(she advances to him, holds his shoulders and shakes him profusely)* hey look at me dear excellency, listen, it's not your fault. In fact, it is okay he is dead now.

**Rutemayeze:** What do you mean it's okay when I just murdered my minister for finance?

**Buranga:** *(She lets go of him, walks around thoughtfully and stops by the dead man. She points at him as she looks at Mayeze)* Sir, this man has been spying on you. He has been planning to overthrow your government.

**Rutemayeze:** *(surprised)* what!?

**Buranga:** You entrusted me with a noble obligation Mayeze, to be your ears and eyes. I do not just enjoy your company or the gifts and cash or treats on account of nothing in return. I have been following him. I follow everyone and keep all accounts for my president. I have investigated him and found out he was planning a coup de tat.

**Rutemayeze:** You never told me that until now lily, how do I believe he was a traitor as you allege?

**Buranga:** *(Bends over to the dead Cyusa, ravages through his bloody coat pocket and fishes out a camera. She presses a few buttons and shows playing videos to the president)* You see, you see now.... well, do you believe it anyhow?

**Rutemayeze:** Why are you telling me this just now?

**Buranga:** Don't be naive Mayeze. My work is to investigate and bring concrete data. Informed data that is non-corrupted with assumptions. Isn't it so?

**Commented [TK11]:** The original line was condescending and did not fit in the arc already established.

**Rutemayeze:** *(absent-mindedly)* Indeed it is! So, this dead ridiculous man has been scheming all these all this time despite my trust in him? I even trusted him with my government's most sensitive ministry!

**Buranga:** Don't you remember how hard he fought to stay in his position in the last season of appointments? He wanted to transition his plans without raising any suspicion. Listen Mr President Sir, in a government, you cannot blindly trust anyone. You cannot even afford to trust yourself! That is how an autocrat survives militant subjects.

**Rutemayeze:** *(Pressing a finger to his head)* Mayeze you are a fool! A big fool! *(groans as he sits on the edge of the seat)*

**Buranga:** At least you have a lot more intelligence than your egocentric late father.

**Rutemayeze:** He led this country well.

**Buranga:** Just like you now. You are doing better Mr President.

**Rutemayeze:** Away with that Buranga. Tell me what to do with this corpse, a cabinet minister cannot be found dead in the state's property.

**Buranga:** Worst of all, it must not be known that the president himself killed him. Just let me think. You see, nobody must know you are blood-stained with Cyusa's spirit!

**Rutemayeze:** *(His knees wobbles at the mention of this, he almost falls to the floor)* What shall we do?

**Buranga:** I said I'm thinking

**Rutemayeze:** *(out of patience)* think faster!

**Buranga:** We can make his corpse disappear!

**Rutemayeze:** How is that!

**Buranga:** Secretly burry him at dusk.

**Rutemayeze:** Then what do we tell his family and the people of the republic state? Besides, a man of his calibre must be having subordinates. He could not execute a coup de tat by himself. His allies will wildly begin tearing this country apart.

**Buranga:** That is the only crisis sir.

**Rutemayeze:** No! Think again, there must be another way!

**Buranga:** (*Mmh... (Takes a pause, paces about then pauses again her face lit with joy of discovery)*) an accident!

**Rutemayeze:** Where? How?

**Buranga:** (*excitedly*) A car accident, he was involved in a car accident.

**Rutemayeze:** What about the autopsy? They will find the bullet in his brain!

**Buranga:** We can just crush his head and pull it off!

**Rutemayeze:** You are insane woman! But I love the idea! (*shouting*) Bring two pairs of gloves ! And a hammer!

**Buranga:** (*As she exits to the next room*) Insane you say...that means you loved and intimately played with a lunatic all this while. (*Chuckling*) you are mad too!

**Rutemayeze:** (*playfully runs after her and spanks her backside*) Go bring me a hammer you sexy witch!

**Buranga:** (*Rolling her eyes as she tosses her blonde wig behind her*) Okay handsome wizard!

*Buranga exits and leaves Mayeze pacing about. He runs and checks the door locks and peeps through the window. Enter Buranga with the gloves and hammer. She hands the items to Mayeze.*

**Rutemayeze:** (*as he mashes the Cyusa's skull open in a mad frenzy*) I... have ...become...an animal!

**Buranga:** You have always been an animal sir (*she laughs heartily without signs of terror at all, she is watching the scattering blood and brains*) His brain looks brilliant. This fellow would have led a bloody coup like that of the white man's saga.

**Rutemayeze:** (*now composed, he wretches at the sight of the mess he has created*) I cannot look at this again! (*Wiping himself and throwing the hammer away*) This is terrible! I Can't believe I just smashed a man's head

**Buranga:** Don't be a child sweet darling Mayeze. You are a man, so be a man and stop playing cowardice before your own messy business! *(Remembering something)* There is this one piece of guilt someone has to survive her entire life. It isn't really a big deal of to have small sins staining one's soul, heckling your thoughts and conscience. Your problem is too tiny to worry you Mayeze. you should not puke because this this small thing. Just like you, a black soot of sin covers my soul Mr president. I assassinated my own father who had raped me frequently. He made me feel like a woman! sometimes, I enjoyed his pleasantly dreadful sin. Of course, he was gentle at first. Then, he got used to me and began manhandling me. I cried secretly for years and even told his blindfolded wife who rubbished my claims. It was a horrible experience! *(Turning around to point to her thighs)* Mayeze, have you noticed these scars on my skin? They are badges of his wicked accomplishments. *(She picks up the glass of scotch finds it empty and bangs it back on the table)* Eventually I got fed up and wanted to free myself, free my womanhood from its maker, I wanted to eat peanuts to gain weight without any sense of horror! I had to *(short pause)* man up and protect my dying spirit. I killed him! I sliced him into pieces and I packed his remains in a waste bag and just like that, his stinking sins ceased to exist!

*Pours herself a glass of scotch. She takes a sip and coughs lightly*

My mother learnt this a couple of years later. Well, she couldn't look at me in the face, and decided to commit suicide. I watched her put a noose on her neck until it squeezed the life out of her. Everyone came to witness as she was dancing with black angels as her body dangled carelessly hoisted to the roof by a rope. When they were gone, I thought I was free, since it was I and my elder brother, my confidant, my prayer and friend, as I foolishly thought. I never realised it immediately but he was just another growing monster. My elder brother, like his father began to molest me. I wonder why I had to be the victim of my own blood and flesh. He was persistent, I thought it was evil of him but being my only confidant, I gave in to his intentions, a couple of months the evil activity was intimately familiar to us. Bliss in the morning and bliss all night long. Soon after, he transformed into a horrible demon. He even brought his drunken pals to have a share. I was a roll of Maryjane passed for puffs amidst rising plumes into the free air. When the growing pains below my valley grew unbearable, one night, a night that my life touched the turning point, I hacked their skulls dead, all the four useless animals. I burnt the house to the ground, headed straight to Ruhande. I just wanted to roam in the streets until my spirit leaves my little half-dead flesh. Mayeze, your father killed but he was a good man. You have killed but it is an accident!

*Mayeze walks to the couch. He is overwhelmed by the story. He pours himself some scotch. Lily sips her own scotch brings it close to her mouth but stops midway and smiles faintly, he smiles grows wider. She gulps the drink and downs the glass and walks to the window with a new confident gait.*

I was picked up in some dangerous corridor by a pleasant young angelic gentleman who turned me into a human being. Of course, I rubbed his back as much he rubbed mine, but it was different, not the same as my father or brother. He took me to school and I excelled from the onset. When it was time to make him

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proud.... yes, I wanted to give him a little darling to secure his blood in the bargain for the next generation... just at that point, he succumbed. His maker called him. *(Sadly)* he put up a spirited fight but I watched him lose the battle to the disastrous brain tumour. *(With a shaky voice)* may his soul sing with white angels.

**Rutemayeze:** *(In tears, he walks to her and embraces her. She remains stoic. Her gaze to a distant place. A sad song plays in the background, it morphs gradually into an energetic song of victory. He speaks sympathetically)* Sorry Lily *(Turns her around and holds her by the waist)* I'm terribly sorry Lily.

**Buranga:** It's high time you learn a thing or another Mayeze. Be a man, be the president to this republic, keep your spirit rough. Now come and help me collect this useless baggage and trash it before some evil gust of wind blows this little secret. There must happen an accident tonight, at dawn there will be news of a dead statesman in a horribly fatal crash that his skull and limbs scattered. You will watch it. You will watch it in the morning.

*(The president helps Buranga lift the corpse, they drag it into a safe corner until later in the night. As Buranga cleans the messy conference room of the state house, Rutemayeze rushes to take a cold bath to clean his blood-stained hands. There was an accident by the next day.)*

**Lights Out**



## ACT TWO

### SCENE ONE

*(This scene opens in the village Rurambi. Ruratema is leading a group of rebels. They have been in the peak of Mt. Nyamveru of Rurambi village, a mysterious mountain that most revolutionaries used to draw the blue prints of all revolutionary schemes. This mountain is said to have been extraordinary since time immemorial. It was used by most lethal liberators who fought the white man and others that turned into nightmares to the incumbent African leaders who forgot their mandate and exercised irregular leadership contrary to the people's expectation. Mt. Nyamveru is seated in the most high and central place of Rurambi village. It is proximal to the late Birame's tracts of land, in fact a quarter of it is part of now, Kizito's land. Kizito's father Birame, used this mountain for his activist aftermath. Decorated with a lot of caves and all types of wild fruits, it's easy for liberators to operate in survival as they free themselves. From the peak, there is a roaring overflow of an extraordinary water source. The noise is an advantage that everyone can shout on top of their lungs without eavesdroppers catching a word. In this mountain, Ruratema who had already made contact with the Cyusa and planned for a coup is scheming his liberation plans when he receives bad news. The news of Cyusa's death)*

**Ruratema:** (shrieking and whistling) Comrades assemble at once, there is bad news! *(Whispers to himself loudly focusing his eyes on his mobile phone)* This is so wrong, this is sooooo...wrong! *(Turning to the huge crowd before him, a Crowd of liberators, women, men and young individuals)* Cyusa is dead!

**Voices:** *(in disbelief)* Nooooo! No! *(Some begin to scatter mournful cries to the thick atmosphere amid confusion).* That is impossible, impossible, and yes impossible!

**Ruratema:** *(gaining composure)* They say it's a road accident. Indeed, it looks like one, but my instincts tell me there is something far beyond that claim. An accident could be a cover for something mysterious that had happened to our leader.

**Voices:** *(assertively)* Yes! No accident, it's not bloody accident!

**Ruratema:** when I recruited you to this motive I had my ambitions, I wanted to liberate this nation and lead it. I dropped my intentions when I met Hon Cyusa. Because he shared similar interests as myself, I thought it was a good idea to have an insider to smoothen the process and lessen the struggle for us. He was an intelligent man, a man with peoples' interest at heart. It is the same reason that he was ready to abandon and betray his boss. Cyusa has died not from a natural cause but through the hands of man. He has been murdered in pure cold blood. A work of iron- fist dictator Rutemayeze!

**The Crowd:** (*chanting*) Rutemayeze must go! Mayeze must go! He must go!

**Ruratema:** Yes! He must go, for the sake dead spirits haunting my conscience. I declare vengeance, I declare rebellion. Following the unfortunate happenings that have robbed us of our capable leader Cyusa, I offer myself as not only the chief commander of this liberation force, but also the leader of this country once the coup is a success. (*The crowd cheers wildly and chants praises. Ruratema acknowledges happily*) Let us take note comrades, that nobody lights a lamp and hides it under the bed. Liberators don't rest or hide until a dark tunnel is fully lit. It's time to go out!

**Commented [TK12]:** Declare and decree is too self-indulgent in front of a crowd

**1st Person:** (*charging the Crowd with a chant*) We fight for justice!

**Voices:** Justice yoooh!

**Ruratema:** We live and die for freedom!

**Voices:** Freedom yoooh!

**2nd Person:** We will fight and die for a better future, no more mysterious killing, our people must be free! And free indeed!

**Voices:** Freedom and power yeah!

**Gisabo:** (*emerging from the Crowd*) We will match without any sign of cowardice!

**Ruratema:** Women power!

**Voices:** Power!

**1st person:** Justice for all...

**2nd person:** peace and prosperity for all.

**The Crowd:** (*the Crowd continue chanting and dancing in a mad frenzy*)

Justice for all!

Power and fair governance!

Freedom with sane sovereignty!

Success on our land!



**Ruratema:** *(as the crowd continues to shout Ruratema, pulls Gisabo aside, he is shocked to see her among the Crowd).* What are you doing here Gisabo? Kizito should not find you anywhere near this mountain or else you will be in a lot of trouble.

**Gisabo:** I don't care my husband, Kizito is a coward. But you are a real man, a true son of the republic born of the soil who toils boldly for the sake of his people. I don't care what my husband thinks anymore. He always thinks I am weak and useless and it is a high time I prove my worth as a woman.

**Ruratema:** But Gisabo, this is not the right way to handle things. As far as I am concerned this is not the right platform to prove womanhood. Listen, you are a woman Gisabo, and you are obliged to your husband, that is the tradition of Rurambi. I advise you to be valuable to yourself and your culture!

**Gisabo:** Culture my foot! I don't care what culture dictates. I don't care about that marriage anyway. All I asked for in my life, is freedom to choose. My parents thought that Kizito was to be a messiah. The more he moved the people during his schooling, the more he became desirable, as a great man of calibre. They married me off to him without considering my feelings. It didn't bother me then, since I was young and naïve. Besides, my husband was very promising. Right now, my husband is intimately married to cowardice. Rugero is more of a woman than myself. I need something different. I want to be me; I want to be part of the change. I want to cause the change!

**Ruratema:** It is well my wife, its well. If that is all you want, I consent, but just be careful. *(As if something changed his mind)* But still Gisabo, you should not engage in this dirty business. What we are doing here is more of a crime than justice. I don't want you to die for anything's sake! What you can do right now is help me convince your husband to join me. Kizito is such an influence, he can move the whole nation with just a word. His mouth is a fire spitter that warms every person's heart in a blissful promise. I know him, he is eloquent, and meticulous with his choice of words. Please convince him for me!

**Gisabo:** You don't even understand me Ruratema. You are just like my husband, a coward. Afraid of women, afraid that I will do something greater than the stereotyped potentials designed by culture for women in this society. You are just a coward. Tell me, I see other women in this camp, don't I have breasts just like them! *(makes as if to raise her dress)* Don't I have a...

**Ruratema:** Stop it Gisabo! That's enough!

**Gisabo:** *(Pointing at a group of women)* Those women listened to me, when I spoke, they listened!

**Ruratema:** *(notices that Crowd had stopped shouting and a group of women around 100 or so had been listening to their tensed argument)* Go home Gisabo, my regards to your Kizito.

**Voices:** *(begins another round of chanting)* Gisabo! Gisabo! Gisaaboo! Gisaaaaabooooooooo!!

**Ruratema:** (*Hushing the Crowd*) Shhh! You win, Gisabo will lead the liberation hand in hand with me. But we must do this carefully so that she can say a good word to Kizito son of Birame to join us.

**1st Person:** That is reasonable, we need him, his irresistible charm in this revolution. We need Kizito.

**Ruratema:** That means we have to let Gisabo go. She must operate more like a spy for us, ears and our eyes. She must help us get merchandises and other little things of that sort.

**Gisabo:** I will be delighted to serve my nation and cause the greatest revolution of a lifetime.

**Ruratema:** (*blowing his whistle, he instructs the audience to be silent*) Fellow compatriots, allow me introduce in a special way my friend and confidant from now on. (Raising her hand) Gisabo here has proven to be useful. A useful woman in all dimensions, precisely a woman of substance, an iron wife of our precious Rurambi, from now on she will be the leader of women, she will deputies me in all activities at stake.

Tomorrow is a big day for us because tomorrow, tomorrow we match, we match for Cyusa, we match for our children, we match for our wives and we match for the general sanity of this nation.

**Voices:** Hurrahh! Gisabo! Gisaaboo!

Gisaaboo!!

(The shouts and ululations continue for a while but suddenly stops and all eyes focus towards one direction. It's Kizito who has been attracted by the Crowd applauding Gisabo)

**Gisabo:**(*as she pulls off her hand from Ruratema's*). I have to go now (she soon disappears into the Crowd making sure she is out of her husband's sight)

**Ruratema:** (with a broad smile) welcome my brother I knew you would come. (he stretches his arms to receive him)

**The Crowd:** Birame! Birame! Birame! Birame!

(Then) Kizito! Ki-zi-to! ...Ki-zi-to! Ki-zi-to!... Ki-zi-to!... Ki-zi-to! Ki-zi-to!

**Kizito:** (to Ruratema, whispering) what are you trying to attain? You now think you've outsmarted my opinion about this insane crap you are perpetrating here? (Sarcastically) Sorry to disappoint you sir (seriously) yes! because hell no! My wife is not coming back here and I'm here to give this Crowd a piece of my mind! Let's see how far you go after this speech.

**Ruratema:** What do you think you are doing here Kizito. Whatever it is you are doing should stop. I beg you to avoid causing any rapture to my camp.

**Kizito:** I was peaceful and non-concerned until you involved my wife into your crafty ideas. And now... (clears his throat and turns to the Crowd who had been shouting his name all along). Thank you, thank you so much (raises both hands to signal silence) People of the republic state, men, women and children of Rurambi, my esteemed proponents. I am so moved for the love you have for this nation. I am so indebted to witness this dedication from members of this nation, what breaks my bones, that which drains by blood, that sends cold shivers of thrilling emotions down my spine is to see children ready, all ready to liberate our nation (he pauses and swallow saliva heavily, he clears his throat another time and proceeds) Today is a day like any other, and change is useful for those who experience it.

**The Crowd:** (the crowd that has been moved but that little oration) YoooH!

**Kizito:** (resuming his speech) When you see a randy he-goat move about determined to create another life for its lineage, you don't presume it's all useless efforts. My people, people of republic, I know something, something that is speaking in bold through your faces... You are out to once and for all create the change, you are out to free your nation, to fight for social justice and light hope in the hearts of your people. I have come to talk to you, to tell you a little story, a story of our people, a story of liberation and a story of success!

**The Crowd:** (*shouting*) tell us, talk to us Kizito!

**1st Person:** (*to the second person*) He is not only a replica of his father physically but also his voice and intelligence quotient.

**2nd person:** I almost thought it was Birame when I first saw him! You would love to see them together with Nyamunsi.

**1st Person:** I think I smell the revolution our fathers never accomplished. With these two together, I have faith in what they can achieve, especially Kizito.

**Kizito:** Year's ago, the republic state was invaded by the white man, the man from the west. Not long after the white man had settled on our land, he thought our ways were barbaric, archaic and more backward. He declared that the black ape-like man must style up. He should be taught how to read and write, chastised into a new religion, and away from our gods, whom he dismissed as atrocious idols. He ruled that one man should marry one woman. (Pauses for effect) As they imposed more traditions on the black man, the black creature got fed up. This is especially when their productive land, women and children were taken away! Tension grew and conflict brewed! You can guess what happened next! (Excitedly) Birame, Nyamunsi and other many citizens of the republic state decided to liberate themselves. (Changing his tone to regret)

unfortunately some greedy misguided black people aided the white man. However, our fathers rebelled and this very mountain became the battle field, where the white man was scared away and a black man took over power. Rutemayeze (I) became the father of the republic state. Birame was his friend and deputy. Their ascent to power was by merit for their spirited fight against the oppressor. But the story does not end there...The black president decided to rule like the white man instead of becoming the leader for his people. In continuing the legacy of the white man, he grabbed more land, used brute force against people, killed more people and did all sorts of oppressive murky businesses to his countrymen. The people led by Birame, got fed up. The transition from the white to the black leadership was similar to jumping from boiling water and landing straight into a red blazing fiery furnace. The people rebelled, the liberation from a black man's rule was disastrous than the white men. A black man fought his brother. With the knowledge of the republic's geographical coordinates, everyone had the access to kill anyone they thought was a threat to, even their barns of yams! (Sadly) When the fight was nearly over half of the total population of this republic was wiped out. It was a horrible avoidable genocide. My father and mother died. We survived by the grace of God. (Raising his voice) Does it strike you as a good thing to think of going back to that dark history again? To stay camped in this cursed mountain of Nyamweru scheming how you would tomorrow slit your throats and kill your future before your own eyes. my people M there are other avenues for peaceful and effective transition of power. It's not always war and death and lost hope! Remember, there were people before us! We all have hope, hope to live, and see another generation grow to take after us. We have divergent views here, but if you ask me, I would advise, "It's a better half loaf than the entire bread" The choice is yours, you can stay here and kill yourselves by tomorrow noon! I'm all done!

*(By morning the next day, the peaceful camp had turned, chaotic. There was a division, one group decided to abandon the mission altogether while the other held on to the mission siding with Ruratema, two divergent groups and opinions in a war zone mean war and death. With the thousands of liberators lives at stake, everyone woman, child, and man have to fight to save oneself. By sunset thick blood and heaps of bodies rolled from the peak of Mt. Nyamweru. Lucky thousands also escaped back to their villages on account of, "Better half a loaf than the entire bread." Ruratema's diehards are seen re-planning to venture the streets of Rubande the next day.)*



## SCENE TWO

*(This scene opens in the streets of Ruhande city. It's midday and the sun are streaking hot. Cars are booting and touts banging every available space on their van's walls wooing travellers. It is a rowdy afternoon when every vendor is yelling for the attention of passers-by trying to sell one thing or another. A mixture of acidic and blissful fragrances has filled the air. Tall heavy buildings are decorating the spacious geographical coordinates of Ruhande. All buildings are shaded differently giving the city a gracious impression. The road is potholed with slopes and deep dips on its sides. In a second, hundreds of individuals swum into the road occupying every corner of the road. They literally induce an unexpected commotion within a wink. The normal city operations have been halted as both travellers, cars owners and residents are still surveying the mission of these sojourners. They are wearing rags with all shades; their faces are wearied. Their blood-stained garments and tools of trade giving them a dangerous manifestation that signals a menace to the entire city of Ruhande. They drag all configuration placards inscribed with every message for the government of Republic state. Ruratema leads the team, Gisabo is side by side exercising her rightful obligation to the people of the republic. She is out to save her husband from everlasting shame characterised by cowardice, to save her village Rurambi from the inflicted dangerous manipulation by the Republic government. As they host a peaceful but scary protest towards the president's office, the entire city joins them enquiring into their mission and the governments forces engages with them from time to time. The cabinet minister for internal security also joins them to mediate)*

**Ruratema:** *(Perched on the dais in the market in front of the throng. Loudly)* Good afternoon Ruhande!

**The crowd:** *(as they applause him having sensed the mission of their visit)* Good afternoon. *(Others begin to shout)*

Mayeze must go! Mayeze must go!

**Ruratema:** *(lifting his arms and lowering them to signal silence)* One moment everybody. Just one moment, people of the republic

**The Crowd:** *(their voices fade away)* a moment!

**Gisabo:** *(rising to the podium, she is heavily bandaged and her face is swollen and some bruises can be observed on her light complexioned skin.)* People of Ruhande, women and children, men and all the descendants of this republic, we have suffered, we have been choked, we cannot freely breathe again, we are slowly dying from this oppressive regime.

**Crowd:** Yes!

**Gisabo:** That is why today we have decided. We have made the decision to overhaul our venerable republic. A journey of change is only possible when someone stands out! You and I. We will all march to the streets, to remind Mayeze that he is the president. The president of all villages in this republic. The president to our children, to women and our husbands.

**Crowd:** We have suffered!

**Gisabo:** Women have tasted the wrath of an unjust society. I'm a living testimony. We don't need tomorrow to be free! We only need today to save our tomorrow! Who agrees with me?

**The crowd:** Agreed! It's true! It's true!

**Gisabo:** My husband should be a liberator of this republic but listen to me carefully people of Ruhande, this government is too hostile for cowards, useless men we breed, that is why, today I boldly present to you a man, one man like messiah, a friend and a husband, a true son of this republic, Give a round of applause for Ruratema!

*(Applause from the crowd for a couple of minutes)*

**Ruratema:** Peace people of the republic. Peace be with you, today I come as a son, a son born of one Nyamunsi friend of Birame! A son born from the soil of our land, son of this great sovereignty! I am here today to finished my father Nyamunsi and Birame started!

**The crowd:** *(astonished)* Birame!

**Gisabo:** Yes, Birame! That was my father-in-law who left a coward son in his place. Birame was my father-in-law

**The crowd:** Birame! Birame! Birame!

**Ruratema:** *(To kwanzqa)* Why are they hailing the dead man?

**Gisabo:** *(Softly)* He had a special attachment with the people. He was their saviour. You will in place of his coward son complete his noble call. Save these people!

**Ruratema:** *(to Gisabo)* of course. *(To the crowd)* Thank you very much! Thank you! *(Waves at them)*

**The crowd:** May God bless you.

**1st person:** May the spirit of your father be with you!

**Ruratema:** Thank you. We are here to remind Mayeze that people still breathe in the republic. We are here to peacefully negotiate for our freedom. We never freed ourselves to get enslave again.

**Crowd:** Freedom, freedom! Freedom! Freedom!

**Ruratema:** In the spirit of solidarity, I seek to champion this peaceful liberation movement. I need your voices chanting peace until the deaf can hear us. Mobilize your energy to overhaul our nation. That is all I ask my people!

**From the crowd:** we are behind you sir

**Crowd:** *(shouting with lifted arms)* Yes!

**Ruratema:** On that account, we march! We march peacefully; however, I must declare that the president is unfit for office. We march through the noble presidential abode. We rapture and turn stones upside down just in case nobody listens to us! If no one listens to us, then we march even faster! If our spilt blood should flow, then it will flow through the entire city of Ruhande!

**The crowd:** Yes!

**Ruratema:** Yesterday, a statesman died in an apparent car crash, I don't believe it. Cyusa was a good man, he was the only good man preaching change in our Republic. For Cyusa we march!

**Crowd:** We march!

**Ruratema:** For Cyusa we mourn!

**Crowd:** we mourn!

**Ruratema:** *(as he leads the way chanting all sorts of dreadful threats, the crowd follows him charged emotionally)*  
Corruption free country!

**The crowd:** Purely free!

*(As they proceed to the president's residence, they are counteracted by a police force led by Misigaro the cabinet minister for internal security. He is holding a megaphone propped on his bulging tummy.)*

**Misigaro:** *(clears his throat)* Good afternoon, good afternoon people of the republic. I request that you stop your operation so that we solve amicably what might have inspired this decision.

**Gisabo:** Hypocrite! A big fool you are. to try and stop us here. We are not here for you, we don't want to see you, and definitely, we are not here for amicable talks sir.

**Misigaro:** *(Waving his hands)* Listen my friends, I don't want to use my men! Attacking president's residential place is punishable by law. We can talk and depart this place peacefully without hurting each other

**Ruratema:** *(sarcastically)* Your excellency honourable sir! We are not friends; we've never been friends. We are here for a reason and you together with your so-called men must get out our way now!

**Gisabo:** We are not afraid; this crowd can consume your bullets and our mission will proceed!

**Misago:** *(Misago who has been listening keenly observing the growing tension)* Hey! Hey guys! Good people of this republic, my esteemed fellow citizens, I understand your urgent call to see the president, I believe your grievances and visit to this place is genuine and significant! I believe we can see the president

**Ruratema:** You have sense Mr. Minister!

**Misago:** But I'm so afraid it will nearly impossible to see the president when you look so dangerous!

**The crowd:** what do you mean impossible?

**Buranga:** The president is currently having a meeting with some diplomats who visited this morning. I think it's unfair to wreck our president's diplomatic session.

**Gisabo:** And it's fair for him to ravage this nation? Is it fair for him to ignore this crowd? To whom is his service as President?

**Buranga:** Sorry my people, I only mean that it is not in order to cause a scene on this important day.



**Misago:** Yes! We can always have democratic discussions, but this is not the right timing people of republic!

**Misago:** We can find a way through our misconceptions without any commotion to our peaceful republic.

**Ruratema:** Peaceful? *(Turning to the crowd)* He says peaceful! Have you not a scar from his inhumane fist?

**The crowd:** bleeding scars!

**Ruratema:** Have you not gone hungry in this republic?

**The crowd:** Deadly starving!

**Ruratema:** Don't you grieve for your father, mother or child? Don't you have ugly memories of unfair defeat from this government?

**The crowd:** *(Emotionally)* We grieve!

**Ruratema:** When commodities are overpriced, don't you lack food? *(The crowds chants wildly. He signals them to stay calm)* Your children! Are your children employed? Have you the voice to complain about your hardships? *(Addressing the minister)* This is our peaceful call. But if our blood must flow, let it be seen flowing in the entire street of Ruhande. If we have to sweat for justice, let our sweats wash our soiled linen sparkling clean! If we have to die, let heaps of our remains stink like the rot in this nation! We march!

*(As the angry crowd begins throwing stones, other begin hacking cops with machetes as the police begin gunning them down! Ruratema's voice is heard more loudly amidst the gunshot rumbles)*

**Ruratema:** This is your chance! *(Louder)* this is your chance to liberate yourselves, your chance to die an honourable death, your chance to secure a better future, we match!

*(The scene ends when a large reinforcement contingent of police has been deployed that manages to disperse the crowd. Ruratema withdraws his mission, swearing to strike another time. Dead bodies of citizens and police are strewn around, and groans of other wounded people rent the air)*





**ACT THREE**

**SCENE ONE**

*This scene opens in the president's residential place. The president has just learnt of an attempted effort to overthrow him. Ruratema has left the city with a pledge to strike another time when least expected. All cabinet ministers are present except Cysa. At a specific point in the hall way, the president moves about the room. He is restless and is struggling to figure out something that is not occurring. Like a kid, he counts his fingers, scratches his head from time to time. He loosens his neck tie. Takes steps forward and backwards then pauses. He repeats this activity a couple of times. The cabinet ministers steal glances at him and speak in low tones amongst themselves.*

**Lilybeth Buranga:** That was horrible.

**Misago:** No! deadly, more like genocide!

**Misigaro:** His Excellency can't take it. I think he is not safe here anymore!

**Rugaza:** I hear they swore to come back.

**Misigaro:** It was a threat, and from the look in their wild eyes, they are striking soon! As soon as tomorrow!

**Rugaza:** This government is sinking.

**Misigaro:** Yes, it seems!

**Rugaza:** Of course, that is what is happening, our government is under siege

**Misago:** What will we do? Where will we go.

**Buranga:** I'll negotiate with the new government. I'll just find my way in there!

**Rugaza:** How?

**Buranga:** I'll do anything, just anything including using my God-given facilities. I'll find my way in.

**Misigaro:** *(Getting upset)* That's so stupid of you as administrators of this government. I mean, this is our government, our government is threatened, our president is going insane. You understand? And now all you can think of is how to betray your government and jump into another regime that you know nothing about? Haven't you learnt any virtue or loyalty?

**Misago:** Loyalty?

**Buranga:** To think of loyalty in this crisis, is so ridiculous of you Hon. Misigaro. When your ship is sinking, they only better decision you can do is grab your life jacket and save your soul!

**Misago:** That is a good proverb Buranga, I'm borrowing it!

**Misigaro:** You are all insane!

**Buranga:** Insane or not, you should know better... Such a catastrophe is not easily reversible. I know very little history about revolutions. I also know the results of ethnic disagreements. It smells blood when insanity of a nation is treated by lunatics. I'll save myself.

**Misago:** Me too!

**Misigaro:** What nonsense! You all cowards!

*(Misigaro is left with the president who is busy walking in the room up and down. The other ministers have vanished)*

**LIGHTS OUT**

*Conards of the Republic*



SCENE TWO

*(This scene begins with rumbling shots that are heard at the State House. The president's office has been invaded. It's an aided coup. Apart from Misigaro all the other ministers have does. The president is helped by Misigaro to escape through the backdoor. There is a black tinted car waiting to help him to the airport and a flight to his exile. His regime has come to an end. Ruratema who has turned all stones upside down is ready to take up the government.)*

**Misigaro:** *(Slamming the door like a roughly)* Sir, they are so many with guns, we can't stop them.

**Rutemayeze:** The defence forces?

**Misigaro:** They don't copy sir

**Rutemayeze:** What about the police, where are the guards?

**Misigaro:** All dead sir, at least three quarters your excellency!

**Rutemayeze:** *(Sweating profusely, loosens his neck tie. Opens up a trunk by the corner, fishes out a huge suit case)*  
Misigaro!

**Misigaro:** Sir!

**Rutemayeze:** We need to get out of this place

**Misigaro:** Sir!

**Rutemayeze:** *(shouting)* Out of this place now!

**Misigaro:** *(Helping him up)* Okay sir, this way, there is a car waiting at the back gate.

**Rutemayeze:** Thank you, come with me! There is plenty of money in that suit case, I also have some off-shore accounts. We can survive in Canada until things are okay.

**Misigaro:** But sir, what about my family?

**Commented [TK13]:** What did the author intend to mean here?

**Rutemayeze:** *(steps close to him)* They'll come after me, after you, after all of us! Your family is safe but you are not! You can send them a flight afterward, but we need to get out from here!

**Misigaro:** Your Excellency, who is going to be the president Sir?

**Rutemayeze:** Are you a fool? Can't you discern its over for us! Don't be silly! It is obvious that someone replaces another when he is overthrown.

**Misigaro:** *(They hastily but stealthily move to the car)* Why do you think our defence force didn't respond sir?

**Rutemayeze:** Did you pay them last month?

**Misigaro:** No sir, they wanted more allowances and you told me not to pay anymore.

**Rutemayeze:** You ought to have paid. Right now, we could not be running like stray dogs.

**Misigaro:** But you didn't want me to pay sir.

**Rutemayeze:** *(Out of patience)* Keep quiet!

**Misigaro:** Sorry sir!

**Rutemayeze:** Call me Mayeze that sort stuff like Excellency, like sir, or Mr President ends here and now. Got it?

**Misigaro:** Yes sir!

**Rutemayeze:** *(shakes his head in disbelief)* Get into the car and locomote it, we have to get out from here.

*(Misigaro starts the engine that attracts some rioters, they begin shooting and throwing stones at the car, however the black tinted Jeep is bullet proof as no effect is felt. They speed off leaving the crowd uttering profanity)*

**LIGHTS OUT**



**ACT FOUR**

**SCENE ONE**

*(This scene opens in the president's office. It is a couple of weeks after the president fled the country. Ruratema is adorned in a designer suit. He is getting ready for his first address to the nation. Misago, Lylibeth Buranga and Gisabo who are also fashionably dressed are seen hovering around him. They are seen moving about the stage restlessly for a couple of minutes. Misago is carrying a brief case. Gisabo is tightening Ruratema's neck tie. Lylibeth Buranga is standing sheepishly at the centre of the stage holding a piece of paper containing the president's speech. She admiringly looks at Ruratema and sends glimpse of feminine smiles at him. Outside the building, a large crowd is waiting for his address, journalists are waiting by the gate ready to air the most breath-taking news of the year. To the people of the republic, It's a relief. It's a new regime. It is light after a long era of terror and darkness.)*

**Misago:** *(turning to Ruratema with a fake smile)* Sir, the crowd is waiting, they'll soon get tired of waiting. You know how eager they are to hear your speech. *(Takes a piece of paper from Buranga and hands it to him)* Here is the speech your excellency, please practice!

**Buranga:** *(To Misago)* And you're giving to him just now?

**Misago:** But Buranga, you know I couldn't prepare it early enough, this was as fast as lightening.

**Buranga:** That's is incompetency sir!

**Misago:** Maybe you are right my lady! But I think there is still time for the president to go through it.

**Buranga:** He has not even finished dressing properly; soon the master of ceremony will call him on stage.

**Misago:** I know.

Buranga: what do we do now?

**Misago:** I suggest that he just masters the important elements.

**Ruratema:** *(Who has been half-concentrating in their talk, turns around and shouts)* Quiet! That's enough. Tell me, what do you have in there Misago? And you should know I don't trust you more than I trust my instincts. If you were capable of betraying your boss Mayeze, you are capable of betraying me!



**Misago:** (*Embarrassed*) Your excellency, I was just tired as much as you were with Mayeze. I am a firm believer in fairness, rule of justice and a president of the people, that is why I'm here.

**Ruratema:** (*Arrogantly*) what do you have within those pages?

**Misago:** Hon. Excellency sir! The first thing here is to thank the people of the republic, thank them for their selfless, support, their prayers and bold account that serviced this revolution. Showing that you are grateful to them for their honourable presence.

**Ruratema:** Grateful? Why should I be grateful to cowards, I had to entice everyone to help me carry out this cause. Why should I portray any form of regard to such clueless, useless freaks? Delete that point, cross it with your pen! Next point!

**Misago:** (*Searching for his pen from his lapel pocket, crosses the point and then reads*) "I want to promise you people of the republic, a peaceful president, a president you have been yearning for, a president that you toiled for. Instead of war, we will witness peace, instead of crimes, we will experience social justice! We will eliminate corruption and fix our economy, and we will make sure our kids get the education they deserve"

**Gisabo:** Why 'we'?

**Misago:** Sir?

**Ruratema:** Why did you repeat we-we-we, instead of I? Am I not the president and Is it not I, who should do all those things you are counting?

**Misago:** Sir, this will create a common ground with the citizens, it will make them feel part and parcel of your government!

**Ruratema:** That is so stupid of you Misago. Very stupid, you think I don't know, the people of the republic are commoners, they are my subjects now and I have to do it for them. I have to save them from their fears. I am the president here. Let me remind you of something little minister, I know Mayeze used to delegate duties to your incompetent council. He used to trust your useless obligations, but you are wrong to think I will do the same. I will myself exercise my responsibilities towards republic. I will not wait for a coup to occur under my nose. Give me that paper, it's not worth a presidential speech!

**Misago:** (*Handing it over, his hands are shaking*) But sir?

**Ruratema:** Give it to me. (*Forcefully grabs it, tears it into pieces and trashes it on the floor*) Now I will go out there as the president. No meaningless written speeches. I will speak my mind. I will not allow anyone to mislead my government. (*Chest thumping*) No one shall mislead Ruratema!

**Gisabo:** *(Comes from the door way excited)* Your excellency, it's your time now!

**Ruratema:** Is it a big crowd?

**Gisabo:** Very, very big sir!

**Ruratema:** Are women there?

**Gisabo:** Plenty!

**Ruratema:** Community leaders and men?

**Gisabo:** All of them sir!

**Ruratema:** Have they spoken already?

**Gisabo:** Very long flowery speeches excellency!

**Ruratema:** Have they praised my courage?

**Gisabo:** Tremendously sir!

**Ruratema:** Ahaaaaaa! Is my Kizito there?

**Gisabo:** *(sarcastically)* That one does he have the balls to surface in an event of this nature. Besides, with my presence here I doubt if he can be so bold to snoop around.

**Ruratema:** *(Thoughtfully)* You know Gisabo, as the new president of this republic, it's only him that can cause me sleepless nights. Kizito, your husband is bad news.

**Gisabo:** Are you honestly afraid of him? That coward? Listen Ruratema, Kizito is a coward. You may not know him much, but I have known him for three years, now. After living together for three good years, my sweet chubby husband was too afraid to impregnate me! He was scared. He denied me a reason to smile as a woman. To have the fruit of my womb and smile with pleasure. Kizito is a coward. He is like a tiny infant. If there is anything I'm so certain about, is that my husband cannot cause you any trouble. He is too weak to be a threat. Your Excellency, if by any chance you need a visionary woman by your side, include me in the list because, Kizito and I is a stale tale as far as I'm concerned.

**Ruratema:** Don't talk that way Gisabo! It is not healthy talk!

**Gisabo:** who cares?

**Ruratema:** *(whispering in her ears)* I love your courage little doll, I adore you. Sometimes I envied my friend because of you. Such a darling you can be!

**Gisabo:** *(Laughing)* Get out from here you... filthy little person. Your audience is waiting.

**Ruratema:** Yes! Yes... Let's go!

*(They all proceed through the hallway to the outer door, out there, on a beautifully raised stage, the president climbs. The crowd applauds him in a ceremonial mood.)*

**Ruratema:** *(clearing his throat)* Good afternoon republicans. Thank you! Thank you so much! I am so delighted to be your president. It gives me a complete pleasure for the hard work I have done saving this republic. I know it's been a dark season. But my regime will fix everything fixable. I want to reinstate a government of fairness. Free from parasites. And my message today to the people of the republic, is that I shall not allow hypocrites like this *(pointing at Misago)* to go scot-free without facing the rule of law. *(Instructing officers behind him)* Take him now!

*(Misago, is shot dead in a public gathering and the awestricken crowd begin to scatter haphazardly, in a rude shock, and the meeting ends prematurely. A couple of months later members of the public feels some unique yoke loaded on their shoulders. They grieve for the introduction of a new regime characterized by bloodshed, high commodity prices, high taxes and frequent elimination of critics. Three years later, Ruratema continues ruling with an iron fist, Republicans are deceived, helpless and too much afraid of sunsets or another sunrise. Publicly, the president is harassing women and Gisabo is one his victims)*

**LIGHTS FADE**

**Commented [TK14]:** This passage of time needs a descriptive change in environment. The author can think about how it can be dramatically captured. A song and dance reflecting seasons or by use of audio-visual technology.

**Commented [TK15]:** The change of time after a long period needs proper dramatic accounting. See next comment



**SCENE TWO**

*(Three years after the great revolution, the people have endured an unusual style of leadership. The scene opens in great municipal Rubande, in the president's office. Crowds of people are screaming by the gate of the huge building. All sorts of grievances, some presenting land grabbing allegations, others about starvation, chronic diseases as many dying under the scorching sun while others are throwing stones to the building, it's messy. The police as usual restore order.)*

**Gisabo:** The noise is becoming too much.

**Ruratema:** As my deputy what do you think I'm supposed to do!

**Gisabo:** I hear Kizito has been mobilizing the people against you. That he has reported you to the United Nations, and to the International's criminal court to be charged. He has influenced the judiciary and made submissions against you. He accuses you of so many things that I would just put together as political injustices. Your time is over Mr Ruratema.

**Ruratema:** I know my time to rule is over, I don't care whether I will rot in prison. At least I was the president.

**Gisabo:** And I was the deputy president.

**Ruratema:** And you drown with me!

**Gisabo:** Drown with you? Are you stupid? Do you think I'm that naive?

**Ruratema:** *(Surprised)* How do you mean?

**Gisabo:** *(confidently)* We all knew your crafty ambitions, how reckless you were, you never had any agenda for this republic. You are over-ambitious. It was so obvious to the entire republic state that you, Ruratema was not a leader. You were not driven by virtuous intentions for this country but your personal lust for women, power and wealth. Just like your father! I know from history, your father envied Birame, he was paid to kill him and he did it willingly. For money, your father betrayed his best friend and confidant. He killed Kizito's family and left him and his little brother Rugero to die in a ditch.

**Ruratema:** How do you know all that?

**Gisabo:** I just said from history!

**Ruratema:** Then why are you here with me? Why did we cause the revolution together?

**Gisabo:** It was a scheme you stupid son of a dog.

**Ruratema:** *(perplexed)* so you fooled me all this time.

**Gisabo:** You fooled yourself long before I met you. You were already stupid to underrate women in this republic. You were stupid to sleep with any woman, including your best friend's wife.

**Rurarema:** *(Angrily)* You are a devil!

**Gisabo:** *(calmly)* Not like you Ruratema. You are the devil's s ancestor.

**Ruratema:** *(Getting up and proceeding towards her in raging anger)* I will kill myself!

**Gisabo:** You will do no such a thing you loser!

**Ruratema:** *(Rushing to grab her)* I'll kill you right now with my bear hands!

**Gisabo:** *(Running away from him and then retorts sarcastically)* Don't be ridiculous Mr. president let me help you. You are in a big mess right now, and you need my help more than before!

**Ruratema:** *(Relaxing)* how is that?

**Gisabo:** Okay, you know you are in trouble, right?

**Ruratema:** Yes, I know that.

**Gisabo:** You also know that your cabinet ministers have betrayed you except me, right?

**Ruratema:** That is what it is!

**Gisabo:** You also know that I will be going back to my husband as soon as you are arrested. I will give him children and then I'll be the First Lady of this country; right?

**Ruratema:** Off with it, crazy woman! Tell me the advice or we can both die here.

**Gisabo:** It is not your position to threaten anyone now Mr. President Ruratema. Be humble. The world is watching you! Listen! It's possible you can be hanged, sentenced to so many years of imprisonment, or be killed by the mob waiting outside this building.

**Ruratema:** What exactly then do you suggest I should do?

*Cowards of the Republic*

**Gisabo:** Step down and present yourself in court to be charged for your crimes. You have broken the law; you have committed crimes against hundreds of thousands of the people in the republic. Thank God, through my help, Kizito has presented every minute evidence against you. Right now, you will be a good boy, walk out there, intelligence services are waiting with an arrest warrant. You can go with them.

**Ruratema:** *(walking out, searching for his gun from his inner pockets)* I will do no such thing!

**Gisabo:** What will you do?

**Ruratema:** *(walking out)* Watch me!

*(As he leaves the building, he is clenching a gun aiming at the hundreds of police officers outside the door. He cocks the gun and is about to fire at the police when they respond by firing at him almost the same time. They shoot at him until their bullets run off. A sharp cry of relief is heard among the gathering crowd, they ululate as they sing songs of victory pushing their way through the officers to see the dead president's corpse)*

**LIGHTS FADE**



### SCENE THREE

*(This scene opens at the same place, the growing crowd is silent, Kizito is majestically pushing his way through the flooding throng. He is confident, full of himself. His suit speaks hope and restored peace. The crowd is moved by his gracious presence. A loud silence prevails. Suddenly, mournful shouts of his name begin to echo from the multitude. His brother Rugero is following him close. As he moves to the raised podium, the crowd sings his name while others sing his father's name.)*

**The crowd:** Ki-zi-to! Ki-zi-to! Ki-zi-to! Ki-zi-to! Ki-zi-to!

Birame! Birame! Birame! Birame!

**Rugero:** *(to Kizito)* Brother the people are blessed today. They celebrate triumphantly as you regain your rightful position as the president of this republic. The world is happy.

**Kizito:** It's everyone's right to be president in this country brother. Tomorrow someone else might be. Someone will take my position. That is what we call democracy!

**Rugero:** As the expected messiah, the liberator of the people, this moment of bliss is your efforts brother be happy for it.

**Kizito:** Don't be carried away brother, this was everyone's efforts. I never bled. But people died for me. That is still injustice to them but at least they saved themselves by their blood.

**Rugero:** About blood talks brother, your revolution was peaceful. There was no blood in our streets, it was dialogue characterised by understanding.

**Kizito:** You were right about other methods other than violence.

**Rugero:** Thank you for seeing the sense now.

**Kizito:** No! All gratitude should be unto you and our wife Gisabo!

**Gisabo:** *(Splitting the crowd as she approaches them)* I heard someone mention my name? Is that the coward son of the republic?

**Rugero:** Look at your naughty wife of Rurambi, you have changed!

**Gisabo:** *(Reaching for a kiss from Kizito, holds his arms and marches to the podium. She smiles at Rugero)* That is what happens when you are deputy President.

**Kizito:** Nice to see you again beautiful revolutionary!

**Gisabo:** Nice to see you again my darling coward.

**Kizito:** Your excellency please, your excellency!

**Gisabo:** *(Kisses him again on the forehead)* It's alright coward darling your excellency! *(Laughter)*

**Kizito:** Everyone is afraid of one thing or another. You must not breed too much courage in your little soul Gisabo.

**Gisabo:** Have you any written speech!

**Kizito:** No! But I'll speak to the people. I'll speak to their hearts and they will listen to me.

**Gisabo:** Have you any idea of the structure of your cabinet?

**Kizito:** I'll leave that to the people of the republic. They will scrutinise and forward names to me for appointments. I want a fair and transparent governance that respects the rule of law.

**Gisabo:** You talk like the man I married!

**Kizito:** You just noticed that today? *(laughter)*

**Gisabo:** *(Seeing the crowd that has endlessly wailed Kizito's name)* It is your time to address them. You are their leader now. Give them hope Kizito.

**Kizito:** Thank you for everything Gisabo, you are a saviour, it would not be possible without your immense sacrifice.

**Gisabo:** Go ahead Your excellency, talk to your people!

**Kizito:** *(At the podium, raising both his arms)* Thank you! Thank you Ruhande! Thank the people of the Republic. I have lived a life in this Republic. A life that another kid must not witness *(pause)* Thank you once again. I love you! *(Tosses a flying kiss)*

**The crowd:** *(The highly emotional crowd continue to applaud him)* We love you too! Thank you!



**Kizito:** This is a great day in the history of this country. A history we will proudly record for generations to come. Allow me thank you for the sacrifice you have made in the past few years. For the endurance, entertaining all forms of ills. Giving away your lives for the sanity of this sovereign state of the republic. Our country has faced the most challenging situations that will be recorded in history. Men have been afraid to live to see another day. Women have cursed the day they brought new lives to the world that will soon perish before their time. Children born of cowardice. People of the republic, I, Kizito Birame junior, confirm that we have all been cowards. For a long time, we were afraid to fix our education system. For a long time in history, we were afraid to train our children virtues, for the record, we failed to hold on to our responsibilities. Members of sovereign our state, our fathers fought a good fight, you have fought a good fight liberating our nation from iron fist. We met greed face to face. A leader employed a family member because the same blood runs in their veins. Another killed the neighbour because their DNA is not the same. We were cowards to revive our economy, too afraid to till our lands, afraid to let our people experience freedom in their own land. We have much to say, together we have much to grieve about, we have much to celebrate, and much more to mourn about. Today people of the republic, for the mandate you give me as your top representative, I have a message, a message of hope! It's an honour to stand before you this time, after almost two and a half decades of misery and long-lasting suffering, to declare to you that I am more optimistic about the future of this Republic state than ever before. I know that this republic has for a long time been associated with cowardice and destruction. Grief and manipulation, poverty and ignorance—all sorts of mediocrity that dehorned our economic growth, and self-stability. I know that this state is rich, our country is a state of courage, ingenuity, a decent and generous republic. We have to live now henceforth, to live in a country of hope, hope that poor or rich, learned or illiterate, living in the city or the village, fashionably dressed or dressed in rags, old or young, disabled, mentally ill, woman or man, we all live in a peaceful republic state pledging allegiance to our democratic government. This is a reason to smile, every single person given a chance, has the capacity to shape our own destiny. Hope is in the face of difficulty or uncertainty. I love you! God bless you! and God bless the Republic state!

*(As Kizito takes the oath of office as the president of the Republic state, the crowd applaud him amidst fresh air of freedom songs. The scene ends with the reunion of Kizito and Gisabo kissing before the multitude. Ten years later Kizito has been president characterised by peace and economic growth. Democracy and observance of the rule of law. His father's dream has been achieved)*

**LIGHTS OUT**