

# ACT 1

# INTRODUCTION

SCENE 1-3

MY CHILDREN! MY AFRICA!

# Debate



# THE DEBATE

## “THAT IN VIEW OF ESSENTIAL PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEN AND WOMAN”

### ISABEL

#### WESTERNISED POINT OF VIEW

- Isabel believes that woman are just as capable as men physically, but are psychologically stronger

### THAMI

#### TRADITIONAL POINT OF VIEW

- Thami being more traditional believes a woman should know her place, at home raising children

# THE DEBATE

- Thami's Perspective:

- He believe in the value of tradition and culture thus basis his discussion out of frustration and his strong beliefs (theme tradition and culture)
- He fears that the African culture is in 'great peril' because of western colonial influence

Isabel's Perspective:

- She respects the principles of traditional African societies however, she feels that Africa can no longer in the past and the time for change has come



# THE DEBATE

- The debate gets out of hand as Isabel starts to argue with Thami and his point of view
- The make Mr. M furious as a calm, orderly debate turns into chaos (theme of tradition and culture)
- He refers to the dictionary (symbol) to bring back order and reminds the audience, Thami and Isabel on the procedure of a debate
  - “My dictionary defines it as follows: ‘the orderly and regulated discussion of an issue...’” pg.41

# THE DEBATE

- After he read the definition, he closes the floor, and he instructs both Thami and Isabel to make their closing argument
- He then instructs the audience to listen carefully and to take into consideration what is being said and not judge it as a popularity contest (encouraging critical thinking)
- Isabel is the victor

# THE DEBATE

- Themes:
  - Race: Coming from Camdeboo, and being sheltered, Isabel believes that the debate will be a walk in the park, as she comes from a Private school, 'feeling very virtuous about our pioneering work.' pg. 52
  - She believes because of her better education the Black learners will be a step or two behind, only to find out that they are equal to the task

# THE DEBATE

- Themes:
  - The theme of race mainly emphasises the differences in education and background, whereas Camdeboo is Westernised, Brakwater is still very proud themselves in their traditions and culture as an African society, leaning more towards traditional ideologies
  - Friendship, the focus is on the beginning of Thami and Isabel's friendship, even being separated by race and gender





## ISABEL'S MONOLOGUE

- Isabel talks about her experience at Zolile High School
- She is taken aback at the state of the location, she goes as far as to complain about how ugly it is
- She explains in more detail about the poverty, small classrooms and how she is glad she is 'born of white skin'
- This is not to be racist, but more of a relief, as she can't see herself living in such conditions

## ISABEL'S MONOLOGUE

- Her eyes are now open to a 'new world', not that she feel like a stranger, as this is not her first encounter with the black race
- She often gossips with her maid in the mornings, and with Samuel, the man who delivers medicine for her father
- But after her experience she realises she is an outsider
- Thus, feeding her curiosity and need for knowledge and understanding, she decides she will spend more time in Brakwater

# ISABEL'S MONOLOGUE

- Themes

- Social class distinction: This is to emphasize the inequality within the location, instead of improving the living conditions, the Mayor of Camdeboo would much rather move the location further away.
- Inequality: This is used to emphasize the difference in treatment of races, Isabel puts the spotlight on all the flaws within the location and praises the beauty of her own town 'our town is very pretty' pg. 51, 'the location is quite an eyesore' pg. 51



# ISABEL'S MONOLOGUE

- Themes
- Living a meaningful life:
  - Isabel is given a chance to see how Black people love. She is surprised that Zolile High School, learners look at her as an equal, not as a superior as she earlier thought.
  - She is eager to know how Brakwater people live in all their squalor and poverty. This helps her to develop a new perspective on life – she is excited that she now has an opportunity to learn more about Black people.



# INVITATION TO THE LITERATURE QUIZ

- The scene provides great potential for conflict between Thami and Mr. M (generational conflict)
- Mr. M invites Isabel to partner with Thami in an English Literature Quiz at the Grahamstown Schools festival. She is very happy that she is invited – she agrees immediately.
- Mr. M shows that he is impressed with Isabel's debating skills.



# INVITATION TO THE LITERATURE QUIZ

- Isabel is alone on stage when Mr. M enters, wiping his head with a handkerchief. He says that he has been looking for her. She calls him Mr. M when greeting him, which makes him happy
- He asks her about a “return visit” to his school and she tells him she would be very excited to do so
- He tells her that he has not come to ask her to debate against one of his students again, but rather to join Thami on a team for a new inter-school English literature quiz



## INVITATION TO THE LITERATURE QUIZ

- Isabel delightedly agrees. She tells Mr. M that visiting his school has been one of the best things that has ever happened to her because it was an eye-opener to see the school and meet people from the location. She further explains to Mr. M how “Knowledge has banished fear”
- Mr. M tells Isabel that he is determined to get a full university scholarship for Thami

# INVITATION TO THE LITERATURE QUIZ

- Living a meaningful life
- Mr. M expresses frustration that Apartheid and the Bantu Education system were designed so that Black learners did not have the same opportunities that White learners had. He calls this 'wasted potential' and 'wasted lives'
- He wants Thami to get the opportunity to study at university. He thinks this will give Thami the chance to live a meaningful life, and to fulfil his potential as a leader