

HORNETS WEDDING

A Choral Drama

by

Book & lyrics: Indija Mahjoeddin

Music, additional lyrics: Mark Dunbar

Composed 2002 – 2003 Revised 2016

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CASTING

Scored for 9 actor/singers, SATB chorus

3 celli, on-stage acoustic guitar, tenor drum (optional)

CHARACTERS

WESTIE	Sylvester Fraser, 58, a world-weary derelict	- tenor
DARK LADY	WESTIE's mixed-race companion, 50ish	- alto
PASTOR	A rural community cleric	- bass
BILL FRASER	A farming patriarch, 74, WESTIE's brother	- baritone
MARYANNE	BILL Fraser's wife of 43 years	- mezzo sop
BRIDE	18, BILL and MARYANNE's youngest child	- soprano
GROOM	22, An early-returnee from the Boer War	- tenor
MOTHER FRASER	Ghost-voice of BILL and WESTIE's mother	- soprano
LEFT-HAND BOWLEE	Ghost-voice of the Fraser's native manservant	- tenor
YIMAN CHORUS	Ghost-voices of the Yiman victims (Led by Left-hand Bowlee)	- SATB chorus & soloists
CONGREGATION (also ALL WOMEN, MEN, S, A, T, B)	Parishioners and wedding guests	- SATB chorus & soloists
FAMILY VOICE 1, 2 & 3	Ghost-voices of the Fraser family victims	SATB soloists

TIME

An afternoon in 1900, on the brink of Federation.

PLACE

A small community chapel near Taroom, Qld Australia.

BACKGROUND

HISTORY

In 1856 on a station in central Queensland called Hornet's Bank, a group from the local Yiman tribes rose up one night and slaughtered the settler Fraser family. After years of fair treatment, the motive was unclear; boys' games gone bad, or pride, or some greater strategic plan. But eight women and children, 2 shepherds and a visitor - every living white who slept on Hornet's Bank that night - were bludgeoned. Only fourteen-year old Westie fatefully survived the assault, defying wounds to ride three days for help. But it was the adult son, Bill, returning from town to a hearth of carnage, who drove their response, wreaking a brutal brand of vengeance on the tribe at large. In just a few years across a vast region, the proud Yiman people would be almost extirpated from the land. Thereafter records suggest the fortunes of the brothers diverge, the hero survivor superseded by a monstrous hero avenger.

This is a story of picking old bones, sun-bleached or buried, and the stain that is left to seep steadily into the present when fissures of truth are hastily over-rendered for a sovereign ideal.

SETTING

On the eve of Federation a wedding is being celebrated in a small country church. As a wild, maiden country comes of age through its betrothal to a maturing sense of sovereignty, so a second generation of Australian-born colonials grapples with the ghosts and wounds of battles past whose brazen brutalities must now be expunged from the public record. The old inebriate at the chapel door is Westie, the bride's estranged uncle, sole witness and survivor of past atrocities. He has come to disrupt the nuptials as the heckling face of madness, memory and reconciliation.

SOURCES

While a work of fiction, Gordon Reid's history of the Fraser massacre called *A Nest of Hornets* (1982, Oxford University Press) was invaluable in researching this story. The authors also acknowledge quotes and paraphrases from W. N. (Bill) Scott's *Brother and Brother*, p.15 'Metho Drinker' (1972, Jacaranda Press), A. N. Kolin and Maryam Mafi's *Rumi: Hidden Music*, (2002, Thorsons) and Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, p 287 (1999, Claremont Classics). Aboriginal Woman's ritual song is based on the melody and lyric, Honey-Ant Song, sourced from T. G. H. Strehlow's *Songs of Central Australia*. (1971, Angus and Robertson, Sydney)

FIRST PERFORMANCE

The first performance of the music from Hornets Wedding was produced by Brisbane Canto Coro at St Andrews Church Hall, Brisbane Australia on Thursday July 24, 2003. It was produced as a song cycle. Three other performances in the season occurred on Friday July 24 & Saturday July 25.

FIRST PERFORMANCE CAST

STORY-TELLERS – Yvette Walker & Dwayne Peachey

BILLY – Mark Cronin

WESTIE – Mark Shortis

MARYANNE – Lesley Hillhouse & Kerrie Woodrow

GROOM – Marco Ramirez

PASTOR – Brian Cleary

CONGREGATION/YIMAN GHOSTS – Brisbane Canto Coro

CELLISTS - Jane Elliott, Kathryn McKee, Naomi Takeda

PRODUCTION

Musical director/conductor – Mark Dunbar

Chorus tutors – Kerrie Woodrow, Mark Shortis, Mark Dunbar

Script development – Doug Leonard, Indija Mahjoeddin, Mark Dunbar

Links for song cycle version – Yvette Walker, Mark Shortis, Mark Dunbar

Repetiteur – Jane Elliot

Graphic design – Mark Dunbar

Program layout – Brian Cleary

Publicity – Lesley Hillhouse, Mark Dunbar

Project management – Mark Dunbar

Choir ticketing – Lesley Hillhouse

Childcare – Anastasia Lazarou

Front of house – Wade Lewis

BRISBANE CANTO CORO

SOPRANOS – Delia Bohler, Rose Chadwick, Doreen Coveney, Maggie Dobbin,

Elvia Ramirez, Fotina Riveros, Libby Schmidt, Shirley Way

ALTOS – Annie Caulfield, Kristen Duffus, Marion Forrest, Lesley Hillhouse,

Suzanne Lundberg, Vanessa Mackie, Elizabeth O'Brien, Dorothea Schafer,

Pia Walmsley, Kerrie Woodrow

TENORS – Ann Baker, Mark Cronin, Anna Fairley, Michael Kerswell,

Mal McKay, Marco Ramirez, Suse Wolf

BASSES – Guido Cifali, Brian Cleary, Eric Colladetti, Jeremy Kee,

James Keightley, Mark Shortis, Gavin Turnbull

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ACT I

#1. Secrets and Closest Bonds

{EXTERIOR. Pre-dawn. A small rural community church.

(Unseen in the pitch dark a homeless tramp, WESTIE, has made himself comfortable on the chapel steps.)

(The staging should allow exterior action on the steps and interior action inside the chapel hall, with a lectern altar and podium, to be concurrently visible. Much of the action is located in the conceptual space of memory)

(Choral voices are heard from offstage.)

ALL WOMEN:

(Off)

**THERE IS A THREAD FROM THE
HEART TO THE LIPS WHERE THE
SECRET OF LIFE IS WOVEN
THESE WORDS MAY TEAR AT THE THREAD
BUT IN SILENCE ARE THE**

CONGREGATION:

(Off)

SECRETS SPOKEN

WESTIE:

(from the darkness)

The ditch is a gash in the black earth's skull.

Cradle me in your burning bosom you old witch-whore

(LX: An incremental fade in of dawn light begins.)

YIMAN/DARK LADY:

(Offstage)

OLD PILE OF WHISKERED SKIN

A DREAM BETWEEN YOUR PAPER BLANKETS ARCHED

SING BRAVELY BROTHER

I TOO HOLD A SONG BETWEEN

ME AND THE WORLD

DARK LADY:

THERE IS A THREAD...

(A match is struck illuminating WESTIE FRASER where he sits on the chapel steps. Bottle in a paper bag beside him, a string of found household objects tied to his ankle, his 'chattels' clatter as he moves. WESTIE draws deeply to light his tobacco.)

WESTIE:

Alone? Not I. I got me mob here, and me Holy Spirit.

(indicating his chattels and his bottle)

Worms and critters they look after ol' Westie, now.

(A PASTOR carries the burning match to the interior, lights chapel candles. [Mus: Underscore vamp] begins.)

CONGREGATION:

(Entering DS and filing past WESTIE towards the chapel interior.)

THE CLOSEST BONDS WE'LL EVER KNOW.

(Continues under the following text.)

WESTIE:

Shh... you'll wake up me old girl. She lives here. There, and there.
She lives all around here. It's time brother. It's getting late.

(Referring to the chattels dragging behind him)

What? Don't touch them. You leave them.

Nah! That's me...me goods and chattels,
sheep and livestock there.

Old Bowlee took 'em down one day...

He took 'em, put them out of their misery.

Ah, shorn and sickly, poor little lambs. Had to go.

CONGREGATION:

(Whispered ad lib.)

I do, I do, I do...

([Foley 1: The sound of digging])

(Segue to [Mus:#2. From Our Dust])

#2. From Our Dust.

{PREMONITION. Onstage CELLISTS play an extended instrumental premonition of violence answered by a chorus of YIMAN ghosts.}

YIMAN:

FROM OUR DUST ALL SECRETS RISE

BRIDE:

(preoccupied with digging and searching.

Something borrowed, something ... something borrowed ...

(Segue to [Mus:#3. Call To Witness])

#3. Call To Witness.

{EXT. The mood brightens in a sudden shift to pre-wedding anticipation}

CONGREGATION:

HURRAY!

CALL TO WITNESS, CALL TO WITNESS

WEDDING VOWS

NEW BEGINNING, LIFE BEGINNING

WEDDING VOWS

NIGHT OF PASSION, RITE OF PASSAGE

DAY OF BLISS

NIGHT OF SENSES, NIGHT OF PASSION

NIGHT OF BLISS

DO YOU? I DO! YOU KNOW? DO YOU?

YES, I DO!

WEDDING BELLS TO SPEAK ACROSS THE EARTH YOU KISS

LISTEN TO THE HEARTBEAT FLUTTER ON THE TONGUE

LISTEN! HUSH NO, LISTEN!

SILENCE, EVERYONE LIS...

SAY NOTHING, NO, BEAT, LISTEN!

ON THE TONGUE

BRIDE/CONG:

THIS IS THE DAY I HAVE WAITED FOR

THESE ARE MY FINAL GOODBYES

TO SECRETS POURED INTO MY DIARIES

TO CHILDISH GAMES AND LIES

CONGREGATION:

HUSH NO SILENCE, EVERYONE

NOTHING, LISTEN ON THE TONGUE

LISTEN, HUSH NO, LISTEN

SILENCE EVERYONE, LISTEN

NOTHING, LISTEN ON THE TONGUE

BILL/CONG:

THE TIES OF BLOOD ARE STRONG AND

LOVE AND DUTY PLAY THEIR PART

I BLESS THE UNION, BUT THE MAN IS WRONG

WHO WOULD YOKE US TO FEDERATION'S CART

CONGREGATION:

TIES OF BLOOD SING (WHO WOULD, WOULD YOU? RUB IT OUT)

TIES OF KIN SING (RUB IT OUT, HE HOW? COULD I?)

WEDDING RING (I DO, I DO)

WHO WOULD DUTY, LOVE WOULD BEAUTY

WED-DONG-DING (RUB IT OUT!)

BRIDE:

THIS IS THE DAY I HAVE WAITED FOR

THIS IS MY COMING OUT

THIS IS MY DAY OF RECKONING

LET THE MYSTERY IGNITE

BRIDE:

THIS IS THE DAY I HAVE WAITED FOR

THIS IS MY COMING OUT

THIS IS MY DAY OF RECKONING

LET THE MYSTERY IGNITE

MARYANNE/ALT/BASS:

MARRIAGE IS NOT THE GOLDEN FRUIT

BRIDE:

THIS IS MY COMING OUT

**THIS IS MY DAY OF
RECKONING**

LET THE MYSTERY IGNITE

LET THE MYSTERY IGNITE

BILL:

THE TIES OF BLOOD ARE STRONG

AND LOVE AND DUTY STAY MY HAND

BETWEEN US WAVERS THE PURE CHILD

HOW EASILY I'D MURDER SUCH A MAN

MARYANNE/ALT/BASS:

GOLDEN FRUIT

BEGIN ANEW AS HIS WIFE

SO MANY THINGS I CAN'T SAY TO YOU

JUST REMEMBER THE GIFT OF LIFE

BILL/TENORS:

THE TIES OF BLOOD ARE STRONG; THEY ARE STRONG

BILL/TENORS:

MARYANNE/ALT/BASS:

BEGIN ANEW AS HIS WIFE

**SO MANY THINGS I CAN'T SAY TO
YOU**

**SO MANY THINGS I CAN'T SAY TO
YOU**

JUST REMEMBER THE GIFT OF LIFE

**LOVE AND DUTY PLAY THEIR
PART**

**LOVE AND DUTY PLAY THEIR
PART**

**I BLESS THIS UNION BUT THE
MAN IS WRONG**

**HOW EASILY I'D MURDER SUCH A
MAN**

(CELLI continue under following text.)

WESTIE:

It's time bro. It's getting late.

BRIDE:

Are we late?

BILL:

No we are on time

WESTIE:

You're just in time, girl, but the marriage is overdue

BILL:

Who goes there? Sylvester? Westie, is that you?

BRIDE:

Papa, get his dirty hands off my pure white dress

WESTIE:

Be careful sister. She might hear you.

MARYANNE:

Who?

(Segue to [Mus:#4. Makerenbe Closest bonds])

#4. Makerenbe Closest Bonds

(EXT/INT. DARK LADY emerges from a blanket, and begins a self-contained traditional-styled ritual which recurs throughout the work intersecting with the rituals of the wedding. SHE moves as she chants the ritual song, in counterpoint to the CONGREGATION'S hymn.)

CONGREGATION

THERE IS A THREAD

FROM HEART TO LIPS

DARK LADY:

MAKERENBE NJELANOU PANJANOU

(continues throughout the hymn)

CONGREGATION/SOLOISTS:

THERE IS A THREAD

FROM HEART TO LIPS

SECRETS SPOKEN

THE CLOSEST BONDS WE WILL EVER KNOW

THE DEEPEST COMMUNITY WE WILL EVER KNOW

THERE IS A THREAD

FROM HEART TO THE LIPS

OLD PILE OF WHISKERED SKIN

DREAM BETWEEN YOUR PAPER BLANKETS

THE CLOSEST BONDS WE WILL EVER KNOW

THE DEEPEST COMMUNITY WE WILL EVER KNOW

**ARE BONDS OF GRIEF
THERE IS A THREAD
FROM HEART TO THE LIPS**

(Mus: Vamp continues under the following text)

BRIDE:

(left alone with WESTIE, panics.)

Papa!

WESTIE:

Shh... you'll wake up me old girl. She lives here. There, and there. She lives all around here. You can hear her can't you? Her hiss of flames on the edges of the world, her creeping through the grey dawn seeping up between your toes.

Let her tell you about wedding... down the aisle, down the bush track to the other side, lass. And when you get there you ain't never coming back out the same as you went in.

Me, I took her hand, a handful of dank earth. Can't find my way out now. Maybe Ching Chong Chinee. Maybe Africa. But there. It's all the same. Blacks, Boers, Brits, bastards!

You take his hand, love, and forget he's just another bastard like all of us. White clay, red sand, black mud. A hand is just a clod of earth when all is said and done.

(The vignette of BRIDE and WESTIE is interrupted by ceremonial action inside the chapel.)

(Segue to [Mus:#5. In Flagrate])

#5. In Flagrante

*INT. PASTOR and CONGREGATION are heard
from within the chapel.*

CONGREGATION:

IN FLAGRANTE DELICTO. RUBRICA VETAVIT

PASTOR:

Behold a hand is just a clod of earth

PASTOR:

LORD PREPARE US TO PRONOUNCE YOUR WORD

BRIDE/DARK LADY:

WHITE CLAY, RED SAND, BLACK MUD

PASTOR/CONG:

THAT WILL BIND IN ONE OUR SPIRIT

WESTIE:

Gor's Trewth a hand is just a clod o' turf.

*(MARYANNE and BILL FRASER cross to join BRIDE.
Segue to [Mus:#6. Rubies])*

#6. Rubies

(FLASHBACK to preparations. A vintage wedding dress and brooch are drawn from an old box.)

BRIDE:

Something old. Something new.

MARYANNE:

Forty years and you're the first to wear it dear. A perfect fit.

BILL:

What's this?

MARYANNE:

We met when papa on his own collected it

BILL:

The curse of it!

BRIDE:

All this be yours, and yours, they said.

(BILL FRASER fumbles with a red jewelled brooch.)

BILL:

(To BRIDE.)

WEAR THESE RUBIES ON YOUR BREAST

PIN THEM TO YOUR WEDDING DRESS

THEY'RE ALL I HAVE OF MOTHER LEFT

BEADS OF BLOOD, THEY GLISTEN RED

BILL:

WEAR THESE RUBIES ON YOUR BREAST

CONGREGATION:

(BUT IS IT WINE MY LOVE?)

BILL:

PIN THEM TO YOUR WEDDING DRESS

CONGREGATION:

(RUB, RUB IT OUT, MY LOVE)

BILL:

THEY'RE ALL I HAVE OF MOTHER LEFT

BILL/BRIDE:

BEADS OF BLOOD, THEY GLISTEN RED

BRIDE:

THEY LOOK LIKE LITTLE BEADS OF BLOOD

UPON MY CHEST, PAPA

THEY LOOK LIKE LITTLE BEADS OF BLOOD UPON MY CHEST

CONGREGATION:

MINE 'TILL ETERNITY

MARYANNE:

WEAR THESE RUBIES ON YOUR BREAST

PIN THEM TO YOUR WEDDING DRESS

A LITTLE OF YOUR HISTORY

YOURS UNTIL ETERNITY

BRIDE:

THEY LOOK LIKE BEADS OF BLOOD UPON MY CHEST, MAMA

CONGREGATION:

BUT IS IT WINE, MY LOVE?

THEY LOOK LIKE LITTLE BEADS OF BLOOD

UPON MY CHEST

CONGREGATION:

RUB, RUB IT OUT

MINE 'TILL ETERNITY

CONGREGATION:

THEY ARE BEADS OF BLOOD UPON MY CHEST

BRIDE:

MAMA

ALTO SOLOIST:

WHOA, TAKE THESE RUBIES

THEY'RE A REFUGE PLACE, WHOA...

BRIDE:

THEY LOOK LIKE BEADS OF BLOOD UPON MY CHEST

(As the instrumental playout quotes the wedding march, BILL FRASER begins to escort BRIDE toward the altar. Segue to [Mus:#7. Two by Two])

#7. Two by Two

*(INT. Wedding processional. BILL FRASER
and BRIDE approach the altar.)*

PASTOR:

(Voice builds as processional approaches.)

TWO BY TWO IN MATCHING PAIRS

OPPOSITES OF EVERY KIND

SO CAME DAY WITH NIGHT

SHARP WITH ROUND

AND BLACK BESIDE WHITE

BLACK BESIDE WHITE

WHEREFORE WOMAN BESIDE MAN

AND OF BEASTS CAME THE WILD AND TAME

THUS UNTO THE FATHER

SO IT IS SAID

ALL CREATURES GOOD AND EVIL CAME

AND CAME! AVENGER OF THE SLAIN

CONGREGATION:

AVENGER OF THE PEOPLE!

IN FLAGRANTE DELICTO, RUBRICA VETAVIT

YIMAN/DARK LADY:

AH...FROM OUR DUST ALL SECRETS RISE

(At the end of the processional BRIDE mounts a high podium to kneel beside the GROOM for [Mus:#8. Virtue])

#8. Virtue

*(INT. BRIDE is elevated on a high podium
beside the GROOM.)*

DARK LADY/FAMILY VOICE:

VIRTUE SITS PURE AND WHITE

VIRTUE SITS HIGH ON THE HILL

VIRTUE SITS INSIDE HER HOUSE

VIRTUE

LH. BOWLEE:

BAREFOOT SITS LOW AND DARK

BAREFOOT SITS OUT ON THE HILL

BAREFOOT SITS IN BLACK BULL DUST

DARK LADY/FAMILY VOICE:

BAREFOOT

DARK LADY/FAMILY VOICE:

VIRTUE SITS HIGH ON THE HILL

VIRTUE SITS INSIDE HER HOUSE

VIRTUE

LH. BOWLEE:

IN THE BLACK BULL-DUST

A BAREFOOT SISTER IS CROUCHED

DARK LADY/FAMILY VOICE:

BAREFOOT

LH. BOWLEE:

IN THE PURE WHITE HOUSE SITS VIRTUE HIGH ON THE HILL

DARK LADY/FAMILY VOICE:

VIRTUE

(WESTIE burps.)

PASTOR:

*(This and following is intoned as a responsorial hymn
over the cello pedal note with WESTIE interjecting.)*

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER

CONGREGATION:

The Son and Holy Ghost

PASTOR:

WE ASSEMBLE

CONGREGATION:

We assemble

PASTOR:

ON THIS HOLY SITE

CONGREGATION:

Sacred site

PASTOR:

RING THE BELLS

WESTIE:

I love me old black tart...

PASTOR:

IF WE LOVE ANOTHER, GOD ABIDES IN US

WESTIE:

What would you know about lovin'?

PASTOR:

FOR IN US HIS LOVE IS BROUGHT TO PERFECTION

WESTIE:

Can your dead words perfect the living truth?

CONGREGATION:

AMEN

WESTIE:

In your dead souls, in your dead souls, what's there of living hope?

CONGREGATION:

AMEN

WESTIE:

Love is the stain on the empty bowl

When the bitter taste is your only food

(DARK LADY resumes her ritual lament.)

Love? We eat it, we drink it,

We roll in it like shit in a ditch,

We sleep in it, my darling, don't we?

*(WESTIE takes a battered guitar from his chattels,
and begins to strum. Segue to [Mus:#9. Westie's
Rubies])*

#9. Westie's Rubies

DARK LADY:

MAKERENBE NJELANOU PANJANOU...

WESTIE:

What would they know, my love? When the thread from your heart to your lips has been wound seven times around your neck, love is all the power you can muster.

BILL:

Do you love this man?

BRIDE:

Papa, he loves me.

WESTIE:

EVERY BREATH YOU BREATHE IS MINE

SWEET TO DROWN IN THIS WARM BRINE

AND WHEN I TOUCH YOU SO

I TOUCH THE LIVING SOURCE YOU KNOW

THERE IS NO BODY, NO BETROTHED

NO BETROTHED BUT YOU AND I

TAKE THOSE DIAMONDS FROM YOUR EYES

THERE'S NO EARTHLY PARADISE

OUR WOUNDS ARE WET, OUR CHEEKS ARE DRY

WE SPEAK OF LOVE WHILE BROTHERS DIE

THERE IS NO YOU. THERE IS NO I

YOU AND I

DARK LADY/WESTIE:

...MAKERENBE NJELANOU PANJANOU

(BRIDE and GROOM are seen slipping outside the chapel to find a private moment. Segue to [Mus:#10. The Voice of the Lord])

#10. The Voice of the Lord

(INT./EXT. As the ceremony drones on BRIDE and GROOM are fornicating in adolescent haste outside the chapel.)

CONGREGATION:

MMM...

(continues under the following text)

PASTOR:

We stand on the edge of the future. Bound with a thin and fickle thread.

PASTOR:

What is Union, my friends? Union of souls, of flesh, of hearts? Of a nation?, Of peoples? In this virgin land we stand. On the brink of federation. As full of hope as these two children pledging their vows of fidelity.

CONGREGATION:

THE GENERATION OF THE UPRIGHT SHALL BE BLESSED

THEIR DESCENDANTS WILL BE MIGHTY IN THE LAND

WEALTH AND RICHES WILL BE IN THEIR HOUSE

PASTOR:

THOSE WHO GO THROUGH THE DESOLATE VALLEY

WILL FIND IT A PLACE OF SPRINGS

FOR EARLY RAINS HAVE FLOODED IT AND POOLS OF WATER

REMAIN

CONGREGATION:

IN FLAGRANTE DELICTO, RUBRICA VETAVIT

(continues under the following text)

WESTIE:

(noticing the couple)

Sprinkle the desolate valley.

Black dust. White ashes. Red to quench its thirst.

CONGREGATION:

MMM...

(Continues under the following text.)

PASTOR:

Born in peace, the spring of our lives

(indicates BRIDE.)

Baptised in the blood of our bravest

(indicates GROOM.).

It is with great solemnity and joy that I seal your futures in this holy bond. For the Lord commands that you shall write anew on the slate of this new nation, a story of harmony and prosperity, that we may say 'I do' and know it!

CONGREGATION:

I do,

PASTOR:

FOR THE RULERS OF THIS EARTH BELONG TO GOD

BILL:

LET THE PEOPLE TREMBLE, LET THE EARTH SHAKE

PASTOR:

THE VOICE OF THE LORD IS UPON THE MIGHTY WATERS

CONGREGATION:

THE VOICE OF THE LORD SPLITS THE FLAMES OF FIRE

YIMAN:

THE VOICE OF THE LORD SHAKES THE WILDERNESS

**MAKES THE OLD TREES WRITHE AND STRIPS THE FOREST
BARE**

AND IN THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD

HE SITS ENTHRONED ABOVE THE FLOOD

*(GROOM achieves orgasm. BRIDE comes close.
Segue to [Mus:#11 Three Day Ride].)*

#11. Three Day Ride

*(INT/EXT. [Foley 2: Sound of a hornet buzzing.]
ALL eyes attempt to track the flight of the
hornet, which draws WESTIE inside the
chapel. His DARK LADY remains outside
where SHE resumes her ritual softly.)*

DARK LADY:

MAKERENBE NJELANOU PANJANOU...

(underscores the following text.)

WESTIE:

I've been on the other side brother. You see that fair across my head.
They walked right in, her mob did. They opened up me thoughts and
went inside. What they took out, I never miss. What they put in won't
let me sleep.

Them hornets sting alright, but I've been on that wild bee flight, they
took me there. I saw it all with my thousand eyes from high up, high
up in the cold air.

I saw the great map before I fell and split my head on the waddie of
a loyal bloke.

CONGREGATION:

IS IT HE, THE, THE BOY

IS IT HE, THE BROTHER

IS IT HE, THE WITNESS

WITNESS OF TERROR, WITNESS OF HORROR

WITNESS THE LEGENDARY...

**HERO, THREE DAYS RIDE AT
BREAKNECK, BREAKNECK PACE
BROKEN, BROKEN BODY DRIED BLOOD
IN HIS FACE
SKULL SPLIT (WIDE)
LIFE SPLIT (OPEN)
REASON, SPLIT IN TWO
PIECES HELD TOGETHER
BLOOD IN HIS TERROR, BLOOD IN HIS HORROR
BLOOD IN HIS BLUE CHILD EYES**

(Segue to [Mus:#12. The Night was Still])

#12. The Night was Still.

(FLASHBACK)

CONGREGATION:

**THE NIGHT WAS STILL, THE NIGHT WAS HOT
THE SCREENS WERE LOCKED, THE DOOR WAS NOT
THE NIGHT WAS BLACK,
AND PRESSED BETWEEN
THE INKY BLACK OF BLACK BARK-LAND
AND THE BLACK OF STARLESS CANOPY**

LH.BOWLEE/YIMAN:

Black was the night. The dawn was pale grey.

YIMAN:

Before first light, the heat of the night
blankets the subtle sight of the pale sleepers.

LH.BOWLEE:

Linen of white winding the dreamers tight.
Smug in their right.

YIMAN/ALL MEN:

So calm so peaceful...

DARK LADY:

And you Bowlee, for all your loyalty
You loved them not, you stopped their dogs

But not their Gods from weeping...

CONGREGATION:

THE NIGHT WAS STILL, THE NIGHT WAS HOT

THE SCREENS WERE LOCKED, THE DOOR WAS NOT

THE NIGHT WAS BLACK,

AND PRESSED BETWEEN

THE INKY BLACK OF BLACK BARK-LAND

AND THE BLACK OF STARLESS CANOPY

AND PRESSED BETWEEN THE BLACK OF THESE

ANOTHER BLACK, A BLACK THAT SEETHES

A SEETHING BLACK

A BLACK OF HEART

A BLACK BETRAYED

SEE HOW CALM, HOW CALM THE STORM BEFORE IT STARTS

BEFORE IT DAWNS ON SLEEPY HEADS

AH-HA, BUT BE FOREWARNED...

WESTIE:

Oh yes The night
was still, The night was
hot And mother
slept. And Lizzie,
Mary, All the
girls they slept...
and slept.

DARK LADY/ALL WOMEN:

Ah-ha!

WESTIE:

So did the brat!
And brother on
the open porch
and teacher in
the granny-flat.

DARK LADY/ALL WOMEN:

Ah-ha

ALL WOMEN:

And in the dark, that inky blackness crept and crept.

LH. BOWLEE:

Watch out you sleepyheads!

CONGREGATION:

**THE NIGHT WAS STILL,
THE NIGHT WAS HOT
THE SCREENS WERE LOCKED,
THE DOOR WAS NOT
THE NIGHT WAS BLACK,
AND PRESSED BETWEEN
THE INKY BLACK**

AH-HA

**OF BLACK BARK-LAND
AND THE BLACK OF
STARLESS CANOPY
AND PRESSED BETWEEN
THE BLACK OF THESE**

AH-HA

ALL WOMEN:

No warning.

LH. BOWLEE:

No, you'll never see another dawning day.

LH. BOWLEE/YIMAN:

This is your night of nights. Put out that light.

(A beat of silence.)

MOTHER:

The night was still, the night was hot.

FAMILY 1 & 2:

The screen was locked.

FAMILY 3:

The door was not

ALL WOMEN:

And pressed against it

Looking in,

A sea of shadow-shaded skin.

YIMAN:

SHE CRIED TOO LATE, FOR PITY'S SAKE

THE PRETTY LACE, THE PRETTY LACE...

ALL WOMEN:

I heard

WESTIE:

the shuffle of their feet.

ALL WOMEN:

I heard

WESTIE:

the muffled scream of recognition when Mama laid eyes on Left
Hand Bowlee's latest enterprise.

MOTHER:

Have mercy! Pity's sake!

ALL WOMEN:

She cried but too late. Black blood already takes its side.

The only white that he forsakes – Your pallid pride.

The black emerging from the night.

The white, a sight, in their night gowns

were dragged from sheets of linen white

And on the grey of grassy ground

MOTHER:

The pretty lace...

ALL WOMEN:

all torn.

MOTHER:

The skirts...

ALL WOMEN:

all torn

MOTHER:

The pin-tucks at the waist...

ALL WOMEN:

and with the men, eleven torn and strewn

ALL WOMEN/MOTHER:

For pity's sake...

WESTIE:

for all that pretty lace was ruined.

(BRIDE is shocked. BILL FRASER stiffens. The CONGREGATION turn their gaze toward the YIMAN.

A beat of silence is broken by the shuffling of DARK LADY preparing to lead the YIMAN in a ritual smoke cleansing. Segue to [Mus:#13. For Man Reaps])

#13. For Man Reaps

(EXT. BRIDE observes the pair outside from the chapel door.)

DARK LADY:

(whilst wafting the smoke from a fagot of smouldering eucalyptus towards the YIMAN CHORUS)

MAKERENBE NJELANOU PANJANOU...

(continues under following text)

BRIDE:

**THE PICTURE IS ASKEW A GRIT OF DUST CLEARS FROM MY
EYE**

THE BONES A SCATTERED

BRIDE/BILL:

THE LITTER THAT WE CLEARED TO CLIMB THE SKY

BILL:

FOR ALL THAT THIS HUMBLE DUST PROMISED

(DARK LADY intensifies her ritual song to a mourning wail.)

CONGREGATION:

FROM THE DUST OUR SECRETS RISE

REAPS, SOWS, REAPS, SOWS

FROM THE DUST OUR SECRETS RISE

FOR MAN REAPS WHAT HE SOWS

WESTIE:

Ah, but we, we've escaped

like a bird from a fowler's snare.

Crush 'em... with an iron rod.

Shatter 'em like pot shards,

splinters in yer eye.

"Submit, quoth the saint,

and bow your brow!"

Little black birds squawk across the sky.

Three shots and we'd watch their feathers fly

*(PASTOR generates a loud sharp bang by sharply
closing a hymn book down on his lectern. Segue to
[Mus:#14. Impediment])*

#14. Impediment

(INT. From the chapel altar)

PASTOR:

I REQUIRE, I REQUIRE AND CHARGE ALL PRESENT HERE

PASTOR/CONG:

**I REQUIRE, I REQUIRE AND CHARGE ALL PRESENT HERE
AND MAY YOU ANSWER ON THE DREADFUL**

PASTOR:

DAY OF JUDGEMENT WHEN ALL SECRETS

BRIDE:

THERE IS SOMETHING AMISS, THE PICTURE IS ASKEW

PASTOR:

THE SECRETS OF ALL HEARTS

BRIDE/PASTOR:

**A GRIT OF DUST CLEARS FROM MY EYE
THE BONES A-SCATTERED HERE**

BRIDE/CONG:

HERE THE LITTER THAT HE CLEARED

BRIDE:

TO CLIMB THE SKY

CONGREGATION:

PERFECT ORDER IS AWRY

BRIDE:

**THE OLD MAN DRIVELS ON AND ON AND NO-ONE LISTENS TO
HIM**

WHO ELSE BESIDE MYSELF?

HE'S BEYOND THE OPEN WOUND TO SOMETHING FURTHER ON

CONGREGATION:

AND MAY YOU ANSWER...(ETC.)

PASTOR:

ON THAT DREADFUL

PASTOR/CONG. ALTOS:

DAY OF JUDGEMENT

WHEN ALL SECRETS OF ALL HEARTS ARE REVEALED

WHEN THE SECRETS OF ALL...

CONGREGATION:

AND MAY YOU ANSWER, AND MAY YOU ANSWER...

**DAY OF JUDGEMENT WHEN ALL SECRETS OF ALL HEARTS ARE
REVEALED**

PASTOR/CONG:

SECRETS OF ALL HEARTS...

DAY OF JUDGEMENT WHEN ALL SECRETS OF ALL HEARTS

PASTOR:

ARE REVEALED, WHEN THE SECRETS

CONGREGATION:

AND MAY YOU ANSWER...

PASTOR:

DOES ANYBODY KNOW?

OF GRAVE IMPEDIMENT OR REASON ABSOLUTE

CONGREGATION:

OR REASON ABSOLUTE, REASON BLOOD SPILT

PASTOR:

WHY THIS UNION SHOULD NOT PROCEED?

CONFESS IT NOW, OR EVER HOLD YOUR PEACE!

CONGREGATION:

DOES ANYBODY KNOW? IN THIS NATION OF THIEVES

PASTOR/CONG:

DOES ANYBODY KNOW OF GRAVE IMPEDIMENT?

CONGREGATION:

WHOSE DESCENDANTS WILL BE MIGHTY IN THIS LAND

PASTOR:

OR REASON ABSOLUTE

CONGREGATION:

WEALTH AND RICHES WILL BE IN THIS HOUSE

PASTOR:

WHY THIS UNION...

CONGREGATION:

THE GENERATION OF THE UPRIGHT SHALL BE BLESSED

PASTOR:

SHOULD NOT PROCEED

CONGREGATION:

THEIR RIGHTEOUSNESS SHALL NEVER BE SHAKEN

PASTOR/CONG:

CONFESS IT NOW, CONFESS IT NOW, CONFESS IT NOW

CONGREGATION:

GOD MAY WAIT...

BRIDE:

WHO ELSE BESIDE MYSELF?

THE PICTURE IS ASKEW

CONGREGATION:

IS THERE A REASON WE CANNOT REJOICE NOW?

BILL:

DON'T LET THEM RISE UP IN JUDGEMENT AGAINST US

IN THE LAST GREAT DAY

CONGREGATION:

IS THERE A FREEDOM WE CANNOT VOICE NOW?

PASTOR:

CONFESS IT NOW

CONGREGATION:

GOD MAY WAIT, FOR THE LIVING GOD'S A BEAST OF PREY

PASTOR:

LET US PRAY

DOES ANYBODY KNOW OF GRAVE IMPEDIMENT...

WESTIE:

I do

PASTOR:

CANNOT PROCEED?

BRIDE/GROOM:

I do

(A beat of silence. Segue to [Mus:#15. Gold That Bites])

#15. Gold That Bites

(INT. Continues from chapel altar.)

PASTOR:

Will no-one speak?

BILL:

(holding a gun to the GROOM's head.)

Do you love this man?

WESTIE:

Truth springs up she does, from this red earth...c

PASTOR:

**AND SO, BEFORE THE FATHER, SON AND THE HOLY GHOST,
TAKE THIS BAND OF GOLD**

CONGREGATION:

GOLD THAT BITES

BRIDE/GROOM:

I do

PASTOR:

ENCIRCLE HER HEART, AND YOU, HIS.

BRIDE/GROOM:

I do

CONGREGATION:

FOR ALL THAT THIS HUMBLE DUST PROMISED

BILL:

Do you love this man?

BRIDE:

Papa, he loves me.

(Segue to [Mus:#16. Undefined])

#16. Undefined

(INT. BRIDE and GROOM prepare to exchange rings, and this song serves to seal the ritual as if an extended kiss.)

CONGREGATION:

AH...ALL I AM I GIVE IT, AH...

BRIDE:

**IN YOU RODE AND SAW ME ALONE
MY HEART YOU STOLE FOR YOUR OWN
NOW LIKE A KING YOU DO RULE MY SOUL**

GROOM:

OPEN TO ME

BRIDE/GROOM:

**TAKE MY LOVE TAKE MY SPIRIT
LET ME GIVE**

BRIDE:

ALL OF IT

ALL WOMEN:

ALL I AM I GIVE IT, AH...

GROOM:

OPEN TO ME

BRIDE:

TOUCH, TOUCH ME TENDER

I, I SURRENDER MY HILLS AND VALLEYS TO YOU

CONGREGATION:

SURRENDER TO YOU

BRIDE/ALL WOMEN:

THOUGH THIS BREAD HAS BEEN BROKEN BEFORE

THOUGH THIS PLACE HAS BEEN TRODDEN BEFORE

TAKE MY LOVE, TAKE MY HAND, TAKE MY BODY

TAKE MY ALL

BRIDE:

TAKE UP YOUR SOVEREIGNTY

GROOM:

HEAR THE VOICE OF MY BELOVED

GROOM/ALL MEN:

KNOCK, KNOCKING UPON MY GATE

GROOM:

OPEN TO ME MY DOVE, MY UNDEFILED

BRIDE/ALL WOMEN:

ALTHOUGH THE BREAD'S BEEN BROKEN BEFORE

GROOM:

MY UNDEFINED...

BRIDE/ALL WOMEN:

THE WORD'S BEEN SPOKEN BEFORE

AND THOUGH THIS PLACE HAS BEEN TROD BEFORE

GROOM/ALL MEN:

MY UNDEFINED

BRIDE/ALL WOMEN:

TAKE MY HAND, TAKE MY BODY

TAKE UP YOUR SOVEREIGNTY

FOR ALL YOUR HEAVENS AND YOUR DEVOTION

BRIDE:

I GIFT MY SOUL TO YOU

PASTOR:

IN HIS IMAGE HE TAKES

BRIDE/ALL WOMEN:

THOUGH THIS BREAD HAS BEEN BROKEN BEFORE

THOUGH THIS PLACE HAS BEEN TRODDEN BEFORE

TAKE MY LOVE, TAKE MY HAND, TAKE MY BODY

TAKE MY ALL

BRIDE:

TAKE UP YOUR SOVEREIGNTY

GROOM:

HEAR THE VOICE OF MY BELOVED

GROOM/ALL MEN:

KNOCK, KNOCKING UPON MY GATE

GROOM:

OPEN ME MY DOVE, MY UNDEFILED

BRIDE:

DEFILED

INTERVAL

ACT II

#17. Blessed Man

(EXT. Emerging from the chapel. From hereon interior zone now doubles as a reception hall without losing its chapel significations.)

ALL MEN:

Ladies and gentlemen, the bride and groom are man and wife!

*(ALL cheer. BRIDE throws her bouquet of wattle.
DARK LADY catches it.)*

(Throughout the following song the whole cast move in a choreography of cheers, tears, kisses and hand-shakes.)

CONGREGATION:

BLESSED MAN, BLESSED MAN, BLESSED...YEAH!

FIRST SOLOIST:

**BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO HAS A VIRTUOUS WIFE
FOR THE NUMBER OF HIS DAYS WILL BE DOUBLED**

CONGREGATION:

**BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO HAS A VIRTUOUS WIFE
FOR THE NUMBER OF HIS DAYS WILL BE DOUBLED**

SECOND SOLOIST:

**BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO HAS A NIFTY, THRIFTY WIFE
FOR SHE IS A JOY TO HER HUSBAND**

CONGREGATION:

**BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO HAS A NIFTY, THRIFTY WIFE
FOR SHE IS A JOY TO HER HUSBAND
BLESSED MAN, BLESSED IS THE MAN**

PASTOR:

LIKE ARROWS IN THE HANDS OF WARRIORS

ALL MEN:

ARE THE CHILDREN OF ONE'S YOUTH

GROOM:

ASLEEP BUT THEN MY HEART WAKETH

GROOM/ALL MEN:

IT'S THE VOICE OF MY BELOVED

CONGREGATION:

**BLESSED MAN, BLESSED MAN...YEAH!
BLESSED MAN, BLESSED IS THE MAN, BLESSED**

THIRD SOLOIST:

**BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO HAS A...(SHE WINKS
SUGGESTIVELY)WIFE
FOR SHE'S A PRECIOUS GIFT TO HER HUSBAND**

CONGREGATION:

**BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO HAS A KISSABLE WIFE
FOR SHE'S A PRECIOUS GIFT TO HER HUSBAND**

FOURTH SOLOIST:

**BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO HAS A SHARPSHOOTIN' WIFE
FOR SHE CAN WAGE A WAR WHEN THEY MUSTER**

CONGREGATION:

**BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO HAS A SHARPSHOOTIN' WIFE
FOR SHE CAN WAGE A WAR WHEN THEY MUSTER**

CONGREGATION:

**BLESSED MAN, BLESSED MAN...YEAH!
BLESSED MAN, BLESSED IS THE MAN**

MARYANNE:

YOUR FEARS HAVE FED US DAY AND NIGHT

MARYANNE/ALL WOMEN:

YOUR SOUL THIRSTS FOR THE LIVING SPIRIT

WESTIE:

OUR WADDIES OUR CARBINES HAVE STREWN DECAY

WESTIE/CONG:

**AND BEFOULED THIS BRIDAL GROUND
HAVE WE GIVEN HER AWAY WITH GOWN BESMIRCHED?
IN ROTTING FLESH TO BIRTH A NATION?**

CONGREGATION:

AND WHETHER RICH OR POOR, RIGHT OR WRONG

SHE WILL SURELY COMFORT HIM

*(Eyes of the CONGREGATION move to MARYANNE.
Segue to [Mus:#18. Maryanne's Lament])*

#18. Maryanne's Lament

*(FLASHBACK. MARYANNE glides silently
sombrely a distance from the main group,
hovering and passing a steadfast BILL
FRASER.)*

FAMILY VOICE 1:

Look how she moves, ever by his side

FAMILY VOICE 2:

Look how she stares and never cries,

FAMILY VOICE1 & 2:

What do you hide?

FAMILY VOICE 1:

What are you thinking, Mama?

MARYANNE:

The fledglings have flown, so has the time

Pearls on a string dropping to the floor

Drop, drop for each year.

FAMILY VOICE 1&2:

What are you sighing for?

MARYANNE:

**WHAT IS THAT WARM AND FOETID FEAST
IN MY NOSTRILS, NEW TO THE RUN?
ON MY DAY OF DAYS YOU CARRIED ME OVER THE THRESHOLD
IN BY THE RED, RED DOOR JAMB
BUT IF I LOOKED AND SAW
THE WOUND SO RAW, I BLOTTED IT OUT THE**

MARYANNE/ALL WOMEN:

CLOTTED AND ROTTED, THE TALK OF THE TOWN

MARYANNE:

**BUT I SAW HER WALK IN MY SHADOW THAT DAY
ANOTHER BRIDE, I HEARD HER PINE
AND THE ONES THAT CRIED AS WE TOASTED OUR FUTURE
ON BLOOD RED WINE
THE STAIN ON MY DRESS I SCRUBBED AND SCRUBBED
AND DAILY I WASH IN THE ANGRY SUDS OF TIME
IS IT WINE, IS IT WINE MY LOVE?**

ALL WOMEN:

CLOTTED AND ROTTED, THE TALK OF THE TOWN

MARYANNE:

**I SWEAR SHE WAS THERE IN HER BRIDAL GOWN
BLUE IN AN ICY PITCH OF BLUE
AT THE END OF YOUR EYES IS A SPOT OF TAR
A BLACK SO DEEP THAT I DARE NOT STARE**

**AND I CANNOT REACH, I CANNOT REACH YOU
WHERE YOUR SOUL IS GASHED AND GUTTED ANEW
EACH TIME YOU SLEEP**

CONGREGATION:

**DIDN'T YOU LOOK WHEN YOU TOOK HIS HAND
TO WED AND TO BED IN THE RED, RED, RED LAND
DIDN'T YOU SEE TILL YOU TOUCHED HIS HAND
ONE DAY ON THAT STICKY, RED, RED, RED DOOR JAMB?**

MARYANNE:

**THEN DID IT TOUCH ME
ROTTING ALL BROTHERS SPLATTERED THE BRIDAL GOWN
THE ECHOING UNDER YOUR HARDENED CHEST
THE TASTING LIKE FOETID ROTTING FLESH
EACH TIME WE DINED ON THE RED PORCH
WATCHING THE BLADE IN YOUR TREMORING HAND
THAT'S WHEN I KNEW, AND IT CURDLED MY SKIRTS
I MOTHER THE FEARFUL LIPS OF A BRUTE
THERE ARE TIMES WHEN I LIE LIKE A BROKEN GIN
LIKE THE HUNDREDTH RAPE, YOU PENETRATE
VENGEANCE IS CRUSHING ME, CRUSHING MY WEIGHT
OR ELSE I ENFOLD YOU, CRADLE YOUR HELL
A SUCKLING, A SQUEALING, STRICKEN BY HATE
BILLY, IF I WERE A REFUGE PLACE
I'D HIDE YOU FOREVER BETWEEN MY THIGHS
AND NOURISH YOU THERE**

**BUT I HATE YOUR EYES
YOUR PITS OF GRIEF, THE BONES OF YOUR TEETH
ARE THE LIVING SHELLS OF A HUNDRED LIVES
THOUSANDS OF LIVES
SMILING OUT LIKE A NECKLACE OF SKULLS
WHEN YOU OPEN YOUR MOUTH**

ALL WOMEN:

CLOTTED AND ROTTED, THE TALK OF THE TOWN, OH...

MARYANNE:

**TROD ON THEIR PRETTY PETTICOATS
I SEEDED AND WATERED THAT CLAY
WHILE YOU DID YOUR DEED
ON THE BLACKS OF THE DAY
THEN LATE AT NIGHT IN THE FIRE LIGHT
I MOTHERED AND SISTERED AND NURSED IT AWAY**

MARYANNE/CONGREGATION:

**BILLY, IF I WERE A REFUGE PLACE
I'D HIDE YOU FOREVER BETWEEN MY THIGHS
AND NOURISH YOU THERE**

MARYANNE:

**HISTORY STAINS WITH A RED RED BRAND
THEY TELL THE UNTOLD WITH THAT UNTUTORED HAND**

**THEY SIGNED THEIR NAME.
IN THE INK OF YOUR KIN,
I SAW IT SMART WHERE THEY SCORED YOUR HARD HEART
THE DAY I CAME IN**

**NONE OF THEM LETTERED YET EACH ONE HE WROTE
HIS TERRIBLE SIGNATURE SMEARED ON THE POST
IN A BRUTAL HAND
IN THE INK OF YOUR KIN
I SAW THE MARK THEY MADE ON YOUR HEART
THE DAY I CAME IN**

*(Segue to [Mus:#19. Father of the Bride -
Underscore])*

#19. Father of the Bride - Underscore

(LEFTHAND BOWLEE, masked and attired in the uniform of service mysteriously assumes the role of MC)

LH.BOWLEE:

Ladies and gentlemen, I call on a man who has well-earned his reputation on the frontier. He has dispersed terror, they say. He has expelled evil. Outlawed treachery. All in the name of your right to peace, freedom, prosperity. He is the patriarch of the Fraser clan, father of the bride, I give you William 'Big Feller' Fraser!

BILL:

(reluctantly taking the floor)

Well, ah...

WESTIE:

I've gone before you and prepared the way, brother. Ah yes. Truth springs up and righteousness she looks down from the tree tops.

BILL:

Well, ah... well, when they're young lambs I'd, ah, I'd barely tell one from t'other but ah, this'uns done alright. We've fattened her up into a fine class. And it's just her luck to be running the ring when the market's gearing up for federation. She's scored herself a prize cut, as'll do her fine, yes'll do her fine, he'll do her fine...

CONGREGATION:

(variously.)

Amen/ good chap/ Yessir,

PASTOR:

Drink to that.

BILL:

Well. They say, the generation of the upright shall be blessed, their descendants will be mighty in the land.

Well we trudged the hard yards through that desolate valley; and we, we made it a place of springs. A toast then, that wealth and riches may grace the houses of our young pair. For we cleared the way and buried the stones...

DARK LADY/LH. BOWLEE:

The bush, the bones

BILL:

...alongside our losses.

DARK LADY/LH BOWLEE:

and buried and buried

BILL:

For here sits our lass in a dress I fetched on a dreadful day, on a dreadful day. It all floods back, I carried that gown and flirted in town while they broke her back, our Lizzy long gone, and I never made it back from town. I never made it back.

WESTIE:

Didn't we lay it to rest old brother. Didn't we lay 'em to rest tho.

PASTOR:

(increasingly intoxicated.)

I require and charge all present,

BILL:

I'll never rest, I was fetching the dress

DARK LADY:

The wattle Big Fraser, Blood on the wattle.

PASTOR:

Does anybody know, recharge and present...

MARYANNE:

They walked in my shadow

BRIDE:

Who?

MARYANNE:

Sisters in bridal white, natives in screaming fright

WESTIE:

Death has no colour, red earth, white ash

PASTOR:

...any impediment, any impediment...

BILL:

Don't... you dare. So much as a hair, By God, I'll never rest. I had gone to fetch that bleeding wedding dress

(Red wine is spilt.)

BRIDE:

Papa

BILL:

Don't you stare my girl! I dare your nigger-loving, number-crunching, paper-pushing soldier man to take up arms and truly struggle for his clan.

(GROOM reacts. Segue to [Mus:#20. Heard A Tale])

#20. Heard a Tale

(INT. Reception. The GROOM rises to speak.)

GROOM:

**HEARD A TALE OR TWO ON THE TRANSVAAL
BROTHERS-IN-ARMS, BROTHERS-IN-WARS
SIDE BY SIDE FOR BRITISH SOVEREIGNTY
EMPIRE SMILES, WE PUNISH THE BOERS**

BILL:

YOURS IS FOR EMPIRE, OURS FOR AUTONOMY

GROOM/CONG (MEN):

**HEARD A TALE OR TWO OR THREE
FROM THE BATTLEGROUND OF BUSH FRONTIER
KILLING FIELDS FOR OUR MATURITY
HOME OR ABROAD, ATROCITY**

CONG (ALL WOMEN):

**WHO WILL HELP THIS LADY
TO BECOME A SOUTHERN QUEEN?**

GROOM/CONG (MEN):

**WE WOULD CROWN THIS LADY
AS OUR NEW BORN NATION
OUR FEDERATION
AND IT'S FITTING TO BE SURE
THAT SHE'S A MAIDEN AND NOT A WHORE**

GROOM/CONG (MEN):

**WHO WILL HELP THIS LADY
TO BECOME A SOUTHERN QUEEN?**

BILL:

HOW CAN I EVER BE SURE?

CONGREGATION:

IS SHE A WHORE?

GROOM:

IS IT TRUE?

BILL:

SHOULD I GIVE YOU OUR YOUNGEST DAUGHTER?

GROOM:

ABOUT THE...

CONGREGATION:

WAR?

GROOM:

ABOUT THE...

CONGREGATION:

SLAUGHTER?

CONGREGATION:

WHO MAKES A NATION?

BILL:

**THE LIKES OF YOU WHO WRITE THE LAWS
ON PERFUMED PAPER?**

CONGREGATION:

No!

BILL:

GET OUT OF HERE!

CONGREGATION:

No!

BILL:

**LIKE BRANDING IRON, OUR LAWS SCORE DEEP
INTO THE FLESH OF THIS COUNTRY, AH...**

LH. BOWLEE:

**LIKE BRANDING IRON YOUR LAWS SCORED
DEEP INTO THE FLESH OF THIS COUNTRY**

WESTIE:

Crush 'em... crush 'em. Splinters in yer eye. "Submit" quoth the saint. Wohooah! we'd watch their feathers fly.

PASTOR:

..any impediment, require recharge..

(Segue into [Mus:#21. Hear a Whisper])

#21. Hear a Whisper

(FLASHBACK.)

YIMAN:

HEAR A WHISPER SKIPPING

HEAR A MOVEMENT CRACKLE

HEAR A HORNET BUZZING

SCUTTling OVER, SCUTTling UNDER COVER

CONGREGATION:

CLICK, CLACK

SHE DROPS IN THE BARREL

TIPPED YOU OFF

LEATHER STRAPS AND BOOTS KICK UP THE GRAVEL

FIFTEEN BREECHES BUFF THE SADDLE

FLUSH THEM OUT, FLOG THEM, FLEECE AND FLAY THEM

TERRIBLE MAYBE

TERRIBLE MAYBE, MAYBE NOT

HEAR A WHISPER SKIPPING

HEAR A MOVEMENT CRACKLE

HEAR A HORNET BUZZING

SCUTTling OVER, SCUTTling UNDER COVER

HICKORY DICKORY DOCK
THE WORD WENT ROUND
WORD WENT ROUND THE CLOCK
THE CLOCK STRUCK, STRUCK, STRUCK ONE
HICKORY DICKORY DOCK
THY WILL BE DONE
WHEN THE LAST ONE DROPS
THAT'LL BE MISSION
THAT'LL BE EXPEDITION
HICKORY DICKORY, HICKORY DICKORY
TERRIBLE MAYBE, TERRIBLE MAYBE...
THAT'LL BE MISSION, THAT'LL BE EXPEDITION...

CONGREGATION:

DONE! / NOT!

(DARK LADY is revealed in tableaux crouched on the ground between WESTIE and BILL FRASER as if ambiguously both prize and threat observed by LH BOWLEE and MOTHER FRASER)

(Segue to [Mus:#22. For a Lark])

#22. For a Lark

(FLASHBACK. MOTHER FRASER steps forward from the chorus and the tableaux.)

CONGREGATION:

**I'M THE KING OF THE CASTLE AND YOU'RE THE DIRTY RASCAL
VIRTUE...**

MOTHER:

**ONCE ON A TIME FAR, FAR INLAND
LIVED A GOOD WIFE AND HER FRONTIER MAN
FOUR PRETTY DAUGHTERS, COUPLE OF SONS
FOUR LITTLE LAMBS AND FIVE YOUNG GUNS**

CONGREGATION:

**I'M THE KING OF THE CASTLE AND YOU'RE THE DIRTY RASCAL
VIRTUE SITS HIGH ON THE HILL**

MOTHER:

**BILLY THE ELDEST HIGH ON HIS BULLOCKY'S CART
SAID I'LL BE DOWN IN IPSWICH TOWN
AND WON'T BE HOME BEFORE IT'S DARK
YOU'LL BE SAFE WITH BLACK BOWLEE
SHEPHERD OR TWO, THEIR LOYALTY**

CONGREGATION:

I'M THE KING DIRTY RASCAL

MOTHER:

**ONCE ON A RUN WHERE HORNETS NEST, WE WERE
GOOD TO THE SAVAGES, DID OUR BEST
FOUR PRETTY DAUGHTERS, SHARED THEIR THINGS
FIVE YOUNG SONS WOULD RAPE THE GINS**

YIMAN:

**VIRTUE SITS HIGH IN THE HILL, PURE AND WHITE
HIGH ON THE HILL
INSIDE HER HOUSE
IN THE BLACK BULL DUST, HER OTHER**

MOTHER:

**BREEDER OF RASCALS, MOTHER OF KINGS
HOW DOES A GOOD MOTHER REIN THEM IN?
SAT IN THE LAP OF THE BLACK MAN'S LAND
GOOD TO THE SAVAGES, BEST WE CAN**

ALL MEN:

JUST FOR THE SPORT

JUST FOR A LARK

DARK LADY:

HUSH LITTLE SISTER

THEY SOW THE SEED OF RESISTANCE

HEAR A WHISPER...SKIPPING!

DARK LADY:

HEAR A MOVEMENT?

YIMAN:

CRACKLE!

DARK LADY:

HEAR THE HORNETS...

YIMAN:

STING!

MOTHER/DARK LADY:

AH, AH...

YIMAN:

WE'RE A WHISPER, SISTER, CLICK CLACK

WE'RE A MOVEMENT BROTHER, CLICK CLACK

HEAR THE HORNET BUZZING, CLICK CLACK

SCUTTLING OVER, SCUTTLING UNDER COVER

MOTHER/DARK LADY:

SCUTTLING OVER, SCUTTLING UNDER COVER

(Segue to [Mus:#23. Dawson Deeds])

#23. Dawson Deeds

(EXT. BRIDE moves forward to face BILL FRASER.)

BRIDE/CONG:

WHAT DID YOU DO ON THE DAWSON?

CONGREGATION:

WHAT DID YOU DO IN THE TOWN?

WHAT DID YOU DO WHEN YOU FOUND THEM?

WE ALL KNOW. WE ALL KEEP MUM

SEND THEM ON THEIR WAY

SEND THEM ON THEIR WAY!

BRIDE:

WHAT'S SPLATTERED ON THE WATTLE?

CONGREGATION:

SEND THEM ON THEIR WAY

BRIDE:

WHAT'S HIDDEN IN THE CLAY?

CONGREGATION:

SEND THEM ON THEIR WAY

BILL:

DISPERSE THEM NICELY

BRIDE/CONG:

THAT'LL BE THE...

CONGREGATION:

DAY!

(BILL FRASER wrestles WESTIE to the ground to mime riding him away from mounting accusations.)

CONGREGATION:

(Three repetitions building in intensity.)

AND TO THEIR GRAVES

THEIR BURNING TREES

THEIR DITCHES HE'D DISPATCH THEIR KIND

FOR EVERY ONE OF US

WERE TWENTY MORE

PLUCKED FROM THE VINE

HE'S A HUNTER IN HIS STRIDE

TWO DINGOES TO ONE BLACK HIDE

AND DROVING FORTY HEAD OF BEEF

UP THE HILL THREE MYALLS

CUT DOWN THE OTHER SIDE

AND IN BROAD DAYLIGHT IN THE

TOWN'S MAIN STREET

A SASSY YIMAN GIN

ALL WOMEN:

(over the third repetition above.)

HAPPY ARE THEY WHO FEAR THE LORD

AND TAKE DELIGHT IN HIS COMMANDMENTS

SPORTING BRAZENLY HIS MOTHER'S FLORAL GOWN

CONG/DARK LADY:

HARD HITS THE GROUND

FAMILY VOICE:

Her blood was thin

LH. BOWLEE:

An eye for a tooth, a tooth for each hair that crowned the Queens of
Hornet's Bank.

DARK LADY:

When I remember the names that burned

LH. BOWLEE/DARK LADY:

So much ash, so much silence

WESTIE:

Brother, Are you listening?

(he fingers his chattels one by one)

For all that this humble dust promised

Gold in the tooth that bites

Fleece from the slaughtered lambs

Black blood – the wine of the earth

DARK LADY:

How much is a bloodline worth.

(Segue to [Mus:#24. Mea Culpa])

#24. Mea Culpa

(FRASER FAMILY members excluding BILL FRASER - i.e. MARYANNE, BRIDE, GROOM, WESTIE, MOTHER and FAMILY VOICES - turn faces away leaving BILL FRASER symbolically isolated CS. They turn back on their next vocal entry.)

ALL:

AH...

CONGREGATION:

DRIVE THE DEVIL FROM THE YARD

BILL:

DO, DO YOU THINK IT'S A CINCH

DO YOU THINK I NEVER FLINCH

YET WHERE THERE'S REASON IT'S NOT SO HARD

TO DRIVE THE DEVIL FROM THE YARD

CONGREGATION:

AND WITH HIS AXE ALOFT

HE WHISPERED CURSES SOFT

PASTOR:

TO HEAVEN RAISE OUR HEARTS

CONGREGATION:

AND UP TO...AH

PASTOR:

HEAVEN RAISE

BILL:

MY AXE I DID RAISE

PASTOR:

OUR HEARTS ABLAZE

BILL:

MY PASSION WAS ALL ABLAZE

PASTOR:

WE PLEDGE

BILL:

TO PUNISH EACH DUSKY FACE

PASTOR:

BRETHREN LET US SWEAR AN...

BILL/CONG:

AN OATH ON THAT DREADFUL DAY

MAKE EVERY SAVAGE PAY

PASTOR:

LOVE CHERISH AND OBEY

MARYANNE:

THERE WERE TIMES, WERE TIMES THAT...

BILL:

**I WOULD HEAR THE WIND WAILING, LORD I AM WRONG?
I'D FEAR THE FARM FAILING, I MUST BE STRONG
SHAKE MY WORLD, TAKE MY WORLD, HOW DO YOU DARE
THAT CURSED CROSS I BEAR...I WASN'T THERE**

WESTIE:

BROTHER, I...

MARYANNE:

BILLY WHY?

BILL:

I WAS NOT THERE

CONGREGATION:

KYRIE ELEISON MEA CULPA

BILL

OH MAMA, I WAS NOT THERE

MOTHER:

MERCY LORD FOR HIS DESPAIR

BILL:

**THESE ABSENT HANDS COULD NOT HOLD YOUR
FALL**

PASTOR:

**O LORD, O GOD TO WHOM VENGEANCE
BELONGS**

THEY SHATTER YOUR PEOPLE O LORD

**AND AFFLICT YOUR HERITAGE, LORD SHINE
FORTH!**

**THEY SLAY THE WIDOW AND MURDER THE
FATHERLESS**

BILL:

I HEAR HER WHISPERING IN THE TREES

WHISPERING 'HAVE MERCY PLEASE'

IT'S NOT TOO LATE MAMA BILLY'S COMING!

CONGREGATION:

OUR AVENGER!

BILL:

SEE YOU ALL, SEE THIS PEACE THAT I HAVE BLED

ALL THIS BE YOURS, AND YOURS WHEN THEY ARE DEAD

YOU'LL THANK ME THEN, FOR ALL THESE BITTER YEARS

MAMA, IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO RIGHT ARREARS

CONGREGATION:

AH... HEAR THEM...

WESTIE:

IN THE TREES

CONGREGATION:

MMM...MMM...

MARYANNE:

OH BILLY PLEASE

BILL:

SOMETIMES I HEAR THEM CALL

HEAR THEM CALL ME!

CONGREGATION:

MERCY! MERCY!

BILL:

OH MAMA, IT'S NOT TOO LATE

BRIDE:

NO PAPA, IT'S NOT TOO LATE

BILL:

ABSENT HANDS COULD NOT HOLD YOUR FALL

PASTOR:

AS ALL HUMAN BEINGS

CONGREGATION:

ALL COLOURS ALL CREEDS

PASTOR:

DESCEND FROM THE WEDLOCK OF ADAM

CONGREGATION:

ADAM AND EVE

PASTOR:

ALL OF ONE BLOOD HATH GOD MADE THEM

CONGREGATION:

THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH

PASTOR:

IN THE LIKENESS OF HIM

CONGREGATION:

IN THE LIKENESS OF HIM, IN THE LIKENESS OF HIM

CONGREGATION:

IN HIS IMAGE HE CREATED

BRIDE/CONG:

IN THE CLAY OF MY GROUND

YOU CARVE OUR NAMES

YOUR NAME FOR ME BENEATH

BRIDE:

**BENEATH YOUR OWN
MY WAYWARD YOUTH
YOU SMOOTH AND TAME
FROM THIS UNPOLISHED STONE**

BRIDE/CONG:

GROW ME A RED, RED ROSE

PASTOR:

**FROM THIS MOMENT FORWARD WE COUNT
THE DAYS BUT NOT COUNT THE PAST
WE COUNT THE NEW BUT COUNT NOT THE STRIFE**

CONGREGATION:

HUSH THE DEAD, CELEBRATE

DARK LADY:

LIFE

YIMAN:

**HERE IN THE CLAY
OF OUR OWN, OUR OWN LAND
YOU CARVED OUR HISTORY**

DARK LADY:

YOUR NAME FOR US

YIMAN:

HERE IN THE CLAY

DARK LADY:

YOUR FATE FOR ME

YIMAN:

OF OUR OWN LAND

DARK LADY:

YOUR CLAIM FOR US

YIMAN:

YOU CARVED OUR HISTORY

DARK LADY:

YOUR HATE FOR HISTORY

WESTIE/GROOM:

MY UNDEFINED...

MARYANNE:

IN THE CLAY OF MY GROUND

YOU CARVED OUR SHAME, SO MUCH SHAME

FROM THIS ROSE GREW A STONE

PASTOR:

BRETHREN TO HEAVEN

BILL:

TO HEAVEN MY AXE I DID RAISE

PASTOR:

OUR HEARTS ALL ABLAZE

BILL:

MY PASSION WAS ALL ABLAZE

PASTOR:

WE PLEDGE

BILL:

TO PUNISH EACH DUSKY FACE

PASTOR:

LET US PRONOUNCE THE OATH

BILL:

AN OATH I SWORE ON THAT DAY

PASTOR:

LOVE, CHERISH AND OBEY

CONGREGATION:

TO HEAVEN RAISED HIS FACE

PASTOR:

TO HEAVEN RAISED OUR HEARTS

BILL:

I'LL DECIMATE THEIR DAMN RACE!

I'LL DECIMATE THEIR RACE!

PUNISH EACH DUSKY FACE

PASTOR:

AND LET US PRAY

LH.BOWLEE:

Isaiah 26: 21 – For behold the Lord will punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity. The earth also shall disclose her blood and shall no more cover her slain.

MOTHER:

ONCE ON A RUN WHERE HORNETS NEST, WE WERE

GOOD TO THE SAVAGES, DID OUR BEST

FOUR PRETTY DAUGHTERS, SHARED THEIR THINGS

FIVE YOUNG SONS WOULD RAPE THE GINS

YIMAN:

VIRTUE SITS HIGH IN THE HILL,

VIRTUE SITS INSIDE HER HOUSE

IN THE BLACK BULL DUST, HER OTHER

MOTHER:

**BREEDER OF RASCALS, MOTHER OF KINGS
HOW DOES A GOOD MOTHER REIN THEM IN?
SAT IN THE LAP OF THE BLACK MAN'S LAND
GOOD TO THE SAVAGES, BEST WE CAN**

YIMAN:

**VIRTUE SITS HIGH IN THE HILL,
IN THE BLACK BULL DUST, HER OTHER
VIRTUE SITS INSIDE HER HOUSE
IN THE BLACK BULL DUST, HER OTHER**

ALL MEN:

**JUST FOR THE SPORT
JUST FOR A LARK**

DARK LADY:

**HUSH LITTLE SISTER
THEY SOW THE SEED OF RESISTANCE
HEAR A WHISPER...SKIPPING!**

DARK LADY:

HEAR A MOVEMENT?

YIMAN:

CRACKLE!

DARK LADY:

HEAR THE HORNETS...

YIMAN:

STING! STING!

MOTHER/DARK LADY:

AH, AH...

YIMAN:

WE'RE A WHISPER, SISTER, CLICK CLACK

WE'RE A MOVEMENT BROTHER, CLICK CLACK

HEAR THE HORNET BUZZING, CLICK CLACK

SCUTTling OVER, SCUTTling UNDER COVER

DARK LADY distances herself to begin her ritual actions. Segue to [Mus:#25. Makerenbe duet]

#25. Makerenbe duet

(INT/EXT. As DARK LADY begin her chant outside, WESTIE holds court amidst the guests.)

DARK LADY:

MAKERENBE NJELANOU PANJANOU

(Continues under the following text.)

WESTIE:

Whata'ya got there? Ah, the ring.

Smoke ring. Fire Ring. Ring o' the iron chain, brother? The old tin can?

Nah there's a ring of silence. That's where we're all going, brother.

Yep. Going in there now, brother. A hundred years of lying silence.

Who will cut out their own tongue? Go on, put 'em in there along with your secrets and truths.

(HE holds out a tin from his chattels.)

For there won't be so much chatterin' now til the ol' serpent rises.

There. Do you hear that?

One hundred strides of the blinding sun, she said. Enough to bleach them bones, and these stains on the old rock.

(To MARYANNE .)

You've been scrubbing and scrubbing, haven't you, my love? And they don't come clean, not like wine when it's spilt. What ring will you have? a soap ring to wash it, a wringer to quash it.

(To GROOM.)

See them fires out there? The Bora rings. Ah, not the ring for you,
eh, boy?

Do you love her, boy? Will you enter in here?

This ring is our seal. Of what? Dare you say it.

Those lips of yours they barely part but truth will tear, even though
your heart...

(He leaves the sentence hanging)

DARK LADY:

(continues more audibly now)

MAKERENBE NJELANOU PANJANOU...

WESTIE:

But nah, nah, nah. No.

This is not the seal of fate for them, the ones we choose to fear.

Because all of us fell. And yet we get up again.

*(Pauses, letting DARK LADY's chant fill out a
thinking space.)*

There's a river of words flows out to sea

And all the lies and truths go with it, lost to the oceans

Hidden meanings, I tell you, Brother

Hidden meanings we sunk beneath the mud here

There... and there. And there is the only peace.

But the sand and grit will rub it and scrub it and score and chafe the
rock hard souls of our descendants

BRIDE:

AHHHHH...

LH. BOWLEE /YIMAN:

(whispered.)

From the dust all secrets rise

WESTIE:

And they will rise up. Ah, they will rise up. Again and again

And we will not know our angels from our demons

And it will be as if we never entered here this silent oath

And the garden of roses will seethe once more

with the thorns of older sins.

(To PASTOR.)

Fear you the wrath of your own God?

I've been talking to 'them', you know

His moon will wane and mars will eclipse the sun

And the pious will rise up and fell your sons

For the rich shall inherit the earth,
But the calamity will flood their palaces, ignite their pride.
Retribution will be the liquor of the times.

The ant, brother. The ant will bite the elephant's ear. But the roar!
That roar will reverberate through the hills
and through the valleys of all the spheres
even unto the dourest of ditches...

(WESTIE stumbles back to his drinking spot, lights a cigarette, passes the match to BRIDE who kneels as it flickers out.)

(Fade to black.)

BRIDE:

(Whispered, becoming inaudible in the darkness.)

Lord take this impediment from me. Take this impediment from me.
Take this impediment from my vows, Lord. Take this impediment
from my future...

(DARK LADY)/WESTIE:

(The last sounds are DARK LADY's ritual wail with WESTIE joining in, drowning out the prayers of the BRIDE.)

**MAKERENBE NJELANOU PANJANOU REMEMBER WE LIVE
AGAIN AMONG YOU.**

**AND WHEN YOU DESTROY OUR LAND WE REMAIN TO WATER
ONCE MORE THE DUSTY TIRED PLAIN**

**REMEMBER WE BREATHE AGAIN WALK AGAIN DEFEND OUR
FOOT FALL UPON THE COUNTRY.**

FIN