

Act one

Scene 1.

(Friday afternoon. A torrential downpour. Two white Americans, JACK, 40s, and WOOLSEY, a little older, are in a car. WOOLSEY is driving. Their conversation is interrupted by a deafening crack of thunder. They shout to be heard over the storm.)

WOOLSEY Don't worry! / These are the best roads in Africa!

JACK I'm fine! Really! Thank you!

WOOLSEY Water's a different story. Don't ever drink from the tap, whatever people tell you. / That goes for teeth-brushing, too. If you didn't boil it or unscrew it, don't drink it!

JACK I know! I've done a lot of traveling!

WOOLSEY You ever had serious diarrhea?

JACK ...I'm not sure!

WOOLSEY How long you here?

JACK Just the semester!

WOOLSEY Well, get ready for it! For the next four months, when you fart, you'll fart with fear!

(The rain has stopped, almost instantaneously. The sun comes out. JACK looks around as WOOLSEY stares straight ahead.)

JACK God, that's incredible! / I've been all over the world, but that is...

WOOLSEY Flick of a switch turns it on, flick of a switch turns it off.

JACK Amazing.

WOOLSEY Yes, indeed.

(They drive for a moment. Then, leaping back in where they left off...)

JACK Brezhnev!

WOOLSEY Perfect example!

JACK God, I'd forgotten / about him, too.

WOOLSEY Exactly my point. Like it never happened.

JACK Absolutely right.

WOOLSEY Forty years. / God knows how much money and blood.

JACK Incredible. Just incredible.

WOOLSEY Berlin Wall's down, what, four years? Already ancient history.

JACK I don't think my son even knows who Brezhnev was.

WOOLSEY There's no enemy now. We won. And yet I miss those fuckers. No, I do. I'm old school, Jack. I can say "Do you want to defect?" and "How much for the entire night?" in ten languages. There's nothing to push against. We're just going through the motions. Four years I've been here, shuffling papers, picking up tourists at the airport. Why? No one can tell me. What are we protecting? No one can tell me. I don't know, Washington doesn't know, you don't know—*do* you know?

JACK You mean—

WOOLSEY Yeah. Tell me.

JACK I...No, I don't—

WOOLSEY Come on, Jack. Give me a fresh perspective. We're still strangers; we can say anything.

JACK(*Laughing.*) Two hours in Kigali and you want my thoughts? I teach international relations / not mind read—What?

WOOLSEY Exactly. (*Off the word "What?"*) "International relations." With whom? Who are we relating with? Four years, I still haven't gotten an answer. You find an answer, you let me know.

JACK You'll be the first.

WOOLSEY Anything, really. You find out anything interesting. People. Places. Happenings. You let me know first. Will you do that?

JACK Sure I can. I'm just visiting.

WOOLSEY Me, too.

JACK I just know one person here.

WOOLSEY That'll change. You like good beer?

JACK Sure.

WOOLSEY The beer here tastes like piss. Makes you thirsty for Schlitz. God, what I wouldn't give for an ice-cold Schlitz. Let's swing by UNAMIR before we go to the hotel, see if we can score some Ghanaian stuff.

JACK The Ghanaians make good beer?

WOOLSEY Geniuses with beer. This is a fucked up continent, but the Ghanaians, they're doing all right. You wanna go by the embassy and check in first?

JACK Why?

WOOLSEY Why? Why in a country where people are getting assassinated left and right would you want the United States government to know where you are and how to get in touch with you?

JACK But the Accords are—

WOSLEY What about them?

JACK There's a ceasefire. There's no fighting.

WOOLSEY And you know this how?

JACK From...everywhere. The BBC, / African news sources. The guerillas agreed to—the RPF laid down their arms. I contacted people at the UN before coming. They told me things were...