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THE COMPLETE PLAYS OF ASIF CURRIMBHOY

Volume I : GOA



This is the first volume in a uniform edition of the complete plays of Asif Currimbhoy to appear under the WORKSHOP imprint.



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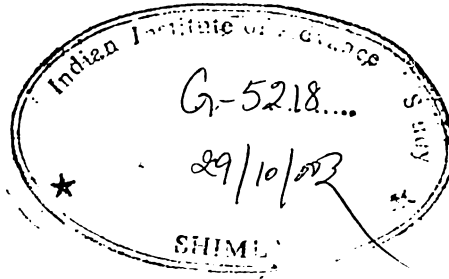


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GOA

Amongst the innumerable plays that Asif Currimbhoy wrote in the sixties, perhaps the one that stands out as the finest and the most perfectly balanced is GOA.

GOA was first produced in 1965 at Michigan State University. It catapulted to Broadway & 32nd Street in 1968 with a critical acclaim that made Asif Currimbhoy the first Indian playwright to achieve this distinction.

But behind this success was years of hard work and neglect from his own country. Ever since the ban on his play, *THE DOLDRUMMERS*, ten years earlier by the Bombay censors, none of the author's works was performed in India until last year.

His first break came at the now-famous Café La Mama in Greenwich Village, New York, where two his plays were produced with spectacular effect in 1965 / 66 when he went there at the invitation of a J. D. Rockefeller 3rd Fund grant.

Back home now, he is fighting for a legitimate recognition of experimental theatre and plays of protest. He feels that excessive productions of foreign works have weakened the emergence of Indian playwrights, and stresses that "Indo-Anglian" playwrights should have their works translated in Hindi and regional languages.

Delhi responded enthusiastically last year to the production of *THE DOLDRUMMERS* which received immediate and urgent identification particularly from the young. This and other plays have now been programmed for other cities in India.

His latest play, *AN EXPERIMENT WITH TRUTH*, deals with the life of Mahatma Gandhi, and ironically shows the vulnerability of a great man to the ordinary trials of life which lesser men are able to take in their stride.

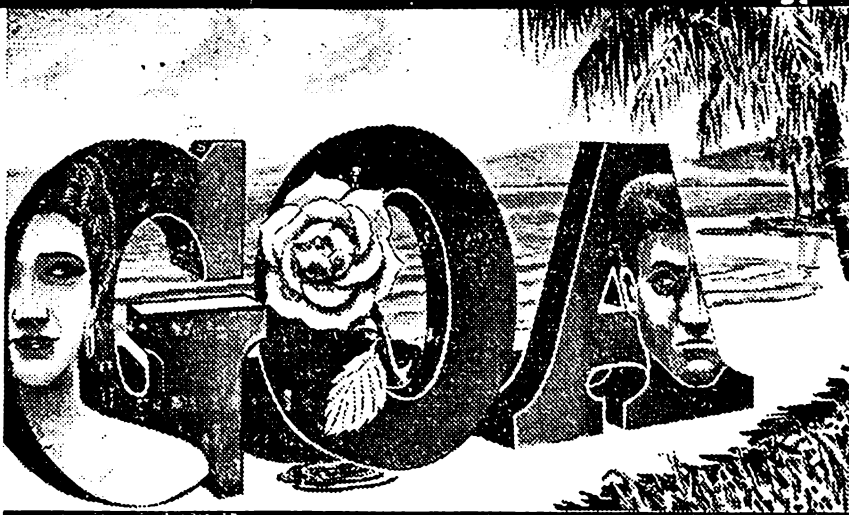
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A WRITERS WORKSHOP
PUBLICATION

DEDICATION

*to Patricia
her devotion to Goa
her friendship with us
A & S*

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THE WORKS OF ASIF CURRIMBHOY

- 1959 *The Tourist Meccà*
The Clock
- 1960 *The Doldrummers*
The Restaurant
- 1961 *The Dumb Dancer*
Om
- 1962 *Thorns on a Canvas*
- 1963 *The Captives*
- 1964 *Goa*
And Never The Twain Shall Meet
The Kaleidoscope
- 1965 *Monsoon*
The Hungry Ones
- 1966 *Valley of the Assassins (scenario)*
- 1967 *The Temple Dancers*
The Lotus Eater
- 1968 *Abbe Faria*
The Mercenary
- 1969 *An Experiment with Truth*
- 1970 *The Great Indian Bustard*

N O T E

GOA was first produced in India on October 24th 1970 at the Centre for the Performing Arts, New Delhi (a merger of YATRIK and the INDIAN NATIONAL THEATRE) with the following Director, cast and staff :

DIRECTOR : Joy Michael

CAST : KRISHNA	Raghu Sudon
ROSE	Zarin Chaudhuri
PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR	Peter Moss / Barry John
GOAN NATIONALIST	Himansu Jani
GOAN HINDU	Pramod Kumar
VICAR	Felix Sequiera
OLD WOMAN	Gitanjali Aiyar
OLD MAN	Anil Dang
SMUGGLER	Marcus Murch
SENHORA MARIA MIRANDA	Sai Paranjpye / Joy Michael
ALPHONSO	Trevor Page
YOUNG PEOPLE	Arun Dang
	Prabha Gupta
	Tapan Haldar
	Lalitha Manchanda
	Himmat Marwah
	Sunita Montero
	Bunny Page
	Janet Sealy
SINGERS	Inocencio and Sofia Montero
	Tony and Loretta Furtado
	Bruno and Edna D'Souza
	Jose and Sybil Faleiro
	Raul Rodriques

The Goan folk dances and music were arranged and provided by members of the Goan community under the direction of Inocencio Montero.

P R O D U C T I O N :

Stage Director and Set Design	Marcus Murch
Set Adviser	Bruno D'Souza
Asst. Stage Manager	Barry John
Lights	R. K. Dhingra
Music	Inocencio Montero
Costumes	Bunny Page
	Margaret D'Silva
	Edna D'Souza
Properties	Prema Karanth

FOREWORD

My friend Mario comes from Goa.

He often tells me: "When I think of Goa my thoughts go back to my own village, nestling amidst the green hills and valleys, the rice fields and the rivers that make Goa a paradisial land . . ."

This is his description of a Goan village :

The village square is dominated by the immense white church with a *patio* facing it . . . just opposite is the post-office where the folks meet in the mornings to collect the mail, read each other's newspapers and discuss current events. The building also houses the local administrative quarters, the old *comunidades* now called the village panchayat . . .

[*Mario always gets a bit excited when he talks of the new régime*]

. . . The meetings here were always loud and lively, but with the advent of freedom of speech (after liberation) they have become violent and vociferous. The other buildings comprising the square include the hair-cutting saloon, the little tea-shop (very popular with the young) and the grocer's, today providing a new and rare sight to the square . . . the sugar queue.

The market place is all noise and bustle, scents and smells, a strange mixture of fish and flowers. Buxom, garrulous fisherwomen, with sweet-smelling *saios* in their hair, are busy enticing the wily customer to buy their delicious river fish. Business is brisk and by noon the market is deserted. After the shouting and the haggling, to quench one's parched throat, there's always a glass of cold (Indian) beer available at the bar next door.

[*The only disappointing thing about Mario is that he cannot cook the hot Goan fish curry, but for that he always invites you to Goa*]

The church feast, like the feast of the patron saint, is a great day for the entire village. Besides the long and elaborate church ceremonies, it means fun at the fair and fireworks, the village band, processions and the sermons in the *patio*. There is the smell of incense and *fnim* in the evening air, and at home hot *sarapatel* with *sanam* and wines awaits the revellers. Rejoice, says the vicar, for it is a "Dia de Festa." It is always a day to remember.

[*Mario is temperate in his habits : though sometimes after a few drinks together his voice flows, beautifully, capturing for me this beautiful image of what Goa means to him*]

The village band consists of five or six seedy individuals in frayed black suits playing rather ancient brass instruments. They are at their musical best at weddings and on feast days, delighting the crowds with their loud and booming renditions of Strauss waltzes, a rich melody of marches and mazurkas, and an occasional tango for the sophisticated. On feast days their music starts at dawn when they gather at the church *patio* and play the *alvorada*. The big bassoon and drum do their utmost to awaken the sleeping village. The band does have its more serious moments, such as accompanying funeral processions and enveloping the entire village in the melancholy strains of Chopin's *Marche Funebre*.

As a matter of fact it is known that many a dying man's last request has been that his funeral should be carried out to the strains of the macabre music of the "Banda Nacional."

[*No description can end without a word on the Taverna, says Mario*]

The "Taverna" is to the rustic Goan what the pub is to the English Cockney. It is a cosy spot for a quiet (and sometimes not so quiet) little drink, after a long day's hard work in the fields. A *copito* of *fnim* or *urraca*, and one for the road, an exchange of local gossip, a talk about the crops and the weather, a silent prayer as the church

bell tolls the Angelus, a song or two, a curse for the dreaded Prohibition, and just one more for the road, and the worker's day is done. At eight, the Church bells chime again, and "Taverna" closes for the night. The labourers wend their way home, as the village is enveloped in the dark folds of the night.

[Thank you Mario]

ASIF

GOA

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

KRISHNA
ROSE
PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR
GOAN NATIONALIST
GOAN HINDU
PORTUGUESE VICAR
OLD WOMAN
OLD MAN
SMUGGLER
SENHORA MARIA
MIRANDA
ALPHONSO

STAGE DETAILS

The scene of the play is the patio. An immense square in the centre of the stage. To the north of the square or patio (facing the audience), a white church, built on the foundation stone of a temple with Hindu carvings (as some churches are in Goa). To the west of the patio is the Taverna. To the east of the patio, jutting out partly on the square, a trellis balcony with a partial view of the residence, around which most of the action of the play takes place. Some benches in the middle of the square, with perhaps a statue of Vasco da Gama, the great Portuguese explorer. Except for a few minor changes (statue, etc.), this main scene remains unchanged throughout the play. The action of the play takes place some time before the Indian takeover of Goa (on December 18th, 1961) when Goa was a Portuguese colony.

ACT I SCENE I

TIME : *Evening*

AT RISE : A few characters sprawling on the benches. They seem exhausted after the day. One can see that they are "regulars" who meet every evening at the *patio* benches, not too far away from the tavern.

Present are : The PORTUGUESE LOCAL ADMINISTRATOR from the *comunidades* and the GOAN NATIONALIST — the OLD WOMAN with a repertory of old wives' tales and an OLD MAN with black frock coat and tie (*worn out*) — the PORTUGUESE VICAR and the GOAN HINDU — the SMUGGLER (*an all-rounder*).

They form several groups yet one group at one and the same time. Each individual is talking to the other and sometimes each couple exchanges some remarks with each other. But their voices are inaudible to the audience. It is not as though this scene were pantomime, but merely that their voices are either not loud or clear enough to be overheard. There is a reason for this method which will be explained later.

Now we come to the first single important action of this scene which introduces us to one of the main characters in the play : SENHORA MIRANDA, a fair-looking woman of about forty, splendidly dressed in the latest Portuguese fashion with colourful parasol in hand, comes down the steps of the bar-tavern (West side of stage) slightly tipsy, and walks slowly across the *patio* to her residence (East side of the stage) in the course of which SHE finds herself obliged to pass by the benches in middle of the square.

The conversation of the "regulars" stop dead upon seeing her. They stop and stare. This lasts almost for a full minute, in a selfconscious movement of time. SEN-

HORA MIRANDA is fully aware of the effect SHE is creating. SHE walks slowly and carefully to avoid showing the effect of any tipsiness. As SHE passes the VICAR, SHE bows slightly in acknowledgement. As SHE passes by the ADMINISTRATOR, the latter lifts his hat and SHE bows again, a coquettish smile playing around the corner of her lips. SHE ignores the rest: the local people. When SHE has to pass the SMUGGLER, SHE almost gives a huff and transfers the parasol to cover her from his sight. But her walk is the same: a slightly exaggerated movement around the hips, a tone of feminine self-consciousness mixed with artful coquetry which SHE obviously enjoys.

Immediately after SHE has passed the bench-watchers, they get into a huddle of twos and fours, obviously remarking on her, looking back at her walking, then gossiping once again. Suggestion of a nudge and a smile, while the VICAR pretends to look away.

This is important: the long *patio* walk. By the end of this Act, three of the main characters will have taken this walk, before the eyes of the bench-watchers, and it is their reciprocal reactions which must reveal to the audience a lot about the characters of the three players.

Now the second important action (*and character*) emerges from the background of the first scene. When the curtain opened on this scene, i. e. right from the beginning, but not obvious until now, there has been a YOUNG GIRL sitting on the balcony (East side of stage) and a YOUNG MAN standing on the *patio* looking up to her. It appears to us that they have been talking for some time, for there has been the occasional sound of the GIRL's voice.

The GIRL is dark-looking and about fourteen with a beautiful innocent face and a strange voice. The YOUNG MAN is somehow different-looking from the other GOANS around the place. As mentioned earlier, they have been the background to this scene for some time, but they were not particularly noticed because of the action being center-

ed around the middle of the stage-square. Only once, when SENHORA MIRANDA is crossing the square within view of the balcony, does the YOUNG GIRL disappear in the house, only to come back after SENHORA MIRANDA (her mother) has been in the house for some time.

LATE EVENING : The REGULARS (Bench-watchers) gradually leave by ones and twos as the stage gradually begins to get dark.

[In the house, underneath the balcony there is the sound of a gramophone playing, occasional laughter of a male and female voice, the clink of glasses mixed with drunken "hushes" . . .]

The GIRL and BOY are still on the balcony and terrace, much like a *Romeo and Juliet* scene.

Now, we come to the climax of the scene. The GIRL's voice is heard : clear, beautiful, yet very strange. This is the reason why no single distinguishable voice was heard earlier : it gives further emphasis to hers.

GIRL (ROSE) : (*Her voice comes like a single silvery shaft of moonlight*)

It's getting dark now. I can see your lips no longer :

I do not know what you say . . .

But my heart is full of love : the more for you are unknown
to me

and I would love . . . this secrecy . . .

Were is not for the absolute dread

of this loneliness in the dark

when I can no longer see your lips

and know not whether I whisper or shout

in this stifling stillness . . .

(*Her voice undergoes a strange, uncontrollable change*)

But when it's light

I know

for I can then see myself

in other people's faces . . .

I can see . . . what I must be saying to them

. . . for they can hear . . .

(Boy climbs up to balcony and gives her a rose)

Yes . . . that's my name

how did you know ?

Did I whisper it . . .

or was I screaming . . .

(Withdrawing her hand, frightened)

No, don't touch my hand

don't touch me

touch me not

stranger . . .

Did I hurt you ?

Is there something you want to say ?

Stand under the light . . . the lamp-post light

. . . where I can see your lips . . .

(Boy moves under lamp-post light)

No sounds please ; no sounds

nor your touch

and I shall love you all the more . . .

(The BOY moves his lips ; the GIRL "hears". The darkness becomes darker, as the scene gradually fades with the BOY'S mute words and the GIRL'S strange voice)

ACT I Scene II

TIME : *Following day.*

SCENE : *The patio with the regular Bench-sitters.*

RISE : *The PORTUGUESE LOCAL ADMINISTRATOR and the GOAN NATIONALIST are sitting on the porch outside the tavern (adjoining the Bench-sitters) having a glass of beer. The OLD WOMAN and OLD MAN, the PORTUGUESE VICAR and the GOAN HINDU are sitting on the benches.*

PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR : *(Slow whisper, deep as the light that grows on him) Goa . . . Goa . . .*

This is Goa . . . my home, no less than Lisbon where I was born.

And when we, the Portuguese, came to India almost four centuries ago, we made of GOA an enclave . . . (Dim light falls on the GOAN NATIONALIST who is sitting across from him drinking beer). Ah, but my friend here, who calls himself a . . . a . . . (Suggestion of a deprecating snigger) . . . Nationalist insists we made this into a . . . colony . . . instead of a small part of Portugal. (Takes a gulp of beer, looking across to the NATIONALIST, continues to talk in soliloquy — it is apparent through play of lights that his speech is reflective of his thought process and cannot be heard by others on the patio.) Then what even if we did? We feel the same way about Goa, despite our political differences . . . Goa . . . Goa . . . this is Goa, my own, nestling amidst green hills and valleys, the rice fields and rivers that make this a paradisial land . . . Look at the patio in front of you. This is the heart of each village in Goa. (His arm floating across the patio and pausing momentarily across the imaginary scenery) . . . the white cross . . . the white cross . . . the Taverna . . . the trellised balconies . . . always surround the patio . . . the patio . . . where everyone meets . . . the old and new . . . those alike and different . . .

like me and my friend here. The meetings here are always loud and lively, with nothing to hide . . . on market days there is all noise and bustle scents and smells, a strange mixture of fish and flowers. Buxom, garrulous fisherwomen, with sweet-smelling *saios* in their hair, are busy enticing the wily customer to buy their delicious river fish . . . the church feast is a great day for the entire village. There is the village band, with fair and fireworks . . . the smell of incense and *finim* in the evening air, and at home hot *sarapatel* and wines await the revellers. Rejoice, says the Vicar, for it is a *Dia de Festa* . . . Ah, yes, it's always a day to remember . . . (*Pointing*) Ah, that's the Vicar there, isn't he imposing? He comes from Portugal too. The man next to him? You mean who's he? Oh, he's a Hindu . . . a Goan Hindu. Oh, you should hear the two of them bicker. I'm afraid of the Vicar's being converted . . . (*Laughs loudly, pensively, seriously*) . . . there is therefore . . . a peculiar meeting point here . . . of cultures and religions . . . of different political attitudes . . . I sometimes get the feeling . . . that this curious imbalance . . . cannot last, beautiful though it is. Time . . . often seems to go either too fast or too slow, as though each were trying to make up for the other . . . I want time to stand still here . . . (*A break in the pensive mood brought about by the sound of the mouth-organ and a mad little dance by the smuggler. The SMUGGLER is playing on the harmonica and dancing a quaint little tune all to himself*)

PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR : Nice day. I always enjoy a glass of beer in the sun.

GOAN NATIONALIST : Don't you ever work ?

PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR : Certainly. I'm here to keep you out of mischief.

GOAN NATIONALIST : Your days are numbered, friend.

PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR : There's nobody here who knows how to count.

GOAN NATIONALIST : Yes, you made sure of that, didn't you.

PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR : No, I give the people what they want . . . a glass of beer in the sun . . .

GOAN NATIONALIST : Like me. I like this too. But I want something more. You understand.

PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR : Yes.

GOAN NATIONALIST : And *you* won't let me have it.

PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR : I'm here to keep you out of mischief.

GOAN NATIONALIST : You're exploiting us.

PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR : (*Screwing up his nose*) That's a dirty word.

GOAN NATIONALIST : You're exploiting us.

PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR : If you come up to my office I'll show you some figures of income and expenditure. It's costing us more to keep up this colony than what we earn from it. Oh sure, we control the mining industry and all that, but it's nothing compared to what it's costing us. You can get up on a platform and say we're exploiting you, but you know damn well how content you all are.

GOAN NATIONALIST : You're exploiting us, friend.

PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR : (*Wearily*) I think we need another glass of beer. Waiter . . . (*More beer poured out ; with animation*) Look how it froths in the sun !

GOAN NATIONALIST : Beautiful.

PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR : Like Goa.

GOAN NATIONALIST : Yes, we drink to that. (*They drink*) Wouldn't you like to go home sometime ?

PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR : (*Dreamily*) Yes . . . No. (*The GOAN NATIONALIST nods his head understandingly. (The PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR looks at him sharply)*) Now what did you mean by that !

GOAN NATIONALIST : (*Innocently*) Mean by what ?

PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR : (*Suspiciously*) N . . . nothing. (*The GOAN NATIONALIST smiles to himself, quite pleased for having scored the point*). The PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR

continues to look at him closely) You know, sometimes when you don't talk, I don't trust you.

GOAN NATIONALIST : (*Smiling gleefully*) That's why you're here — to keep me out of mischief.

PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR : (*With irritation*) The way you talk people would think I have no work to do but to sit out here and waste my time drinking with you.

GOAN NATIONALIST : (*With anger*) What the hell do you think I'm doing here ! Spending my time usefully ? I got my reputation too with the nationalists and it does me no good to sit here drinking with you. (*Both glower at each other, not trusting themselves to say any more. The church bells chime, and the VICAR calls out to them from the bench . . .*)

VICAR : Don't forget to come to church now, both of you. (*The PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR and GOAN NATIONALIST wave back their consent to the VICAR. The VICAR turns benignly to his companion on the bench, the GOAN HINDU*). And when will you come to my church, brother . . .

GOAN HINDU : I'll worship from outside, father.

VICAR : Why from outside ?

GOAN HINDU : My temple, father. You built your church on it.

VICAR : What do you mean ?

GOAN HINDU : (*Pointing to the foundations of the church*) See the foundation stone to the church, father ? Look closely. That ancient carved motif is the lotus flower, and my gods sublime. That was my House of God . . .

VICAR : . . . and still is, my son. Come inside.

GOAN HINDU : No. (*Conversation shifts to the OLD WOMAN and OLD MAN*).

OLD WOMAN : . . . and the sea waters rose like mountains around the old city of Goa, and the fires raged, and pestilence came . . . but there was no repentance . . .

OLD MAN : . . . ahh . . .

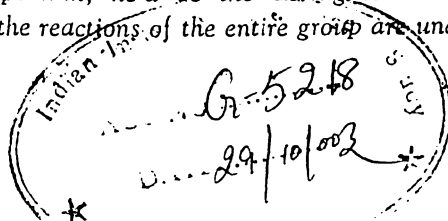
OLD WOMAN : . . . who would have thought this paradisial island where peace flowed like the pure water of rain would

from dreadful avalanches of death and destruction . . .

OLD MAN : . . . ahh . . . (Then the smuggler changes the melody, deliberately, offensively. A bright jarry tune. He dances half joyfully, yet with a sense of the macabre, and comes prancing up to the OLD WOMAN, shaking his hips, suggestively, in an obvious imitation of SENHORA MIRANDA. Reactions of the group are as follows — a guffaw from the P. ADMINISTRATOR and GOAN NATIONALIST — an amused smile from the VICAR and the GOAN HINDU — frozen silence from the OLD WOMAN, but a suppressed grin from the OLD MAN).

OLD WOMAN : Oh go away, you filthy man !

SMUGGLER : (Raising himself up with hauteur, and putting a monocle to his eye) Me ? Filthy ? Why, you old crow, I give you satins and laces, genuinely smuggled at discounted rates. I lavish cigars and beers and perfumes to the . . . (Waving his hands) . . . wide, wide interior . . . (Indignantly) Who said I was a smuggler ! I'm a . . . a . . . commission agent. Why, some of the best families . . . are my friends. After all, it is I who risk imprisonment for them. Ah, but look at my clothes ; the latest striped shirt from Portugal, and pointed black shoes that set me up as the first in fashions in old-fashioned Goa. Certainly I was filthy once. I never came from the landed Goan-Christian aristocracy. I came from the fields and wore a loin cloth. But I was smart. I can now speak Portuguese like the Portuguese, not the locals. Yet I am more nationalist than the nationalist. I worship the Church from inside and the Temple from outside. I can tell more old wives' tales than all you tails put together. So now I am filthy . . . rich ! (Giggles like a baboon and plays madly on the mouth-organ. The bat doors of the bar open, and a large man stands lurching, crooked up on either elbow on the bat-doors, with a genial sheepish smile on his florid red face. This is ALPHONSO, another of the main characters in the play. If one had to type him, he'd be the Portuguese beachcomber type. For once, the reactions of the entire group are unanimous. THEY



all smile indulgently at him, for he exudes a certain charm).

GOAN NATIONALIST : *(Smiling) Hello Alphonso ! Come and have a drink with us. (ALPHONSO descends, staggeringly, swoops his hand and picks up the PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR's glass, and gurgles it down).*

PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR : *Hey ! That's mine.*

ALPHONSO : *Chico ! (Puts up three fingers to the waiter Chico. Does not wait for his drink but moves on).*

PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR : *Hey ! Come back and have your drink. (But ALPHONSO moves on. As he passes by each of them . . .)*

VICAR : *Hello Alphonso. (Repeat).*

OLD MAN : *Hello Alphonso. (Repeat).*

SMUGGLER : *Hello Alphonso. (Repeat . . . He waves back genially at them. This is important — the sound of genuine "hello's". As ALPHONSO passes by the OLD WOMAN, he bows with exaggerated graciousness (being intoxicated) to which the OLD WOMAN titters with pleasure. So he makes the long patio walk, like SENHORA MIRANDA did before him, while the BENCH-WATCHERS see him through, reacting with fond admiration, talking about him between themselves . . . as he walks to the end of the line . . . where SENHORA MIRANDA waits on the balcony, her head tossed up with pride and admiration for her man, while the others watch his drunken entry into the house, and gossip again between themselves. SENHORA MIRANDA gets up with poised, self-conscious dignity, and comes down the balcony inside her home. The action now is transferred to the house as the rest of the patio daren and the others are not to be seen. Once out of sight of the watchers, SENHORA MIRANDA rushes up like a little girl to ALPHONSO.)*

SENHORA MIRANDA : *(Throwing herself in his arms) Alphonso ! (She kisses him long and tenderly) You smell of drink but kiss me again . . . (They kiss) and have another.*

ALPHONSO : *Kiss or drink ? (Laughing) Both ! (She kisses*

him passionately, then runs around and comes back with bottle in hand) Ah ! that's my girl.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Fondling his bull neck*) Girl . . . Girl . . . I am your girl.

ALPHONSO : (*Drinking*) Yes.

SENHORA MIRANDA : I'm your mistress and your wife.

ALPHONSO : (*Still deep in his drink*) Mmm . . . Yes.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Pouring hers*) But then I should be called Senhora Alphonso.

ALPHONSO : (*Patting her*) All in good time, my dear, all in good time.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Baiting him, yet with a trace of seriousness*) It's not as though we were merely having a good time, is it ?

ALPHONSO : Of course not.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*With mischievous eyes*) Though I know how to give a good time too.

ALPHONSO : (*Catching the twinkle, dragging her for another kiss*) The best screw I've ever known.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Acting coquettish, trying to elude him*) Now . . . Now . . . Don't be vulgar, little boy.

ALPHONSO : (*Repeating*) Little boy . . . little boy. (*Laughing vulgarly*) That's why I can call you little girl. But I know you're whacking big !

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Not knowing what to say*) Ha . . . ha . . .

ALPHONSO : I guess it's age that gives experience.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Wincing slightly, peppering her make-up*) A hell-of-a-lot more goes with it too, Alphonso. Huh, . . . we should know, my love.

ALPHONSO : (*Heavily*) Right there.

SENHORA MIRANDA : Take for example you.

ALPHONSO : Me ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : What gives you so much experience, Alphonso ? Little girls ?

ALPHONSO : (*Not knowing what to say*) Ha . . . ha . . .

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Half-teasingly*) A big hulking man like you . . . you should be ashamed of yourself.

ALPHONSO : Well, you'll admit . . . (*Stops*)

SENHORA MIRANDA : Admit what ?

ALPHONSO : Well, youth . . . is youth.

SENHORA MIRANDA : You're getting very profound, Alphonso.

ALPHONSO : (*Shifting*) Where's that drink ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Holding the bottle*) Here.

ALPHONSO : Give it to me.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Holding bottle at arm's length, partly joking and partly serious*) Huh-huh. (*Negatively*)

ALPHONSO : I said give it to me !

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Slightly shaken, trying to carry the joke*) A little bit then. A little bit then. We've got a long evening to go.

ALPHONSO : (*Pouring himself a drink*) Thass right. We've got a long evening to go.

SENHORA MIRANDA : And too much drink spoils the fun.

ALPHONSO : (*Nodding, drinking, repeating*) And too much drink spoils the fun.

SENHORA MIRANDA : Ah, be cheerful, Alphonso. I love you that way. It's so much fun then. Be cheerful, Alphonso. For my sake, tell me about Portugal . . . wonderful Portugal. Ahh, wouldn't I look beautiful there . . . and young too. The climate . . . does things . . . for your skin. Makes it firm and tight . . . for you, my dear. And rosy.

ALPHONSO : (*Dully*) Rose ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Sharply*) I said rosy ! (*Then softly, trying to get back to dream-life*) Rosy. Pink and red. See how white my skin is ? It would turn pink and red.

ALPHONSO : Like a lobster.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Artificial laugh*) You've seen me when I get flushed, Alphonso. Then I'm like them, am I not ?

ALPHONSO : Rouge ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Holding him*) Yes, when the rouge gets rubbed out. When you take it all away. Hurt me so I could scream . . . Then you see me coming . . . real ! (*She says it with such passion that it makes him stop for a moment out of his intoxication*)

ALPHONSO : (*Quietly and not untenderly*) What do you want, Maria ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Almost tearfully*) I want you, Alphonso. You. You make me feel it. I'm in heaven. Portugal. I'm there, though I may never have been there before. Walking on the patio, with my heels clicking, and the young men looking at me admiringly. Noblemen. From the aristocracy. Admiring Senhora Alphonso. You then walking next to me, holding my pomeranian dog, with arm linked in mine, smoking a strong cigar. It . . . it reminds me . . . of . . . of my former husband. He was like you, tall and strong. Like a bear. Shaggy too. Fair like you. We were to have settled in Portugal, where his mother lived. Oh, he sang beautiful love songs. It was one long happy moment . . . of youth, when no one ever believes that there can ever be an end . . . till it comes. (*Her voice hardly a whisper*) He died, Alphonso. He merely died. Unbelievably he died. And there was never anything — nobody . . . who could do anything about it. (*Softer*) Not even I. Nor those great white churches that stand like spectres in the moonlight . . .

ALPHONSO : (*Heavily*) I come from a dirty little town in Portugal. I love this place, but one day I shall return home.

SENHORA MIRANDA : We, my love, we.

ALPHONSO : (*Looking at her aïstantly*) What would you do there ? No long patio walks. The one here is long enough.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Panicky*) No, don't say that ! I hate it here. I dread having to cross that patio. Day in and night out. Like something predatory.

ALPHONSO : Portu_gal is pretty to you only because it is

far and unreal.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Emphatically*) Yes, because it's far away from here. No, not because it's unreal. My mother told me stories about her home, and it was real. Or else I would not have believed it.

ALPHONSO : (*His eyes narrowing*) What about your father ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Unprepared*) My . . . my . . . father. He also came . . . from somewhere around there.

ALPHONSO : And told you real little stories. Bedtime ones.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Hard*) Yes, like you. He was another, like you. They all come, like you. Men.

ALPHONSO : How different are you . . . as a woman.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Looks incredulously at him for a long moment*) Why Alphonso, you're not so drunk after all. (*Then bursts into a gurgle of near-hysterical laughter*) Ah, what's all this sop-stuff about ? Let's dance, honey. Put on that record. And give me a sip of that drink.

ALPHONSO : (*Getting up energetically*) Ah, that's my girl. Let's both get drunk as dodos.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Music and drinks turned on*) And paint this bloody town red.

ALPHONSO : (*Getting together on a dancing stride. Softly as romance must have it.*) I've got something for you, love.

SENHORA MIRANDA : Oh, let me guess.

ALPHONSO : I'll give you a hint.

SENHORA MIRANDA : More expensive than the last one ?

ALPHONSO : Yes.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Delighted, kissing him*) Of silver ?

ALPHONSO : No, gold.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Squeezing him joyfully*) Oh, you need more than a kiss for that.

ALPHONSO : Give.

SENHORA MIRANDA : First tell me what it is.

ALPHONSO : (*Removing from his pocket*) A necklace. A gold necklace. With a chunk of gold at the end. A cross

weighing goodness knows how many ounces.

SENHORA MIRANDA : *(Taking it in her hand and feeling its weight)* Why, it's heavy . . . *(Looking at the figure of Christ on the cross)* . . . and beautiful. I'll wear it to Church. Won't the Vicar be happy.

ALPHONSO : Like me ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : *(Looking mischievously)* In a different sort of way, I guess.

ALPHONSO : Heavenly gates. We all want to enter the heavenly gates. And the keys are made of gold.

SENHORA MIRANDA : Why Alphonso, that's a very philosophic remark. And practical too.

ALPHONSO : Like you, huh ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : You should know. Oh my dear, you should know.

ALPHONSO : I wish we'd stop talking.

SENHORA MIRANDA : *(Softly)* Whenever you want, Alphonso.

ALPHONSO : *(An edge to his voice)* Yes, I know.

SENHORA MIRANDA : But darling, that's the way you want it. Whenever you want, isn't that right ? Or do you want me to play hard to get ?

ALPHONSO : *(Derisively)* Hard to get.

SENHORA MIRANDA : *(Hard as nails)* What makes you think you're so easy, Alphonso ?

ALPHONSO : *(Mumbling, not wanting to get into a fight)* I'm a man.

SENHORA MIRANDA : *(Laughing bitterly)* And men are men. And dogs are dogs. And girls . . . *(The hysterical laugh again)* . . . girls . . . are made of sugar and spice, and everything that's nice. *(ALPHONSO takes her roughly and kisses her)*

SENHORA MIRANDA : No. *(Shoving him away)* Not that way. Not drunkenly and stupidly. That's not how a man should do it.

ALPHONSO : Your husband used to do it differently, huh ? He never came home drunk.

SENHORA MIRANDA : He never pretended.

ALPHONSO : No, of course not. Came home and made love the same evening so that the wife would not suspect he'd been out with a whore.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Abstractly to herself*) To feel new, and strange and different. Secret to the touch. Violent too, yet tender. It comes from freshness and innocence.

ALPHONSO : (*Looking at her unbelievably*) What did you say ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Distantly*) I forget. I forget. It was too long ago.

ALPHONSO : (*Softly*) Yes, you got more than that. More than a roll in bed.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Smiling tenderly*) So have you, Alphonso, so have you. (*They kiss, almost with a touch of innocence*) Your kisses burn, Alphonso. But it was made of drink a little while ago.

ALPHONSO : I find you . . . strange and different. Not the same woman.

SENHORA MIRANDA : Is that the only reason why your kisses burn ? Must it always be strange and different ?

ALPHONSO : I don't know. I do what I feel.

SENHORA MIRANDA : That's nice, Alphonso. In a way it makes it so much easier. Come, sit with me by the couch. (*She sits. He lies with head on her lap*) My ! What a thick mop of hair you've got . . . (*She passes her hand through his hair and grips it like a mane*) . . . like a boy. What were you like as a boy, Alphonso ? Tell me.

ALPHONSO : I was hot-blooded.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Giggles*) That I know. Tell me more.

ALPHONSO : Kissed the girls and made them cry.

SENHORA MIRANDA : More likely you made them laugh, Alphonso, except . . . when you left them I suppose.

ALPHONSO : Why should I have left them ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : Left them and came to Goa.

ALPHONSO : Oh . . . that.

SENHORA MIRANDA : Alphonso . . . ?

ALPHONSO : . . . Yes ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : Will you promise me something ?

ALPHONSO : (*Drinking thoughtfully*) . . . Sure.

SENHORA MIRANDA : No. I mean really.

ALPHONSO : (*Distracted . . . drinking to himself*) Really what ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : Really promise me something.

ALPHONSO : Sure.

SENHORA MIRANDA : That you'll never leave me and go back to Portugal.

ALPHONSO : (*Frowning*) Now why should I ever do that ? I'm quite happy here. Got a lot of friends . . . and comfortable here. Nothing costs very much. And it's easy being Portuguese. You know what I mean ? So I like it here.

SENHORA MIRANDA : But it can't be forever, Alphonso. I mean you can't be living like this forever.

ALPHONSO : Why not ? Plenty to eat and drink. No worries.

SENHORA MIRANDA : But . . . but . . . wouldn't you like to do something, Alphonso ?

ALPHONSO : The Local Administrator gives me a job or two from time to time . . . and pays me handsomely.

SENHORA MIRANDA : Yes, because he doesn't want you hanging around with nothing and no money. It wouldn't do any good to see a Portuguese doing that.

ALPHONSO : Perhaps.

SENHORA MIRANDA : Wouldn't you like to go back home ?

ALPHONSO : (*Dreamily*) May not be such a bad idea sometime. Yes, when I was a boy . . . something of your early life always sticks . . . but I suppose it's never the same again.

SENHORA MIRANDA : You can always make it that way. I know, Alphonso. You have a lot of determination when you want to be that way.

ALPHONSO : You think so ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : Of course I do. I *know* so. You

can do any job if you put your mind to it.

ALPHONSO : Even the Administrator's ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : Why not ?

ALPHONSO : You mean . . . (*Getting slightly excited*) . . . you mean I could really take over from the Administrator if I really want to . . . and live like him . . . in that huge mansion ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : Why not . . . if you were to return to Portugal . . .

ALPHONSO : What does that have to do with it ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : It's quite simple, Alphonso dear. You'd have to qualify for his post. It would require training and work . . . in your home country . . . before they send you out here as the Administrator.

ALPHONSO : (*The thought seeping through*) Is that so ? That wouldn't be too hard, I suppose. (*Puffing out*) After all, I've got a lot of *experience* here. But imagine, Maria ! (*Getting more and more excited.*) The big house and all the servants and grandness . . .

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Emphatically*) Then, and only then, would I return to Goa.

ALPHONSO : (*Excitedly, thinking to himself*) Yes, yes, that would be wonderful. And all that cellar of wine. I'd call my friends over every day . . .

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Interrupting*) Which friends . . . ?

ALPHONSO : Oh anybody who wants to be friendly. Consider that is the job of the Administrator. Watching over friends.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Sighing*) Perhaps . . . the job of the Administrator may not suit your . . . your . . . temperament quite so well, Alphonso. You're carrying me away with your dreams.

ALPHONSO : (*Full of self-confidence now*) Me ? Dreaming ? I can do any job I put my mind to. Remember ? Anything !

SENHORA MIRANDA : Yes, Alphonso. I am sure of it. But let's start small, shall we ? Anything . . . regular. Not

when the Administrator finds it necessary . . . from time to time.

ALPHONSO : (*Suspicious*) You mean a job, don't you ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : Yes.

ALPHONSO : Here ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Torn between dreams and reality*) Yes . . . No. No, not here. We can start . . . anywhere. But not here.

ALPHONSO : What about . . . Diu or Daman ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : Well . . . it wouldn't be here, and if it meant a regular job . . .

ALPHONSO : (*Teasingly*) What about . . . Lisbon ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*In dreams and almost tears*) Lisbon. Lisbon. How musical it sounds. How different I feel. Oh, Alphonso . . . (*Her voice breaks*) . . . don't tease me, Alphonso. Oh I hope so much, I cry, I cry, Alphonso. (*She puts her hand on his chest and cries*)

ALPHONSO : (*Overwhelmed, not having expected this, and touched ; softly*) Maria . . . Maria . . . It means so much, does it ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : Oh Alphonso, I'm a woman. Woman. No different, you understand. I hope, naturally. Perhaps even more because it sounds so unreal. But I want it so. These desires . . . that of youth . . . passed. The longings become different as time goes by, but just as strong. Perhaps . . . it's part of my nature. But you bring it out, Alphonso. You with your thick hair, and your feeling ways, as though nothing else ever mattered . . .

ALPHONSO : (*Out of depth. Back to his drinks*) Whatcha saying ? Whatcha saying . . . ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : I'm saying that I'm common but you're not, though everything seems the other way around. Yet we find something in common. Now isn't that hilarious ?

ALPHONSO : Yes, very funny. But a lot of talk.

SENHORA MIRANDA : Why, Alphonso, I've seen you talk for

hours on end . . . with your friends.

ALPHONSO : Oh, they're different . . .

SENHORA MIRANDA : I should hope so. I wish you wouldn't mix with . . . *all* of them.

ALPHONSO : What do you mean ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : Oh, I mean it's alright if you have a drink with the Administrator, or have a chat with the Vicar . . . but the rest . . . (*Shrugging her shoulders*) . . . of the Goans . . .

ALPHONSO : Why, what's wrong with them ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : They . . . they don't have the same background. You understand. Oh, it's alright I suppose if you occasionally meet them, but this idea of being too friendly with all and sundry isn't exactly becoming.

ALPHONSO : Why not ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : Well, I don't have to keep repeating myself, do I ? We . . . We're different, you know.

ALPHONSO : . . . We ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : Yes, I remember my parents telling me . . . how it was necessary to keep the distance.

ALPHONSO : Your mother and your father.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Impatiently*) Naturally. It takes two to make parents or don't you know !

ALPHONSO : It also takes two to make children.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Alert*) What do you mean !

ALPHONSO : (*Wavering*) Well . . . you know I've never been conscious of colour. We Portuguese aren't.

SENHORA MIRANDA : But this one is !

ALPHONSO : (*Cautiously*) That could be a bit embarrassing — for you.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Sharply*) Why ?

ALPHONSO : (*Trying to be evasive ; wanting to change the subject*) Well . . . well . . . (*At a loss for words ; then recalcitrant*) How the hell should I know !

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Insistent*) You said it would be embarrassing for me. Why ?

ALPHONSO : (*Sympathetically*) I thought it was fairly obvious, my dear. (*Softly*) Why do you press me to hurt you ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Clasping the cross around her neck*) Oh . . . you mean . . . (*Her voice in a hush*) . . . Rose. (*ALPHONSO does not reply. Whispering to herself*) Rose . . . Rose . . .

ALPHONSO : (*Softly*) Nobody would have known it . . . if you had not said so yourself. And I'm glad you did.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Hushed tone*) Yes, Rose is my child, dark though she is.

ALPHONSO : She's the fairest flower in all the world, Maria.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Looking up to him*) Why don't you ask me ?

ALPHONSO : What ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : You may not understand me completely, Alphonso, yet there are few things that your instinct does not tell you.

ALPHONSO : My dear, I drink like a bear . . .

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Running her fingers through his hair and gripping him determinedly at the hair above the nape of his neck*) . . . with his passion . . . (*They kiss passionately*) Why don't you ask me . . . whose child she is ! (*They break apart*)

ALPHONSO : I don't like to hurt people . . . even when they want to be hurt.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Insistent on drawing out blood*) Why don't you ask me . . . who her father was ?

ALPHONSO : You've already told me . . . he was Portuguese.

SENHORA MIRANDA : Why don't you ask me . . . who my father was ?

ALPHONSO : You've already told me . . . he was Portuguese.

SENHORA MIRANDA : Ah ! . . . But it's evident that I'm lying somewhere. That girl's either got the blood of her father . . . in which case he wasn't Portuguese . . . or she's got the blood of her grand-father, in which case my father was not

Portuguese. (ALPHONSO is silent) Why are you silent, Alphonso? Wouldn't you like to know where I'm lying? Either my child's a bastard . . . or I am.

ALPHONSO : (Quietly) I told you before . . . it makes no difference to me.

SENHORA MIRANDA : Ah, but it does to me. Can you imagine my feelings, Alphonso? Now you know why I don't like coloured people. They make me feel dirty.

ALPHONSO : Rose is the cleanest girl I know.

SENHORA MIRANDA : No doubt. No doubt. But give her time. She's only fourteen, you know. Time may come when she's no different from me. Only I'm fair, and she's dark.

ALPHONSO : (Slowly) Rose is Goa. Goa is Rose.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (Said with peculiar emphasis) She came from my womb. Dark and bloody as the night when she was conceived. Oh the pain; the dreadful pain. They say it should give rise to love when it's cut out from your own flesh. But the colour is different. A constant reminder . . .

ALPHONSO : What a dreadful love is yours, Maria. It's frightening.

SENHORA MIRANDA : My love is tender, Alphonso. We quarrel . . . about nothing. Let us forget. (Sound of a strange singing voice)

ALPHONSO : Who's that?

SENHORA MIRANDA : (Quietly) Rose.

ALPHONSO : Her voice is strange.

SENHORA MIRANDA : She tries to remember what a voice must sound like.

ALPHONSO : When . . . When did she . . . become deaf?

SENHORA MIRANDA : In her late childhood. A congenital defect.

ALPHONSO : Who taught her to read lips?

SENHORA MIRANDA : Herself.

ALPHONSO : (Lapsing into silence) Hmmm . . .

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Trying to break out of it*) Well ! Well !
Your drink has evaporated fast. How about a drop for
both of us ?

ALPHONSO : No.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Almost aggressively*) Why won't you
have a drink !

ALPHONSO : I just don't feel like it.

SENHORA MIRANDA : What does *feeling* have to do with it ?
It's . . . it's just not *natural* your not having a drink.

ALPHONSO : I find you take advantage of me when I drink.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Indignantly*) I . . . take advantage of
you . . . when you drink !

ALPHONSO : What I mean is that you say all sorts of things
I don't understand when I'm drunk.

SENHORA MIRANDA : And you think you'd understand if
you were sober, that's it ?

ALPHONSO : I just might.

SENHORA MIRANDA : But if I were to drink . . . wouldn't
that sort of . . . equalize us ?

ALPHONSO : I never thought of that.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Pouring out two very stiff ones*) Well
Alphonso, dear, that should not be difficult to find out.
(*They drink it down. She pours another*) They say men love
to drink each other under the table. Well, cheers, Alphon-
so darling . . . (*They drink it down. She pours out yet another*)
What do men talk about when they drink, Alphonso ?
Women ? (*Her voice loses humour*) That must be fun.
(*She pours out some more*) Viva ! Women have greater capa-
city, they say. You don't believe it, do you, Alphonso ?
That's because you're a man . . . a Real Man . . . (*And some
more*)

ALPHONSO : (*Slurring*) That's the quickest I ever got drunk.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Patting him on on his thighs*) Never
mind, little one, we'll soon get to the point . . . of equaliza-
tion . . . (*Pours out some more*) They talk a lot, don't they,
at the Tavern ? I've never been in there before, you know,

so if old Chico ever tells you I have, he's a bloody liar. (*Pours out an extra one for herself*) Who do they talk about? Rose and myself? or just Rose? or just myself?

ALPHONSO : Nobody talks about Rose.

SENHORA MIRANDA : Oh, so they just talk about me, do they? What do they say, Alphonso? Do you listen to all they say, or do you, put in your two-bits too? Never want to hurt me, do you, darling? You great sweet Bull. What have you got at the back of your dirty little mind, you Ox? I know just screwing me is not all you want, you innocent bastard . . . (*ALPHONSO get up violently sending the table and bottles in a crash*)

ALPHONSO : (*He slaps her*) You bitch!

SENHORA MIRANDA : Haaa . . . that's more like it, Alphonso. I got to thinking you were just another tame slimy prick!

ALPHONSO : I'm warning you, Maria. You behave like this and I leave.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Tantalizing him*) Oh, have I offended your inherent Portuguese nature? You're not used to these kinds of tortures, are you? You're full of sensibilities, you damned Portuguese. Don't give me that about loving Goa and all. I know what goes on . . . and on . . . and on . . .

ALPHONSO : I'm leaving, Maria.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Becoming more possessed now : regretting her outburst, apprehensive, but not wanting to change positions too soon*) Leaving, are you? When will you be back? When the beer has turned flat and there's no more froth left? When your bar-chums have gone, no more man-talk left to be done; when your crude dulled desires hunger for woman's flesh . . .

ALPHONSO : (*Dead serious now, her remarks having gone to the core*) I'm leaving, Maria . . . for good!

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Realizing he's serious, finding herself having to change positions earlier than expected*) Leaving? (*Her voice goes through a strange change*) Leaving? No, no,

Alphonso. (*It becomes a whine*) No, **you** can't leave, Alphonso. You won't leave. You had promised me you wouldn't. Or that you'd take me along with you. Take me then. To Diu or Lisbon or I don't care where. (*Sobbing*) Just take me. (*He is about to leave, but she grabs him*) No, stay a minute. Just a minute. I swear to God I won't keep you longer if you don't want to stay. (*Calling out*) Rose! Rose my dear! Where are you? Where are you? (*She goes out; ALPHONSO sits hypnotized. A few seconds later SENHORA MIRANDA returns with ROSE*)

SENHORA MIRANDA: Rose . . . (*Turning ROSE around to face her*) . . . see me, dear . . . Rose, we've got a guest. He wants to go but I want him to stay. You understand? (*Rose nods*) He talks at lot about you. Calls you an innocent white flower . . . (*Rose's hand goes to her heart*) says Rose is Goa and Goa is Rose. Is terrified of me, yet comes and often stays. (*ALPHONSO cannot bring himself to look up at her*) Hoping. Hoping. That's why he comes back over and over again. See what he gave me? A necklace . . . of gold. With a cross that weighs a ton. Here, I'll put it around your neck. No, no, don't be frightened. He's a harmless animal. I know. (*She gently puts the necklace around the neck of her daughter*) Now Alphonso. Look up. Look at her. Nothing to be ashamed of. She's innocent and beautiful. And she's dark. Not fair like you. Look up, you dog. Look up at her! (*ALPHONSO is perspiring, he can't look up*) You'll never see her again if you go for good. So see her now! Look at her! (*ALPHONSO raises his eyes slowly, guiltily. Then he bursts out at MIRANDA*)

ALPHONSO: YOU BEAST! YOU HORRIBLE BEAST! (*Gets up and runs out.* SENHORA MIRANDA turns her daughter's face around, and looks gravely into her eyes)

SENHORA MIRANDA: (*Quietly*) He'll be back.

ACT I Scene III

TIME : *The same evening.*

SCENE : *NOBODY on the patio, except near the balcony where the BOY stands as in the first scene with the GIRL (ROSE) on the balcony.*

AT RISE : *Under the balcony, in the house, sits SENHORA MIRANDA. She sits still for a long moment. Then she sighs and moves the curtain aside to look across the patio. She sees the BOY. She notices that he seems to be moving his lips for she hears no sound. Then with curiosity she looks up, and finds ROSE sitting on the balcony. She studies the situation quietly for a minute. Then she smiles strangely to herself. Taking the umbrella in her hand, she raises it over her head, and knocks on the balcony. ROSE is immediately alert. She recognizes the communication (presumably from the vibrations on the balcony), and raising her finger quietly to her lips to caution the BOY, she leaves and comes down the stairs to her mother.*

SENHORA MIRANDA : *(Looking at ROSE's face)* Rose.

ROSE : *(Her voice wavering)* Yes, mother.

SENHORA MIRANDA : *(Speaking slowly with pronounced lip movements)* What were you doing upstairs ?

ROSE : Nothing, mother.

SENHORA MIRANDA : *Who's that outside ? (Rose catches a sharp breath)* I said who's that outside, Rose.

ROSE : *(Her hand to her breast)* Boy.

SENHORA MIRANDA : He looks more like a young man to me. Who's he ?

ROSE : I don't know.

SENHORA MIRANDA : *(Looking closely)* You don't know ?

ROSE : *(Looking unblinkingly at her mother)* I don't know.

SENHORA MIRANDA : But he talks to you.

ROSE : Yes.

SENHORA MIRANDA : Have you ever met him before ?

ROSE : No.

SENHORA MIRANDA : But he's spoken to you before . . . across the balcony.

ROSE : Yes.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Turning her head slightly and raising the curtain sideways so she can see without being seen*) He's a stranger here. I can make it out. He's not like the others. Dark, yes, but not like the others. (*She's now talking to herself. ROSE cannot read her lips because her head is turned sideways as she muses, to herself, looking out at the patio*)

SENHORA MIRANDA : Alphonso is there somewhere. Probably in the Tavern. A good thing for him . . . to think things over. So also for me. (*Thoughtfully*) Yes, it would be interesting, wouldn't it . . . to be occupied instead of . . . available . . . with more strings . . . Why don't you call him in . . . (*As she says it she turns her head to ROSE. ROSE guesses that something must have been said to her but cannot make it out*) . . . I said why don't you call him in, Rose.

ROSE : (*Not sure now whether she has read the lips correctly*) . . . in ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : Yes, dear. Call him in. He seems well dressed and respectable. He also seems to know you and I think I ought to be introduced to him. (*ROSE hesitates as she goes to the door*) Call him in, Rose, call him in. (*ROSE opens the door slowly, and calls out to him. He enters. He's not as boyish as he looked earlier. There's a strange precocity about him, a distant mystery*) Ah, good evening, young man . . . (*SENHORA MIRANDA at her charming best gets up and shakes hands*) . . . my name is Senhora Miranda, and this . . . is my daughter, Rose. I believe you've met her.

KRISHNA : (*Quietly. Looking at ROSE*) Yes, I've seen her before . . . many times.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Raising her eyebrow quizzically*) Indeed.

KRISHNA : (*Continuing to look at ROSE*) My name is Krishna.

SENHORA MIRANDA : And mine is Senhora Miranda.

(KRISHNA now turns around and looks at her. He smiles, self-confidently. SENHORA MIRANDA smiles back at him)

KRISHNA : I'm sorry. I was facing your daughter . . . because I know she cannot hear.

SENHORA MIRANDA : And I can.

KRISHNA : Yes. (A pause)

SENHORA MIRANDA : Won't . . . won't you sit down, Mr Krishna? (They sit down) You're a stranger here, aren't you?

KRISHNA : Yes.

SENHORA MIRANDA : I recognized that at once . . . the first time I saw you. Won't you have a drink? Some whisky perhaps?

KRISHNA : (Looking again at ROSE) Thank you, Senhora Miranda, but I don't drink.

SENHORA MIRANDA : Maria . . .

KRISHNA : (Turning his look again to SENHORA MIRANDA) . . . Maria then. (They both smile again momentarily at each other)

SENHORA MIRANDA : I don't like . . . formality. It comes in the way of being . . . occupied.

KRISHNA : (His gaze again reverting to ROSE) Your daughter does not talk much in your presence.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (Looking at ROSE) Well, Rose? (ROSE looks from one to the other, her eyes bewildered)

KRISHNA : Ah, you're confusing her, Sen . . . Maria. She cannot look from one to the other so fast. (Looking steadily at ROSE) It takes patience, doesn't it, Rose? Care . . . and a lot of patience. (ROSE smiles shyly) It took years, didn't it? And a strong urge . . . to understand. (SENHORA MIRANDA has been looking from one to the other, a strange excitement filling her being)

SENHORA MIRANDA : (Her voice a bit choked. Turning to ROSE) Rose, get us some tea please (ROSE looks at her) I said get some tea, Rose. Some tea. (ROSE leaves) (Then turning to KRISHNA) That was a very impressive speech, Krishna. Clearly said. Cleverly too. No fumbling or mistakes.

Not like any boy. Nor like any man. You're a strange one, Krishna.

KRISHNA : Senhora Miranda . . .

SENHORA MIRANDA : . . . Maria !

KRISHNA : Maria then . . .

SENHORA MIRANDA : No, just Maria.

KRISHNA : Maria.

SENHORA MIRANDA : Does not sound like Rose, huh ?

KRISHNA : Sounds only matter to us, Maria, ut not to her.

SENHORA MIRANDA : What matters to her, Krishna, since you seem to know her so well ?

KRISHNA : (*Pauses before replying*) You.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*A bit staggered*) You're not a boy, Krishna. You're a man. Are you a real man ? (*KRISHNA smiles*) Do you ever go to the Taverna ?

KRISHNA : No.

SENHORA MIRANDA : Have you ever taken the long patio walk ?

KRISHNA : What's that ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : You'll know one day. (*KRISHNA shrugs his shoulders. Looking at him fixedly*) Then you don't drink ?

KRISHNA : No.

SENHORA MIRANDA : Are we on the point of equalization ?

KRISHNA : . . . The what ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : Never mind. (*Pause*) Why don't you ask me ?

KRISHNA : . . . Ask you what ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : Why Rose is so dark and I'm so fair. (*KRISHNA shrugs his shoulders indifferently*) Like you are dark and I'm fair. (*KRISHNA looks at her*) Like he is fair and she is dark. (*KRISHNA frowns*) Therefore, it should mean something ; your being dark and my being fair.

KRISHNA : You're mixed up, Maria. It does not always work that way.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Angry*) No ? Why not ? Like you

are younger and I'm older. Like he's older and she is younger. There's a rhyme to it somewhere.

KRISHNA : That's all there is, Maria.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*More angry*) Like you're a stranger and I'm a stranger. Like he is not and she is not. Doesn't it match, Krishna ?

KRISHNA : Not to me, Maria.

Listen : *Like I'm dark ; so is she*
Like I'm young ; so is she . . .

That rhymes.

Like I'm a stranger ; she is not
Like she is ; like I'm . . .

That matches, Maria, that matches.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Furious*) Why you . . . (*Raises her hand to strike, which he catches*)

KRISHNA : I don't hit, Maria. I don't commit violence either.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Quivering*) You'll never get to her . . . (*Rose enters with the tea and KRISHNA speaks looking at her*)

KRISHNA : (*Passionately*) Nobody's going to stop me, Maria. Nobody's going to stop me. I've waited for her too long. It took care and patience, and long years of understanding. You see, we had something in common. It rhymed ; it matched. But it was more than that. I love her, Maria. She's tender to the touch, though I never touched her. She watched my lips . . . speak through the night, afraid to close her eyes, and be embalmed in the terrifying stillness of it all. And I felt equally. Terrified that my hands should hold the uncrushed flower . . . so pure . . . and fragrant. (*Both the woman look at him hypnotized. ROSE stands still with the tea tray in her hands*)

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*The first to recover. Going up to ROSE*) Thank you, dear. I'll get the tray now. (*She takes it from ROSE's lifeless hands*) How many spoons of sugar, Krishna ?

KRISHNA : One.

SENHORA MIRANDA : I always take two, and Rose always

taken there. (*She makes the tea in silence and then passes it around. ROSE sits down and drinks the tea quietly. SENHORA MIRANDA gets up, balancing the cup in one hand, and walks slowly around the room, her hips undulating slightly as though it were the patio walk, while she talks, partly before her daughter, partly behind her daughter, so that her selected bits of conversation may not be heard depending upon her position in the room*)

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Said as she walks behind ROSE*) Neat. Very neat, Krishna. Where did you learn to speak like that? Almost rehearsed, yet very moving. More things unsaid than said. And many more things meant . . . (*Said as she walks in front of ROSE*) Rose must have a sweet tooth to take three spoons of sugar. She likes things sweeter than most . . . (*Said as she walks behind ROSE*) . . . and many more things meant . . . than said. Dark you are, Krishna ; darker your thoughts are too, in spite of the light which you claim to shed on her. . . (*Said as she walks in front of ROSE*) . . . I suppose that's because she has a sweeter tooth than most. That's how she remembers her voice ; it's a taste in her mouth . . . (*Said as she walks behind ROSE*) . . . It's not going to be easy, Krishna. (*Softly*) You see, Krishna, I come first, like two spoons of sugar before three. No one's going to stop you, Krishna . . . but you'll have to pass by me first . . . (*KRISHNA laughs. It infuriates SENHORA MIRANDA. She breaks her slow walk. Now she approaches ROSE, looking at her eyes steadily, speaking softly, hardly audible, with clear lip movements . . .*) Hear me, Rose. I speak softly but you don't need sound. You only need me. Understand? (*ROSE nods her head like one hypnotized. KRISHNA shifts uneasily*) I've got a guest here. He wants to stay, but I want him to go. Tell him to go, Rose. (*Hardly a whisper, but the lip movements are very clear*) Tell him to go, Rose. (*Lip movement*) Go . . . Go . . . (*At first ROSE's mouth quivers, then it catches the vowels of her mother's mouth, like the young. Gradually it becomes articulate . . .*)

ROSE : . . . G . . . G . . . Go . . . Go . . . (*Her mother nods her head, like instructions to a child. KRISHNA looks on, speechless and horrified*)

ROSE : . . . Go Krishna go . . .

KRISHNA : (*Screaming to SENHORA MIRANDA*) YOU BEAST !
YOU BEAST !

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Twisting around violently, with a terrible gleam in her eyes*) Ahh ! What happened, Krishna ! What went wrong ! What became of your calculations ! Slap me ! Why don't you slap me ! . . . (*ROSE cannot see all, nor hear anything, but she guesses intuitively, claps her hand before her eyes, her ears, her face, pathetically, moaning slightly, like some dumb animal, who not being able to stand the torture, dashes away . . . KRISHNA makes a move to go after her, but is stopped by SENHORA MIRANDA*) Ah, but you'll have to get by me first. Nobody's going to stop you, Krishna, but you'll have to get by me first . . . (*Her hands go up to his black hair*) . . . your hair, Krishna, it's black and thick . . . (*She catches him by the hair at the nape of his neck*) . . . strong Krishna, though you may not be violent . . . though . . . (*She laughs queerly*) . . . you may be full of love, you carry the hate potential . . . I come first Krishna or else you go . . . (*Her movements becoming more passionate*) . . . you're like a bull too Krishna . . . a big brainy bull that gives more promise . . . (*Her eyes partly closed, her breath sharper, her lips closer to KRISHNA who stands tense, immobile, but under terrific strain*) . . . me first . . . me . . . me . . . me . . . (*Her face closer as she repeats it, the veins on his neck taut as he does not bend, till she releases him, with hate in her eyes*)

SENHORA MIRANDA : . . . GO THEN . . . GO KRISHNA . . . (*Softly*) . . . I know you'll be back . . . (*Door bangs open and ALPHONSO lurches in, almost totally drunk ; a high peal of penetrating laughter from SENHORA MIRANDA*) You've come back, haven't you ? I told you so. Didn't I tell you so, you great bull of a man . . . (*She goes up to him and he picks her up in a passionate embrace*) . . . I've got your finger marks

still on my face. You've got some swing, Alphonso, you have got some swing. Many a younger man could learn from you, if they could only use their brains, if they could only use their potential . . . of which you have none, my dear Ox . . .

ALPHONSO : (*Blubbing drunkenly while KRISHNA watches like a frozen stone*) . . . Rose . . . Rose . . .

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Soothingly*) All in good time, you impatient virgin. All in good time. We've got a lot of things to do first . . . to improve on, you know, for I was always first . . . (*The darkness gathering over her face*) . . . in that dark bloody night, fertile with horror, in that dark bloody night, fertile with horror, was I . . . (*The darkness passing*) . . . what was I saying ? . . . ah, yes, all in good time . . . it can't be today. It takes time, but it gets nearer you come every time, so do not waste time . . .

ALPHONSO : (*Blubbing wretchedly, while KRISHNA watches with tears in his eyes*) . . . Now . . . Now . . .

SENHORA MIRANDA : Patience, patience, you big Ox. You wouldn't like to hurt, would you ? It takes time, getting used to. Therefore, I always take on first ; a protection in a peculiar sort of way, if you know what I mean, you drunken fool . . .

ALPHONSO : (*Pleading, falling on his kness, while KRISHNA shuts his eyes tight, raises hands to blot out ears*) . . . Maria . . . Maria . . .

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Eyes satanic ; herself almost exhausted through sheer victory*) Ah, that's the way I like to hear it. Maria. Maria. Not "Maria then." But "Maria". Just Maria. Maria alone, like when we're no longer formal. Then is the right time . . . for introductions. So that we come to know each other . . . well . . . Equalization. Alphonso, this is Krishna. Krishna, this is Alphonso. And I'm Maria, without beginning or end — make your friendship, Alphonso. Say "Hello". I know Alphonso loves to hear the word "Hello". I know, Krishna, you don't

believe in it, but it's quite necessary. Say it now, Krishna. See my words . . . (*Moulding her lips in a clear "Hello" . . . as though she were telling or teaching her daughter*) . . . "Hello" . . . that's right, you're getting it now.

KRISHNA : (*Partly hypnotized, lips quivering*) H . . . hello.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*The sheer lust of victory will not leave her, exhausted as she is by this ordeal*) Ahh . . . so sweet. But the function's not over yet. After every "Hello", Alphonso likes to be taken to the Taverna. I know you don't drink, but that does not matter ; Alphonso does. And you can see the poor dog can hardly stand on his feet. A few drinks, Krishna, that's all it will take. Aren't we after all all victims of survival ? His feet are getting heavy. He's crossed the patio many, many times, while you have not even once. So take him along for the last drink that wasn't meant for the road . . . and come back alone . . . along the long patio walk . . . for me . . . me . . . (*KRISHNA gets up, dazed, but not unpossessive, of his senses. He goes over to ALPHONSO, and takes him by the elbow leading him towards the door. ALPHONSO goes with him unprotestingly, too drunk to know what is happening. KRISHNA leads him out, across the patio, which is empty, to the Taverna. The evening lights get dimmer. MARIA leaves the room downstairs and goes to her bedroom and through transparent curtains we see her changing her clothes into bright scarlet with a black scarf and dark red lipstick across her white expressionless face. Then slowly she leaves her room and climbs up the stairs to the balcony where she sits and waits, looking across the patio. The BENCH-WATCHERS gather. In twos and fours and in a group, mirroring everything. The bat-doors of the Tavern open to frame one single man ; KRISHNA. He emerges, and takes the long patio walk. The BENCH-WATCHERS watch. Now we see the third pattern of reaction across the face of Portuguese Goa. Hate. distrust, fear ; of this stranger, not too unlike them, but an outsider nevertheless, an unknown element, too unpredictable, yet outwardly calm and peaceful. KRISHNA takes the long slow*

walk, looking neither left nor right, the BENCH-WATCHERS silent and pale, some reflecting the above reactions, while he walks, slowly, calmly, peacefully towards the balcony, towards where MARIA sits and watches, then stands as he approaches and enters her house, herself with proud and triumphant smile written across her face)

CURTAIN FALLS

ACT II Scene I

TIME : *The following day.*

SCENE : *On the patio with the regular BENCH-SITTERS.*

AT RISE : *The GOAN NATIONALIST is sitting across the PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR with glass of beer in his hand.*

GOAN NATIONALIST : There is a change coming . . . inevitably. And, my friend, you will be in the midst of it. You know I've got my ears glued to the ground. And while you think you are trying to keep me out of mischief, you are ignoring the greater danger. Normally, I couldn't care less, and often I have to do what I must, but . . . I've got used to you and would be sorry to see you go.

PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR : Ahh, my good friend, it's good of you to say so, but I'm afraid you're underestimating me.

GOAN NATIONALIST : *(Shrugging his shoulders)* Suit yourself.

PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR : *(Breaking the froth of the beer with his finger absently)* Mind you, I'm not saying it can't be done. It . . . it just wouldn't be logical. Not after fourteen years. You've got develop a cause . . . and you can't do it as a pacifist.

GOAN NATIONALIST : There is a breaking point to all patience.

PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR : We've been here four hundred years. We're old as the hills. We're part and parcel of this life whether you like it or not . . . and I don't see why you shouldn't like it. It's not as though we were obstructing you . . . except that there are limits of course.

GOAN NATIONALIST : Ahhh . . .

PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR : But there's no such thing as limitless freedom. You know that as well as I do.

GOAN NATIONALIST : But there is such a thing as liberty.

PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR : And how do you get liberty ?

GOAN NATIONALIST : If it is not given, then it must be won.

PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR : And how would it be won ?

GOAN NATIONALIST : If need be . . . through liberation.

PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR : You mean through invasion.

GOAN NATIONALIST : Call it what you like.

PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR : I thought maybe you were going to say self-determination.

GOAN NATIONALIST : We tried that and failed.

PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR : I thought maybe you were going to say *satyagraha*.

GOAN NATIONALIST : We tried that too ; we tried passive resistance and failed.

PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR : Liberation is a dirty word to me ; like exploitation or invasion ! I wonder if you will come to the same conclusion if it should happen that one day I am not here.

GOAN NATIONALIST : You were never before much concerned about means to an end.

PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR : Ah, but that's because I never pretended.

GOAN NATIONALIST : If there ever were any violence, I would not like to see you hurt.

PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR : Nor I you.

GOAN NATIONALIST : Strange that we should be on different sides of the fence and yet have so much in common with each other.

PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR : I told you . . . we are part and parcel of each other's lives.

GOAN NATIONALIST : And yet it is inevitable that we break away. There's bound to be a reaction, of course, but that is again unavoidable. We do it for the larger good of the larger people in the long run.

PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR : Everything you say sounds like an expediency. Like bringing in an outsider. Like an unnatural alliance.

GOAN NATIONALIST : Perhaps . . . but a necessary one. There's nothing . . . nothing . . . you can do to stop the basic desire. You could float this *enclave* in milk and honey and yet we would want for ourselves that abstraction with all our hearts, and nobody, no-one will ever be able to stop us, even though we may be ruthless to ourselves and others in getting it. And if freedom cannot be won alone, I'd be willing to join the devil himself to get it.

PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR : That way . . . you will lose what you want most.

GOAN NATIONALIST : Maybe, but there's nothing that I can do to prevent it either, even if I wanted to. We are compelled within ourselves, you understand.

PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR : (*Wearily*) Frankly, my friend, I do not know who's right and who's wrong, or even whether I should bring moral values into judgement.

GOAN NATIONALIST : (*Raising his glass*) Let us drink this beer while it lasts. Look at the froth shining in the sun.

PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR : (*Raising his glass*) Beautiful. Like Goa. (*Across to the benches*)

VICAR : (*To the GOAN HINDU*) When are you going to come into my Church, son ?

GOAN HINDU : Why ? Will it remove caste distinctions ?

VICAR : All are equal in the eyes of God.

GOAN HINDU : Then why is it that the Catholic-Brahmin looks down upon the Catholic non-Brahmin and the Portuguese Catholic looks down upon the Jesuits . . .

VICAR : (*Interrupting*) These are social evils ; not religious ones.

GOAN HINDU : One thing or another, it's all the same to me. But tell me, Father, why don't you come to my temple ? (*Conversation shifts*)

OLD WOMAN : Beware. Beware. The wrath of God. Like invading armies. Death resurrected. Thunder and lightning ; limitless catastrophes.

OLD MAN : Ahhh . . .

OLD WOMAN : It will strike . . . (*Waving a finger overhead to the cross on the top of the Church*) . . . out there !

OLD MAN : Ahhh . . . (*The SMUGGLER plays the mouth-organ once again, desolately. He dances an unmerry tune, with false, unmeasured steps. Then stands, awkwardly, self consciously, before the audience or before the BENCH-SITTERS, and points to himself . . .*)

SMUGGLER : Me ? I live off the fat of the land. And if there's no fat, I scrounge off the dustbin like an emaciated cat with a full fish-bone stuck in her mouth . . . So if smuggling should come to an end, why then I shall stick my head in the dustbin to find other ways of subsistence . . . But I shall not go back loin-cloth into the fields, for I have now developed the rich taste of a parasite. A tourist guide. A swanky hotel. An industrial boom. A political party. A municipal campaign. A prohibition era ; all this means means money to me . . . cutting corners of course . . . And if you should object, I shall have one on you . . . for I am the necessary evil ; the safety valve of the nation, where corruption, linguism, communalism . . . breeds. So let me free or keep me in bondage ; either way I flourish. (*A harmonica laugh covering the full octave. Playing the mouth-organ first with the right hand and then with the left*) You see . . . I'm ambidexterous. (*Scene darkens towards the patio gradually blotting out the BENCHSITTERS, and begins to brighten inside the house of SENHORA MARIA where the action is transferred. KRISHNA is lying on the sofa with head on the lap of SENHORA MIRANDA much in the same pose as ALPHONSO was in the first act*)

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Caressing his black hair and holding it in her hand behind the nape of his neck from time to time*) Isn't it nice. I feel relaxed. Like I had surpassed the yoint of . . . equalization. Krishna, you're a sweet boy after all. A passionate child.

KRISHNA : (*Looking up and smiling*) Satisfied ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Nodding her head affirmatively*) Huh-

huh. I wasn't sure to start with. Like all burning curiosities I was afraid of hoping too much. Oh, but I was proud of you; when you took that long patio walk, I was proud of you.

KRISHNA : You looked more victorious than proud.

SENHORA MIRANDA : What's the difference; victorious for myself; proud for you. I saw them look at you sitting on the benches . . . the vultures! They were *afraid*, Krishna, afraid of you. They didn't "hello" and act pals with you. They withdrew and shrunk and evaporated. Before you! . . . my quiet peaceful boy . . . with the potential of a giant!

KRISHNA : (*Smiling*) You're letting your imagination run away with you.

SENHORA MIRANDA : No, no. I've got a strong instinct too . . . like Alphonso. And look at the way you handled Alphonso. That took more than imagination. It took action.

KRISHNA : (*No humour in his eyes*) It also took a bit of help from you . . . Or don't you remember, Maria?

SENHORA MIRANDA : Ahh, there's no harm in a bit of competition, is there, Krishna?

KRISHNA : Between who?

SENHORA MIRANDA : Why, you and Alphonso, of course.

KRISHNA : For whom?

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Innocently*) Why, for me, of course.

KRISHNA : What about . . . Rose?

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Unwavering voice*) What about Rose? Oh you mean the competition . . . (KRISHNA *nods*) between you and Alphonso . . . (KRISHNA *nods*) . . . for Rose . . . ? (KRISHNA *nods*)

SENHORA MIRANDA : Now isn't that strange. All along I thought you were competing for me.

KRISHNA : (*Sighing*) I've got a present for you, Maria.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Excited*) Not really!

KRISHNA : (*Takes a small box from his pocket and chucks it over to SENHORA MIRANDA*) No need to guess. Diamond.

A diamond ring.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Opening the box and looking with wide eyes*) Www . . . Wow !

KRISHNA : (*Smiling*) Like it ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : Like it ! (*Grabs hold of him and kisses him*) It's wonderful ! And diamonds are more expensive than gold. They weigh less, but they're worth more. Like some people, I guess.

KRISHNA : How do you weigh people ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : I measure them first, from tip to toe, from circumference to height. Then I look at the stuff they are made of . . . are they made of air . . . or are they made of beer ? Then I multiply the two, and pronto, I get their weight.

KRISHNA : (*Smiling*) Ingenious.

SENHORA MIRANDA : Now take you . . . (*KRISHNA looks*) . . . I put my arms around you like this ; that's volume ; I squeeze you tight ; that's density . . . (*She kisses him*) . . . that's your indication of weight.

KRISHNA : (*Smiling*) Amazing.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Suddenly serious*) You smile like a boy. Sometimes you seem . . . no older than Rose. Sometimes you remind me . . . of deeper horror. Then too, there is an innocence . . . like Rose. Where are you from, Krishna ?

KRISHNA : (*Expressionless*) Not far from here.

SENHORA MIRANDA : Who are you ?

KRISHNA : Anyone.

SENHORA MIRANDA : I've got a long memory.

KRISHNA : So have I.

SENHORA MIRANDA : Would you ever be able to take me away from here ?

KRISHNA : Why ? I like it here.

SENHORA MIRANDA : You like it here ?

KRISHNA : Why not ? I've always felt this . . . was mine. Always wanted to possess it. You, this house, Rose.

Like I had a right to it.

SENHORA MIRANDA : Thank you for asking me.

KRISHNA : (*Looking upstairs, then at MARIA*) I've never hidden from you what I wanted, Maria. I never looked at Rose with a feeling of guilt . . . Now we've got something in common. You called it equalization. We'll get used to the rest. (*Looking upstairs*) Because you know there is something more I want Patience, that's what you said to Alphonso, didn't you. Patience, so he would play up to you to feel secure and hopeful . . . Well, Maria, I've got patience too, but I don't whine like a dog. And I don't make half-way bargains either, so remember that, Maria.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Stung*) God, you've got density. You're made of stone.

KRISHNA : You're wrong there. I've got a heart that yearns. But I've been stopped too often. It develops callouses. Not dead callouses, but callouses that burn !

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Tough herself*) There's a long way between here and upstairs.

KRISHNA : I know. But don't try my patience too long. And don't take sides. You may have white skin, but so also have albinos. It doesn't prove a thing.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Aroused*) What do you mean ! What do you mean !

KRISHNA : You've got shades of black within you, Maria. Rose wouldn't come out dark unless there was dark blood somewhere . . . What do you think Alphonso was talking about before he passed out at the tavern last night ? He was trying to find out whether I was your father or your former husband.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*With incredulous amusement*) Father or husband ?

KRISHNA : It's pretty obvious what he meant. Rose couldn't come out dark unless either your husband or your father was dark like me. In terms of colour, therefore, I was either your husband or your father. Something in

common. You've got shades of black within you, Maria. See it right and you won't be conscious of it any more.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Looking at him meaningfully*) How far . . . are you conscious of everything within you, Krishna ?

KRISHNA : (*Facing her, taking up the challenge*) Tell me.

SENHORA MIRANDA : You are not soft, Krishna : you're hard.

KRISHNA : Soft . . . to Rose.

SENHORA MIRANDA : You don't have love, Krishna. You have hate.

KRISHNA : Love . . . for Rose.

SENHORA MIRANDA : You're not peaceful, Krishna ; you're violent.

KRISHNA : Peaceful . . . to Rose.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Pause*) Is that . . . how Rose sees you, Krishna ?

KRISHNA : Yes.

SENHORA MIRANDA : Take care . . . that's all I can say . . . just be careful, Krishna.

KRISHNA : (*Trace of scorn*) Of whom ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*After a pause*) . . . of yourself . . . of what you see . . . as yourself, of what you appear to me. Of what you are to Rose. (*Then softly, gently*) Why are you so full of opposites, Krishna ? Soft and hard. Love and hate. Young and old. Peaceful and violent. Yes, you have potential. You cover the full range of the known and unknown. But there is also that crack within you, Krishna. You don't let your opposites come into full play. You're pushing one side too hard. So be careful, Krishna. Rose may see you as soft and loving and young and peaceful. But I know your potential is hard and hateful and old and violent. So be careful, Krishna.

KRISHNA : Why do you worry, Maria, why do you worry ? For the moment at least you are victor. That should please you. You found . . . the vulnerable in me and worked it to your advantage. I am aware of that, so why

worry . . .

SENHORA MIRANDA : Don't cast your image too high and too wide. Everyone who falls within its range gets taken in. Perhaps that is your intention or perhaps you believe in it yourself. I wouldn't know. It's dangerous ; that's all I can say ; it's dangerous.

KRISHNA : (*Looking MARIA full in the face, with fearful intensity*) Maria, listen to me . . . There is only one thing I want out of life . . . (*Whispers*) . . . Rose . . . And I'll have her at any cost.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Whispering as though to herself*) There were moments when Alphonso was terrified of me ; there are moments when I fear . . . this vision of you.

KRISHNA : (*Himself whispering*) What you fear is only yourself, Maria.

SENHORA MIRANDA : No. No.

KRISHNA : It comes from within. From the darkest recesses of your own soul.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Fearfully*) No.

KRISHNA : From all you want to hide about your real self ; from all you want to tear out of others.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Terrified ; shouting*) No ! (*Pause*)

KRISHNA : (*In sheer contrast to the situation, KRISHNA smiles and says softly*) Maria. Just Maria. Not Maria then.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Poised uncertainly for a minute, then goes into his arms*) You're a naughty boy, Krishna. To frighten me so.

KRISHNA : I'm sorry,

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Hugging close to him*) I'm very . . . vulnerable myself, you know. I've got a woman's vulnerability.

KRISHNA : . . . Yes ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : A woman needs to be loved. It's a sort of . . . craving. It grows . . . differently with each person, depending upon how it needs to be satisfied.

KRISHNA : . . . Yes.

SENHORA MIRANDA : It's not like a man . . . turning hot and cold. A woman likes to keep something every time, like squirrels who gather nuts before going into hibernation.

KRISHNA : (*Looks at her quizzically and wondering what she is driving at*) . . . Hmmm . . .

SENHORA MIRANDA : That's me, you know. I store, then hibernate. (*Sound of ROSE'S voice singing*) Ah, that's Rose singing. Wouldn't you like to know how she became deaf? It was an accident, oh my dear, it was an accident. I've never got over it . . . (*KRISHNA continues to look at her carefully*) My mother . . . she was Portuguese you know . . . like my father too . . . was very upset. She was a superstitious woman. She said Rose was deaf because she was dark. Like some original sin had been committed . . . (*Laughs strangely*) . . . imagine that ! (*KRISHNA doesn't say a word but turns his head slightly to catch the sound of ROSE'S voice*) That's why I always thought Rose's defect was congenital, having been originally there, rather than by accident. You know what I mean. If something is inevitable, it becomes congenital, rather than accidental . . .

KRISHNA : No, I do not know what you mean. Either you were responsible for it or you were not.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Wide eyed innocence*) But my dear, that's saying a lot. It's also saying nothing. Rose . . . is growing up to be an independent child. I'm not responsible for her.

KRISHNA : (*Sighing*) No . . . I mean yes, it's as you say.

SENHORA MIRANDA : I'm glad you agree. Though sometimes I wonder what will become of her . . . after I'm . . . gone. No, I don't think we'll ever be separated. Cut out from the same flesh, we were . . . I saw her coming out from my womb when she was born . . . dark hair . . . it emerged like a black fountain from the impure spring . . . I kept wondering why they did not wash her clean, till they put her to my breast and the milk ran dry . . . (*KRISHNA*

looks at her again deeply, not saying a word) The bud unfurled itself like a flower. That's why I called her Rose, the colour of blood that broke when she was conceived. Now you understand why she's — immaculate . . . Purity, like the rose flower, always comes from the dungfilled soil . . . (Sound of door bell. No one moves or seems to hear for a while. KRISHNA is still lying on the couch. MARIA is in a world of her own. The door-bell rings again, and MARIA starts . . . Getting up and going to the door) I wonder who that can be? (She opens the door and large ALPHONSO stands framed in it. Voice like bells; not losing her composure) Why, it's Alphonso! Hello Alphonso. Come in. Come in. Don't just stand in the doorway like some Vasco da Gama statue. Come in. You know. I get a sense of repetition . . . and yet something is missing. Oh! I know now. You're sober. (Sternly) Alphonso, you're sober!

ALPHONSO : (Pointing a shoulder) What's he doing here?

SENHORA MIRANDA : Now don't be rude, Alphonso. He's my guest. Same as you. And he wants to stay. Same as you. Isn't that cosy?

ALPHONSO : For whom?

SENHORA MIRANDA : (Turning to KRISHNA) Heard that, Krishna? Who said he was dumb? He's got the instinct of a horse.

ALPHONSO : You're a cow.

SENHORA MIRANDA : Alphonso excels in repartee. Come, darling. Come and sit down. Let's have something to drink. (Looking at KRISHNA) Or shall we have some tea, with one, two, three lumps of sugar.

ALPHONSO : You're crazy too.

SENHORA MIRANDA : I am all that and more. Alphonso dear, I have mad moments of you . . . and Krishna. It's flattering, you know, to be courted by both of you. Occupied . . . not available. (ALPHONSO gaping looks at her) Oh! Shut your mouth, Alphonso. You look so stupid. You should be strong and silent like Krishna here. He

may be small, but he's worth his weight in . . . diamonds. Yes, that boy has a lot of . . . density.

ALPHONSO : (*Pointing a finger at KRISHNA*) What's he doing here ?

KRISHNA : (*Coolly*) I stay here.

ALPHONSO : (*Unbelievably*) What did he say ?

KRISHNA : I said I stay here. I've taken your place.

ALPHONSO : (*Thunderingly red ; makes a move to grab hold of KRISHNA*) Why . . . you . . . little . . . swine . . . (*SENHORA MIRANDA intervenes, laughing till the tears come into her eyes*)

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Hardly able to contain herself*) Alphonso ! Don't spoil the fun. Not yet anyway. We've got a long way to go. A little drink at a time, my impatient one.

ALPHONSO : (*Mumbling*) I'm not impatient.

SENHORA MIRANDA : Oh but you are. Oh but you were. You should have been yourself last night. I called you "the impatient virgin" . . . (*Beside herself in laughter*) . . . those books at the bookstalls . . .

ALPHONSO : (*Shifting his foot in embarrassment*) I was drunk.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Gurgling away with laughter*) Drunk ! Drunk ! My dear, you were painting this town bloody red. A solo performance. (*The laughter dying out gradually*) Krishna should know. He was playing nursemaid to you.

ALPHONSO : (*Reminded ; glowering at KRISHNA*) Him ? Him ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Watchful, in her element ; her eyes darting from one to another ; goading on the tournament*) Yes, him.

ALPHONSO : (*Scornfully*) Was he playing nursemaid ? Yes. I guess he was. Pumping me with whisky while he was drinking milk, I suppose. All nursemaids drink milk. Don't they ? Goat's milk. It gives them virility.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Egging him on*) Oh but, my dear, he doesn't need milk for that !

KRISHNA : (*Quietly*) I didn't need to drink anything. You were drinking enough for both of us.

ALPHONSO : Yes, you saw to that, didn't you? But I've drunk for more than two people at a time before. I've never passed out before.

KRISHNA : You were in a delirious condition.

ALPHONSO : (*Screwing his eyes and looking at him suspiciously*) There's something of a Micky Finn in you.

SENHORA MIRANDA : Ah, you've got it, Alphonso. Right instincts. I always said you had right instincts. Yes, he certainly has that in him. He can knock anyone out cold before they know it.

ALPHONSO : (*Rolling his sleeves*) I'd like to see him try.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Holding him*) No, no, Alphonso. Just as he doesn't drink, he doesn't fight either. He says he doesn't believe in violence. If he finds you objectionable, he just won't co-operate with you, that's all. He'll resist you passively . . .

ALPHONSO : (*Mumbling again*) I don't need his bloody co operation.

SENHORA MIRANDA : Oh, but he's so *sweet*, Alphonso. He wouldn't harm a fly. Look how young and innocent he is. He stands for Principle.

ALPHONSO : For what?

SENHORA MIRANDA : Principle! Principle! The rights and wrongs of life. What he wants is rights. What he can get, is his. So he wants this house, and everything and everyone in it. And he says he's been patient, but he does not intend to be patient any longer. He says he's waited for fourteen long years. Now, what do you think of that, Alphonso?

ALPHONSO : Over my dead body, honey, over my dead body. (*SENHORA MIRANDA takes ALPHONSO in her arms and kisses him*)

SENHORA MIRANDA : You're my hero, you big ruddy brainless bull, you are my hero. (*She kisses him again.* KRISHNA

gets up from the couch, slowly, deliberately)

KRISHNA : *(Clearly)* Well, I'm glad you had your say. Exactly what you wanted to say, leaving the real truth of the situation unsaid. *(Moving slowly, treading carefully)* And you're just the kind of sucker, Alphonso, to swallow it all, hook, line and sinker. She's using you, fool, just like she's using me . . . *(MARIA'S eyes sparkle, snake-like)* Whose idea do you think it was, that last drink for the road in the Tavern, across the patio, with your feet already heavy as lead, needing only that last drink to put you down? *(ALPHONSO looks incredulously, first at KRISHNA then MARIA)* Yes it was I who took you there, more intoxicated than you yourself, more under the influence of the compulsion than you were when you begged on your knees like a dirty whining dog . . . *(ALPHONSO turns around and looks at MARIA, staggered . . .)* Who stood triumphant at the balcony while I took that lonely walk, spilling my guts on the road, too ashamed to stop and pick them up . . . for fear that I might lose myself further . . . *(He is talking to himself now, not caring about others)* Closing, shutting out, killing that one instinct of pure love which had to be whored in order to get to pure love, staining itself on the long long way, leaving me no better than both of you . . .

SENHORA MIRANDA : *(Screaming)* You bastard ! You bloody bastard !

KRISHNA : *(His teeth clenched)* I won't go into your antecedents, Maria, but just in case your Big Bull still appears a hero, I think I should also tell you a thing or two . . . *(MARIA is stock-still)* So he lived in this house before me, did he? Well, what did he do for you? Did he make love to you for yourself or was he imagining someone else when you wrapped your legs around him . . . *(ALPHONSO winces ; MARIA flushes)* And when he drank, you thought he was charming and amusing. Have you ever seen him drink at the Tavern? How do you think he makes his friends there? Comparing, Maria, comparing. Like game-

trophies hung on a wall. (ALPHONSO *quivers with rage*; MARIA *withdraws*) And now he comes here and you fall into his arms. Even you must know what that means . . . (Rapidly) Look into his shifty eyes, Maria . . . (Slowly) . . . even you must know what that means . . .

ALPHONSO : (Intimidatingly, hoarsely) You've said enough, boy, you've said enough. And that's the last thing you'll ever say.

KRISHNA : Not here. We meet at the Tavern tonight, Alphonso. At the Tavern. Tonight.

ALPHONSO : (Approaching menacingly) I choose my own timings, boy.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (Stopping him again) No, Alphonso. Wait.

ALPHONSO : (Flushed) You didn't believe everything he said, did you, Maria? He's a bloody liar. (Pleading) Maria, Maria, he's a stranger. I'm not. I've been with you many years. (MARIA *hesitates*)

SENHORA MIRANDA : I . . . I don't know.

ALPHONSO : (Talking like he's never talked before) Lisbon, Maria. I'll take you to Lisbon. Remember the musical sound. I will take you away, Maria, away . . .

SENHORA MIRANDA : (Almost in tears) Oh, Alphonso.

ALPHONSO : I may not have done much for you, Maria, but I'm used to you. You know I am. And you know me well enough to see through me . . . to know that I never designed, never meant ill.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (The tears coming now) Yes, yes, Alphonso, my love, I know, I know.

ALPHONSO : Ask him yourself. He has Principle, you said. Ask him to speak the truth. (MARIA *looks at KRISHNA. KRISHNA stands tight-lipped*) Well boy, speak out. You have plenty of words when you want say something.

KRISHNA : (Quietly) I warn you, Maria. Be wise in your choice. (MARIA *moves closer to ALPHONSO*)

SENHORA MIRANDA : I'm afraid.

KRISHNA : Afraid of your choice ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Abruptly*) No, of you. Alphonso, tell him to go. (*Before ALPHONSO can say anything, KRISHNA moves swiftly and dashes upstairs to ROSE'S room. Screaming*) Stop him ! (*But KRISHNA is already there. He opens the door. Stops*)

KRISHNA : (*Impellingly*) Wait ! Rose must decide. Rose. Rose. Come here, Rose. Come with me. Downstairs. To meet your mother, and an old friend. (*ALPHONSO, who was half way up, stops in his tracks. ROSE stands on top of the bannisters. Then she comes down slowly, looking around. All now face each other in the room downstairs*)

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Going over and clasping ROSE*) Rose. Oh Rose. My child.

KRISHNA : Leave her, Maria. Let her decide for herself. She's not a child any more. Let her decide. (*Approaching ROSE*) Let her remember . . . when she first saw me . . . outside her balcony . . . when I spoke to her for endless hours of my love unblemished . . . stole from her loneliness and sadness . . . gave her a rose in hand which said "touch me not, stranger . . . and I shall love you all the more" . . . (*ROSE goes towards him*)

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Stopping her*) Wait, Rose, wait. Don't listen to him.

KRISHNA : (*Continuing with hypnotic voice*) . . . and we did love each other all the more, in our simple pantomime, myself speaking unspoken words, herself, remembering her most precious words, which flowed, like a clear shaft of moonlight, through the still night . . . (*ROSE is within touching distance of him*)

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Desperate, pleading*) No, Rose, no. Don't let him touch you, Rose. Don't let him take you away, my child. (*But she advances and is almost in his arms*) Wait, Rose. Wait. There's something you ought to know. He lies. He said something that was a lie. Can you understand me, Rose ? Can you follow what I'm saying ? He

said a lie. He said . . . his love was unblemished. But it's not ! It's blemished ! He's whored his love ! He said so himself ! He's stained it. He's whored it . . . (*Her voice breaks into a cry*) . . . to me ! (*ROSE raises her hand to her mouth to stifle the agonizing scream. KRISHNA'S face contorts with fury . . . He flings himself towards ROSE, crushing her in his arms, trying to kiss her frantically . . .*)

KRISHNA : (*Struggling with her*) You're mine, Rose ! You're mine !

ROSE : (*Screaming*) Don't touch me ! DON'T TOUCH ME, STRANGER ! ELSE I SHALL HATE YOU ! (*KRISHNA won't let go of her. ALPHONSO catches hold of KRISHNA and flings him against the wall. ROSE runs to her mother first, but before the mother can touch her, she changes her mind and runs to the other side of the room, holding on to the wall. KRISHNA gets up slowly. Blood flowing over his face, KRISHNA gets up painfully, but does not attempt to strike*)

ALPHONSO : (*Spitting on him*) Fight, man, fight ! (*But KRISHNA won't fight. ALPHONSO knocks him down again with a vicious blow. This time it takes KRISHNA longer to get up. ROSE looks, alarmed, confused, frightened. She runs up to ALPHONSO catching his hand*)

ROSE : No ! No ! No more ! Don't beat him, please. Let . . . him . . . go. (*KRISHNA stands, blood flowing from his face. There is hate in his eyes. His face is now old and hard and violent. He goes to the door, then turns around, looking at all three . . .*)

KRISHNA : (*A slow but clear whisper*) We . . . meet . . . tonight. (*Door closes*)

CURTAIN FALLS

ACT II Scene II

TIME : It is night — 18th December 1961.

SCENE : The invasion of Goa.

AT RISE : There is rain and thunder and dark ominous clouds. Wind blows hard, screaming, swirling the rain across the deserted patio. No sign of life, except a faint light in the Tavern. Silhouette of two men outlined against the window curtain of the Tavern. There is the clap of thunder and lightning accompanied by a sharp, piercing, human scream. A scream of surprise and pain and death. (N. B. : If the producer wishes to dramatize this further, he can show the earlier entry into the Tavern of one or both of the men in the dark howling night. One of the men is KRISHNA who was waiting, and the other was ALPHONSO who left the house of MARIA and walked across the patio to keep his appointment with KRISHNA at the Tavern, which was the challenge that KRISHNA had flung across to him earlier) An awful stillness of nature and man for a few seconds after the scream when all the elements die out awaiting recognition of the awful dead. The bat-doors of the bar are flung open and the figure of a large man staggers out, clutching on to his heart, trying to pull out the stiletto that was violently and deeply buried. (Since the scream was one of surprise, the dagger could equally well have been plunged in his back) ALPHONSO collapses. Again complete silence of few moments, and again thunder and rain. Slowly another figure emerges from the door of the Tavern. A flash of lightning reveals his identity; it is KRISHNA, his violent and hateful face distorted almost beyond recognition. He goes over to ALPHONSO, removes the dagger, and plunges it once again into the corpse in fanatical vengeance. He gets up breathing heavily now, with bloody knife in hand. For a long time he stands, swaying slightly, the dark clothes becoming wet in the rain and the howling wind. Then he walks, again the long patio walk with nobody on the balcony,

stalking his invisible shadow, till he reaches the house of SENHORA MIRANDA. He pushes the door open and enters. SENHORA MIRANDA is alone in the room. She looks up, a momentary expression of fear flashing across her face, which she overcomes through forced naturalness . . .

SENHORA MIRANDA : Krishna . . . Krishna. (KRISHNA comes in the light. Forced laughter) Why, you give me a fright, Krishna ! Barging in like that. You're soaked . . . soaked wet in the rain. Here, let me remove your clothes . . . (KRISHNA raises his hand and steps back) No ? But you'll catch a chill, Krishna. What a dreadful night it is. I . . . I wasn't expecting you. (KRISHNA recedes further into the darkness, not uttering a sound) Don't just stand there, Krishna. Come in. You're wet . . . and you're shivering. I . . . wasn't expecting you. Yes, I said that earlier, didn't I ? It's this thunder and lightning ; it upsets me. (KRISHNA stands, alone and silent) W . . . why are you so quiet, Krishna ? I . . . I hope you're not . . . upset, about earlier this evening, that is. I . . . I couldn't help it. Neither could Rose. You . . . you brought it on yourself. Alphonso is a man with a terrible temper. And he's possessive . . . like you.

KRISHNA : (Throwing the bloody knife on the table) Not any more. (SENHORA MIRANDA looks at the object incredulously. She stares at it, her eyes becoming large and frightened)

SENHORA MIRANDA : (Her hand holding the cross) W . . . what are . . . what are you saying, Krishna ? Wh . . . why the . . . the knife ? What . . . do you mean ?

KRISHNA : (Quietly) I've killed him. I've killed Alphonso. I had to have her . . . before he. She . . . is . . . mine.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (Her voice tremulous, breaking out into hysterical screams) No. NO ! (KRISHNA comes over and holds her hand impellingly)

KRISHNA : Yes ! Yes ! This, and more !

SENHORA MIRANDA : (Incredulous) Y . . . you're joking, Krishna. Y . . . you're doing this to frighten me. You wicked boy. (Pleading) Aren't you a wicked boy. It's

not true. (*Screaming*) IT'S NOT TRUE!

KRISHNA : (*With fury*) Why not? Why not? You saw the potential in me, didn't you? What did you say then? Yes, old and hard and hateful and violent. Yes, you have strong instincts, Maria. But mine are stronger! (*His bloody hand staining hers . . . She sees it for the first time*)

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Stunned*) You . . . killed . . . him. My Alphonso. You killed him. You, who wouldn't hurt a fly. Did not fight back. Who to Rose was young and peaceful and innocent.

KRISHNA : (*Hissing*) You robbed me of that, Maria, or don't you remember? Blemished me, with compulsion greater than my own.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Trying to snap out of it*) You killed him. My . . . Alphonso. My . . . love.

KRISHNA : (*Hating*) No better than you killed mine. She kept coming to me. She was almost in my arms. Till you spoke . . . about my having whored her love . . . with you.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Pleading*) Then me! It should have been me! Not Alphonso! Not him.

KRISHNA : (*Softly*) It is going to be you too. No, I won't kill you, Maria. I need you now.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Distractedly*) Need me? (*Breaking out into a scream*) YOU MURDERER! YOU KILLED MY ALPHONSO!
(*The realization dawning more*) YOU KILLED MY ALPHONSO!
(*KRISHNA slaps her viciously to break her out of the hysterics*)

KRISHNA : (*Low and soft*) I killed him. Realize that. I killed him. Accept it . . . I killed him. Then you won't have to scream it out any more . . . for nobody here except us can hear you . . . (*Thunder and more flashes of lightning. MARIA now crouches, shaking less, realizing more*) I need you now, Maria. Not the way Alphonso needed you. My own way; worse than killing. It is but half-done yet. The rest . . . in collusion. (*MARIA looks up, her deepest anxiety showing behind her fear*) Blemished! The blemish was not only mine. It also had to be yours. You can't leave when

it suits you, Maria. No half-way bargains, I told you right from the start. (MARIA looks unblinkingly) You were quite right to fear me ; just as right as when you saw the innocence and peace within me. But now . . . now Maria . . . remember your deepest horror ! (MARIA recoils. KRISHNA crouches over her, dominant) How did Rose come out ? Like the black fountain from the impure spring ! Why was she named Rose ? Because she was conceived in your blood ! What was the night of fertile horror ? It was a night such as this.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (Screaming, closing her eyes) NO ! NO !

KRISHNA : (Persistent, penetrating) Why was she black ? Because of your husband ? Or because of your father ? Or because there was neither husband nor father, but just another man like me . . .

SENHORA MIRANDA : (Whimpering) No . . . No . . .

KRISHNA : (Merciless, without change of breath) . . . whom you came to hate. With deepest horror. Who made you impure. Who was a stranger like me. Who conceived Rose in your womb gushing with blood. WHO RAPED YOU ? (MARIA looks up gasping, eyes wide, mouth wordless, clutching on to her cross, besides herself in distraction)

KRISHNA : Who took your innocence, in that night fertile with horror . . . innocence reminded only . . . by Rose. Bringing back that memory ; constantly reminding. Rose. Rose. Rose. Who was born of your original sin. Rose. Rose. Dark Rose. Who was colour of blood that broke out when she was conceived. Rose. Rose. Dark Rose. WHO RAPED YOU ? Rose Rose. A man, dark, stranger, colour of Rose, who raped you. WHO WAS IT ? ROSE ! ROSE ! Who Rose reminded you of. Who reminded you of Rose. Understand me, Maria, now. Understand closely. (MARIA closes her eyes in delirium, in part-consciousness, yet with mind conditioned to his compulsion) Why was it Rose ? Why was she innocent ? When you were fair and blemished yourself ? If Rose was he, and he was Rose, what would be the

best vengeance ? A nail for a nail, and a tooth for a tooth, Maria. That which cannot remain innocent any longer if blemished. (MARIA is praying to herself) So you, Maria, not I, started the game. Dangled Rose before us, not through competition for you, *but for her*. Made us whore with you, not for yourself, *but for her*. Used us, not to rape one who had already been raped, but to rape one who had not been raped ! (She stops praying) Who constantly reminded you of your former self. Whom you wanted also on your point of equalization. Who was taught not to be touched so that experience of the rape would be a real one. (He pauses) Rose. Rose. Maria, it is Rose. Single your intentions. Use me a step further. Pour your hate not on me but on Rose. Relieve yourself of this guilt through Rose. For she was the cause of it all. Then remember ; did she scream like you ? Feel your pain and horror. For then only she becomes you. (He stops dead and looks at her penetratingly. There is a gurgle in her throat. It shapes into laughter ; laughter driven to insanity. He lets her laugh insanely ; to let the insanity capture her completely. Then, without a word, he takes her gently by the hand, and they climb up the stairs together to ROSE'S room. They reach up to the door. They stop. KRISHNA turns around to MARIA. There is an indescribable expression on his face as he enters the room. A few moments of silence. Then . . . ROSE screams. She screams and screams. MARIA'S eyes seem to turn within themselves. She collapses to her knees. There is a flash of lightning outside. It strikes the cross atop the church, which falls. While ROSE screams, with pain and horror and a deeper death)

KRISHNA'S VOICE : Now ! Now ! Come, Maria ! Hold her ! Hold her . . . by the black hair ! See for yourself ! Feel . . . for her ! (MARIA rises fainting, beyond herself, yet rising to his command) Come Maria ! Now ! Now ! HOLD HER ! (MARIA goes in. The scream itself reaches a pitch of insanity, then goes dead in the faintest sobs)

CURTAIN FALLS

ACT II Scene III

TIME : *A few weeks or months later.*

SCENE : *Revival of the patio scene.*

AT RISE : *A mere spotlight on the GOAN NATIONALIST as he soliloquizes, articulating to us but implying a mental process.*

GOAN NATIONALIST : *(The spotlight on him, surrounded by darkness, as he sits outside the Tavern, by himself, with a glass of beer in his hand)* That was the day of the invasion of Goa : 18th December 1961. The Indian troops marched in and liberated Goa. It ended 400 years of Portuguese rule. At last the Portuguese enclaves of Goa, Daman and Diu were no longer "pimples" on the face of India . . . herself a young Republic fourteen years old. But in the process the innocent and peaceful and moral image of India was blemished with her first act of violence . . . tarnished was the rose worn in the lapel . . . *(He lifts the beer glass and drinks)* Some say there was great rejoicing when the Indian troops marched into Goa. I was party to it, of course, being a nationalist myself, working in collusion with the liberator to free my people from the yoke . . . a yoke which many did not seem to mind. After the invasion there was the occasional case of rape but on the whole the troops were very well behaved . . . *(Sighs and drinks the glass down)* The troops have withdrawn now and we have civil administration and the freedom of choice. There is the usual party politics, the regional differences, the occasional sabotage, but on the whole there is, I suppose, a sort of "progress" for the future. Meanwhile I should like to have my beer with some peace and quiet before they bring in prohibition . . . *(Orders another glass of beer)* I won't hide it from you, I miss my old friend. I said "hello" to him countless times and enjoyed the glass of beer together and enjoyed our little quarrels. It was good fun and games and we never really intended to

be serious till . . . (*He looks around surreptitiously*) . . . they wanted the invasion. And we found we wanted it too. (*Pause*)

GOAN NATIONALIST : I guess it was inevitable, though I wish there had been some other way out. (*Slowly and seriously drinks his second glass*) What will become now, I don't know. Tourists will come and industries will develop and this pleasant sleepy town with the Portuguese atmosphere will develop into an Indian metropolis, giving opportunities to all. But I sometimes wonder (*Softly*) . . . I sometimes wonder . . . what will become of that stranger, that invader, that "liberator," who will now have to find his own peace, within himself . . . (*Lights open on the patio scene. The GOAN NATIONALIST is sitting where he was, breaking the foam of beer pensively with his finger. It is obvious that we have followed his thoughts. The BENCH SITTERS are all present, except that the PORTUGUESE are no longer there, and have been substituted by their counterparts. Where the PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATOR was sitting there is perhaps the VILLAGE PANCHAYAT . . . another GOAN NATIONALIST in the company of an INDIAN wearing a Congress-cap. They come over and sit down on the same table as the first GOAN NATIONALIST who lifts his glass of beer and moves over to another table. In place of the PORTUGUESE VICAR, there is perhaps a GOAN VICAR or a CATHOLIC VICAR from some part of India. He seems to find nothing in common with the GOAN HINDU, because although both of them are sitting on the same bench, they seem to have nothing in common with each other, even a dispute on religion. The OLD WOMAN and the OLD MAN are also sitting mutely, with long forlorn looks. The OLD WOMAN turns around and looks up at the church top, where the lightning had struck the cross on the night of the invasion. The OLD MAN looks up too. Perhaps the cross has not yet been replaced, or perhaps it is still under repair and is receiving a fresh coat of white paint. Only the SMUGGLER is not there. Incidentally, the statue of VASCO DA GAMA is now being replaced by that of a*

man in loincloth. There is none of the animation and gaiety of the first scene ; only estrangement, and after a while all the occupants leave, and darkness settles once again, sombre and heavy. Some time passes by. One by one everyone leaves the Tavern. Time comes to close up. Once again the rain begins to fall, the clouds become ominous overhead, there are indications of thunder and lightning, forecasting yet another night like that of the invasion. Now the rain falls, the thunders come loud, and lightning flashes. The bar doors of the bar open, and A DRUNK with dark clothes and collar turned up, with bottle in hand, reels outside the door, putting bottle to mouth and raising his head to take the last gulp from the bottle. While his face is up there is a flash of lightning and momentarily one recognizes the remnants of KRISHNA'S face. It is sapped and withdrawn and degenerated, burned within its own fires of hell, hate and violence, drawn into itself, unable to cope with its seemingly opposite. When the lightning shows his face, he hides it, covers it withdrawing within the collar and dirty and torn clothes. He looks across to the balcony which is empty and desolate. He hesitates. He withdraws into the shadow upon hearing the sound of a mouth-organ. It is a macabre melody, played by the SMUGGLER, who dances insanely, in peculiar soliloquy, on the patio, whose once smart clothes are themselves in shambles. Unknowingly he comes close to the shadow, and gives out a yelp on finding KRISHNA hiding there . . .)

SMUGGLER : (Holding on to his heart like as though he had received a shock or heart attack) Phew ! Christ ! you scared me. Hiding like a scarecrow in the dark. I'm easily frightened, you know. Bad enough having this weather like that night without having you playing hide-and-seek. (Going closer to KRISHNA who slinks in the shadows) Anything left in that bottle, friend ? I'm a scavenger, you know, like a cat that goes to a dustbin and pulls out for herself a bony fish I'm a parasite too, ambidexterous, who can live off anything or anyone, misery included . . . (Looking closely

at his prospective customer) Are you you in need of anything, friend, because I'm here to supply at . . . at a fee. No more smuggling left for me. So I'm the tourist guide of the seamy side, the industrial licenser with the greasy palm, the political promoter with promotional prospects. You see, I've got the talent . . . for survival . . . (*Coming closer to KRISHNA*) I'll be frank, I look upon you as a prospective customer. As I said I trade in all. Name your . . . specifications. I know every sewer in town, from the mucky to the sophisticated. What do you want? (*KRISHNA points across to the balcony. The SMUGGLER smiles*) Oh, there. (*Slowly*) There. You're sure it's there you want to go? I've got many more place to show you. Gayer, better places. You don't want to go there, friend.

KRISANA : Why not?

SMUGGLER : 'Cause they're not normal any more, that's why.

KRISHNA : Who?

SMUGGLER : Sure, the young one and the old one. Something seems to have happened that night. No-one knows what. Her friend, the Portuguese, was killed in the invasion. She, the older one, went crazy. The other . . . the younger one . . .

KRISHNA : (*Holding his arms*) Yes?

SMUGGLER : (*Curiously*) Why do you want to know? (*KRISHNA lets out a cry and clutches him by the throat*) L . . . let go. Let go. (*The grip relaxes*) Y . . . you crazy too?

KRISHNA : What happened to the girl?

SMUGGLER : (*Feeling his neck tenderly*) I dunno. I dunno. Why don't you see for yourself? I can take you there.

KRISHNA : I'm a stranger.

SMUGGLER : That's alright. The stranger, the better.

KRISHNA : I . . . don't want to be seen.

SMUGGLER : But you want to see, huh? And you want something more . . . something more every time.

KRISHNA : How would you know?

SMUGGLER : I know. I know. It happens every time.

KRISHNA : (*Looking across*) The lights are low.

SMUGGLER : You won't be seen. You won't be recognized. I assure you of that. And you'll be able to do whatever you like . . . Whatever you like . . . that's part of my business . . . and service.

KRISHNA : (*Still looking*) The balcony is bare.

SMUGGLER : What matter ? What matter ? Sometimes there are ghosts, they say, that whisper through the night, clear as a silvery shaft of moonlight, in that balcony bare . . .

KRISHNA : (*His voice falling to a whisper*) The house is quiet.

SMUGGLER : There is no longer the need for any words. They do not talk to each other. They only see each other . . . as patches of darkness. Yet, they are aware of each other's presence.

KRISHNA : I want her. I want her.

SMUGGLER : Come with me. (*He starts to move, but KRISHNA holds him back*)

KRISHNA : No, no. It is a long walk across. They're sitting. They're watching . . . me. They want me to take the walk alone. But I can't . . . I can't any more.

SMUGGLER : (*Looking at him closely, suspiciously*) Who's watching ? (*Pointing to the empty benches*) There's nobody there.

KRISHNA : I want her still. I want her more.

SMUGGLER : Then come. Follow me. Lurk in my shadows. You won't be seen. Do what you want, under the cloak of my shadow. You won't be seen. Under my cloak. Like my shadow. Easy to become like me. Ambidexterous. An instinct for survival. No past or future. Not having found, lose yourself within me. Walk without a shadow. Perform the essential service of a scavenger that nobody else will. See without being seen. Do without being caught. Hang upside down like a bat in the night. Shadowy vampires.

KRISHNA : (*Looking closer, suspiciously*) W . . . who are you ?
 SMUGGLER : (*Whispering in KRISHNA's ear*) I'm your . . .
 your friend, brother, myself. We are substance and shadow. I can merge myself within you . . . (*Darts behind KRISHNA in the darkness. KRISHNA looks around in panic as though the devil-of-the-smuggler had got into him. The SMUGGLER laughs . . . comes out from behind him*) Looking for me . . . within yourself ? . . . like some devil had captivated you. Perhaps then, there is yet another dimension, yet another potential, that does not rest . . . on opposites. It has something to do . . . only with you. (*KRISHNA looks around for him in the darkness*) Look at you now. Look at you. Your face . . . your hands (*Jutting his macabre face in the light*) Like mine ! (*Jutting out his claw-like hands in the light*) Like mine ! Look around for your shadow in the light . . . it's missing ! Therefore . . . you become devoid of substance, of the mountainous substance of which you were once so proud.

KRISHNA : (*Whispering with fear*) Who're you ? Who're you ? (*Screaming*) GET AWAY ! GET AWAY ! (*No sound. The shadow of the SMUGGLER disappears. KRISHNA catches hold of his own throat*) What's happened ? Where are you ? Why does my voice sound . . . like yours ? Or is it mine really ? Where have you gone . . . this part of me called substance ? Why have even the shadows . . . disappeared ? (*Pointing out to the bare balcony*) Where are the sounds of ghosts, whispering through the night, the sounds of lovers that died long ago ? Is there then . . . any resurrection ? Did I not dig the grave . . . to take her in my arms . . . AND RAPE HER ! (*Sounds of echoes of his shout, rolling across the empty patio and balcony*) But scavengers do dig, don't they, for pieces of tarnished bone. They pick up pimps and whores, for collusion, deception, and obliteration itself. Sometimes they pick up the remnants of their own selves . . . in limitless horror. (*A tremulous whisper*) Yes, I want her the more, dead though she dies within herself, living

though she lies within me . . . (Calling out to the SMUGGLER) TAKE ME THERE ! TAKE ME THERE ! (The SMUGGLER appears as though out of nowhere, playing his macabre tune on the mouth-organ, like the Pied Piper, while KRISHNA follows, merging within each other's substance and shadow, sometimes becoming one and sometimes emerging as two, till they reach the house. Ring.)

SMUGGLER : (Calling) SENHORA MIRANDA ! SENHORA MIRANDA ! (The door opens. SENHORA MIRANDA standing there, haggard and considerably aged, with an air of complete distraction about her) Ah, Senhora, I've got a customer for your house. (KRISHNA cowers in the corner with coat covering him) He's shy. He doesn't like lights. He doesn't mind mirrors around the bed, but he doesn't like lights. Perhaps he can see in the dark. Anyway, please dim the lights, Senhora. He must have a reputation to protect. He doesn't want to be recognized. Yet he looks very much like me. He can stand against the wall . . . and disappear. So don't press him too much. He's shy, like a boy, doing it the first time . . . (Bursts into high-pitched laughter) . . . Senhora. Senhora. Strange. (Awfully serious now) I'm beginning to look like you now. At least I'm speaking like you. (Pause, then in sensible voice) Do you mind lowering the lights, Senhora, they hurt my client's eyes. (SENHORA MIRANDA lowers the lights to bare dimness)

SENHORA MIRANDA : He's shy, like a boy, doing it far the first time. Yes, that's what I would have said.

SMUGGLER : But I said it for you.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (Bursting out into insane hysterical laughter) So you did.

SMUGGLER : I'm like your shadow, Senhora.

SENHORA MIRANDA : Relax. There are no shadows, here. (Gurgling with laughter) How can there be shadows in darkness ? (Then suddenly — the SMUGGLER goes over and whispers to KRISHNA) Senhora, he doesn't want you. He wants your daughter.

SENHORA MIRANDA : But I always come first. Like lumps of sugar. I've got to be protective. Is he clean? Does he hurt? Is he tender? He has to pass by me first, picking up my innocence and my dirt. (*Absently*) For dark you are, friend, and darker are your thoughts, in spite of the light which you claim to shed on her . . . (*More distracted*) For sometimes . . . you remind me of . . . a deeper horror. (*Thunder and lightning outside*) What's that! Who did that outside? Who started the thunder and rain? Does the lightning still streak across the sky . . . and strike the cross? The heavy cross. Made of gold and diamonds? Like white spectres in the sky. I carry it to heaven every night when I go upstairs. To put my baby to sleep. To hold her tight. (*The SMUGGLER turns to KRISHNA and taps his head lightly pointing his face to SENHORA MIRANDA*)

KRISHNA : W . . . what's her name . . . Senhora? (*SENHORA MIRANDA turns around like a flash, then the distraction overcomes her, and she looks past him*)

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Part-recognition*) What's her name, did you say? What is her name? But that didn't sound odd. It's the way you called my name "Senhora" that sounded odd. Not Senhora then. Just Senhora. Senhora by itself. Her name is Rose, sir. She's made of sugar and spice and everything that's nice and it will cost you only twenty rupees for a single time. Above all, she's a virgin, sir. I should know. I was there. I was there when her innocence was born. You see, I taught her to be innocent, to fear the touch, to be afraid of peace, to have horror of love. Isn't that what a mother should do to equalize her love?

KRISHNA : Y . . . you have made of her . . . a whore.

SENHORA MIRANDA : Clean to the touch, sir, clean to the touch. It is . . . an honest living. She protects me in many ways, sir. She tries them out first, to match my innocence and beauty. She has a feel . . . a peculiar feel . . .

that tells her the truth. Most of all, she waits . . . and waits, and waits, lying there like some warm and tender animal. She's not a whore, Sir. I am that but not her. She is Rose. And Rose is Goa ; and Goa is Rose.

SMUGGLER : Ah, yes, quite, quite, Senhora. Now to get down to business . . . my customer is getting impatient.

SENHORA MIRANDA : Is he ? Is he an impatient virgin too ? Did he have to wait fourteen long years ? Poor boy. Poor boy. He grew up to manhood so suddenly. Unrecognizably. Unbelievably. One moment he was offering a rose with the beauty and simplicity of young lovers ; the next he was monstrous and horrible, fertilizing madness, while the blood oozed . . . (*Her voice going up shrilly*) . . . in the rape, tore through me twice . . . twice in one lifetime.

SMUGGLER : (*Holding her tenderly*) Senhora . . . Senhora . . . Senhora . . . be peaceful, Senhora.

SENHORA MIRANDA : (*Breathing deeply*) Peace and tranquillity. Peace and tranquillity, my son. What happens to one who has forsaken it ? Are his tortures the same as mine and that of my daughter ? Does he listen in silence . . . the awful stillness and loneliness of the deaf. Does he blind his eyes against the terrors that all sight shows . . . was he ever a man of principles, son ? Or does he return victorious, as I did once standing on the balcony while he took the long patio walk ?

KRISHNA : (*Emerging. His emotions and expressions unknown*) Senhora, he wants to return home, but does not know how. So he chose the way to go further . . . not one step more, but the last step of all, this time alone, not in collusion, answerable to none . . . save himself.

SMUGGLER : (*Saying almost together*) Senhora, he went to church and didn't find peace. Senhora, he went into the temple and didn't find peace. Senhora, he tried to make friends but no-one would say "hello" to him.

KRISHNA : The Girl ! Now ! Rose ! Now ! (*Without a word* SENHORA MIRANDA takes her umbrella and knocks upstairs.

They all wait in silence, expectantly, while KRISHNA withdraws further in the dark. The curtain in the room upstairs moves open, and ROSE walks out slowly, wearing a bare negligée, her slim brown legs flowing bare, but her face unseen because of the darkness that falls across it. Even as she descends down the stairs, slowly, carefully, feeling her way, the shadow persists across her face which cannot yet be seen. She stands at the bottom of the stairs, her face still in the shadows. There is a sharp breath from KRISHNA)

SENHORA MIRANDA : (Going up to ROSE whose hand is on the banister, and putting her fingers lightly over ROSE's hand) There she is, Sir. Do you approve? I've taught her everything I know. It was almost like teaching myself over again. It took a bit of help, of course. A bit of remembering too. But she's a fine girl. She's like me, you know, though we may see opposite. She does everything the customer wants — everything.

KRISHNA : (In anger) Why don't you let her speak for herself? (SENHORA MIRANDA touches the daughter's hands as though it were a code between themselves)

ROSE : (Her voice more strange than ever) I . . . allow . . . everything. I . . . give . . . everything.

KRISHNA : (Tearing SENHORA MIRANDA's hand away from ROSE) Leave her alone! Why don't you leave her alone? Why are you telling her all the time what to say?

SENHORA MIRANDA : (Standing in front of ROSE) Come here, Rose. Come here. (Turning to KRISHNA) You see, Sir, she cannot hear. (Standing in front of the light and facing ROSE) Read my lips, Rose. Come here. I said come here. (ROSE does not move SENHORA MIRANDA turns around and looks at KRISHNA)

KRISHNA : (Apprehension in his voice) Well . . . why won't she come? (SENHORA MIRANDA stretches out her hand brings ROSE forward so the light now catches her face. There is a gasp from KRISHNA as he sees her face . . . unchanged except for a blind across her eyes) What's that! What's she got

across her eyes ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : A blind.

KRISHNA : W . . . why ? C . . . can't she see ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : She can, Sir.

KRISHNA : Then . . . then why the blind ?

SENHORA MIRANDA : She wants . . . only darkness. She wants to hear . . . only silence. But it won't detract from your pleasure, Sir. She can still feel. She can still feel from what's left of her. (*KRISHNA darts across to ROSE with his hands going up to her blind*)

KRISHNA : (*Shouting*) TAKE IT OFF ! TAKE IT OFF ! (*His hands almost touch her face and the blind across her eyes when he stops himself in mid-air. Whisper*) No . . . No . . . She's deaf . . . and now she's blind, isn't she. That means . . . she can't recognize. She can't know. She can't be reminded. She can only give . . . everything ! Not knowing she will give, to me, like to any other . . . (*Whisper*) You . . . you say she is still warm and tender . . . like some living quivering animal that lies helplessly in the dark, with her eyes and ears closed, unable to withhold . . . (*Whisper*) There can be no violence about it then. I revert . . . to my former self. As I always wanted it, not as I was forced to take it. It could . . . couldn't it then . . . approach pure love, as though nothing had ever happened . . . (*Whisper*) For all we want to do is blot out our senses and forget. Just as Rose is doing. Just as I took the drink before I came here. Leave only one sense to operate . . . touch. Like the touch of my hand when I gave her the Rose. (*Whisper*) Why should I then tear off this blind ? Why should I face . . . myself. Let me live . . . this pleasure . . . in anonymity, dreaming of my former self . . . like scavengers who chew on tarnished bones . . . (*Whisper*) For this heat within me drives me further, wanting to drain the last vestige of purity, in a revival of innocence, where nothing ever mattered any more . . . then . . . to go deeper and deeper . . . beyond sanity . . . even if necessary into its

deepest horror . . . (Aloud) Senhora, I'll have her . . . on her own terms of detachment . . . and on my own of intimacy. Would you please tell her to go upstairs, and await me? I follow. (SENHORA MIRANDA touches her daughter's hands. ROSE turns around quietly, and ascends the stairway slowly, feeling her way to her room. KRISHNA follows, his form rising into the stairs, into the darkness, pausing for a while to look at the empty balcony, before he enters ROSE'S room. There's now no rain, no thunder, no lightning. The sky is clear, and the balcony stands silhouetted in the moonlight . . . A voice is heard as though from the empty balcony. It is that of ROSE . . . incredibly clear and sparkling, like a silvery shaft of moonlight)

ROSE'S VOICE : It's getting dark now. I can see your lips no longer ; I do not know what you say . . . But my heart is full of love ; the more for you're unknown to me . . . and I would love . . . this secrecy . . . Were it not for the absolute dread of this loneliness in the dark when I can no longer see your lips and know not whether I whisper or shout in this stifling stillness . . . (Her voice undergoes a strange, uncontrollable change) But when it's light . . . I know . . . For I can then see myself in other people's faces . . . I can see . . . what I must be saying to them . . . for they can hear . . . (Pause — implying act of giving rose) Yes . . . that's my name. How did you know? Did I whisper it . . . or was I screaming . . . No, don't touch my hand . . . don't touch me . . . touch me not . . . stranger . . . and I shall love you all the more . . . (The sound of the voice now seems to be coming from the room) and I shall hate you all the more. Don't touch me . . . Don't touch me. (Screaming) DONT TOUCH ME . . . MOTHER ! DON'T HOLD ME ! IT'S HIM, MOTHER ! IT'S HIM ! (A scream that turns hoarse. SENHORA MIRANDA and the SMUGGLER are already halfway up, when ROSE emerges, still with blind over her face, the negligée torn and blood stained, to her mother's arms, crying. MARIA holding her, holding her tight . . .)

ROSE : Take the blind off, mother ! Take the blind off !
 I want to see . . . I want to see . . . I won't have to wait
 any longer . . . (With trembling hands the mother removes
 the blind. Slowly, ROSE disengages herself from her mother's
 arms, walks back to the room, shifts aside the curtain, as
 KRISHNA's nude body falls out, with a dagger in his heart)

[CURTAIN CLOSES]





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