

Jean-Marie V. RURANGWA
excerpt from a play

BUTERA BWA BUGABO,
or, *A Survivor's Son*

In Memoriam
The Tutsi of the Rwandan Genocide

Characters

Charles BUGABO: Professor of Physical Geography, a Tutsi (“Inyenzi-Inkotanyi”)

Act I

Jeanne KAMAGAJU: Professor of History, CHARLES’ fiancée, a Tutsi (“Inyenzi-Inkotanyi”)

Isidore SEMASAKA: Professor of Biology, a colleague of CHARLES’, a Hutu and an Impuzamugambi

Act II

Callixte HABİYAKARE: Doctor and childhood friend of CHARLES’, a Hutu

Act III

Benoît BANZIZIKI: genocide survivor and drug addict

Jean-Claude MIGABO: genocide survivor and law student in Namur

Chantal MUKESHIMANA: his girlfriend, genocide survivor and history major in Namur

Act IV

Brigitte VAN DER GOTTEN: social worker, CHARLES’ wife (no lines; does not even really need to appear in excerpt)

Background:

On April 6, 1994, the airplane carrying President Juvénal Habyarimana and the President of Burundi was shot down as it prepared to land at Kigali. Both presidents were killed. As though the shooting down were a signal, military and militia groups began rounding up and killing all Tutsis and political moderates, regardless of their ethnic background.

The Interhamwe (also known as the Interahamwe) militia played a major role in the Rwandan genocide of 1994. Early in 1992, political organizations affiliated with President Habyarimana, a Hutu, formed two militias—the Interahamwe (“Those Who Stand/Attack Together” in Kinyarwanda) and the youth wing of the CDR (Coalition for the Defense of the Republic), the Impuzamugambi (“Those Who Have the Same Goal”). Trained and supplied by the FAR (Rwandan Armed Forces), the militias were involved in the killing of more than 2,000 civilians, mostly Tutsi, members of the rebel FPR (Rwandese Patriotic Front), and also moderate Hutus.

According to linguistics professor Dr. Mathias Ruzindana, the word Inyenzi, which means “cockroach”, was used by the Tutsi underground during their first antigovernment attacks in 1963, because they attacked by night and disappeared by day. In the mouths of the FPR’s detractors, this designation soon took a pejorative connotation later intensified in anti-Tutsi propaganda and discourse, when it was used to designate all Tutsi in general. Court records from related war crimes trials show those accused admitting that within the context of the civil war in 1994, the term “Inyenzi” became synonymous with the term “Tutsi” and conferred, as used in a socio-political context, the de facto meaning of “persons to be killed”.

The FPR gave the name Inkotanyi, “fighter” or “struggler”, to its soldiers, though this term too was later used to designate indiscriminately all Tutsi.

According to Philip Gourevitch, author of a study of the Rwandan genocide, the Interhamwe militia had its genesis in soccer fan clubs sponsored by leaders of the MRND (Republican National Movement for Democracy and Development), the party of President Habyarimana, and the “akazu” (“the core of the concentric webs of political, economic, and military muscle and patronage that came to be known as Hutu Power”). Most reliable commentators estimate that anywhere from 500,000 to 1,000,000 people were killed in barely four months, arguably the swiftest genocide in history” (LCHR July 1997).

Act I

(At CHARLES' house in Kigali—Nyamirambo. A tastefully appointed living room, the furniture new. The time: night, April 6, 1994, one week before the marriage of JEANNE and CHARLES.)

[...]

Scene 4

(The same room in disarray. Militiamen of the Impuzamugambi have already searched the premises for “missiles” of the type used to down the President’s plane a few hours before. CHARLES and JEANNE kneel on the ground before Isidore, who paces rifle in hand.)

SEMASAKA

At last—the long-awaited moment! I am the master of my fellow man. His existence is my merest whim. I alone decide: life or death? The moment when I am his God. You do know, in fact, that now I am your God?

CHARLES and JEANNE

Yes, we know.

SEMASAKA

And in our language, what is God’s name? If you behave yourselves, I could save your life. Otherwise, this bayonet awaits. What, then, is God’s name?

JEANNE

In our language, God’s name is Nyagasani.

SEMASAKA

Really? Do the Tutsi of the Caucasus, of Mesopotamia, of Abyssinnia—do your people all call God Nyagasani? No! You lie! Nyagasani is a Bantu name, a Rwandan name. But you are not Rwandan. You’re Semitic, or Nilotic, or what have you—the only sure thing is that you aren’t Bantu, much less Rwandan. You speak Hebrew, or some derivative thereof—what would I know, really, of such things? What you should have said was this: “In your language, Kinyarwanda, which is not our own, because we are not Rwandans, God is named Nyagasani.” Repeat what I have just said, please—go on.

CHARLES and JEANNE

“In your language, Kinyarwanda, which is not our own, because we are not Rwandans, God is named Nyagasani.”

SEMASAKA

Very good! And as I am now your God, you may naturally address me as Nyagasani. Have we reached an understanding?

CHARLES and JEANNE

We have, Nyagasani!

SEMASAKA

(joyous, exultant) Incredible! This really is an unprecedented event in my life up to now. I've succeeded in making a former colleague and his fiancée call me God! It's really too marvelous.

Blessed be the man who shot down our President's plane. What other national disaster could have delivered into my hands the fates of two Inyenzi to be disposed of as I wished, when I wished? (*lifting JEANNE's chin*) Don't you agree, my dear?

JEANNE

Yes, Nyagasani!

SEMASAKA

Very good! (*to JEANNE*) You're a Professor of History, are you not?

JEANNE

I am, Nyagasani.

SEMASAKA

I myself have studied history. And I continue to do so. You know, we have eminent historians who defend the people's interests at the Party's very core. Do you know the Party I'm referring to?

CHARLES

No, Nyagasani!

SEMASAKA

What's this? You aren't familiar with the Party that protects the interests of the Rwandan people? Ah—well, how understandable. You are, after all, foreigners. I pardon you. The Party that protects the interests of the Rwandan people is the incomparable CDR. The Coalition for the Defense of the Republic. Have you foreigners understood me?

CHARLES and JEANNE

We understand, Nyagasani.

SEMASAKA

Very good! What was I saying, then—oh yes, our party's eminent historians have bequeathed us fundamental notions of our national history—the history of Rwanda—that we must in our turn pass on to our children, to our friends abroad and even our enemies abroad—the latter like yourselves, of course. I recently read the book *The Rwanda of the Hutus*. One of the many publications by our eminent historians in the CDR. It is the Bible of the Impuzamugambi and the

Interahamwe. It's a book that in my mind should be read by all Rwandans. I've read it ten times myself, and in these repeated readings a certain passage plucked at my attention. I know it by heart now, from having read it so many times. It's

SEMASAKA (*cont'd.*)

one the very first page, if you're interested. Listen: "God made Rwanda and gave it unto the Hutu. Then He made the Nile and gave it unto the Tutsi. But the Tutsi, not content with the Nile, invaded Rwanda and subjugated the Hutu. In 1959, a revolution restored power to the Hutu, the rightful masters of Rwanda. But the Tutsi, envious of the revolution's achievements, invaded Rwanda again in 1990. But this time the Hutu were watchful and remain so to this day." You see, Inyenzi-Inkotanyi, your place is not here, in Rwanda, but in the water of the Nile. And we, the defenders of the Republic and therefore democracy, we have a sacred mission to protect Rwanda by repatriating you—whole or in pieces—right up the Nyabarongo. The crocodiles of your native Nile will thank us, I'm sure, for this feast we've so kindly furnished them.

CHARLES

Nyagasani, may I ask you a question?

SEMASAKA

Why not? Go ahead! Perhaps some still-obscure passage in my discourse needs elucidation? I am entirely at your disposition.

CHARLES

It does not have to do with your discourse, but with something else.

SEMASAKA

What, then?

CHARLES

How does a man suddenly become a wolf?

SEMASAKA

(*mocking laugh*) I believe the term is metamorphosis, my dear Bugabo. Surely you're familiar with it? Do you remember our days at the little Seminary in Butare, when together we studied Greek and Roman mythology? Didn't Jupiter, king of the gods, turn into, here a bull, there a swan, to ease his way in seducing whatever mortal he sought? Didn't Queen Niobe weep herself to stone for having offended the mother of Apollo and Diana? And to speak of things less lofty and closer to home, take Nyirantsibura, the Queen Mother of the Bushi! Didn't she, on the very verge of being captured by the royal Rwandan army, release the torrents of her bladder, and didn't these form the Kiva Lake to confound her pursuers? Come come, you know as well as I—in all the world's mythologies are cases of metamorphosis, each with its causes and desires. You have killed our President, the Father of our Nation, and the defenders of democracy have turned into wolves. Really, it's not difficult to understand, Professor. I've even gone

one better: I myself have metamorphosed into God, into Imana Nyagasani. Have I answered your question?

CHARLES

Yes, Nyagasani. But what I don't understand is how an old childhood friend, an old classmate and even now a colleague can send me to my death without a shudder, without sorrow, without any regrets. I could understand it if...if it were a boy of the streets, with neither creed nor camp, but to see a professor of the university—to see you, Nyagasani, behaving as they...the world has...I cannot believe it.

SEMASAKA

Do you know what I saw on the way here? An Impuzamugambi killed his Tutsi wife and all his children, because they looked like her. I saw with my own eyes an Interhamwe woman decapitate her Tutsi husband and the children she had borne him. I saw a young man disembowel his Tutsi mother. I saw Hutu militiamen massacre by the dozen other Hutus who in some way had betrayed our cause. And your imagination quails before an officer of the CDR wishing to kill his Tutsi colleague. We have nothing more in common, Professor Bugabo! We are the wolves, and you our prey. Listen to me!! Yesterday a fellow officer, a priest, confided to me on the way out of a meeting: "I am above all Hutu before priest." Change is everywhere, my dear friend. Really, I don't know why you refuse to understand.

JEANNE

Nyagasani, ask anything you want of us. We are ready to give you everything we have, but please, let us live.

SEMASAKA

But everything here is mine already, you stupid whore, starting with you! And if you belong to me, then everything that's yours belongs to me. Aristotle is hardly required reading for such a simple syllogism. That charming dress you're wearing—a gift for my wife! These fine Italian shoes and these imported purses are all hers now. After all, they'll do you no good in the grave, if ever a grave you have.

JEANNE

Nyagasani, please, if you should kill us, please don't let us go unburied. I beg you, let me be buried with Charles.

SEMASAKA

Haven't you been listening to the animals outside? They weep for our dead President, their General. And to atone for their bereavement, for a grieving Rwanda, we will deliver them your dead bodies.

CHARLES

(beside himself) Semasaka, killer! Do whatever you want! Go ahead! Shoot! Make it quick. Our blood be on you to your grave. In your own words: you became a wolf. No good end awaits the wolves.

SEMASAKA

No, no, no—that's not how we do things in the CDR. We respect the orders of our superiors. And my superiors have told me to pace myself. Not to waste precious bullets. To kill slowly, from time to time. And that time is now! *(He buries the bayonet in CHARLES' left shoulder and bashes him across the head with the stock. CHARLES falls to JEANNE's screams. SEMASAKA turns to her.)* No more tears, my dear. Stop your crying! Come along instead and show the CDR what talent you've got between those hips.

JEANNE

Monster! Animal! *(Weeping over CHARLES' body.)* Don't die, Charles, don't die!

SEMASAKA

If not today, tomorrow.

JEANNE

Kill me! Kill me too!

SEMASAKA

No. Not now, at least. The party's just starting, Jeanne! And you're the entertainment.

JEANNE

Monster! I curse you! You will die a terrible death.

SEMASAKA

I really couldn't give a damn. It's true, I'm a monster. A monster who will make you beg for more. We're wasting time. *(He drags her violently outside.)*

JEANNE

(screaming her life away) Let go! Let go of me! Let go!

Act II

(The house of CALLIXTE HABIYAKARE.)

Scene 1

(On the veranda. The two friends, CHARLES and CALLIXTE, are seated, CHARLES with a Fanta and CALLIXTE with, incidentally, the same brand of beer, Mützig, that CHARLES was sipping in the first scene, in the safety of his home, before it was attacked. An unspecified amount of time—at least six months—has passed, during which news of the genocide has become commonplace, repercussions have calmed, and Charles, under CALLIXTE's ministrations, has recovered not only from his physical wounds but a brief amnesia whose source (physical or psychological?) is not stated.)

CHARLES

But what about...the rest of the world?

CALLIXTE

They go about their lives, like the rest of us. A bit put out, perhaps by evidence of a genocide perpetrated under their very noses. They've preferred to call it an "inter-ethnic conflict"—a recent flare-up in the ongoing war between Hutu and Tutsi.

CHARLES

A way of distancing themselves.

CALLIXTE

Exactly.

CHARLES

And what does the Vatican have to say?

CALLIXTE

Some officials of the Holy See accuse the Rwandan state of being anticlerical. Because, you see, certain fathers, brothers and sisters who had a direct or indirect hand in the genocide have been imprisoned.

CHARLES

Where is the objection, if the imprisoned are made to atone for their sins?

CALLIXTE

The Vatican's dignitaries do not believe the imprisoned clergy to be guilty. "Lies! A priest could no more kill than give orders to kill! It's unthinkable!" And so on. My cousin André Bariyanga was a preacher. He was an active member, with my father, of the CDR. You know, I roamed about in complete freedom during it all. My house was left untouched because the militiamen knew my brothers to be heads of the Interahamwe and my father a CDR diehard. But to

CALLIXTE (*cont'd.*)

be safe I assumed their uniform. I took the Tutsi I would save by the arm and told them I had come to kill them. And each time I crossed paths with the militiamen, I shouted “Death to the Inyenzi!” And they shouted back joyously: “Long live Hutu Power!” This was how I saved the Tutsi. My brother André had just as many killed. Lately he lives a life without worry in a small parish in Southern Italy.

CHARLES

And the survivors? Tell me about the survivors.

CALLIXTE

There are survivors. Very few, of course. It is never quite possible to exterminate a group, be it national, ethnic, racial, religious... There will always be survivors. [History is there to remind us of this even if we often turn a deaf ear. There they are.] More dead than alive. They seek in vain something to hold on to. To a happy, intangible past? To the realism of a present beyond both faith and understanding? Or to a grim and melancholy future? To themselves survivors constantly put Shakespeare’s question: “To be or not to be?”

Scene 2

(The living room. A despairing CHARLES, his head in his hands. Then he rises and, seeming to address someone—)

CHARLES

Fates—you have stripped from me my life and sentenced me to go on living in a world without compassion, beyond my understanding. How am I to act? Am I to smile at others while my heart freely bleeds? Sing, when sorrow has made my soul a stone? Tell the world that all is well when all is ill? Unburden myself to others when their very look accuses me of living? Or am I to be silent? To suffer in silence, weep in silence, and die in silence? And the memory of my parents, my brothers, my sisters, my uncles, my aunts, my cousins, my neighbors, my friends, of all my victim countrymen, must I shut them too away in my soul’s dungeons, in silence? No, I cannot. (*Raising his voice*) I will speak, I will speak, I will speak. To friends and enemies alike, I will cry out over the rooftops, under all the skies, that I had a mother and a father, that I had brothers and friends who lived and died in their country of Rwanda, fallen cruelly to the Interahamwe, the Impuzagambi, the ex-RAF simply because they were Tutsi. I will tell the world I was to marry a woman named Jeanne Kamagaju, who dreamt of Paris, of Rome, of Venice, and of Florence, and that the men of the militia raped her, beat her, cut off her ears and breasts, chained her to a post and burned her alive. I will say that. It is my duty. I survived so that I might tell the whole world what became of my family. It is why I live. Yes! It is why I live.

(During this speech CALLIXTE, returning with drinks, stops in a doorway, unseen by CHARLES, and listens.)

CALLIXTE

(entering) And if Fate opposes your plans?

CHARLES

There is much She lifts her hand against but before the sacred task of memory she will lay down her arms, I'm sure.

CALLIXTE

I've a letter for you, from Belgium. It's from your friend, David Kessler, in Namur.

(He hands the letter to CHARLES, who reads it quickly.)

CHARLES

(lost in his thoughts) Go to Namur! Far from my family, my brothers and sisters and Jeanne? And take up physical geography again? Learn the names and histories of terrains so that I might command the very patch of earth that swallowed them to return what I've lost? Make a new life for myself? How? A pipe dream. And what is life worth without Jeanne? Help me, Callixte.

CALLIXTE

I think our friend David is right, Charles. It is as you said. You must live for them, now that they can no longer live for themselves.

CHARLES

(after a moment's reflection) You're right. I must live for my own dead. It is the reason I live now. I will go to Namur. I will learn anew how to live like others. I will pretend to be normal like others. That first question forms already on their lips: "You're from Rwanda? How did you survive?" And on mine will be the story of the genocide of my people. I will tell it to the thousands of Namur. They will invite me to Brussels, to Liege and to Ghent. I will go to Brussels, to Liege and to Ghent; I will go to Paris, to London, to Rome and Berlin, in all the world's capitols I will tell the story of how my people were massacred and how I was not. Callixte, will that be a life?

CALLIXTE

[Not an easy one.] It is the sacred task of memory.

[...]

Act III

(Namur, Belgium. The living room of a student apartment: 3 sofas around a coffee table with several bottles of Stella and one of J&B whisky; a few glasses here and there. The apartment belongs to Chantal MUKESHIMANA and her boyfriend Jean-Claude MIGABO. It is at least two years later.)

Scene 1

BENOÎT

“To be or not to be” is no longer a riddle to me. *(guffaws from Chantal and Jean-Claude.)* You laugh, but I repeat: “To be or not to be” is not a mystery.

JEAN-CLAUDE

And what will you tell Shakespeare?

BENOÎT

Yes!

JEAN-CLAUDE

To which?

BENOÎT

Not to be.

JEAN-CLAUDE

Meaning?

BENOÎT

Meaning that I have chosen not to be.

JEAN-CLAUDE

What do you mean, not to be? You’re alive, aren’t you? Flesh and blood. Hashish and whisky!

BENOÎT

My tragedy exactly. I am fully aware that smoking and drinking can seriously ruin my health. Can’t live with’em, can’t live without’em! Before all that killing in Kigali, I was catnip to the ladies. Smart, good-looking, athletic...if it wasn’t basketball, it was volleyball, otherwise it was soccer. Or I was headed for the movies, or at the theater already, or at the library or the galleries. Not a nightclub in town knew my face. I was the pride of my parents; I was proud of myself. BOOM! The genocide bomb blew up and our neighbors—I mean the people next door, people we thought we knew—they came over, killed my mom, killed my brothers, killed my sisters, they took everything we owned—they tied me up and

took me to Kiyovu, where my fiancée lived so they could burn us alive together. When we got there...my fiancée was on her back, legs apart, with a spear through her each way and an arrow sticking out of her head. Lying in the middle of her parents' blood, of her brothers' and her little sisters' blood, all torn up by bullets. They were disappointed to find her dead, so they decided to burn me alive over my in-laws anyway, but some argument broke out, I guess there was some internal strife in the ranks of "Hutu Power", when this priest I used to see around the galleries, this Swiss priest Marcel Sorg, passes by. He buys my life and hides me at his house. They came back there looking for me three months later, where Father Sorg had packed me away with forty-five other Tutsis. They were knocking down the front door when some soldiers from the Patriotic Front ambushed them from behind.

Thus were we delivered. The soldiers drove us to another hiding place. I couldn't sleep at night for what I'd seen so this Belgian friend of mine told me to come up and get some real treatment. But it doesn't make a difference because the clearer I get in the head, the clearer I see everything. Everything. What follows is my decision, with due reflection, to resign from reality, and spend my days in the company of hash and drink. Banziziki one, Shakespeare zero.

JEAN-CLAUDE

But you have your health...

BENOÎT

Mens sano in corpore sano, baby. What's a healthy body when your mind's totally bombed-out? BOOM! Into your care, drink and toke, I do these final shreds of sanity give—please, just keep them away from the rest of the world. Tell us, won't you, what's your secret? Just how do you keep on keepin' on? After, y'know, it all. Can't you see that reality is just this giant monster with a hundred heads with every red eye trained on us? Tell me, Migabo. I heard there used to be seven other people in your family. You saw them die. You saw them all die. How can you sit there and study?!? How can you read, write, smile, or walk down the street like a human being??

JEAN-CLAUDE

They are with me, my family. Here, with me. Always and everywhere. And because they are in me they give me the courage to confront this monster with a hundred heads. Their bodies or their remains are under schools and churches, in the pits of sewers, yes, at the bottoms of lakes and rivers, but their names are forever printed in my memory. And that memory of them which burns sharp and bright in me gives me the strength to fight your monster with a hundred heads.

BENOÎT

(empties his glass and stands) Friends—a final word. "To be or not to be" is no mystery for you either. You've chosen "to be" So be it. I shall now retire to my nothingness, since "being" is impossible for me. Good night sweet friends! Thanks for the whisky! *(Exit BENOÎT.)*

Scene 3

CHARLES

(raises a glass of Leffe brune [a Belgian dark ale], proposing a toast)
To our survival!

CHANTAL and JEAN-CLAUDE

To our survival!

CHARLES

(downs half his glass)
How goes the work?

JEAN-CLAUDE

I'm on the last chapter of my thesis.

CHANTAL

I've got my defense in a month.

JEAN-CLAUDE

And then, we will follow your example.

CHARLES

My example?

JEAN-CLAUDE

We'll get married! Right, honey?

CHANTAL

My clock is *so* ticking. I can't wait to have children. Lots and lots of children.

CHARLES

Lots and lots! We're still in Belgium, not Rwanda.

CHANTAL

I don't care! Who wants dinner? Have you eaten, Charles?

CHARLES

Not yet. And my wife is out with a friend. May I?

JEAN-CLAUDE

So: what did you want to tell me so badly you couldn't tell me on the phone this morning?

CHARLES

Something—wonderful.

JEAN-CLAUDE

Out with it already! She can't hear us from the kitchen, if that's what you're worried about.

CHARLES

You know I've been living with Brigitte for two years now. This woman has a patience, truly, that surpasseth all understanding. For two years now I've been unable to...

JEAN-CLAUDE

To...

CHARLES

To do anything at all!

JEAN-CLAUDE

You've been having...issues.

CHARLES

Enormous ones! That is—not when I'm by myself. But in bed with Brigitte: everything fails me.

JEAN-CLAUDE

How—?

CHARLES

I just couldn't! And the worst was, each time she kissed me or caressed me I would turn to her and, in the flames of ardor, I'd see Jeanne instead before me, chained to a stake and burning alive while all around her the militia danced to "Twasezereye Ingoma ya Cyami". I'd start screaming so loud then, I'd wake all the neighbors. But Brigitte couldn't see what I saw. And later in the night she'd get up and spend the night smoking and drinking.

She urged me to go see a psychiatrist or a psychologist. But it wouldn't have changed a thing. So she resigned herself to an unfulfilled married life.

JEAN-CLAUDE

But that's horrible! And here I was wondering why the two of you were still waiting to have kids. I didn't know you were...about your... And you really went two years without ever—?

CHARLES

Not once. But Migabo, how could I? When Jeanne stood between us? But yesterday, she came to me!

JEAN-CLAUDE

(laughs) Like the Blessed Virgin to Kibeho? No kidding?

CHARLES

Cross my heart. What I'm going to tell you sounds incredible, a fairytale, but... She came to me in a dream. A vision of beauty. She wore a bridal dress and the Italian sandals I had brought her from Naples. I wanted to reach out and touch her, to kiss her, to hold her but she was beyond my reach, and retreated even as I moved toward her, weeping. Weeping. And she said, "Don't cry, my love. I know you loved me greatly. And I too, loved you as much. But our fate was never to live together as man and wife. Go with my blessing. Love Brigitte Van Der Gotten. I know she loves you deeply as well. She has lived too long alone with you, yet never in her heart hating or betraying you. Love her. I commend her to you. I am dead, but you live. Live for us both now, my love! Live for my family and for your own, and for all our dead! Never forget us. This I ask of you. Adieu, my love. God bless your happy home."

With these words a flood of tears rushed to my eyes, and when at last I could see again, she was gone.

JEAN-CLAUDE

And so were your...issues.

CHARLES

Let me tell you. Well, if that was hard to swallow—last night I made love to Brigitte for the first time, and our first night was truly the stuff of legend. We gave Jupiter and Alcmene a run for their money—

JEAN-CLAUDE

That would be a thirty-six hour night, if memory serves. Bravo, my friend!

CHARLES

—furthermore, she was in her, shall we say, her fer—

JEAN-CLAUDE

Say no more. Truly magnificent work, my friend. You've cultivated your garden. (*calling his fiancée*) Chantal! Chantal!

CHANTAL

(*from the kitchen*) Yes, honey!

JEAN-CLAUDE

A bottle of champagne and three glasses!

CHANTAL

(*champagne and flutes in hand*) What's the occasion? What are you two so happy about!

JEAN-CLAUDE

Here, here! *(taking the champagne from her, he pops the cork and fills the glasses)* One for you and one for you. *(passes a flute apiece to CHARLES and CHANTAL. They raise to toast.)*

CHANTAL

(curious) What's the occasion?

CHARLES

To last night—the happiest of my new life!

JEAN-CLAUDE

And to the little Hercules on his way!

(They clink glasses, CHANTAL still a bit bewildered.)

Act IV

(At the house of Charles BUGABO and his Belgian wife Brigitte VAN DER GOTTEN.)

Scene 2

(The dining room. The tables are laid for a dinner party: bottles of beer, wine, whisky; platters of food. The guests, African and European, are seated: drinking, laughing, chatting.)

CHARLES

Friends, friends—a few minutes of silence for a few words. First of all, thank you all for joining us in our home to share in the joy brought to it by a recent addition—to whom I shall soon introduce you. As you surely all know, I come originally from a family of nine. I am the only one left. When I came to Namur at the invitation of my friend David Kessler, to whom I owe my most urgent thanks, I was crippled at first by fits of depression. The temptation to suicide was my constant companion—often you saw him more clearly than I, by my side. I lived in a nothingness in which my life seemed worth nothing. It was only with your support—the love of friends—that I finally renounced the fatal gesture. Brigitte Van Der Gotten, my wife, whom I met at the University of Namur, has helped me more than I can say, to live again.

Through her, I learned that not all was lost, that I might restore sense to what remained. We were married three years ago and God has filled our lives with joy by granting us a being beautiful as the dawn.

This treasure is named Butera Bwa Bugabo Bwa Rusekampunzi Rwa Kayumba Ka Kayigamba Kanakuze Ka Kabera Ka Murangira Wa Rutinywa Rwa Rutaganda. *(applause from the guests, amused by the name's length)* For those of you to whom this name seems long, Brigitte has chosen another : Seb. Short for Sebastian. *(to his son)* Butera Bwa Bugabo! In your veins runs the blood of Rwanda and of Belgium. For this reason you are a bridge. Between nations, between peoples, between races. Butera Bwa Bugabo! You were born in Namur, your father in Butare. When you are grown, see that the road that leads from Namur to Butare is no longer a walked by those who hate and who divide, but by those who love and who build. When you have children, have them tell their children, and have these children tell their own, that in 1994, in the land of their fathers, a racist regime committed genocide against the Tutsi, killing even their own Hutu who would not join in the killing, who did not believe in hate. Tell them that more than a million human lives were destroyed in this senseless apocalypse. Butera Bwa Bugabo, I tell you again, you are a bridge between the country of your mother and the country of your father. Never forget this.

(He hands the baby back to BRIGITTE. The guests applaud.)

Dear friends, let us eat and drink to the health of Butera Bwa Bugabo—a survivor's son!

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Brussels, November 1999