

THE MEETING HOUSE

The untold story of an African serviceman who became a prisoner of war to the Japanese in WWII but was miraculously repatriated and returned to the woman he loved before America bombed Tokyo.

Genre: Historical drama based on a true story

FADE IN.

1 INT. DORMITORY, PRISONER OF WAR CAMP NEAR TOKYO, 1944 1

Exhausted prisoners of war fall silent as a TEENAGE GUARD (16) enters their bunkhouse. His SERGEANT waits at the door.

JAPANESE SERGEANT
You! Black prisoner! You are
wanted. *Subayai*. (Quick)

MAKORONGO (39) hauls himself out of his bunk helped by TOKI(21) his Tanganyikan compatriot. The teenage guard yanks him upright and grabs him by the Red Cross on his sleeve.

KENYAN (25) BRIGHT (22) and JABU (17), other African POWs, move forward but CHUCK (32) a Californian Airman, puts up his arm to stop them.

CHUCK
I'm sorry, I'm so sorry pal.

MAKORONGO
Thanks Chuck, but this looks like
the end for me. *Kwa heri. Kwa
Herini*. Goodbye.

CHUCK
Don't worry. These guys are about
to be flattened by Allied fire.

TEENAGE GUARD
Come! Now. Come.

TOKI
Won't this camp be bombed too?

CHUCK
The US have plans to bomb every
railway and dockyard around Tokyo.
It's gonna make Pearl Harbor look
like a kid's picnic.

Sub-title: ~ **The Empire of Japan, 1944** ~

2 EXT: PRISONER OF WAR CAMP BELOW QUARRY NEAR TOKYO, 1944 2

The flag of Japan flies above the POW camp yard. Makorongo turns and speaks straight to the camera as he walks.

MAKORONGO

Operation Meetinghouse, March 1945.
The single most terrible bombing
raid in history. In Tanganyika,
our Meeting House was built with
skulls of our enemies.

The sergeant and guard shove Makorongo towards a wooden
administration block where a diplomatic car is parked.

3 EXT. AFRICAN VILLAGE MEETING HOUSE, 1914 - DAY 1 3

An ancient skull juts out of the cracked red adobe wall of an
open-sided thatched meeting house in an African village.

HANS-WERNER(9) an attractive blond German boy turns his face
to reveal a disfigurement to the lefthand side of his jaw. He
jumps off the roof holding a toy train.

A Warusha CHIEF(34) erupts from the entrance to confront him.

CHIEF

I thought so! It's Hans Scar Face.

Hans twists away, leaps over a row of clay pots, dives under
a chicken coop and avoids a dog barking on its chain.

Goats scatter as he runs past a smoky outdoor cooking fire.
The Chief loses Hans as he squeezes between grain-stores, but
doubles back, scoops the boy under his arm and strides off.

4 EXT: AFRICAN FARM BELOW MOUNT MERU, 1914 - DAY 1 4

The Chief carries Hans past women in traditional Warusha
dress picking fruit. A toddler, naked except for a string of
beads round his tummy, plays in the sand at her feet. The
volcano known as Mount Meru lies beyond them.

CHIEF

Keep still or your ears will bleed.

Hans looks up as a Go-Away bird rises from a tree squawking.
He waves his toy train at the large grey bird.

GO-AWAY BIRD

Go 'way! Go 'way!

5 EXT. PLATFORM OF MOSHI RAILWAY STATION, 1914 - DAY 1 5

A locomotive arrives at a simple station with the lion and
eagle of German East Africa stamped on the front panel.

Sub-title: ~ **The colony of German East Africa, 1914** ~

HASANI, a dignified Tanganyikan(40), opens a carriage door and descends with a bundle of belongings.

YOUNG MAKORONGO (9) stands at the carriage door looking around before taking his father's hand and jumping down.

They walk up the platform. Young Makorongo sees a sign saying MOSHI that hangs above an Asian Guard holding a red flag.

Hasani passes the engine to find the end of the line. There is no town, only a goat sitting on the tin roof of a shack.

HASANI

It is quieter here than I expected.

The boiler safety valve lets off a sudden excess of steam. This alarms Hasani, but he walks towards the guard.

Young Makorongo turns to stare up at the funnel. Behind him the guard points Hasani to a red marram road that leads down the hill towards the solitary volcano of Mount Meru.

HASANI (CONT'D)

Come my boy. Makorongo, come!
'The flowing water of the river
does not wait for a thirsty man'.

Young Makorongo runs after Hasani who strides past a road sign to Arusha. The black, white and red flag of 'German East Africa' flies from a rough-hewn flagpole above them.

6 EXT: RED MARRUM ROAD FROM MOSHI TO ARUSHA, 1914 - DAY 1 6

Hasani and Young Makorongo walk hand in hand down the dusty road. The snow-capped mountain Kilimanjaro rises behind them.

OV HASANI: 'See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.'

OV YOUNG MAKORONGO: How are days evil?

OV HASANI: They can be difficult. We must grasp any opportunity to do good.

7 EXT: RIVER ACROSS ROAD FROM MOSHI TO ARUSHA, 1914 - DAY 1 7

An African fish eagle sits on a branch above running water.

Hasani and Young Makorongo reach a river crossing their road.

YOUNG MAKORONGO
Here's the flowing water Pa.

The fish eagle flies off. Hasani sees there's no bridge. He puts down his bundle, picks up a stick, and tests the water.

A cloud of red dust from the dirt road rises behind a 1912 open-topped motor car driven from Moshi by VON LETTOW, a German (44). An enormous lady is seated next to him.

MGANGA (30), also walks from Moshi. He raises his hand for a lift, but the car hurtles past leaving him covered in dust.

Vervet monkeys chatter in the trees above.

Young Makorongo looks up as the car stops at the river's edge. Hasani steps back, unable to see how it will cross.

Von Lettow cuts his engine, sounds a hooter and settles down to wait while his passenger begins to read a book.

VON LETTOW
Do you have a problem?

HASANI
This river is too deep for the boy.

Eight young warriors of the Warusha tribe, in traditional dress, emerge from the bush and jog straight up to the car.

VON LETTOW
Pop him on the back, lend a hand
and.... here we go!

The warriors lift up the small car.

Mganga sees Young Makorongo being favored as Hasani puts him in the car with the bundle. The warriors carry the vehicle across the river with Von Lettow and his passengers inside.

Hasani wades after it trying to keep his clothes dry.

8 EXT: FARMHOUSE VERANDA BELOW MOUNT MERU, 1914 - DAY 1 8

Hasani and Young Makorongo walk down an avenue of Jacaranda trees towards a colonial farmhouse.

OS: A dachshund barks.

Date palms and banana trees surround a tin-roofed bungalow. Bird of Paradise plants stand either side of steps that lead to a Kikuyu grass lawn.

An East African NANNY sits on a tartan rug, legs straight out in front of her, playing with CLARA (2) in a white sunbonnet.

The wide veranda is furnished with planters' chairs and trunks. Tree seedlings grow in pots lined up below the roof.

The bare-chested Chief sets Hans down before his father, a Prussian BARON (39) who descends the steps.

BARON

Hans-Werner! You got into the Meeting House? Oh, no.

HANS-WERNER

I wanted to ask the Chief to mend my locomotive.

CHIEF

It is the village elders who need mending.

The Chief laughs and walks off, his shadow passing across Young Makorongo, who waits on the lawn.

The Baron strides up to shake Hasani's hand in welcome.

HASANI

Hasani - I am the cook from Usambara...

BARON

I do apologize. I need someone to help control my son.

Hasani smiles at the furious boy, disregarding his scars.

HASANI

Is he eating enough greens?

BARON

Can you make schnitzel?

HASANI

Schnitzel, the dumplings, strudel, mayonnaise! Thick mayonnaise.

BARON

Can you wait at table?

HASANI

I can wait anywhere.

9 INT. FARMHOUSE AND HANS-WERNER'S BEDROOM, 1914 9

Hans-Werner storms past his mother, a Silesian BARONESS (30) in a high lace collar followed by a dachshund.

Hans flops onto his bed and flings his broken train across the floor.

10 EXT. FARMHOUSE VERANDA BELOW MOUNT MERU, 1914 10

Young Makorongo sits with his bundle by the steps whilst the Baron reads Hasani's letters of reference. Beyond him, the Nanny swings Clara onto her back and walks around the garden.

BARON

Do you have family with you?

HASANI

Just Makorongo, my boy.

The Baroness is handed Hasani's references as a groom brings the Baron a chestnut horse. He swings into the saddle, gives Hasani a wave and trots off.

Hans comes out with his train in pieces. He looks to his mother but she's reading. The dachshund rubs itself on her long skirts.

BARONESS

Not now, Hans darling.

YOUNG MAKORONGO

Can I help?

Hans is surprised to see a boy of his age.

HANS-WERNER

What do you know about trains?

YOUNG MAKORONGO

I've just been on one.

HANS-WERNER

Really? Have you?

Young Makorongo offers his hands. Hans sits down and gives him the toy, which Makorongo starts to click back together.

YOUNG MAKORONGO

It hissed like a snake.

HANS-WERNER

We have a steam engine here.

YOUNG MAKORONGO

Do you?

The Baroness sees her son has found a true friend.

BARONESS

When can you start work, Hasani?

11 EXT. AFRICAN FARM BELOW MOUNT MERU, 1914 - DAY 2 11

A flock of sacred ibis take off.

Hans-Werner runs barefoot, pushing Young Makorongo in a wheelbarrow in the dappled sunlight beneath tall trees.

YOUNG MAKORONGO

Faster, faster!

Hans-Werner pushes his new friend past Warusha women wearing traditional leather aprons with laden baskets on their heads.

12 EXT: FARMYARD, AFRICAN FARM BELOW MOUNT MERU, 1914 - DAY 2 12

A bearded Afrikaans *TRANSPORTEER* in a wide-brimmed hat adjusts a harness as Warusha men load hessian covered bales onto a wagon pulled by six long-horned oxen.

An enormous ridgeback hound sniffs a packing crate of wood-shavings. Hans-Werner pushes the wheelbarrow past the Baron who fixes a pipe to a pump recently unpacked from the crate.

The wheelbarrow halts. Young Makorongo is tipped out onto a pile of sacks. Hans-Werner laughs, dives on top of him and rolls onto a bale stamped with the words: SISAL - ARUSHA

YOUNG MAKORONGO

What does this say?

HANS-WERNER

Can't you read?

YOUNG MAKORONGO

Not yet.

HANS-WERNER

I'll teach you.

A little African girl stares at Hans-Werner's face as he begins to write his name in the sand.

The *transporteer* walks over to see the Baron's new pump.

BARON

Mechanization - the key to the future. In pumping water from the Oosa River this will increase production by a hundred percent or more.

TRANSPORTEER

Will the farmers downstream not suffer?

BARON

Don't you want to increase efficiency?

TRANSPORTEER

What must we do if it breaks down?

BARON

There's no danger of that. This is made in Germany.

The Baron rises to light a cigarette and look over the wagon as the boys write letters in the sand.

BARON (CONT'D)

You should think of replacing these oxen with one of the lorries being imported from the Fatherland.

TRANSPORTEER

How will we purchase fuel if trouble in Europe flares up?

BARON

What do you know about that?

TRANSPORTEER

I'd start making plans if I were you. 'Jy krap met 'n kort stokkie aan 'n groot leeu se bal, tjommie'
(You better watch out)

Hans-Werner begins pouring sand onto Young Makorongo's head. The *transporteer* laughs but the Baron is horrified.

BARON

Hans-Werner! Where's your hat? Don't you realize that this sun can kill you?

The boys stop larking about.

HANS-WERNER

The sun? Can it? What about the moon, the stars?

The Baron takes out his gold pocket watch.

BARON

Your scar tissue will flare up.

HANS-WERNER

Papa, the elders are saying that if you start using the pump it will anger the water spirit.

BARON

Nonsense. It'll soon be tea-time. Go home and wash your hands.

13

EXT: AFRICAN FARM, MOUNT MERU - EARLY MORNING - DAY 3

13

A Bateleur eagle soars above the farm. Its shadow falls on the two boys as they run barefoot through the fields.

Hans-Werner still wears no hat. Young Makorongo uses his catapult to whack pendulous fruit off a sausage tree.

The eagle's shadow falls on a large spitting cobra.

Hans runs ahead, unaware of the snake. The cobra rears up, widening its hood, ready to strike.

Young Makorongo manages to bring Hans to the ground as poisonous venom from the cobra's fangs sprays over them.

Hans crawls back. Young Makorongo loads his catapult.

The snake moves off fast on the last third of its tail, the body in an upright position with the hood spread.

YOUNG MAKORONGO

That spit can make you go blind.

HANS-WERNER

I thought they bit?

YOUNG MAKORONGO

That too.

HANS-WERNER

Has it gone?

YOUNG MAKORONGO

They are good to eat.

HANS-WERNER

Isn't it poisonous?

YOUNG MAKORONGO

The meat tastes sweet. Like the chicken.

HANS-WERNER

Do you think we could find a python? One that squeezes.

YOUNG MAKORONGO

Maybe. Father says that when the rains are coming, snakes walk.

HANS-WERNER

I want to catch a really big one and skin it.

YOUNG MAKORONGO

Look for their spoor. It's like a long, straight footprint in the sand.

Young Makorongo shows him, tracing a line in the sand.

14

EXT: OOSA RIVER AND SISAL PLANTATION, 1914 - DAY 3

14

Hans and Young Makorongo run past tall maize onto a bridge crossing the river. They look down on steep banks.

A group of Warusha maidens (7-17) collect water in gourds and calabashes, heaving them onto their heads before moving off.

Young Makorongo spots two porcupine quills at his feet.

YOUNG MAKORONGO

Porcupine quills! I'm going to keep these for my wife.

HANS-WERNER

Yuck. Why do you want to get married?

YOUNG MAKORONGO

I love girls.

Hans touches his face, fearing it would repulse a girl.

HANS-WERNER

I want to keep looking for snakes.

Hans turns to run on but Mganga approaches and leans over the rail to pick *msasa* pods and put them in a goatskin bag.

YOUNG MAKORONGO
We're not allowed to go up there.

HANS-WERNER
All right - choose. There, or the Meeting House?

Mganga looks up sharply at the words 'Meeting House'. Young Makorongo stares back at him.

HANS-WERNER (CONT'D)
Oh, come on. I want to show you something.

Mganga watches the boys run up into the sisal fields.

15 EXT: SISAL DECORTICATING MACHINE SHED, 1914 - DAY 3 15

Hans and Young Makorongo run along rows of vast, spiky plants that throw striped shadows on their legs.

OS A traction engine and threshing machine pound away.

Hans runs ahead towards a sisal processing shed. As the boys approach he has to yell above the noisy machinery.

HANS-WERNER
My father calls this machine Progress.

YOUNG MAKORONGO
Is it going anywhere?

HANS-WERNER
Mother says it's his baby.

YOUNG MAKORONGO
A baby that can make a lot of noise.

HANS-WERNER
It's a de-cort-i-cator.

The Chief works out how to button his new overalls as men unload sisal from a Scotch cart harnessed to two oxen.

16 INT: SISAL DECORTICATING MACHINE SHED, 1914 - DAY 3 16

OS: HANS-WERNER

It bashes up the leaves into what
Papa calls hemp. It's for making
rope for ships and things.

MR POONA, a turbaned Indian mechanic resembling a dung
beetle, stokes the boiler of a traction engine.

Warusha laborers sing in unison as they pass bundles of
prickly edged sisal leaves into the decorticating machine.

Young Makorongo appears at the machine shed door eager to see
how the steam engine works. Hans joins him.

White fibers emerge to be hung up to dry on overhead wires.

Hans barges past Young Makorongo and starts to help the
laborers feed the machine.

17 EXT: SISAL DECORTICATING MACHINE SHED, 1914 - DAY 3 17

The Baron arrives on his chestnut horse and dismounts.

BARON

How are the men doing?

A worker ties up the horse by its reins. The Baron glances at
his pocket watch as the Chief joins him.

18 INT: SISAL DECORTICATING MACHINE SHED, 1914 - DAY 3 18

Hans passes individual leaves to Young Makorongo who feeds
them into the threshing machine.

Young Makorongo sees the Baron's image reflected in shiny
metal as he strides into the shed with the Chief.

BARON

Hans-Werner, you idiot! Get out of
here at once.

Hans looks up. The singing stops.

BARON (CONT'D)

Foolish child.

The Baron has his hands under Hans's armpits and starts to
remove him from the machine shed.

Young Makorongo is tugged sideways. The skin of his hand is snagged on the hooked spines of a long sisal leaf that has been fed into grinders. He twists in an effort to get free.

The Chief lunges forward to grab Young Makorongo who is dragged along the wooden chute towards the threshing machine.

The steam engine pounds on, belching smoke.

Hans looks horrified. Panic sets in amongst the workers. The blades munch away. Threshing chains pulverize the leaves.

Unaware of this, Mr Poona keeps stoking his fire.

YOUNG MAKORONGO

No. No. Ahhhh.

The Chief grabs a large spanner.

Young Makorongo's thumb is caught by the metal blades.

The machine crunches to a halt, the spanner in its blades.

Mr Poona looks up in alarm.

19 EXT: SISAL DECORTICATING MACHINE SHED, 1914 - DAY 3 19

OS: Young Makorongo screams cont...

The Baron's chestnut horse panics and pulls back, breaking its reins. It gallops off down the sisal field.

20 INT: SISAL DECORTICATING MACHINE SHED, 1914 - DAY 3 20

The workers are silent. The drive belt flaps round uselessly.

The Chief pulls back hot metal blades with his bare hands.

BARON

Oh, No! No. Dear Heaven.

21 EXT/INT: FARMHOUSE VERANDA BELOW MOUNT MERU, 1914 - DAY 3 21

Heavenly German music comes from a wind-up gramophone. An embroidery basket with a measuring tape and a small pair of scissors lies next to it.

Hasani, dressed in a *kanzu* (long Nehru-necked housecoat), places a Meissen tea cup and saucer on a tray.

The Baroness sits at a desk on the veranda, writing letters. The smooth-coated dachshund sleeps at her feet.

The Nanny pushes the pram along the garden path. Guinea fowl peck at the lawn. All is calm, peaceful and orderly.

22 EXT: FARMHOUSE LAWN BELOW MOUNT MERU, 1914 - DAY 3 22

Hans pelts across the lawn without his shirt. The Guinea fowl scatter. He is followed by the Chief running with Young Makorongo in his arms. Behind them giant fig trees with aerial roots frame the view of Mount Meru.

23 EXT/INT: FARMHOUSE VERANDA BELOW MOUNT MERU, 1914 - DAY 3 23

Hasani sees the group as he rises and slams down his tray.

The dachshund wakes and starts to yap.

Hans runs up the steps, almost breathless.

HANS-WERNER

It's like what happened to me!

HASANI

Makorongo! My boy.

As the Baroness rises, Young Makorongo's bloody hand bound in Hans-Werner's shirt, is thrust into her face.

The dog stops yapping. The gramophone grinds to a halt.

CHIEF

Memsaab, we need the sticking plaster.

The Baroness is shocked rigid. Thin sheets of writing paper are whipped up in the breeze and float to the ground.

The dachshund licks up blood that drips onto the floor.

BARONESS

Oh, how dreadful! What happened?

The Baroness grabs her tiny scissors but they fail to cut the cotton fabric. She gives them to Hans and unwinds the shirt twisted around Young Makorongo's hand.

Hasani waits for her diagnosis.

HANS-WERNER

He was dragged into the de-corticicator. Very quickly.

Young Makorongo's thumb is a bloody mess.

BARONESS

Oh, my Lord. Lie him down here.

The Chief lays Young Makorongo on a coffee-table trunk. The Baroness removes porcupine quills from his back pocket.

More writing paper blows off the desk. Hans gives the scissors to the Chief, and catches a sheet.

BARONESS (CONT'D)

Hasani! Hasani!

Hasani takes the porcupine quills from her.

HASANI

Memsaab.

BARONESS

Oh, there you are. Boiling water! *Lete - maji - moto - hapa!* (Bring boiling water). Make sure it's boiled. And fetch napkins. Clean, ironed handkerchiefs.

Hasani rushes off towards the kitchen.

BARONESS (CONT'D)

And salt! Salt. Bring me salt.

The Chief is still holding the scissors.

CHIEF

Salt?

She take a needle and thread from her embroidery basket.

BARONESS

You are going to have to be strong and courageous, my boy. Hans-Werner! Fetch the pliers.

BARONESS (CONT'D)

Hasani, here quickly.

The Baroness twists the top off the salt and pours it all into the water. Hasani assumes she wants to plunge the wounded hand into the cooking pot.

HASANI

Oh, *Mem*, do not cook his hand.

Instead The Baroness takes the scissors from the Chief and throws them into the pot. She adds a needle and thread.

Hasani is further horrified by the scissors.

HASANI (CONT'D)

Hakuna doktari hapa? No doctor?

BARONESS

No doctor for miles and miles.

She cleans the wound with the linen as the Baron trudges past the nanny and Clara who starts to wail from the pram.

Young Makorongo twists and yelps in pain.

HASANI

Polee polee, Memsaab. Polee polee.
He is just a *toto*.

BARONESS

Don't worry, I will take care.

HASANI

My first-born.

BARONESS

Hold him still.

Hasani takes Young Makorongo's arm as the Chief holds his head from behind and Hans skids in with the pliers.

Young Makorongo stares up at them.

BARONESS (CONT'D)

Makorongo. You are going to have to trust me. Be strong and courageous.

The Baroness puts the jaws of the pliers in the water.

Young Makorongo's eyes widen as the others talk above him.

HANS-WERNER

She does sew very neatly.

CHIEF

Yes, and the *Memsaab* is not drunk.

BARONESS

What do you mean?

CHIEF

I mean the doctor in Arusha. He is
always drinking.

Pliers pull the needle & thread past Young Makorongo's face.
The Baron walks up the steps as he screams.

24 EXT: OOSA RIVER BELOW MOUNT MERU, 1914 - SUNSET - DAY 4 24

Elephants walk across the horizon at sunset.

OS: African singing.

25 INT: HASANI'S HUT, AFRICAN VILLAGE, 1914 - DUSK - DAY 5 25

OS: African singing CONT...

Young Makorongo's hand is bandaged but his fingers are purple
and swollen. Hasani sponges his forehead in his lap. Beyond
their open door female figures crouch around a small cooking
fire, singing softly. Hasani hears someone approaching.

BARON

May we come in?

Hans ducks through the low door, his arms full of towels and
blankets, followed by his father.

BARON (CONT'D)

My wife says he must drink cod
liver oil.

He unrolls Thermos flask from one blanket.

HASANI

Is it not too precious?

BARON

He needs the vitamins. Don't worry,
this can't be worse than Malaria.
Count fever as a blessing but keep
him warm and dry.

The Baron kneels to unwrap a stone hot-water-bottle.

HASANI

Asanti sana. (Thank you)

HANS-WERNER

You must fight this off, Makorongo.
Then we can find a *chatu*.

Young Makorongo smiles weakly.

26 EXT: OOSA RIVER BANK, MOUNT MERU, 1914 - NIGHT 5 26

Elephants come down to the river to drink in the moonlight.

OS: African singing becomes mournful.

27 INT/EXT: FARMHOUSE VERANDA BELOW MOUNT MERU, 1914 - NIGHT 27

OS: Burring noise of crickets and cicadas.

The Baron walks up the veranda steps, followed by Hans. The Baroness waits in the lamp-light, the dachshund in her arms.

BARON

The infection is severe, I'm afraid. Hasani knows it may be too much for the boy.

BARONESS

I cleaned the wound most thoroughly.

BARON

You did your best. I'm sorry, Hans-Werner. I think he must have septicemia. Blood poisoning.

HANS-WERNER

Very badly?

28 INT: HASANI'S HUT, AFRICAN VILLAGE, 1914 - DUSK - DAY 6 28

Young Makorongo thrashes with pain in Hasani's arms.

Tanganyikan women sit by a cooking fire outside. They nod to the Chief as he enters the hut.

CHIEF

Your son is losing his hold on this life, my friend.

HASANI

The *Germani* claim it is just bacteria. That he must fight.

CHIEF

We have brought you Mganga, the doctor of our people.

Mganga enters. The lamp light accentuates tribal markings on his face. The Chief nods in respect. Hasani stares up at him.

HASANI

Mganga.

Mganga removes the German blanket and slides his hands over Young Makorongo's body, drawing air through his nostrils.

MGANGA

This is what happens when the water spirit is angered.

HASANI

To a child?

MGANGA

Pumps and steam engines anger the water. Have you not seen it swirl?

Mganga feels along Young Makorongo's body searching for a charm tied around his stomach, wrist or ankle.

MGANGA (CONT'D)

You have not purchased protection. This child wears nothing to guard him from evil spirits that have been aroused. If they demand his death his soul will feel trapped here and bring much anguish on your family.

HASANI

We wait until morning.

CHIEF

Have you medicine, *Doctari*?

MGANGA

It is too late, *Bwana*.

Mganga lifts the bandaged hand.

MGANGA (CONT'D)

I am not happy about selling a cure after the white man has interfered.

HASANI

They only say he must stay warm.

MGANGA

What of this drink?

He removes the top of the Thermos flask which catches the light, and sniffs the steaming contents.

CHIEF

The boy is suffering. Come, our way is best. Let Mganga, take him.

Mganga moves towards Young Makorongo but Hasani gets angry.

HASANI

He is my only son. I'm not leaving him out in the cold.

CHIEF

Hasani! You cannot let him die within your house.

HASANI

He stays here. Get out. Get out.

CHIEF

I'll pay.

HASANI

No need. Hans is bringing me *msasa* leaves to treat the infection.

Mganga leaves. The Chief is incredulous.

CHIEF

You who come from far away do not understand. It is a dangerous, a very dangerous thing to dishonor a *mganga*.

29 EXT: OOSA RIVER BANK, MOUNT MERU, 1914 - NIGHT 6 29

OS: Hyenas call.

A hyena casts a moon-shadow as it approaches the river and sniffs the air. Another laughs in the distance.

30 EXT: HASANI'S HUT, AFRICAN VILLAGE, 1914 - DAWN - DAY 7 30

Hans runs through the African village clutching a bow and arrow, *msasa* leaves and another Thermos flask.

An old woman comes out of her hut with a smoldering log to start her fire. She stops to stare at Hans and shakes her head, but he reaches the hut as Hasani comes to the doorway.

HASANI

It is early, my boy.

HANS-WERNER

I've bought this for Makorongo. I wanted to say I was sorry for what happened.

Hasani stares at him, exhausted. Hans assumes the worst.

31 INT/EXT: FARMHOUSE SITTING ROOM BELOW MOUNT MERU - DAY 7 31

The Baroness lifts Clara from a cot swathed in mosquito netting and walks from her bedroom into the sitting room to see the Baron stride up the veranda steps holding a satchel.

BARONESS

The Post has come. At last!

BARON

You have a card from your sister.

Hans arrives at his side. Beyond them the chestnut horse is being led away on a long rein by the groom.

BARONESS

Thank you, my Darling.

BARON

And I have the News.

The Baroness reads her postcard. She moves towards the veranda for better light followed by her dachshund.

BARONESS

What's happening in the world?

Hans twists his head to read the German newspaper held by his father who stands, smoking. The periodical has been tightly furled and keeps trying to roll itself up.

BARON

Interesting... Belgium! We've taken Belgium. What territory do they own in Africa apart from the Congo?

The dachshund slinks off.

A framed wedding photograph, a baby photograph, a formal photograph of the family in front of the farmhouse and a silver hairbrush are flung in to a woven basket. A mirror behind it reflects the Baron and Baroness.

BARON

You can't come to a military camp. We'll be on the move, taking control of the Congo no doubt - opportunities beyond measure there.

BARONESS

I refuse to stay here alone with the children. Look how the Afrikaners suffered in the Transvaal, farms burnt to the ground.

BARON

That was different. This won't be for long. Maybe a month or two, nine weeks at the most. Everything here on the farm will be fine now I've installed an irrigation system.

BARONESS

Sorry, but I've had enough. It's too dangerous.

The Baroness opens a suitcase on the bed and starts packing. The baby's crib with its mosquito netting looms behind her.

BARON

In that case, return to Silesia for a while, but how will European children react to Hans's face? How would he cope?

Hans enters and starts playing with the sewing scissors.

BARONESS

Could Makorongo come with us?

BARON

I don't know if he's even going to survive.

The Baroness picks up her basket and storms out.

BARON (CONT'D)

Silly woman.

33

INT/EXT: FARMHOUSE VERANDA BELOW MOUNT MERU - DAY 7

33

The Baroness rushes onto the veranda with her basket, followed by the dachshund who begins yapping.

The Baroness wipes away her tears to focus on the garden.

BARONESS

Thank the Lord. Oh, bless him.

Young Makorongo walks up in a clean shirt, arm in a sling, bringing her a bunch of flowers, Mount Meru behind him.

BARONESS (CONT'D)

It's Makorongo! He's alive. The re-hydration fluids must have worked.

The Baron comes out, followed by Hans holding the scissors.

HANS-WERNER

I told him to come up for a new bandage.

The Baroness sits down, accepting the flowers and hugs Makorongo as Hasani enters with a tray and nods to his son.

YOUNG MAKORONGO

Are you going to Arusha?

BARONESS

No, we're leaving for good.

HANS-WERNER

Now?

The Baroness rises, attempting to hide her tears.

BARONESS

Yes, Hans-Werner. We depart tomorrow morning.

HANS-WERNER

Why?

BARONESS

Just pack your things. Hurry! Do what I say for once.

HANS-WERNER

Where are we are going?

BARONESS

Home.

The Baroness grabs a her needlework and goes into the house. Hasani begins to gather up cups and saucers.

HANS-WERNER
But this is our home! Here.

HASANI
It must be coming this way.

HANS-WERNER
What is?

HASANI
The war. Suffering travels.

HANS-WERNER
Have you ever been in battle?

HASANI
We cannot marry or stand equal with others until we have proven ourselves as warriors. In my youth, the fighting was too bad. At times brother against brother.

Young Makorongo checks his reflection in the glass doors.

HANS-WERNER
But you didn't have guns. Or cannon. Bullets.

Hans flings the scissors behind him.

HASANI
We had spears, knew victory, became acquainted with sorrow. Look at us. We are not of the Warusha tribe. Our family has had to keep moving on, keep trying things from a different angle.

Hasani takes his laden tray into the house.

34

INT: FARMHOUSE, 1914 - DAY 8

34

Hasani walks through the house with his tray. Hans follows.

HASANI
The Memsaab is right not to delay.

HANS-WERNER
I'm not going!

HASANI

It will be too much danger here.

HANS-WERNER

Are the elders that cross with me?

35

EXT: FARMHOUSE KITCHEN, 1914 - EARLY MORNING - DAY 9

35

The Chief oversees workers loading a portmanteau and various baskets onto the back of the *transporteer's* ox-wagon laden with trunks freshly labelled for Rosenberg, SILESIA, GERMANY.

The ridgeback looks at the luggage and whines.

The groom tightens the girth of the Baron's horse, which circles around forcing Hasani back towards the ox wagon.

The Chief picks up the scissors and gives them to Hans.

HANS-WERNER

Oh, thank you.

Hans slips them into his mother's bag. The Baroness and the nanny, holding Clara, sit beside the *transporteer*.

BARONESS

Tell me, have your family recovered from the Anglo-Boer war?

TRANSPORTEER

We will never recover, my *frau*.

Hans ties to take a seat next to the Baroness.

BARONESS

This isn't going to work, Darling. Find room on the back.

HANS-WERNER

Can't I stay here with Hasani?

BARONESS

No. Do as you are told!

HANS-WERNER

Who will look after East Africa if we lose the war?

HASANI

The British, I fear. They have Kenya to the north.

HANS-WERNER

I don't suppose they'd do it very well.

Hans finds his Masai spear packed with an ostrich egg, porcupine quill and his catapult.

HANS-WERNER (CONT'D)

Can I give this to Makorongo?

HASANI

No. We have an old Swahili saying:
'It is not for the traveller to
give a gift to those who remain.'

The Baron comes out of the house armed with his rifle and wearing polished boots. The groom brings his horse over.

BARON

I'll be back soon with spare parts
for the decorticator.

The Baron slides his firearm into the saddle scabbard and turns to shake the Chief by the hand.

BARON (CONT'D)

You'll keep the pump going? Make
sure everything carries on as
normal until we return?

CHIEF

Yes, *Bwana*. (Sir).

Hans sits on the back of the cart. Young Makorongo runs up, arm bandaged, to give him a python-skin pocket-watch case.

YOUNG MAKORONGO

We made this for you. Father says
the rest of it will have to stay
here.

HANS-WERNER

You found a python?

YOUNG MAKORONGO

Quite a big one. Come back soon.
We'll look for another.

Hasani hands Hans the dachshund.

HASANI

Kwa heri, my boy. Kwa Herini.
(Goodbye to you all.)

Hasani takes Young Makorongo by the shoulders as the ox-wagon starts with a jerk, but he runs after it.

YOUNG MAKORONGO
Kwa heri. Goodbye.

Young Makorongo stops to watch the wagon leave.

36 EXT: FARMHOUSE VERANDA, 1941 - LATE AFTERNOON - DAY 10 36

Noise of the farm pump thumps in the distance as a canvas-roofed Lee Francis (a light 1930's safari vehicle) draws up.

Makorongo's python is stuffed rigid. While the tail is coiled, the body rises up to the height of 6 foot. It stands on the same veranda. The armchairs are now covered in blue & white chintz and there is an enclosed office at one end.

TONY (19), tall, clean shaven Scott with sandy hair, clad in hunter's green, enters with his rifle and drops a small flag into the python's open mouth. It is the flag of Tanganyika featuring a giraffe and a Union Jack.

OS: African drums start beating.

Sub-title: **27 years later**

- The British Protectorate of Tanganyika Territory 1941 -

MAKORONGO STRAIGHT TO CAMERA
My father was not pleased about the
death of that snake.

MAKORONGO (now 36) walks onto the veranda with a crate of paraffin lamps, which he sets down on the trunk he was once operated on.

TONY
I'm sure it had been keeping down
the rodent population very nicely.

MAKORONGO
I still feel bad about killing it.

TONY
I'm Tony by the way.

MAKORONGO
Welcome.

They shake hands. Beyond them Hasani (now 68) begins supervising two farm laborers unloading Tony's car.

TONY

I've been sent to get the sisal production going to help the war effort. My parents are up at Bulwa growing coffee for the troops.

MAKORONGO

Please send them my greetings. It is good you have come over.

Makorongo glances at the hunting rifle. Tony unwraps three jars of Marmite and they continue unpacking.

TONY

Marmite from my sister Emily in Scotland.

MAKORONGO

To eat on toast?

TONY

That's right. You must introduce me to the irrigation system but I'm more of a hunter than a farmer.

MAKORONGO

When I was small there was so much hunting. We thought the Germans would shoot every living thing, but your English DC in Arusha is keen on rules and regulations. Licenses.

TONY

Does the District Commissioner hunt? I must go and see him.

MAKORONGO

He's come to shoot the guinea fowl.

TONY

Typical Englishman. My forefathers came from further north. Have you eaten? Will you join me?

MAKORONGO

Eeh, Bwana, not tonight. Tonight the drums are calling.

TONY

Is there a funeral?

MAKORONGO

A *n'goma*. It's the night of the full moon. I am expected to attend.

TONY

I wish I had a girl I could take dancing.

MAKORONGO - STRAIGHT TO CAMERA

Every mother in the district is going to be looking at me. I'm not prepared to take my clothes off.

37 EXT: AFRICAN VILLAGE, BELOW MOUNT MERU, 1941 - NIGHT 10 37

A full moon rises. African drums beat. A village *n'goma* is in progress. Makorongo looks around before joining Hasani and the Chief (now 57) in his headdress and traditional regalia.

CHIEF

Makorongo! Come, have some beer. My daughter helped to brew this.

Makorongo reacts shyly to the word 'daughter'.

HASANI

I did not think making beer was woman's work.

CHIEF

Ah, but she grew the sorghum. I threw in a dead frog.

HASANI

The English say we add the battery from the motor car.

The Chief wheezes with laughter as he pours *pombe* (millet beer). We see Makorongo's scarred thumb as he takes it up.

CHIEF

I leave the secrets of inebriation up to Mganga. Do you ever have pain in that thumb, Makorongo?

MAKORONGO

Mganga? Is he here?

Discs of wood have been set into Mganga's earlobes. He is dressed in a ceremonial monkey-skin cloak and holds a stave with vulture claws hanging from it.

A choir of African maidens arrive in single file wearing oiled leather aprons embroidered with beads and cowry shells. Strings of seeds, tied around their ankles, make a rhythmic noise to accompany their stamping and clapping.

Mganga approaches Makorongo but is distracted by the maidens who form a circle and sing in light cast by an inner ring of small fires fed by an old lady, MAMA MBUZI.

The Chief points out his daughter MERU (17).

CHIEF

There's Meru, back from visiting her grandmother. She's a fiery one. Burns brightly but is liable to be explosive. I named her after the volcano. Go and talk to her.

MAKORONGO

She's looking beautiful.

The maidens start to dance, throwing themselves forward onto one foot and back onto the other. Young male warriors move in around them, naked, but adorned in the body paint with feathers in their hair. Touching women is forbidden but they compete by jumping vertically up and down.

The maidens jump in unison, their beaded necklaces and bracelets catching the firelight.

Makorongo moves around the warriors. As Meru glances up he flicks his head, inviting her to step out and join him.

MAKORONGO TO CAMERA

Meru. The girl I've been waiting for half my life. Isn't she lovely?

MERU

I cannot leave the dancing!

MAKORONGO

For a moment. To gain your breath.

MERU

My father will see it as an offense to the ancestors.

MAKORONGO

My father will keep him busy.

The Chief laughs, intent on stirring the beer with Hasani.

Makorongo leads Meru to the quiet village Meeting House.

MERU

Why, Makorongo, are you not amongst the warriors?

MAKORONGO

Agh, they are not in my age grade.
And feathers make me sneeze.

MERU

But they are handsome and traditional. I'm meant to embrace that.

MAKORONGO

Meru... those boys will not be allowed to marry for ten years.

MERU

...a man must have his time of fighting - or small concerns will overwhelm him.

MAKORONGO

I would rather talk than dance around you.

MERU

What do you want to discuss?

MAKORONGO

Oh, Meru. I want to give you words that are straight words, not words tied up in other words.

MERU

Tell me.

Makorongo draws in breath to deliver a rehearsed speech:

MAKORONGO

Fine hopes like strong winds blowing through my soul.

Meru can't believe he is saying this.

MAKORONGO (CONT'D)

Winds that almost blow me away. You have a sweet spirit, Meru, and are beautiful. Too beautiful. All I have are dreams.

MERU

Dreams when you are sleeping?

MAKORONGO

Dreams that are hopes.

MERU

Are you sure? Tell me in those straight words.

MAKORONGO

My hope is that you will join me in building a future.

MERU

Ah. Would this mean going far away?

MAKORONGO

No. We can stay here on the farm.

MERU

You first need to ask these things of my father.

MAKORONGO

Of course. I know.

MERU

And I think the price for the future might be very high. Maybe too high for someone who is not yet a proven warrior.

38

EXT: HIPPO POOL IN BUSH, 1941 - DAY 11

38

A hippo grunts and descends into water blowing through his nostrils. Ibis fly past. Elephants browse near the pool.

As an elephant lifts its foot the print fills up with water in which a soaring eagle is reflected.

Makorongo's face is screwed up in concentration. He is busy cleaning the air filter of the Lea Francis safari vehicle.

Tony shows him how it clips on then begins sorting out his ammunition. He loads a .450 double rifle and slots four spare shots into his left breast pocket and four into the pocket of his sleeveless shooting jacket.

TONY

It only fits in a certain way. A bit like me. Always carry a spanner, always check the air filter. I learnt it the hard way.

MAKORONGO TO CAMERA

Why are Europeans so bossy?

TONY

My mother said I must know how to put vehicles back together if I wanted to survive.

As Makorongo checks the oil, we see his scarred thumb.

MAKORONGO

Will you teach me to drive? Maybe, one day, I can find a job in Scotland.

TONY

You might not like the cold.

MAKORONGO

It's difficult to find paid work here.

TONY

I was lucky. A dead croc was found with a bangle in its stomach. The police had it on a murder charge.

MAKORONGO

The crocodile?

TONY

It had eaten someone. The District Commissioner was convinced that it was time to despatch any big ones. I'm hoping to cure the skins.

They move off along the river looking for crocodiles.

MAKORONGO

May I have the teeth?

TONY

Crocodile teeth? What for?

MAKORONGO

To sell to Mganga.

TONY

The witch doctor? Is he making dentures now?

MAKORONGO

He sells them as magic charms. The idea is that the spirit of the crocodile makes you invincible. People pay a lot for that.

TONY

It's just a protection racket.
Don't get involved.

MAKORONGO

A crocodile has sixty-six teeth.
Mganga will pay me for the skull
too.

TONY

You know witchcraft is illegal
throughout East Africa, don't you?

MAKORONGO

Yes, but this is just trading.

39 EXT: OOSA RIVER BRIDGE BELOW MOUNT MERU, 1941 - DAY 11 39

Hasani is crossing the bridge over the flowing water.

OS: A bang akin to gunfire.

Hasani turns to see a small cattle truck lurch as it comes to a halt. VERA (48) emerges from the driving seat to study her puncture. She looks about 35 and is very attractive, wearing a shirt with corduroy trousers.

VERA

Oh, no. Not another one.

HASANI

Ooo, Memsaab. Are you having a
problem?

VERA

I am indeed! Is it Hasani?

HASANI

Jambo, Mem. Habari gani?

VERA

I thought I recognized you. I'm
Vera Winter. We farm cattle the
other side of the road to Arusha.
As you can see I'm not going that
well. Not going anywhere at all.

Hasani examines the torn tyre.

HASANI

We need *Bwana* Tony.

Vera searches under the driver's seat.

VERA

The new farm hand? I was bringing him some avocados. We have a tree fruiting.

HASANI

That's too kind.

VERA

Do you think you can help me change the wheel? I have a spare.

HASANI

It's my son who wants to be a mechanic but I can try.

VERA

Oh, Heck! Someone's pinched my jack.

40 EXT: FARM HOUSE, MOUNT MERU, 1941 - LATE AFTERNOON - DAY 11 40

Tony grabs the steering wheel, teaching Makorongo to drive in the dusty Lea Francis. As they approach the farm he spots the cattle truck and Vera with Hasani who removes the tyre.

Vera approaches Tony with her basket of avocados.

VERA

Here at last. I'm Vera Winter - your closest neighbor.

TONY

Tony Maxtone-Mailer.

He reaches out to shake her hand. Instead, she gives him the basket, her engagement ring catching the sunlight.

VERA

For you.

Tony is taller and more attractive than Vera anticipated.

TONY

For me?

VERA

I was hoping you might be able to help me with a young horse. I've just bought rather a naughty mare.

Tony is amused and intrigued. Makorongo sees she's married.

41 EXT: HIPPO POOL IN BUSH, 1941 - EARLY MORNING - DAY 12 41

A warthog rolls in a hollow. Zebra look on.

Tony lowers his binoculars and takes up his rifle. Makorongo uses a machete to point to footprints.

MAKORONGO TO CAMERA

See here... fresh spoor. *Mamba*, a big crocodile with a full belly. It slid into the river.

Tony and Makorongo look across the water but can't see it.

TONY

One that size would have huge teeth. What do you need money for?

MAKORONGO

Breeding stock.

TONY

Cattle?

MAKORONGO

Ten Heifers I can put in calf.

TONY

Ah, she must be some lady. How does she feel about the prospect of being sold?

MAKORONGO

She wants to put the price up!

TONY

She doesn't mind?

MAKORONGO

A high price proves how much she is worth. The money will be used to educate her brothers if anything happens to me before our sons can protect her.

A lone male elephant looks at them from the other side of the bank before sloshing itself with river water.

MAKORONGO (CONT'D)

A girl wants to be highly regarded. This gives her dignity. If I pay good money, I will never lose her.

TONY

Well, you'd better make a down-payment or someone else might beat you to it...

Tony uses his binoculars to spot a crocodile lying on a sandy riverbank with its mouth open. The teeth look impressive. He lifts his rifle to his shoulder.

A Go-Away bird squawks at them from the trees.

BIRD

Go-way, go-way.

The crocodile runs into the water. Tony lowers his rifle. Makorongo has failed to spot both bird and reptile.

MAKORONGO

I need a pair of field glasses.

TONY

Have you thought of taking King Georgi's Shilling? Joining the Army before Hitler makes slaves of us all?

MAKORONGO

I can not imagine fighting the *Germani*. They were our friends - established crop rotation.

TONY

The Kings' African Rifles offer great training. You'd probably be at the wheel of a lorry. I'd follow my brother into the Air Force willingly. It might impress the girls.

MAKORONGO

Do you not have a better way of letting a woman know you value her?

TONY

I suppose so.

MAKORONGO

How? With cattle?

TONY

A diamond ring would help. Not sure how I'll find any around here.

42 EXT: PLAIN BENEATH KILIMANJARO, 1941 - EARLY EVENING - DAY 422

A mongoose pokes its head around a termite mound.

POV mongoose: Two riders cross a plain beneath the purple mountain. Their white horses look almost luminous in the evening light as they ride past a small herd of giraffe.

The family of mongooses scurry away.

Tony, wearing his side-arm, rides a huge gelding. He steals a look at Vera mounted on a feisty grey mare but looks relaxed. She wears gloves and a linen hat with a chiffon scarf.

TONY

These plains are full of holes.
Anteaters mainly. And warthog.

Tony indicates a large burrow.

VERA

Oh, I don't think one should let
little problems like that get in
the way of what you want to do in
life.

Vera pushes her horse into a canter. Tony has no choice but to follow. They race each other into the distance.

43 EXT: NEAR HIDDEN CAMP BENEATH MT KILIMANJARO, 1941 DAY 12 43

Hooves thunder across the hard ground, narrowly missing a spiky aloe growing over another gaping warthog hole.

Vera's hat blows off. She reins in her mare and turns to retrieve it. Tony turns his horse, leans down from his saddle and picks up the hat at a canter.

Vera tries to look unimpressed as Tony trots towards her holding out her hat, its chiffon scarf catching the breeze.

The horses draw to a halt and start circling each other.

TONY

I've decided I should make an offer
before the price goes up.

VERA

Do you always think of money?

TONY

Investments. I've been learning
about bride price.

(MORE)

TONY (CONT'D)

It's normally ten head of cattle
but you can pay in other livestock.

Tony passes her the hat.

VERA

The sum in question increases with
educational qualifications and
experience. In regard to my
combined age and assets, that
amount would be pitiful. And I'm
already married.

TONY

I thought you didn't let little
problems like that get in the way
of what you want from life.

Vera tries not to smile and rides on looking straight ahead.
She sees something strange through the vegetation.

VERA

Ostrich poachers?

The riders find a pair of canvas safari chairs set up by a
campfire looking towards the mountain. A folding table, set
with glasses, stands to one side. Vera is delighted.

VERA (CONT'D)

Oh - Tony... What a treat.

Tony and Vera dismount. Hasani steps out of hiding to take
the horses while Tony proceeds to pour drinks. Vera removes
her kid gloves and straightens her ring.

TONY

Gin and Tonic, Vera?

VERA

A pink one please.

TONY

With lemon?

VERA

If technically possible.

TONY

Indeed it is.

VERA

Bitter sweet.

TONY
How bitter?

VERA
Enough to ward off the mosquitoes.
But I don't think I taste so good
any more. Too old. And under oath
to forsake all others.

Vera takes the glass in her left hand. Her engagement ring IS a large sapphire surrounded by diamonds with no wedding ring.

Hasani hands the horses to Makorongo near the safari vehicle.

HASANI
She is too old - must be beyond
childbearing age.

MAKORONGO
Nothing will happen.

HASANI
It might. Who will look after him
in his old age if he has no *totos*?
The elders would not be impressed.

In the background Tony brushes a mosquito from Vera's arm.

44 EXT: HIDDEN CAMP BENEATH MT KILIMANJARO, 1941 - DAY 12 44

OS: The gloop, gloop sound of tree frogs.

Egrets fly home to roost. Hasani lights lanterns. Tony picks a sprig of sage and hands it to Vera.

TONY
Wild sage to keep the midges off.
Is that a bruise on your cheek?

Vera rubs the leaves calmly between her fingers.

VERA
Pluchea leubintzae, an aromatic
member of the *Asteraceae* family, a
shrub, with both male and female
forms, that thrives in sandy,
alkaline soils especially in ground
that has been disturbed.

TONY
I only know the Swahili names of
most plants.

VERA

But then you are a child of Africa,
I am just a European import.

TONY

Was it always your ambition to be a
cattle farmer?

VERA

Goodness no. I was a concert
pianist with a husband in the Army.
We moved to Nairobi when he was
seconded to the King's African
Rifles. By the time his posting
came to an end he'd got used to the
climate and decided to settle here
ignoring the fact that I might just
miss going out to restaurants, the
theatre, dances, that sort of
thing.

Hasani politely offers Vera grilled hors d'oeuvres.

TONY

Ah, you must try this.

Vera accepts a piece of white fish on toast.

HASANI

The tail of the Crocodile. With
mayonnaise.

VERA

Mmmm...

TONY

It tastes like crayfish. Very
nutritious.

VERA

I have always rather wanted a pair
of crocodile skin shoes...

OS: Somewhere in the bush a male lion roars.

45

EXT: SISAL DECORTICATING MACHINE SHED, 1942 - DAY 13

45

The Chief is working at the drying racks. Female laborers
pass behind him. MR POONA is servicing the threshing machine.
Meru is beside herself with worry.

MERU

Why? Why did you have to put him forward for conscription?

CHIEF

You have changed your way of speaking. I understood you did not think Makorongo was good enough for you.

MERU

He has interesting ideas.

CHIEF

I want to see a man with money asking for your hand, Meru.

MERU

Can he not serve with the police?

CHIEF

Like Tony? You have to be 'long like a telegraph pole to qualify', as Hasani says. Over six foot three.

MERU

There must be other tasks. Makorongo is kind and thinks of others. Please, don't send him to war. He has no wish to be in the fighting.

CHIEF

I must find many men. All of Tanganyika, all of Kenya and the countries to the west are putting their best athletes forward. Most are up for adventure. We must count it an honor. They will wear glory.

MERU

Makorongo is different, older. Everyone knows the Wazungu are calling for youths. He has no interest in guns or uniforms.

CHIEF

Do you not want a proven man? A well-travelled warrior?

MERU

Are you still angry he helped the German boy to kill the python?

CHIEF

That was long ago. The Army
Sergeant asked me for men who know
how to drive the motor car.

Mr Poona puts down a large spanner with an unusual groove
slashed across it. The Chief stares at it.

CHIEF (CONT'D)

...For men who know how to doctor a
lorry. Makorongo is the only one
we have here.

Meru leaves to hide her tears. The Chief picks up the spanner
he once used to save Makorongo's life.

46

EXT: CATTLE BOMA, VERA WINTER'S FARM, 1942 - DAY 13

46

Long-horned Boran cows bellow. A bull paws the ground kicking
up the red dust while cattle egrets hop around.

Two Masai herdsman, with bright cloth knotted over their
shoulders, whistle as they muster cattle into the *boma*.

Vera examines a cow and calf that have swollen eyes.

VERA

Why didn't you tell me the cattle
have bad eyes? They must be in
pain.

The herdsman look on silently.

VERA (CONT'D)

Keep this calf aside. I'll treat
the infection myself.

Vera strides over to help a cow in labour, penned in a crush
at one end of the *boma*. Her truck stands next to it.

Tony drives up in his canvas-roofed Lee Francis.

VERA (CONT'D)

The men here say I have the eyes of
a vulture but I wasn't even sure
you were around.

TONY

Vera. Are you all right?

VERA

Thank you for coming. I wasn't sure
my note would find you.

Tony starts to examine the cow.

TONY

It looks urgent.

VERA

I thought I could manage but there's been a lot on. The rains are late, the Masai have burnt my hill pasture, I have no grazing left. And my husband is still with his regiment in Mombasa. You know he took my dogs with him?

TONY

Wasn't he under official orders?

VERA

That's not the only thing he's under. He's gone through all our money. Left me with nothing.

The Masai herdsmen pick up on this and slip away.

TONY

But your bruises are healing?

VERA

I loathe, hate and detest him. He never did anything but sit on the veranda and trim his ridiculous mustache.

TONY

I wanted to come sooner.

VERA

Don't you have to join the war-effort?

There is a bellow as the cow makes her presence known.

TONY

I'm already in the Police Reserve, officially on 'Farm Supply'. Make the most of me while you can.

VERA

Thank you. I think this calf must be in a breach position.

Tony grabs a birthing rope and approaches the cow, rubbing her flank.

TONY
 Vera, it could get be rough living
 out here.

The cow experiences a contraction. Tony heaves on birthing
 ropes, taking the strain with his back.

VERA
 I'll be fine.

TONY
 Think about moving into my house
 for a while. It would be more
 secure than this place. Hasani will
 be around.

VERA
 I suppose I could pop over in an
 official capacity, to work on your
 accounts.

Soon a newborn calf is being licked into life by its mother.

TONY
 Both girls very much alive.

VERA
 Another nine heifers and I could
 buy myself a wife.

Tony grimaces.

47 EXT: AFRICAN FARM, MOUNT MERU, 1942 - SUNSET - DAY 13 47

Ibis fly across the evening sky. In the distance, a long line
 of cattle are being driven towards their *boma*.

Meru leads Makorongo up a hillside to watch the sun set over
 the plains. Kilimanjaro looms behind them. Their heads touch
 in silhouette as they mutely say goodbye and turn to look
 towards an uncertain future.

48 EXT: OLD GERMAN FORT IN ARUSHA, 1942 - DAY 14 48

The regimental march of The King's African Rifles is played
 on a wind up gramophone.

Sunlight glints on a K.A.R. cap badge worn by a RECRUITING
 SERGEANT.

RECRUITING SERGEANT

First time you are wearing boots?
You will need them! You are in the
K.A.R now.

He stands in front of Makorongo and 30 young Tanganyikan warriors last seen at the *n'goma*. All are in K.A.R. uniform with navy blue puttees and shiny boots.

The Recruiting Sergeant sees Makorongo hiding his damaged thumb and nods to Mganga who watches them from under a black umbrella. He looks back at Makorongo before counting coins into a purse which he gives to a waiting youth.

RECRUITING SERGEANT (CONT'D)

Stand in line! A-tennnn-shun!
Forward March! Left, right, left
right, left, right, left, right...!

The recruits march off watched by a group of small boys.

49

EXT: ENTRANCE TO ARUSHA TRAIN STATION, 1942 - DAY 14

49

OS CONT: The regimental march of The King's African Rifles

The Recruiting Sergeant and his K.A.R. recruits are followed by the small boys as they approach the railway station.

Five *Masai Moran* (warriors) lean on their spears outside the gateway, dressed in red *shukas* (cloaks).

RECRUITING SERGEANT

Left turn! Left right, left right,
left right! Company halt.

Makorongo and the recruits are brought together under the flag of Tanganyika Territories where the *transporteer* (now 64) off-loads wood from his ox-wagon. A ridgeback hound lying across his driver's seat looks up as Vera drives up in her cattle truck with Hasani.

The Chief, Mr Poona, Mama Mbuzi and female farmworkers stand on the open back with Meru. A cord is wound around her hands.

HASANI

Will we be in time?

The small boys climb up the sides of the truck while the Chief descends. The youth slips Mganga's coins into his hand.

Tony draws to a halt outside the station in a police vehicle loaded with camping gear. He's wearing the uniform of an Assistant Inspector in the East African Police Force.

Makorongo sees Tony has a 6'5" Police Orderly to assist him.

MAKORONGO

If only I had been taller!

Tony sees Vera leap down from her cab only to be confronted by a street vendor selling cigarettes while he is greeted by the Chief and the elderly Mr Poona.

TONY

They're off to your part of the world, Mr. Poona.

MR POONA

We came with the railways - they go with the railways.

CHIEF

Are they being sent overseas?

MR POONA

To Ceylon for training! Then who knows?

CHIEF

We thought they would be guarding our borders.

Meru darts past them, runs up to Makorongo and sweetly puts the cord his hands.

MAKORONGO

Meru!

MERU

Take the spirit of the crocodile with you for protection.

MAKORONGO

Give these shillings to your father for your bride-price. It's not enough, but I'll save my pay.

He tries to hand her the silver coins and a small purse.

MERU

Keep them - I can wait.

MAKORONGO

You must.

MERU

You will need money. I can wait.

WOMEN AND BOYS

Kwa heri. Kwa Herini. Goodbye.
(Goodbye to you all.)

Vera sees Meru's tears, but joins Tony as he's pestered by the street vendor.

TONY

Hapana, Hapana (No, no).

VERA

You didn't take *Kingi Georgi's shilling?*

TONY

The D.C. wants anyone speaking Masai to serve on the home front.

VERA

I haven't seen you in uniform before.

TONY

Don't look too closely.

VERA

How could I not?

TONY

They got the measurements wrong. The lining to the pockets failed and my truncheon fell down one leg.

He pulls at the front of his jacket as she peers inside.

VERA

Fortiter et Fideliter.

TONY

I don't know what you mean.

VERA

Strength and courage.

50

EXT: PLATFORM AT ARUSHA RAILWAY STATION - DAY 14

50

The steam train whistles, the funnel belches smoke.

The Recruiting Sergeant marches his recruits under a sign saying 'Arusha', followed by Mr Poona, Vera, Hasani, Meru and others.

RECRUITING SERGEANT

Right turn! And halt! Company board train.

Makorongo looks towards the engine then back at Hasani.

CHIEF

Why are they being sent east?

TONY

Those in command reckon they'll have resistance to malaria.

CHIEF

Is it hot there?

TONY

Sweltering. The Allies are recruiting thousands of West Africans.

Tony catches sight of Vera waving to the young recruits.

CHIEF

I've asked Makorongo to look after the young ones.

TONY

It's good. They'll see the world.

CHIEF

You are not going with them?

TONY

I wish I was.

Makorongo climbs into the train and turns to look at Meru's gift. In his hand is a crocodile tooth on a cord.

Vera joins Tony on the platform.

TONY (CONT'D)

I just pray they'll all return.

As the locomotive pulls away, the Warusha ladies ululate in farewell. Meru waves with hands outstretched in front of her.

MAKORONGO

Kwa heri. Kwa Herini. Goodbye.
(Goodbye to you all.)

51 INT: FARMHOUSE VERANDA, 1942 - AFTERNOON DAY 14

51

Birdsong fills the garden. The veranda walls hang with trophies of African antelope and the hairy face of a warthog with large tusks.

A bowl of lemons sits on a table. Vera stands outside Tony's office pulling off riding gloves to reveal her engagement ring. She straightens this, spotting the stuffed python.

VERA

'The serpent in the garden.'

Tony, in uniform, walks in with a covered basket. His police vehicle is parked on the lawn.

TONY

Our best crop yet and we probably won't be able to export it.

VERA

Don't worry; the troops are sure to need feeding. You'll make a fortune out of citrus and maize.

TONY

My book-keeping is way behind, I'm afraid. Shoddy.

Tony offers her the basket.

VERA

What's this?

Vera starts untying ribbons holding the lid down.

VERA (CONT'D)

I haven't got anything for you!
Isn't it the custom for the one who stays to give the present?

The bundle moves. Vera finds a fluffy white puppy inside.

VERA (CONT'D)

Oh! What a sweet little thing.

TONY

I was looking for a cattle dog but thought he would keep you company.

VERA

A boy! He's adorable. Do you know where you are being posted yet?

TONY

Me? I'm off to Narok.

VERA

Narok? It's the back of beyond.

TONY

HQ for the Masai Mara. I can't think why. I was due to sort out Italian prisoners of war in Somalia. North-east Frontier stuff.

VERA

But the Mara must be your favorite place on earth.

TONY

Narok is hardly a battlefield.

VERA

My husband told me it was crucial in the last war. Strategically.

TONY

Back then it was on the German-British frontier. The Kenyan border ran right through it. There are nothing but wild animals there now.

VERA

I'm so jealous. The wildebeest migration will be starting soon.

TONY

I know. I know. I must report for duty. Don't want to be late.

Tony takes Vera in his arms, puppy and all, but she disentangles herself.

TONY (CONT'D)

Will you come and see me?

VERA

At the Police Head Quarters?

TONY

In the Mara. Camping.

VERA

And leave my cattle?

Tony kisses her, chastely.

TONY

Stay here for now. It's best. For you, I mean.

Tony turns to leave. He glances back over his shoulder.

TONY (CONT'D)

Won't you think of marrying me?

VERA

I'm too old.

TONY

Who says?

VERA

Hasani. The Chief. That Mganga fellow. They're highly disapproving. You need a nineteen-year-old with child-bearing hips.

TONY

Mganga? Fan-belt? Ah, spare me.

VERA

No, my darling. You don't want to be stuck with a dribbling old woman complaining about her arthritis.

He turns back to face her.

TONY

Listen, Vera. Now is now.
(He kisses her) We live now.
(He kisses her) Here and now.

VERA

Now is all we'll ever have.

She kisses him back.

52

EXT/INT. AMBULANCE, JUNGLE, BURMA 1943 - DAY 15

52

OS: mortar fire, shelling & Brewster Buffalo planes.

A Red Cross armband. Makorongo's face is contorted, as if in pain, but it is he who wears the armband.

A shell explodes in the jungle. He hurries under date palms and past a WWII Red Cross ambulance with a case of dressings.

Sub-title:

- Burma, 1943 -

MAKORONGO TO CAMERA

Brewster Buffalo planes. We didn't know it would be this bad but I've made a good friend: Singh, although I call him Song. Wants to be a surgeon. Has a beautiful wife back in India and three little ones.

SINGH, a turbaned paramedic, treats an injured soldier. Behind him stands a pair of pack mules, a BRITISH OFFICER and cheery but exhausted soldiers, muddy and pouring with sweat.

AUSTRALIAN SIGNALMEN operate a field radio. Allied Soldiers lead mules laden with field cannon down rainforest slopes.

BRITISH OFFICER

Have you fellows got anything for dysentery?

Makorongo helps Singh dress his patient's head wound.

MAKORONGO

Nothing, Sir. We are waiting for supplies.

BRITISH OFFICER

Anything we can eat? My chaps are starving.

Makorongo takes an old sweet tin from his pocket and offers the British Officer an assortment of fried grasshoppers.

MAKORONGO

I fried up some insects. They make good snacks.

He eats one to show they are edible.

BRITISH OFFICER

I'd hate to deprive you.

There is a commotion on the ground. Singh approaches another injured man.

MAKORONGO

Look out!

The wounded man kicks out viciously. He's a wounded JAPANESE OFFICER in curious rubber boots that divide off the big toe.

BRITISH OFFICER

Not a happy chappie. One of the prisoners wanted for questioning. Needs to be watched I'm afraid.

MAKORONGO

Yes, sir.

The British Officer looks around for his men.

BRITISH OFFICER

Corporal Morrison! We need your help. Oh, there you are.

Two soldiers approach.

BRITISH OFFICER (CONT'D)

I'm leaving a couple of my men with you to guard this little souvenir. Don't leave without military escort. Okay?

SINGH

Yes, sir.

BRITISH OFFICER

It's all very tricky in these parts. The enemy could be anywhere.

The British officer leaves his soldiers to guard the injured Japanese Officer.

BRITISH OFFICER (CONT'D)

OK, all yours. Watch out for displaced civilians clogging the roads. Find someone to treat your tums at the Field Dressing Station. Cheerio!

The soldiers to add more straps to the POW's stretcher.

SINGH

I really don't know why we bother to save these blighters. Hold his arms before he kills himself.

MAKORONGO

Does he seek death?

SINGH

They hate to lose face, the Japs. The Samurai sword of his ancestors has been lost.

MAKORONGO

Have his elders passed judgement?

SINGH

He considers himself dishonored.
A Japanese Officer sees capture as
despicable. It is to become like
one of your insects. Let's get him
into this tin and off to Casualty
Clearing. One, two, three. Up!

They push the stretcher into the back of the ambulance. The
soldiers climb in and close the doors.

MAKORONGO

Do you think we'll make it?

A mortar falls nearby. Singh runs towards the cab. Makorongo
swings into his driving seat but fails to start the engine.

SINGH

First you must save the life of
this ambulance.

Makorongo grabs a spanner to tackle the starter motor.

Monkeys chatter from a tree. Makorongo checks the air filter.

MAKORONGO

Thank you, Tony.

SINGH

Here's our escort.

Makorongo cheerfully waves his spanner at an armored car.

53

EXT: AFRICAN VILLAGE, BENEATH MOUNT MERU, 1943 - DAY 15 53

Chickens scratch around. An old woman turns mealie-corn cobs
on coals and stirs a three-legged iron cooking pot. Little
children play in the sand, naked except for beads round their
tummies & ankles.

Meru laughs at them as she pounds corn using a long pole and
a container carved from a tree trunk. Her harvest of maize is
piled on a wooden sleigh.

Above her, noisy weaverbirds with yellow plumage work on
their pendulous nests.

The Chief comes out of his hut and crosses to the Meeting
House as his group of elders gather for an evening meeting.

Meru realizes Mganga, dressed in a European suit, is waiting
at the Meeting House. He shakes the Chief's hand.

CHIEF
Habari gani? Are you well?

MGANGA
Habari njema. I am well.

Mganga looks at Meru, who adds more corn from a woven bowl.

MGANGA (CONT'D)
 Your daughter?

CHIEF
 My eldest, Meru.

MGANGA
 I like a good worker.

Meru pounds the grain, her face set.

CHIEF
 What man doesn't? She is promised to Makorongo, son of Hasani. He hasn't yet paid the bride-price but we are hoping he will return from the East with much gold.

MGANGA
 I paid you to send him there.

CHIEF
 I didn't realize...

MGANGA
 The old saying goes: 'If you want a good crop you must first pull the couch-grass from the field.'

CHIEF
 Couch grass?

MGANGA
 Unwanted weeds.

54

EXT: STEEP HILLSIDE IN BURMESE JUNGLE, 1943 - DAY 16

54

A flurry of gunfire. The British Officer and his soldiers, return shots from a muddy path halfway up a hillside.

BRITISH OFFICER
 Unload the cannon! Morrison!

The corporal turns towards the nearest mule. There is more gunfire from the other side of the valley.

The mule is hit in the ear and rears up, pulling back. The handler loses his grip. It gallops off carrying the cannon and bashing a young Kenyan soldier of the K.A.R.

KENYAN

Jabu!

KENYAN (22) hauls JABU (15) to his feet and drags him up the slope. The Australian signalmen struggle up after them.

BRITISH OFFICER

This way!

The British Officer is followed by five K.A.R. Tanganyikans with Kenyan, Jabu and another from Kenya called BRIGHT (21).

Japanese infantrymen with backpacks break out of the jungle forcing the Allies onto a rock promontory above a ravine

A Japanese officer smiles.

55

EXT/INT. AMBULANCE, JUNGLE, BURMA, 1943 - DAY 16

55

OS: Distant rattle of automatic fire and thud of mortars.

The ambulance is driven in a different direction from before. Makorongo passes an overturned, burnt-out Army truck to find himself behind a Burmese ox cart driven by two small boys.

Wounded Australians in the back of the ambulance brace themselves as it lurches from side to side.

SINGH

What has happened to the escort we had yesterday?

MAKORONGO

Their fuel pump has gone. They can't even spare a motor cycle. I was ordered to drive on.

He starts to cough, finding it difficult to pass the ox cart.

SINGH

It's because we are carrying wounded Australians, rather than high-ranking prisoners.

MAKORONGO

Let's just get them to the Field Dressing Station.

He narrowly misses an oncoming bicycle ridden by a Burmese and nearly slides into the ox cart.

SINGH

Try not to kill anyone else.

Makorongo reaches for the crocodile tooth Meru gave him.

He sees in his wing mirror that the little boys on the ox cart are safe and brings the charm up to his mouth.

56 EXT: WATERFALL IN BURMESE JUNGLE, 1943 - DAY 16 56

A Burmese pagoda stands by a dramatic waterfall cascading through misty rainforest.

The British Officer and his soldiers trudge eastward through tropical vegetation. Their Japanese guards, with backpacks and long bayonets, chivvy them over a high bridge.

The Japanese officer stands with a hand on his Samurai sword. The Australian signalman are followed by five K.A.R. Tanganyikans with Kenyan, Jabu and Bright, who looks ill. Japanese soldiers, with long bayonets fixed, press them on.

Monkeys leap along a branch. A bird takes flight. A stone temple god, lit by sunlight, looks down from a shrine.

57 EXT/INT. AMBULANCE, JUNGLE, BURMA, 1943 - DAY 16 57

Makorongo and Singh wait as Indian refugees trudge towards them with domestic animals and an old lady in a handcart.

A shell falls in the paddy field behind them spraying water as civilians run for cover.

Makorongo grinds into gear and drives on.

58 EXT: AFRICAN HUT NEAR THE OOSA RIVER, 1943 - DAY 16 58

Bamboo grows by the river. A pure white goat is held on a rope by a small African HERD BOY outside a hut. Mganga hands Mama Mbuzi coins that she slips into a purse on a chain.

Beyond them, Meru and the village maidens last seen dancing, collect river water in calabashes with three girls.

Mganga shoves the herd boy towards the goat.

MGANGA

Bring the goat. Don't let it
escape.

The herd boy tries to lead the goat one way, then another, obstructed by the line of maidens coming up from the river carrying water on their heads.

Meru sees the goat, catches Mganga's eye, and freezes.

MGANGA (CONT'D)

I like to see a woman carrying
water.

Mganga strides towards Meru, eyes roving over her body.

MGANGA (CONT'D)

You are looking very beautiful
today. I hope you are going well.

Meru looks blank. Other girls giggle. A calabash of water belonging to one of them drops to the ground and smashes.

The goat jerks away.

The herd boy is left with a rope burn. Tears roll down his cheeks as he cradles the wound with his other hand. Mganga cuffs him over the head.

MGANGA (CONT'D)

Catch the goat.

The herd boy does not move. Mganga runs off after it himself.

59 EXT: BURMA JUNGLE, 1943 - DAY 16

59

Droplets glisten on the 20" blade of a bayoneted rifle. The eyes of a Japanese Officer blink back the rain.

Armed Japanese infantrymen advance, east to west, through dripping vegetation in absurdly camouflaged tin hats.

60 INT: RED CROSS FIELD DRESSING STATION, BURMA 1943 - DAY 16 ~~604~~

Wounded Allied soldiers lie in a dripping Casualty Clearing tent. An Australian Medical Officer examines a patient. A pretty nurse squeezes past with an enamel jug and bedpan.

MEDICAL OFFICER

Hasn't that ambulance returned yet?
I need to get this chap out of
here. He's skin and bone.

61 EXT/INT: AMBULANCE, BURMA, 1943 - DAY 16 61

It is raining hard. The ambulance is stuck in mud at a precarious angle near a Burmese village.

The wounded Australian soldiers wait inside as Makorongo jacks up a rear wheel. Singh shoves bamboo under the tyre.

The paddy fields are deserted except for an ancient Burmese in a wide straw hat fishing from a traditional boat. He smokes a pipe, watching them without making a move.

Makorongo takes the jack round to the cab. He starts coughing but heaves himself inside and tries to start the vehicle.

Singh finds a plump leech on his leg and pulls it off. The wound starts streaming with blood.

62 EXT: RED CROSS FIELD DRESSING STATION, BURMA 1943 - DAY 16 62

A red cross marks the canvas roof of the Field Dressing Station. Red Cross trunks are stacked up outside.

The section of Japanese soldiers in tin hats emerge from the jungle bearing rifles and cross puddles in two-toed boots.

63 INT: RED CROSS FIELD DRESSING STATION, BURMA 1943 - DAY 63

OS: Clap of thunder and heavy rain.

The nurse looks up but hears thunder rather than shelling. She helps a feverish young soldier to drink. The Medical Officer has a stethoscope on his patient's naked back.

MEDICAL OFFICER

And take a deep breath... Is that the ambulance?

The Japanese Officer and his section of soldiers storm in.

The nurse sees her patient's alarmed face as she is bayoneted from behind.

MEDICAL OFFICER (CONT'D)

We're Red Cross!

Japanese soldiers bayonet the medical officer, orderlies and every patient lying in every bed.

64 EXT/INT. AMBULANCE, BURMA, 1943 - DAY 16

64

Makorongo drives in torrential rain. Singh staunches the flow of blood from his leech bite.

SINGH

Isn't that artillery fire?

MAKORONGO

Just more thunder.

SINGH

In what direction is the fighting?

MAKORONGO

At this stage, the enemy could be anywhere.

65 EXT/INT. AMBULANCE, FIELD DRESSING STATION, 1943 - DAY 16 65

Makorongo turns the ambulance to the Field Dressing Station.

Singh looks up as birds fly up into the trees, screeching.

Makorongo sees the birds and slams on the brake. Singh waves him on but Makorongo is listening.

MAKORONGO TO CAMERA

This isn't normal. Birds do not fly in rain.

Makorongo finds reverse gear, crunching it in.

The wounded Australians in the back are jarred as he turns.

SINGH

What are you doing?

MAKORONGO

There is something bad here. We must leave.

SINGH

But it is a Field Dressing Station.

Makorongo stops and opens his door to look down. The print of a Japanese two-toed rubber boot fills with water.

MAKORONGO

Spoor like an ostrich.

66 INT. RED CROSS FIELD DRESSING STATION, 1943 - DAY 16 66

OS: revving ambulance.

The wounded nurse lies across the body of her patient. She looks towards the entrance.

The Japanese Officer turns towards the entrance.

67 EXT/INT. AMBULANCE, FIELD DRESSING STATION, 1943 - DAY 16 67

The Japanese officer appears at the entrance of the tent.

Makorongo throws his gear lever into first gear.

His wheels spin in the mud.

Makorongo tries second gear and lurches off.

Singh sees the Japanese Officer and armed soldiers emerge from the tent.

Makorongo gets the ambulance back on the track but it slides into a long packing case, which cracks open.

His boot hits the accelerator pedal but the vehicle stalls.

Soldiers run up behind the vehicle, followed by the Officer.

Makorongo turns his ignition key, churning the starter to no avail.

Japanese soldiers open the back of the ambulance. They bayonet the Australians and yank their bodies out.

JAPANESE OFFICER

Kono sharyō ga hitsuyōdesu.

(We need this vehicle.)

Makorongo grabs a spanner but is forced to stand under the Red Cross sign on the side of his vehicle with Singh, arms out-stretched. Rain runs down their faces like tears.

JAPANESE OFFICER (CONT'D)

Kono enjin o shidō sa semashou!

(Get this engine started!)

A Japanese soldier tries to start the ambulance but, while the starter motor turns, the engine won't fire.

Singh points to his Red Cross armband. He is shot dead.

The same rifle is aimed at Makorongo but the Japanese Officer raises his hand, pointing at his large spanner.

JAPANESE OFFICER (CONT'D)

*Īe! Kare ni enjin o shidō sa sete
kudasai!*

(No! Get him to start the engine!)

Makorongo opens the bonnet and uses his spanner to hit the starter motor. The engine fires up.

The Japanese Officer registers his usefulness.

JAPANESE OFFICER (CONT'D)

*Kokujin no seibi-shi o tsurete kite
kudasai. Watashitachi ni wa kare ga
hitsuyō kamo shirenai.*

(Bring the black mechanic with us.
We might need him.)

The officer shoves Makorongo towards the back of the ambulance. He skids and nearly falls on top of a dead Australian but is hauled inside by his captors.

68 EXT: AFRICAN VILLAGE & FARM, 1943 - SUNRISE - DAY 17 68

Dawn breaks over the African farm. Blue wood smoke rises from thatched huts, a little dog stretches, a rooster crows.

The maidens walk in single file with tools balanced on their shaven heads. They pass under a beehive slung in a tree.

Meru is the eldest and tallest, leading the group. The other girls break into song, but she doesn't join in.

Mganga eyes them from behind a stand of millet.

69 EXT: QUARRY ABOVE POW CAMP, TOKYO, 1944 - DAY 17 75 69

A whistle sounds, an explosion goes off, rock is blasted. Mechanical winding gear adds to the sound of quarrying.

An eagle soars over the POW camp looking down on European captives, most wearing hats or caps, who use levers to force slabs of white oya stone from the rock-face.

A NORWEGIAN SAILOR and Chuck, the American Airman, load stone into a trolley on a rail line overseen by the teenage guard.

A canvas backed truck packed with new prisoners of war drives past a sign and through gates into a yard where the flag of Japan is being raised.

The teenage guard jogs toward his Sergeant. Chuck and the Norwegian Sailor grab a chance to rest. They look towards the latrines where four black KAR prisoners of war toil.

Sub-title: **~ The Empire of Japan, 1944 ~**

70 EXT: YARD BELOW QUARRY POW CAMP, TOKYO, 1944 - DAY 17 70

A PRISON COMMANDER (57) and A female, civilian TRANSLATOR (53), watch Makorongo and other POWs descend from the truck.

Beyond them, Kenyan, Jabu, and Toki walk out of the latrines with bamboo yokes from which swing buckets of excrement.

OS: Quarry winding gear.

Kenyan breaks into a fit of coughing and is forced to set down his bucket. Excrement sloshes onto his torn uniform.

71 EXT: QUARRY ABOVE POW CAMP, TOKYO, 1944 - DAY 17 71

The Norwegian Sailor diligently loads stone. Chuck looks up to see a European prisoner drilling. New Zealand soldiers prepare to lay explosive charges.

72 EXT: LATRINES BELOW QUARRY, POW CAMP, TOKYO, 1944 - DAY 17 72

The Japanese Sergeant strides up to the coughing Kenyan and slaps him around the face. Jabu and Toki step back to avoid him and let new POWs from Burma queue up to use the toilets.

JAPANESE SERGEANT
Speedo, speedo! Kuri! Kuru Bakaro.

Makorongo stares at him as he joins the queue.

TEENAGE GUARD
Hagu. (Go)

The teenage guard kicks Kenyan over and jogs off.

Kenyan looks up from the ground, his face covered in muck but he sees Makorongo and smiles broadly.

KENYAN
A brother K.A.R! Welcome!

There is an explosion in the quarry.

73 EXT: QUARRY ABOVE POW CAMP, TOKYO, 1944 - DAY 17

73

OS: Echo of explosion.

The Norwegian Sailor and Chuck load stone into the trolley as small pieces of rock begin to fall.

The Norwegian Sailor looks up to see the quarry wall crumble. Chuck runs off but he slips on rubble.

A massive piece of rock splits from the quarry wall.

It falls on the Norwegian Sailor. His face fills with pain.

74 EXT: LATRINES BELOW QUARRY, POW CAMP, TOKYO, 1944 - DAY 17 74

The quarry is silent.

Work at the latrines continues while European prisoners queue up to use the toilets. Makorongo and Kenyan hurry past them, weighed down by full buckets hanging from their yokes.

KENYAN

We are near Tokyo.

MAKORONGO

Tokyo?

KENYAN

You came over in a ship?

MAKORONGO

Like cattle, packed in the hold with no light, no water.

KENYAN

This has become a land of old men. They use us prisoners as slaves in mines, factories, at the docks.

MAKORONGO

Where are you from?

The crocodile tooth hangs from his neck.

KENYAN

Kenya. I was born near Mombasa on the coast. The damp here is worse than Burma. It sits on my chest.

Human excrement in the buckets splashes onto them.

MAKORONGO

How can they make us do this work
when we eat no more than cabbage
that comes from the sea?

KENYAN

Oh, my friend, this is good.

MAKORONGO

Good? We carry excrement. Do you
Kenyans have no values?.

KENYAN

It is not going to explode.

The Sergeant and teenage guard laugh as they walk past.

Kenyan bows to them. Makorongo tries to bow but starts
coughing. His buckets land on the ground with a thud.

The Sergeant is splashed. He looks at Makorongo with disdain.

SERGEANT

Aeso! (Take him to the icebox).

75 EXT: AFRICAN MARKET, ARUSHA, TANGANYIKA, 1944 - DAY 18 75

Small piles of tomatoes lie on cloth under a mango tree.

Live chickens are brought into town by a cheerful youth on a
bicycle. Meru makes her way through the market carrying a
basket of sorghum on her head.

A lady greets her as she scoops peanuts into a woven *kiondo*
bag for a girl with a baby on her back. Coins change hands.

Goat meat is being barbecued by the side of the road. An
errand boy zig-zags past holding a scrap of paper aloft.

An Asian tailor works at his sewing machine. Meru looks up,
attracted to hanging lengths of printed cloth.

Mganga watches her from behind his *dawa* (medicine) stall
stocked with aloe leaves, tortoise shell and jars of herbs.
He picks up a dried vulture head, and twists off the beak.

76 EXT/INT: AESO CELL, POW CAMP, TOKYO, 1944 - NIGHT 17 76

The teenage guard forces Makorongo across the yard and pushes
him into an *aeso* (a concrete cold-room four foot square).

His arms hit the far wall. He can neither stand nor lie down.

SERGEANT

No like work? You stay here. No blanket! No water! Plenty food.

The Sergeant thrusts a box at Makorongo who holds it as the teenage guard slams shut the metal door.

Inside are the Norwegian's legs, severed off below the knee.

77 INT: FARMHOUSE KITCHEN, MOUNT MERU, 1944 - DAY 19 77

Steam rises in front of Hasani's faces as he smooths one of his house coats with a charcoal-heated iron.

OS: vehicle arriving.

Hasani looks up.

78 INT/EXT: FARMHOUSE OFFICE & VERANDA, 1944 - DAY 18 78

The white dog, now quite large, looks up from its basket.

Vera works at the farm accounts, a tray of tea nearby. She sees Tony walking towards her in police uniform.

VERA

Tony...

TONY

Vera.

VERA

Have you managed to learn any Masai?

TONY

Afrikaans. I've been working with the *transporteers*.

VERA

What's happened? You don't seem yourself.

She offers him her tea, but he pours himself water.

TONY

It's been happening a long time. The reason I was sent to the Mara was horrific. Sorry, but I couldn't write about it.

VERA

Is there some ghastly detention camp there?

TONY

No, no. I was commissioned to shoot game.

VERA

Problem animals?

TONY

No. Antelope and zebra. In huge numbers. To feed the troops.

VERA

I know. All my Boran cattle have been commandeered - as well as your milk cows. I was given a receipt by the War Office but no money...

TONY

We then started taking anything on the hoof. Thousands of animals. Hundreds of thousands. Until the air was blue and the sky black with vultures. The meat was sent by rail to ships waiting at Mombasa. Much of it went to Somalia to feed the Italian prisoners of war. I did what I could but with delays... we had an outbreak of anthrax. My assistant died.

VERA

That nice young man? The tall one?

TONY

It was mass slaughter in the end. We've taken the great herds from the plains of East Africa. Ancient lineages lost forever.

VERA

My love. Don't blame yourself.

TONY

They want me to go back for more.

VERA

How much leave do you have now?

TONY

I am not on leave. Is Hasani about?

79

EXT: AFRICAN VILLAGE MEETING HOUSE, 1944 - EVENING 18

79

A yellow weaverbird brings grass and hangs underneath his nest to weave it into the base.

An old lady sits with her legs straight out in front of her weaving a *kiondo* grain bag. Mganga walks towards the Meeting House. His long earlobes wobble as he watches Meru at work.

Meru sweeps the yard around her father's hut with a reed broom, one arm behind her back.

Naked children scatter as Tony drives up in his police vehicle. They mill around as he gets out and looks for Meru.

Tony doesn't yet see the Chief or Mganga sitting under the Meeting House thatch, watching him.

Meru stops working to greet Tony with polite deference.

TONY

Meru?

MERU

Jambo, Bwana.

TONY

Habari gani? (Are you well?)

MERU

Habari njema, asante. Yes, I am well thank you, *Bwana.* We did not know you were home.

TONY

It is only a short visit.

Tony takes an official, K.A.R. letter from his uniform.

TONY (CONT'D)

Meru. I bring bad news. I have already informed Hasani. I think Makorongo would have wanted me to tell you too.

Mganga laughs like a hyena and lights a roll-up. The Chief cuts his fingernails with tiny scissors.

Tony lowers the type-written letter, and stares at Mganga.

MGANGA

...the market for goats is strong. It would be a good time to make up a big herd.

(MORE)

MGANGA (CONT'D)

The British will be finished by
this war of theirs and move on.
Then you will be able to take over
land like this.

The Chief frowns. Mganga assumes he is disagreeing with him,
but the chief can hear Tony.

TONY

Makorongo has been reported missing
in action. We do not yet know...
(if he has been taken prisoner.)

MGANGA

Do you disagree with what I say?

CHIEF

No, but the price you talk of is
too low for a hard working maiden.

Meru looks at a fallen weaverbird nest. A child picks up the
blue speckled eggs that had been inside. One is broken.

80 INT: AESO CELL, POW CAMP, TOKYO, 1944 - NIGHT 17 80

Moonlight falls through the grid of the aeso. Makorongo lies
on the cement floor. He coughs, unable to stretch out.

OS: African singing and dancing.

Clasping his legs for warmth, Makorongo starts to dream of
food and water:

81 EXT: FARM AND RIVER BANK, 1914 - MONTAGE DREAM SEQUENCE 81

Young Makorongo and Hans' faces are reflected in an
irrigation furrow passing the farmhouse. Makorongo scoops
clear water into his mouth while Hans catches frogs.

Bees hum around a cleft in a tree. Young Makorongo climbs up
to it with a hooked stick tucked into his shorts and a
smoking weaverbird nest wrapped in green reeds.

Hasani (aged 40) waits below with a leather container.
Despite buzzing bees, Young Makorongo stuffs a chunk of honey
comb into his mouth.

Hans catches a small fish from the Oosa River.

Young Makorongo flings dry Acacia branches on a fire he's
building in late afternoon light.

He looks through smoke to watch Hans thread fish onto a stick. The Baroness walks along the river bank.

Hasani sweeps a sandy path in the garden.

HASANI

When the rains come, snakes walk.
We need look out for their spoor.

YOUNG MAKORONGO

Why do people get mean and vicious?

HASANI

When they are out-numbered or eaten
up by fear.

African drums beat as the dream turns into a nightmare.

A snake turns into a crocodile that rears up from dark water.

BARONESS

Be strong and courageous my boy...

Meru puts out her hand and is given the crocodile tooth. She wears the same patterned cloth as at the station.

MERU

I can't wait, can't wait any
longer.

The tooth burns Meru's hand like acid. She throws it into the water. A green water spirit spins and swallows it. The spirit roars and dissipates in a vortex.

82 INT: AESO CELL, POW CAMP, TOKYO, 1944 - NIGHT 17 82

Makorongo wakes from his dream, sweating, and brings his crocodile tooth charm to his lips.

OS: African drums beat.

83 EXT: AFRICAN VILLAGE, MOUNT MERU, 1944 - SUNDOWN - DAY 18 83

OS: African drums beat CONT...

Maidens huddle in blankets around a fire. The Chief gestures for Meru to join them.

Mama Mbuzi rakes the embers. Hasani stares into the flames. Meru kneels between them. Mganga is absent.

MERU

Can I ask something of you, Mama?

Mama Mbuzi nods.

MERU (CONT'D)

The goat. Your white goat.
The one I saw Mganga buy from you?
What did he want it for?

Mama Mbuzi looks up at the full moon.

Hasani looks at Meru who stares back at him.

MAMA MBUZI

What do you want from life?

84 EXT: BANK OF OOSA RIVER, MOUNT MERU, 1944 - NIGHT 18 84

A herd of elephants cross against the setting sun, the young following their mothers in single file.

A jackal sniffs the air. Hyenas wait in the long grass.

MAMA MBUZI

Mganga calls on powerful forces.
Ignore them at your peril.

The elephants move on.

85 EXT: HILLTOP, AFRICAN BUSH, MOUNT MERU, 1944 - NIGHT 18 85

Mganga draws a knife. It's blade catches the light.

OS: A jackal howls.

Mganga clutches a struggling individual. His face twists in concentration. The body in his grasp is the white goat.

OS: African drums resume their distant beating.

86 EXT: PRISON YARD, POW CAMP, TOKYO, 1944 - NIGHT 18 86

OS: The beat of African drums (CONT).

Makorongo is held up like the goat. The teenage guard ties his thumbs and splays his arms as if crucifying him.

The Prison Commander taps two fingers while pacing up and down. His civilian translator, adds notes in oriental script to a concertina pad. She wears wooden shoes.

PRISON COMMANDER

You no eat! You no hungry? Why you
have injured hand?

The teenage guard adjusts Makorongo's ropes so the tips of his toes touch the ground.

The rope bites into the old scars on his thumb.

PRISON COMMANDER (CONT'D)

No good! I want to see savage. To
study behavior of African man. Next
time we see you eat.

The guard raises a bamboo cane.

PRISON COMMANDER (CONT'D)

No, no. I first must measure.

A pair of calipers loom in front of Makorongo's eyes.

The Commander measures the width of his nose. Calibrations are noted down by the translator. The Commander then takes measurements of his lips, ears and head.

PRISON COMMANDER (CONT'D)

Uxeito (Wait!) Wait, I want to see
something else). I have heard it
reported...

The Commander unsheathes a knife and slices through Makorongo's shorts.

PRISON COMMANDER (CONT'D)

No tail at all! I thought all black
devils had tails. He must be
beated. (sic)

MAKORONGO

Why?

PRISON COMMANDER

Why? One: For wrong thinking. Two:
Looking arrogant. Three:
Infringement of discipline. Grave
offense against Emperor.

The teenage guard takes glee in beating Makorongo repeatedly across his legs with a bamboo cane.

87 EXT: FARMHOUSE VERANDA BENEATH MOUNT MERU, 1944 - DAY 19 87

Rows of clean bandages, medical implements and bottles of ointment stand on clean white linen in the sunshine.

The shaggy white dog plays with a piece of cotton wool on Kikuyu grass in front of the farmhouse.

Vera sits behind a table, administering First Aid. Her queue of patients include women and a hunched old man but no young men. A baby peeks from a *kanga* tied around his mother's back.

Mama Mbuzi waits with the herd boy as Vera treats his hand.

VERA

This wound must have been festering
for sometime.

Hasani (now 70) walks out of the house holding a glass bowl of steaming water. The herd boy looks up at him.

Hasani looks back at him through the steam.

HASANI

Oh. My son!

VERA

Is he your boy, Hasani?

HASANI

No, he just reminds me of...

Little children watch, fascinated as Vera turns the water purple by adding iodine and dips her cotton-wool into it.

VERA

This will hurt I'm afraid.

HASANI

Maji kali. (Fierce water) You must
be strong, my child.

The herd boy grimaces as the iodine stings.

Whilst treating the wound Vera looks up to see Meru.

HASANI (CONT'D)

Ah *Memsaab*, this is Meru.

VERA

Meru, how are you?

Meru curtsies.

MERU

Mem.

VERA

The nurse in Arusha has been sent off to war, so you'll have to put up with us, I'm afraid.

MERU

Mem.

VERA

Are you sick, Meru?

Meru shakes her head. Hasani looks down.

MERU

I have come to you asking for...

Vera leads Meru across the lawn, leaving Hasani to bandage the herd boy's hand.

VERA

Is it a woman's problem?

This gives Meru confidence, igniting the fire within her.

MERU

Yes. It is. Of sorts. I am asking for a loan.

VERA

A loan?

MERU

I need to borrow cattle to pay my own bride-price.

88

INT/EXT: MGANGA'S HUT, MOUNT MERU, 1944 - DAY 19

88

Mganga squats by a smoky fire inside his hut, which is full of glinting bottles and filthy jars of *dawa*. Flies buzz around as he ties a charm to a baby with smallpox.

A thin young mother holds the sickly child while the grandmother extracts coins tied in the corner of her cotton wrap and counts them out for payment.

Mganga taps his fingers, insisting she pays more.

89

EXT: FARMHOUSE VERANDA BENEATH MOUNT MERU, 1944 - DAY 19 89

MERU

I cannot be joined to that man. He has had other wives. Women are sent to him when they cannot fall pregnant.

VERA

Ah, I always wondered... they stay for a month? Or two?

MERU

As the daughter of a chief, I can only marry an elder, but he is old. Nearly as old as my father.

VERA

Forgive me, but why is your father contemplating this if you are not happy about it?

MERU

To him it is an honor. Mganga is highly revered. He cannot see that for me it would be a kind of slavery.

VERA

But...

MERU

My father has bad debts. They are pressing on him.

VERA

I'm afraid I don't have any.

MERU

You must! Surely? They do not need the shillings. The payment can be in livestock. It will just be until Makorongo returns from the war.

VERA

Come with me.

Meru follows Vera as she strides off with her dog.

90

EXT: BOMA BY FARM STABLES, MOUNT MERU, 1944 - DAY 19 90

A marabou stork, resembling an undertaker, stands on bare earth in the cattle yard. There are no cows.

VERA

Even my breeding heifers have been taken to feed the troops. I too have a sore heart. All I have left is a horse no one else can handle.

MERU

I fear Mganga has set a curse on Makorongo. It will kill him.

VERA

No it won't. Nothing can have any power over love.

The women walk back across the lawn, followed by the dog.

MERU

I did not understand when Makorongo spoke of dreams, the dreams he had for us. I was too young. But he spoke of building a future together. Now I see that his words were about loyalty and trust.

VERA

It's good to dream. At times it's the only thing that keeps you going.

MERU

This separation has given me a longing for Makorongo. Deep feelings I have not known before.

Vera sees Hasani bandaging the boy's hand.

VERA

He's is Hasani's son isn't he? His only son.

Hasani releases the herd boy. Vera sees a charm tied around his ankle.

91

EXT: MASAI MARA GAME RESERVE, 1944 - DAY 19

91

Tony, armed with a rifle & side-arm, climbs up a rock outcrop with a Masai tracker. The police vehicle stands below them.

Tony reaches the top. An African plain lies before him but no hoofed animals can be seen. The tracker points out vultures soaring in the distance and down to one brown speck.

Tony raises his binoculars.

A young wildebeest calf stands against the skyline, bleating. It is quite alone.

92 EXT. FARM AND VILLAGE, MOUNT MERU, 1944 - LATE AFTERNOON 19 92

A female bushbuck watches Meru as she walks home alone, clasping her shawl around her for comfort.

As she approaches the village, Meru walks past an old woman shutting up her chickens in a little hut on stilts.

Fires burn, smoke drifts. The Chief sits with his elders in the Meeting House. Meru passes them silently, enters her grandmother's *rondavel* and closes the door.

93 INT: DORMITORY, POW CAMP, TOKYO, 1944 - EVENING 19 93

Makorongo lies on his front holding his crocodile tooth charm. Kenyan looks down from the bunk above as Chuck brings him a mug of green tea and examines his bruised legs.

CHUCK

What are you holding?

MAKORONGO

It is for good luck.

CHUCK

Are you sure it's working? I'm more concerned about you than my skin infection.

MAKORONGO

My best friend had to live with a scared face. Did they shoot you down from the sky?

CHUCK

Yep. Plane caught fire. Couldn't get out fast enough. Found myself bobbing about in Japanese waters.

MAKORONGO

Is there no way out of here?

CHUCK

How are you going to get off an island like Japan? Try to escape and they'll decapitate you.

KENYAN

And we will have to eat your head.

94 EXT: MGANGA'S HUT, NEAR MOUNT MERU, 1944 - DAY 20

94

Mganga pulls the scales off a dead pangolin.

A Go-Away bird squawks from the trees.

Mganga looks up as Vera rides up on her grey horse. Without dismounting she takes out her wallet and counts notes.

VERA

Are you the one who has the power
to sell curses?

Mganga rises, thinking he has a customer.

MGANGA

I am he.

VERA

A curse strong enough to kill a
man?

MGANGA

That would cost you a lot of money.

VERA

Are you sure it will work?

MGANGA

Curses activate once I have made a
sacrifice.

VERA

I see.

Vera stuffs the money back in her pocket, turns her horse and canters off leaving Mganga nonplussed.

95 EXT: AFRICAN FARM, MAIZE FIELDS, MOUNT MERU, 1944 - DAY 20 95

The Chief supervises workers bringing in the maize harvest.

Vera rides up and goes through the traditional greetings.

VERA

Good afternoon to you.

CHIEF

Memsaab.

VERA

Habari? How are you, Chief?

CHIEF

Habari njema. I am well. How is it with you?

Vera jumps off her horse and takes the reins over its head.

VERA

My eyes are the eyes of a bird today. But my mind is working like the mind of a she-elephant. I have come here to tell you that neither the bird nor elephant want to cause offense.

CHIEF

How is it that I can help the elephant?

VERA

I need you to call a meeting of the elders. Please invite your *mganga* to attend. The one Bwana Tony calls Mr. Fan-belt.

CHIEF

Mganga?

VERA

It's a matter for the police.

96

EXT: YARD BELOW QUARRY, POW CAMP, TOKYO, 1944 - DAY 20 96

The teenage guard lights a bonfire while Makorongo, Kenyan, Jabu, Bright and Toki demolish a dilapidated bamboo fence.

Kenyan tosses rotten wood onto the flames, which crackle as Makorongo takes his crocodile tooth from around his neck.

MAKORONGO TO CAMERA

I must get rid of this thing.

KENYAN

Doesn't it remind you of home?

MAKORONGO

It comes from a bad source.

Makorongo throws the crocodile tooth into the embers.

The tooth bursts into green flames that flare up. Distorted by the heat-haze, it resembles a writhing crocodile.

MAKORONGO (CONT'D)
The spirit of the crocodile.

TEENAGE GUARD
Speedo, speedo.

Makorongo exhales, feeling as if a weight has been lifted. When he fails to move, the guard tries to belt him with his rifle butt but is distracted by the green flames.

MAKORONGO
Gone. I am free of it.

The guard belts Makorongo who falls into the ash.

TEENAGE GUARD
Furio... Furio. Furio. Furio.

The guard kicks Makorongo before jogging off, leaving him to stare at the dents made by his feet in the sand.

An eagle soars above the quarry looking down on the scene.

Makorongo lies on his back watching the bird.

97 EXT: AFRICAN VILLAGE, 1944 - LATE AFTERNOON - DAY 20 97

Patterned fabric is shaken out.

MGANGA
I have bought a gift. Something for
a fine young woman.

Meru looks up from her cooking fire. Mganga is holding the exact length of printed cloth she'd admired at the market.

Meru looks to her father but the Chief ignores her, swishing flies with a wildebeest tail mounted on a stick.

Hasani and the elders enter the Meeting House. Some open tobacco pouches. All react as Mganga takes a seat.

Meru rises to enter her grandmother's *rondavel* but stops by the door as Vera rides up, dismounts, hands her grey horse to a boy and enters the Meeting House.

Vera shakes hands with the elders but Mganga won't touch her.

98 EXT: JAPANESE PRISON BELOW QUARRY, 1945 - DAY 20 98

Makorongo and Bright use bamboo rakes to make curved paths. Jabu extracts rubbish from under huts to burn on the fire.

The Commander nods with approval and leaves, as does his translator. They pass Kenyan and Toki bringing barrowloads of newly cut white stones to set along the sides of the paths.

Kenyan notes the footprints left by wooden sandals.

Jabu brings Makorongo some torn, labelled packing.

JABU
Look what I found.

BRIGHT
The guards must be pillaging Red Cross parcels. Were there any letters with this? Any food?

JABU
I'll see what else I can spot.

MAKORONGO
These white rocks are perfect.

KENYAN
Freshly cut. They're from the tunnel Chuck and his gang are digging for the Commander.

MAKORONGO TO CAMERA
I fear that tunnel is to be our communal grave. In days of old, the Masai would seize young men of the WaArusha and had them digging wells to extend their grazing. Once the cattle watered, the Masai killed their slaves in cold blood. They wanted to keep the location of the wells secret.

99 EXT/INT: FARMHOUSE VERANDA, 1945 - LATE AFTERNOON DAY 20 109

Tony walks onto the veranda in his police vehicle but no one seems to be at home. The white dog lies asleep in the office.

100 EXT: FARM STABLES, MOUNT MERU, 1945 - EARLY EVENING - DAY 20 100

Golden light floods the garden. Vera dismounts and leads her horse into its stable.

Tony appears from behind, startling her.

TONY
I didn't mean to shock you.

VERA
What's happened?

TONY
Simply no more zebra left. There is
nothing left.

VERA
I've missed you.

He kisses her.

TONY
I've missed you every second of
every day. You know you have never
looked so beautiful.

VERA
And you are just the man I needed.

Vera swings Tony back towards his parked vehicle.

TONY
I am delighted. You know what I've
heard, in the back of beyond?

VERA
What's that?

TONY
I gather you are free to marry.

VERA
Oh, yes. The divorce came through.
It's not very exciting.

TONY
Would you be looking for another
husband by any chance?

Tony tries to take her in his arms.

VERA
Actually it's a policeman I need
right now. Quite badly.

TONY
Why?

VERA
I've got trouble with a fan-belt.

TONY
A mechanical problem?

VERA

I'm joking. That Mganga fellow you call Fan-belt. The one with the long ears.

TONY

What about him?

101 EXT: YARD BELOW QUARRY, POW CAMP, TOKYO, 1945 - DAY 20 101

Makorongo uses the sharpest white stones to edge paths his friends have made through the camp, which now looks neat.

Bright rakes smooth sand within the rocks, while Toki creates ridged gravel around standing stones.

TOKI

Paths make it easier for those with wooden shoes.

BRIGHT

Jabu has started to track the guards. He can even tell how fast the delinquent one is moving.

KENYAN

I want to be able to use these rocks as missiles.

MAKORONGO

My intention was for the stones to catch the light, like this.

KENYAN

What, and just look pretty?

Makorongo nods, standing back to see the camp transformed. His shining rock garden has become a thing of beauty.

102 EXT: IMPERIAL PALACE CASTLE, TOKYO - NIGHT, 1945 102

Armed Imperial guards patrol a bridge to an illuminated castle reflected in still water and framed by cheery trees.

OS: Sounds of an ostentatious party rise within the palace.

103 INT: RECEPTION HALL, IMPERIAL PALACE CASTLE - NIGHT, 1945 103

Japanese officials meet diplomatic guests. A German COLONEL resembling the Baron covers his jaw with one hand as he explains his mission to a Japanese lady in traditional dress.

COLONEL

My engineers are looking into providing Japanese submarines with Messerschmitt engines, basically designing machines to kill people.

The Colonel overhears the Prison Commander in conversation with a bespectacled German engineer.

PRISON COMMANDER

Our brightest young men are at the front but we have found way to increase manpower efficiency, discovering some captives have useful skills. You must come and inspect the new stone garden built at our quarry. It is not far to drive.

The engineer is disinterested, but the Colonel intervenes.

COLONEL

I would be most interested.

The Prison Commander bows, eager to make an impression.

104 EXT/INT: FARMHOUSE VERANDA, 1945 - EARLY EVENING DAY 20 104

The white dog looks towards the veranda steps.

POV dog: Vera talking to Tony at the stables.

VERA

... Can't you charge Fan-belt with murder?

Tony and Vera walk towards the dog.

TONY

How can I arrest anyone for the death of a man in the Far East? It's ridiculous.

Vera bursts into tears, storming past him into the house.

A toothless crocodile skull looks towards the house from the citrus trees the other side of the lawn.

105

INT: DORMITORY, JAPANESE PRISON, 1945 - DAY 20

105

Makorongo and Kenyan enter with Toki and Jabu supporting Bright who falls into his bunk, one eye half-closed due to swelling from a new cut.

CHUCK

What's the Swahili word for brain?

KENYAN

Bongo.

CHUCK

Well, don't let them into your bongo.

KENYAN

I don't think they wait to be invited.

CHUCK

You know that they put the inadequate soldiers in charge of us? The delinquents and psychos they don't want on the front?

MAKORONGO

What do they mean by '*furio*'?

CHUCK

They shout *furio* at you?

KENYAN

To each and every one of us.

CHUCK

Take no notice.

MAKORONGO

What does it mean?

CHUCK

That you are the lowest of the low.

KENYAN

This is not something new.

CHUCK

Yeah, but when they declare *furio* it means that you aren't going to live more than six months.

MAKORONGO

No?

CHUCK

It means that you won't get out of here.

Chuck walks to the door of the dormitory.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

None of us will. Brains or no brains. Wait till the US bombing starts.

The Sergeant and teenage guard burst into the room, shoving Chuck aside. One holds the bamboo cane.

TEENAGE GUARD

Prisoner Jabu-Mombasa!

Jabu stands frozen in terror, thin and child-like. The bamboo cane is tapped slowly against the wall.

SERGEANT

You come first for *aeso*, black man, then for questioning. On suspicion of wrong thinking.

Jabu trips, but is dragged out of the dormitory by the guard.

MAKORONGO

Hold your heart. Be strong.

106 EXT: AESO CELL, YARD OF POW CAMP, TOKYO, 1945 - DAY 20 106

The Sergeant and guard march Jabu off to the *aeso*.

107 EXT: QUARRY AND YARD, POW CAMP, TOKYO, TOKYO, 1945 - DAY 207

A diplomatic car flying small Nazi flags drives through the quarry, bringing the German Colonel towards the prison yard.

A guard opens the prison gates revealing the orange globe of the sun. The diplomatic car drives through.

The Colonel emerges from the car, tall & clean-shaven with short hair, wearing gloves and a greatcoat with high collar. He glances up to see the guard shove Jabu into the *aeso*. He can see that he is underage but not that he is African.

The Colonel is greeted by the Prison Commander and Sergeant with much formality. Rifle butts are slapped, feet stamp. The German salutes, the Japanese bow.

PRISON COMMANDER
Welcome to Imorit Prison, Colonel.

COLONEL
Commander. It's a pleasure to be here.

The Colonel looks up at the Japanese flag.

PRISON COMMANDER
We hear you work with the Imperial institutions. Are you in Tokyo for much time?

COLONEL
A matter of days. I am here with the Führer's military delegation.

PRISON COMMANDER
Ah, yes. Did you enjoy a good journey?

The Prison Commander begins to show him the camp.

COLONEL
Amazing. We flew from Germany to Japan with only five landings to re-fuel.

PRISON COMMANDER
The Junk! I know of this flying Junk.

COLONEL
Jünkers. I understand you are using prisoners of war for labour. Is this going well?

PRISON COMMANDER
We are proud to show the German Reich around model prison.

COLONEL
I see you've been building paths. In interesting shapes...

108 INT: DORMITORY, POW CAMP, TOKYO, 1945 - DAY 20

108

Makorongo listens horrified as his friends talk in Swahili.

KENYAN
Nakatka doktari... I think you need a doctor for this eye.

BRIGHT

Sisi hakuna doktari hapa.
(We have no doctor here.)

OS PRISON COMMANDER

All captives accorded best possible treatment. They unanimously express appreciation of Japanese magnanimity, grateful to Imperial Government...

The walls are so thin every word can be heard.

109

EXT: DORMITORIES, POW CAMP, TOKYO, 1945 - DAY 20

109

The Commander leads the Colonel past the dormitories followed by the Sergeant.

PRISON COMMANDER

...for the just and good treatment accorded to them..

OS MAKORONGO

Lete maji hapa, tafadhali. Water.
(Bring water here, I beg you.) *Mimi nataka maji.*
(I need water).

The Colonel stops to listen.

PRISON COMMANDER

We plan to have prisoners at one hundred and thirty different sites in Japan.

COLONEL

Excuse me, Commander, but I've just heard Swahili being spoken. Do you have any East Africans here?

The Commander pauses, before issuing a command.

PRISON COMMANDER

We have blacks. *Shippo no nai kuroi akuma o tsurete kite kudasai.* (Bring me that black devil with no tail.)

110 INT. DORMITORY, POW CAMP, TOKYO, 1945 - DAY 20

110

MAKORONGO TO CAMERA

"A new era is coming into being
reflecting wisdom and benevolence
of mighty Emperor..."

The Sergeant enters, catching this mockery. The prisoners remain motionless waiting to hear who they want.

SERGEANT

You! Black prisoner! You are
wanted! The Meeting House! Now!

The Sergeant strides over and yanks Makorongo to his feet. Toki has to help him up. The guard arrives to drag him out.

Kenyan, Bright and Toki group together, unable to help.

CHUCK

I'm sorry, I'm so sorry my friend.

MAKORONGO

Kwa heri. Kwa Herini. Goodbye.
(Goodbye to you all.)

111 INT. COMMANDER'S OFFICE, POW CAMP, TOKYO, 1945 - DAY 20

111

OS: Noise of quarrying starts up outside the office.

The Colonel is helped out of his greatcoat and nods in greeting to the civilian translator who mutely bows her head, hands clasped. The Prison Commander remains standing.

As Colonel removes his gloves and is shown a seat behind the desk, the Sergeant opens the door and the guard shoves Makorongo in front of the desk. He stares at the Commander.

The Colonel takes a pocket-watch case from his breast pocket and checks the time on his father's gold pocket watch.

Makorongo is pushed into the chair. He spots the watch case.

The Colonel glances at the prisoner as he removes his cap, but has no recognition. The Commander digs in a filing cabinet, looking for paperwork.

COLONEL

Tell me, what regiment are in?
Where do you come from?

Makorongo looks up into his eyes. The Colonel appears and sounds exactly like his father but with a disfigured jaw.

MAKORONGO

I come from, from a sisal farm on the Oosa River in Tanganyik... what you know as German East Africa.

COLONEL

What are you doing here?

MAKORONGO

'Flowing water does not wait for a thirsty man.'

COLONEL

Indeed it does not.

Hans-Werner the Colonel slowly recognizes him.

PRISON COMMANDER

Tell me, please, what you talk about?

Makorongo looks up, the guard seizes his arms, jerks him from the chair and tries to force him into a prostrate position.

The Colonel pushes back his chair, turning to the Commander.

COLONEL

I have to explain that this Tanganyikan should not be here.

The Commander frowns, unable to grasp the language.

TRANSLATOR

Kono genjūmin wa koko ni irubekide wanai. (This native should not be here.)

PRISON COMMANDER

Why not?

COLONEL

Were you fighting for the British?

MAKORONGO

They gave me an ambulance. I was a driver for the Red Cross.

COLONEL

The Red Cross? Commander, we cannot have personnel from the Red Cross serving jail sentences. This man is not in the correct place. Should not be here. He must be extradited without delay.

The Colonel takes out a small note-pad and fountain pen.

TRANSLATOR

Kare wa shūjin o shakuhō suru yō shuchō shita. (He insists the prisoner be released.)

COLONEL

We have to stick to the rules. Tokyo agreed to adhere to the Geneva Red Cross Convention of 1863... In 1929 the...

PRISON COMMANDER

What? So then! Prove this man's identity!

COLONEL

I've known Makorongo for nearly thirty years. He is a German citizen who has simply been enslaved by the British. You would be very much in danger of losing face if you were found to be holding a Red Cross worker. It could cause serious diplomatic problems.

PRISON COMMANDER

Higher Authority would require positive identification.

The Colonel is stumped.

PRISON COMMANDER (CONT'D)

Definitely need to see proof.

The Commander flicks his hands in command. The Sergeant opens the door for the Guard to remove Makorongo.

The Colonel raises his hand. He pulls at his right thumb.

COLONEL

Look at the prisoner's right hand. It was caught in farm machinery when he was a boy.

TRANSLATOR

Shūjin no oyayubi ni nanika mondai ga arimasu. (Something is wrong with the prisoner's thumb.)

A guard lifts Makorongo's thumb above the table.

COLONEL

My mother had to sew it back on.

The Commander, who has seen the thumb before, starts shuffling papers, looking down his list of prisoners' names.

PRISON COMMANDER

*Kanren suru shōsai o kakitomemasu.
Shūjin no kaikyū to shimei,
kokuseki, Sekijūji-sha dōnyū*
(Take down the relevant details;
rank and full name of prisoner,
nationality, Red Cross
deployment...)

MAKORONGO

I cannot go, Hans-Werner.

COLONEL

What is wrong?

MAKORONGO

I cannot leave the others from our
regiment to suffer here.

The Translator looks amazed. A shocked silence follows.

There is a knock at the door.

COLONEL

What others?

Jabu in tattered KAR uniform, enters with several half-burnt Red Cross parcel boxes and a yellow-topped jar of Marmite.

JABU

Sir, I found this on the bonfire.

COLONEL

And how old are you?

112 EXT. AIRFIELD, TOKYO, 1945, EVENING 112

A Jünkers plane takes off above traditional wooden buildings.

113 INT. JÜNKERS GERMAN AIRCRAFT, TOKYO, 1945, EVENING 113

Toki, Jabu, Bright & Kenyan look down and spot Imorit Prison to see paths Makorongo made from white rocks catching the evening light. They clearly spell out letters P.O.W.

KENYAN

You have been thinking like an eagle.

MAKORONGO

Chuck said something about his next mission.

MAKORONGO TO CAMERA

Operation Meetinghouse. I've been terrified the bombers will incinerate Tokyo.

114 EXT: SKIES OVER TOKYO, 1945, EVENING 114

On the opposite horizon, B29 Superfortress bombers close, and commence bombing the ancient city.

One pilot sheers off as he spots the POW camp from the air.

115 INT: JÜNKERS GERMAN AIRCRAFT, 1945, EVENING 115

COLONEL

P.O.W. - I thought there was something odd about those paths.

MAKORONGO

It was you who taught me to write in the sand.

116 INT: VERANDA OF AFRICAN FARM, 1945 - NIGHT 20 116

OS: Clicking sounds of the African night: cicadas, fruit bats and nightjars.

Tony hands Vera a *kiondo* bag, watched by the white dog.

TONY

I've bought you peace offering. Hardly diamonds but fashionable.

Vera finds a pair of beautifully made crocodile shoes.

VERA

Thank you! I haven't had anything new since the war began. Nothing pretty like these. Nothing so chic or glamorous!

TONY

You realize that being married to me will be grim: no going back to Europe, no concerts, no theatre, no restaurants or dances...

Vera slides her feet into the shoes and turns her heels.

VERA

Are you sure about this?

Tony pulls her into his arms.

TONY

Quite sure. I just don't know where I can find an engagement ring.

The dog watches them.

117 EXT: JÜNKERS AIRCRAFT, AIRFIELD, SILESIA, 1945 - DAY 21 117

The roar of aircraft engines flares then suddenly ceases.

Sub-title: - **The Province of Silesia, Germany, 1945**

The Colonel emerges from the newly-landed Jünkers aircraft dressed in his greatcoat to find the airfield covered in the snow. All is quiet and still. A Nazi flag hangs limp.

Time on his pocket-watch is checked as it starts snowing hard. Makorongo joins the Colonel, seeing snowflakes land on his grey uniform. Their breath looks like smoke.

COLONEL

Snow - it muffles the sound.

MAKORONGO

I've never seen it before.

COLONEL

You have. It's been lying on the peaks of Kilimanjaro all your life. Take these so that you can look at it when you reach home.

The Colonel, so in need of friendship, hands over his Zeiss field glasses. Makorongo has always wanted a pair.

MAKORONGO

I am sorry. I cannot...

COLONEL

'It is not for the traveller to
give a gift to those who remain.'
I'll ship them to you.

MAKORONGO

How did you know I was at the camp?

COLONEL

I heard Swahili being spoken soon
after I arrived, but it had never
occurred to me that you would be
attached to the armed forces.

MAKORONGO

We have to prove ourselves as
warriors before we can marry.

The bespectacled German engineer and his two draftsmen emerge
from the plane clutching instrument cases and rolls of blue-
print Messerschmitt plans. The engineer stares at Makorongo.

The Colonel ignores him, putting the field glasses away as
the draftsmen descend the steps.

COLONEL

Once we win this war, I'm hoping
you can help me re-establish German
East Africa. With these new
submarines, will win.

MAKORONGO

All we want is peace.

COLONEL

Yes, well, the Red Cross will take
care of your repatriation from here
on. You will be transported to
their HQ in Cairo and then on
south. A long journey. I so wish I
was joining you.

Makorongo touches his arm lightly in farewell. Kenyan, Jabu,
Bright & Toki are amazed by the snow but file down the steps.

The Colonel returns the salutes of two waiting drivers in
long winter coats. Their staff cars emit billowing exhaust
fumes. Footsteps crunch.

118 EXT: STEAM TRAIN, TANGANYIKA, 1945 - DAWN - DAY 22 118

As dawn breaks a steam train travels across an East African plain dotted with flat-topped acacia trees. The locomotive flies the Union Jack.

Makorongo comes to the window and gazes up at an eagle soaring in the sky, a symbol of liberation.

119 INT: STEAM TRAIN, TANGANYIKA, 1945 - DAWN - DAY 22 119

Makorongo is joined at the train window by Toki and Kenyan who look up at the eagle and out over the plain.

A herd of giraffe walk past the acacia trees.

A warthog with three piglets trots through long grass.

A male ostrich runs right past the train window.

MAKORONGO

No need for field-glasses.

KENYAN

You will be home soon. And all being paid for by this Red Cross.

Kenyan flops down on the seat beside Jabu and Bright.

MAKORONGO

I am afraid you three will end up a little way from where you live.

KENYAN

You did not tell the Colonel that we are from Kenya?

MAKORONGO

Did you want to stay in that quarry?

KENYAN

You tricked him?

MAKORONGO

I might have said something about growing up on the Equator, or under the shadow of Kilimanjaro.

Makorongo looks briefly to camera.

MAKORONGO TO CAMERA

It was Hans-Werner who assumed that we were all from his old colony. I only ever claimed they were from East Africa, which is true.

BRIGHT

I think you might just have hoodwinked a Nazi officer.

JABU

Undoubtedly a man of importance but he removed his uniform for us.

MAKORONGO

Come to my village, to meet my old father, then we will work out how to get you three over the border and back to Kenya.

120 EXT: BANKS OF OOSA RIVER & SHAMBA 1945 - EVENING - DAY 23 120

A herd of elephants go down to the water to drink. Their reflections are caught by golden light. A large elephant caresses a smaller one with its trunk.

Makorongo walks up to Meru's *shamba* (*field*) full of energy.

MERU

Makorongo?

MAKORONGO

I asked if I could help drive the train on the final leg. It enabled me to disembark at Usa River.

MERU

It is you.

MAKORONGO

Thin but happy.

Makorongo takes Meru's hands in his and whirls her around until she falls into his arms, giddy and laughing.

MERU

Where've you been?

MAKORONGO

To the end of the world.

MERU

What was it like?

MAKORONGO

Horrible.

MERU

We thought you might be dead.

MAKORONGO

I lost my mind for a bit.

Needing to pat his chest to confirm that she is not dreaming, Meru finds the crocodile tooth pendant missing and smiles.

He tries to take her in his arms but she keeps him back.

MERU

Will you marry me?

MAKORONGO

I didn't want to rush you.

MERU

Rush me? I've been waiting more than two years.

MAKORONGO

Are you free? Will you marry me?

MERU

I am my own woman now.

MAKORONGO

Will you have me?

MERU

Will I?

MAKORONGO

Will you?

MERU

You must know I am free to say, Yes or No or Maybe.

MAKORONGO

No?

MERU

Yes. Yes not No. Yes, I will. Right now I cannot think of a finer dream - and I don't care how many cucumbers you tread on.

MAKORONGO

Me?

MERU

Only there will be complications.

MAKORONGO

I don't care.

MERU

And it might cost a lot.

MAKORONGO

We'll make a plan.

MERU

Are you sure?

MAKORONGO

We just need to look at things from
a different angle.

121 EXT: STATELY HOME (*SCHLOSS*), SILESIA, 1945 - NIGHT 23 121

Moonlight shines through pine trees illuminating a Schloss in the snow as a long grey vehicle drives up and stops. The headlights are switched off and the car door opens.

The Colonel scrunches up the steps to the front door as it starts to snow afresh.

Hans walks into the warmly lit hall, closing the heavy door behind him. The brass knocker shines in the moonlight. It is formed in the shape of an eagle.

122 EXT: AFRICAN VILLAGE, MOUNT MERU, 1945 - SUNSET DAY 23 122

A *n'goma*, a feast, is being prepared. Old women coax fires where goats are roasting. The Chief stirs a huge pot of *pombe* millet beer. The *transporteer* arrives in his ox-cart loaded with baskets of tomatoes and onions.

OS: sound of rolling thunder.

The only men present between the ages of 17 and 50 are the former POWs: Makorongo, Kenyan, Jabu, Bright and Toki.

MAKORONGO

The thunder sounds like shelling.

CHIEF

It's good to be blessed by rains at
a feast.

MAKORONGO

You must meet our Chief.

The Chief greets each one in the traditional manner.

CHIEF

We are so pleased you are all here.
I want to know by what way you
travelled back from the ends of the
earth. We want to know about the
ndege (the airplane), of what you
had to eat, too many things.

MAKORONGO

I would quite like my father to be
here first.

CHIEF

Where is he?

MAKORONGO

Still working. I think he is
perhaps far too loyal.

123

EXT/INT: FARMHOUSE VERANDA, 1945 - SUNSET - DAY 23

123

OS: African Drums and sound of the village *n'goma* (dance).

The stuffed python looks down on Tony. Hasani enters with the
dog. Tony watches the cattle truck lurch down the drive.

TONY

Who's that?

HASANI

Mganga has bought the old cattle
truck but I'm not sure he knows
much about vehicle mechanics or how
scarce fuel is.

OS: The rumble of thunder.

TONY

Thunder, that's good. We need rain.

HASANI

Ah, not tonight, Bwana.

TONY

Yes, of course. You'd better go on
ahead. I'll see you there.

Tony turns and walks into the house with the dog.

124 EXT: MERU'S HUT, AFRICAN VILLAGE, 1945 - SUNSET - DAY 23 124

Beads flash in the firelight. With much giggling the maidens rub oil onto Meru's shaven scalp. She pretends to resist.

Tony and Vera, in her crocodile skin shoes, arrive as a boy runs fast through the crowd. Makorongo greets them as Toki takes Kenyan, Jabu and Bright to stamp around a big fire as the maidens jump up and down, singing into the night.

TONY

A package arrived for you today.

He hands Makorongo a box marked ZEISS - JENA.

MAKORONGO

From Zeiss? What does that mean?

TONY

That if this war ever ends you'll be equipped for a new career as a safari guide.

MAKORONGO

Is this a dust filter?

Makorongo finds the case contains brand new a pair of German binoculars with his name engraved on them.

Drummers beat, rising to a crescendo.

Meru finds Makorongo who formally takes her hand and leads her towards the Meeting House where his POW friends gather.

OS: Rumble of thunder.

MERU

You have had your time of fighting?

MAKORONGO

Indeed we have!

JABU

Did he tell you *Kingi Georgi* has given us all shillings for the time we were held captive?

MAKORONGO

Being paid whilst in prison was not something I had expected.

Makorongo looks straight at camera.

A number of small boys including the little herd boy drive a herd of 80 goats through the crowd and into a new boma.

MERU

So many goats?

MAKORONGO

For something of great value.

MERU

And what could that be?

Makorongo just smiles as rain starts to fall heavily.

TOKI

They say that if it rains at a wedding then all the tears that need to be shed will be shed and there will be sadness no more.

MERU

But does it have to rain tonight?

125

EXT: AFRICAN VILLAGE, MOUNT MERU, 1945 - SUNSET DAY 23 125

Makorongo stands outside the Meeting House thrice shaking the Chief's hand. Meru tries to be modest and hide her smiles as she looks over the huge herd of goats.

MAKORONGO TO CAMERA

I bought them from a man with long ears. He told me he was moving from the district.

Mama Mbuzi enters with a selection of beaded jewelry. Makorongo adorns his bride with a porcupine quill necklace. Tall flames leap behind them, defying the rain.

- END CAPTIONS -

This true story was told by Makorongo and Tony when they visited his old friends in Kenya in 1986.

Hans-Werner died soon after World War II. Vera was 29 years older than Tony. They were married for more than 30 years.

The stuffed python currently resides in Scotland.

FADE OUT.