

MY CHILDREN, MY AFRICA!

Act one
ATHOL FUGARD

ACT 1 SCENE 1

MEET THAMI, ISABEL AND MR M



**CLASSROOM NR 1
AT ZOLILE HIGH SCHOOL,
BRAKWATER**



‘ORDER!
ORDER!’

"The opposition has spoken about sexual exploitation and the need for women's liberation. Brothers and sisters these are foreign ideas. Do not listen to them. They come from a culture, the so-called Western Civilization, that has meant only misery to Africa and its people. It is the same culture that shipped away thousands of our ancestors as slaves, the same culture that has exploited Africa with the greed of a vulture during the period of Colonialism and the same culture which continues to exploit us in the twentieth century under the disguise of concern for our future."

THAMI'S CLOSING STATEMENT



Isabel's closing statement



"The argument against equality for women, in education or any other field, based on alleged "differences" between the two sexes, is an argument that can very easily be used against any other "different" group. It is an argument based on prejudice, not fact."



**Seventeen votes
for Thami and
twenty-four
Isabel**

“... equal time and consideration ...”



**“Riot ... Police start shooting
as soon as they hear it”**





**I ended up
being damn glad
I was born with
white skin“**

BRAKWATER (location)

- **‘a terrible mess of the location’**
- **‘an eyesore’**
- **‘houses... made of bits of old corrugated iron or anything else...’**
- **‘little pondoks’**
- **‘no gardens’**
- **‘potholes ... stones ... dust ... rubbish flying around!’**
- **‘No electricity, no running water. No privacy!’**
- **Home to Zolile High School**





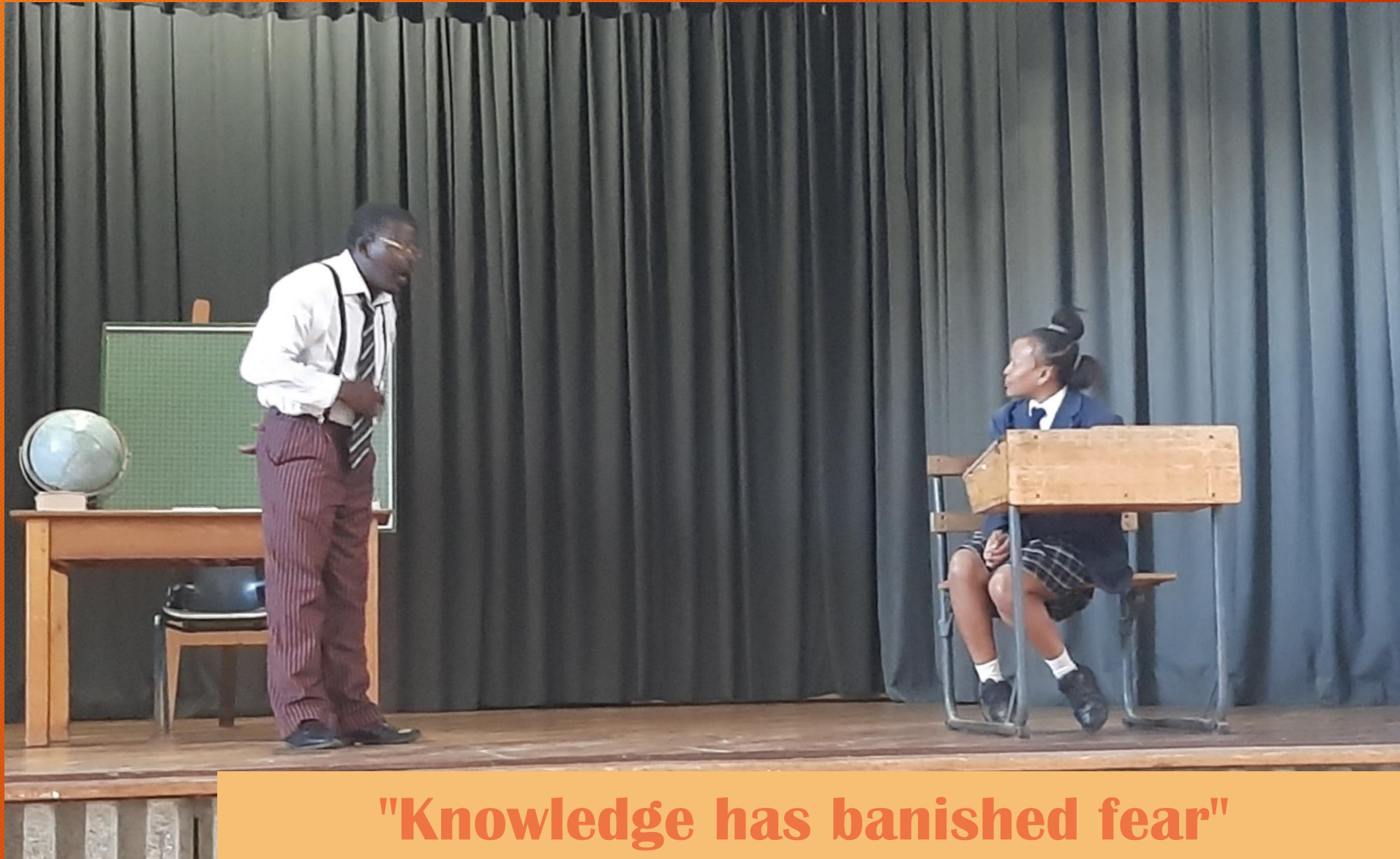
CAMDEBOO (town)

- **‘pretty’**
- **‘nicely restored National Monument houses and buildings’**
- **Home to Isabel’s family**
- **Home of Camdeboo Girls’ High School (CGH)**
- **Karoo Pharmacy**

**Mr M: I've seen too much
of it, Isabel. Wasted
people! Wasted
chances!**



**Isabel: I'm in the team?
... Mr M, you're a
genius!**



"Knowledge has banished fear"

‘(Thami) is a born leader, Isabel, and that is what your generation needs. Powerful forces are fighting for the souls of you young people. You need real leaders. Not rabble-rousers. I know Thami is meant to be one. I know it with such certainty it makes me frightened. Because it is a responsibility. Mine and mine alone.’





‘My pursuit of knowledge is eager...’

‘I am a Confucian.’

‘Learning undigested by thought is labour lost, thought unassisted by learning is perilous!’

‘I get heart attacks. When I walk out into those streets and I see what is happening to my people, it jumps out and savages me like a wild beast.’

‘...one of those animals, the one called Hope, has broken loose and is looking for food...it is a dangerous animal for a black man to have prowling around in his heart... That is why I am a teacher... I feed young people to my Hope.”

Isabel: I'm a bad loser.

Mr M: I am ashamed to say it but when I lose I also want to grab my hockey stick and hit somebody.'

Isabel: I know (Thami) is a good loser... He'd never grab his hockey stick and take it out on somebody else if he doesn't win.





‘My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings...’

‘There are quite a few Ozymandiases in this country, waiting to be toppled.’





‘Am I one of The People?... Please don’t pull down any statues on my behalf.’

‘They are not our heroes, teacher.’

‘...let us sit down and discuss it, because I have a few constructive alternatives ...’



‘I’ve got an invitation for you and Thami from my mom and dad.’

‘Of course we accept, Isabel ... Don’t worry about him, Isabel. I’ll put it in my diary and remind him at school.’

‘He speaks for me on nothing!’

‘Sometimes dealing with the two of you is like walking on a tight-rope.’

‘I’ve caught you looking at him in a ... I don’t know ... in a sort of hard way. Very critical.’

‘He’s got eyes and ears but he sees and hears nothing.’





‘...sitting in a classroom doesn’t mean the same things to me that it does to you. That classroom is a political reality ... it’s part of the whole political system we’re up against and Mr M has chosen to identify himself with it.’



‘The school bell is ringing! And what a wonderful sound that was or me.’



‘We don’t need the Zolile classrooms any more...’

‘That little world of the classroom where I used to be happy ... has become a place I don’t trust anymore. Now I sit at my desk like an animal that has smelt danger ... and knows it must be very, very careful.’