

Play name: *Siembamba*

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Characters: **Kind** (Girl, mid-20s, returning to her childhood home)

**The Mother of All Things** (Fictional character from **Kind**'s imagination, ancient being, Stream of Consciousness speaking (in manner of spoken word poet)

**Trudy's Daughter** (Domestic worker, **Trudy**'s daughter; 25 years old. Veneer of confidence)

### **Kind**

*Carries suitcase. Inside it is her old doll's house*

*Siembamba, mamma se kindjie,*

*Siembamba, mamma se kindjie --*

*draai sy nek om, gooi hom in die sloot:*

*trap op sy kop dan is hy dood.*

Daar's soveel stories oor dié wrede liedjie. Ek dink nie enige iemand weet regtig waar dit ontstaan het nie. Meeste mense sê dit gaan oor die konsentrasiekampe, dat dit beter was vir die Boer-kindere om vermoor te word as om in die kampe te lewe. Ander sê dit beskryf wat hulle met die baster-babas gemaak het, die babas wat gebore is as gevolg van Britse soldate wat Afrikaner vroue verkrag het. Maar die woord self is Portugees of isiXhosa in oorsprong, en is waarskynlik verwant aan die isiXhosa woord "ukubamba" wat beteken "om vas te hou." En dan is daar ook 'n storie wat sê 'n swart bediende het tydens die oorlog met haar mense se kindertjies van die Britte gevluug en hulle in 'n grot iewers weggesteek. Daar het sy die liedjie gesing om die kindere te sus na hulle vir 'n slang geskrik het. So eintlik "sien 'n mamba" en die doodmakery gaan oor die slang. Dis 'n cop-out dink ek, die mensdom maak mos altyd verskonings vir sy eie wreedheid.

Another story is that the song is actually about the Xhosa, who violently killed white - sorry, European - women and children during the Xhosa Wars, also known as the Cape Frontier Wars or Africa's 100 Year War. But this theory sounds a bit far-fetched to me, like

someone's been taking liberties whilst penning history. History is nothing more than a series of distorted memories - subjective truths remembered through tinted glasses and a tinted mind, or through a swirl of whiskey at the bottom of the bottle. And then inked into a dictionary, encyclopaedia or textbook to make it fact.

### **Trudy's Daughter**

*Clipped tone of disinterestedness that eventually disintegrates*

Mehlo madala/Lide ixesha singabonani [*Long time no see.*]

It's quite something. To be back here. In this kitchen. I remember it a lot bigger. I was a lot smaller. Back then.

I only came a couple of times, when there was some emergency at home or it was school holidays and everyone was busy. Mostly I would play under the kitchen table. I would be very quiet. I used to think that if I was quiet enough no one would know that I was there, and I could stay. And always live here with uMa instead of going to school and learning Afrikaans and being stuck at our small house that smelt like burnt pap and paraffin.

### **OR**

I only saw mevrou a couple of times. I remember her being very beautiful, smelling like flowers and having very red lips and long nails. I remember the little girl best. She was my friend when we were small. When it didn't matter that my mother was the maid and I wasn't big enough to be noticed so no one thought I was "taking advantage" by playing in her room with her.

(*Head snaps up*) I hated being left behind after Ma's holidays. When she would come home for a week twice a year. I hated feeling Ma get up off the mattress in the morning before the sun was even up to catch a bus that would take her away. I hated that bus. And I hated that my grandma would always make meat some Sundays and sometimes not at all and I hated having someone else's clothes to wear, only after they were stained or torn or too small.

Andikho endlini/Andikho sekhaya. [*This place is not homely/ I don't feel at home.*]

### **OR**

I never hated the Madam. She paid for me to go school. I never hated that little girl. The one who lived in this house. The one who didn't have to keep quiet and hide. She hadn't done anything wrong. And she didn't have a mother either, that's why she needed to borrow mine.

It wasn't her fault.

I hated my Ma. I hated her. For being patient. For being grateful. For being quiet underneath that kitchen table and hoping no one would notice.

I hated her for not choosing me.

Uyeva? Andisazi isizathu! [*Can you hear? I don't know why/the reason!*]

When I talk, it's not with my mother's tongue. They cut it out in school and gave me a spoonful of quicksilver to swallow my new language down and it's been lurching in my belly ever since.

Andikho endlini/Andikho sekhaya, Ma (*Catch in her throat*) Andikho endlini/Andikho sekhaya

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### **The Mother of All Things**

*Spotlight. Standing microphone*

I was born a very long time ago. Before time, before the concept of time even existed, long before humans came along and assigned fixed values to arbitrary instalments of time, before one second was ever one second, or one year was ever one year, or one lifetime was ever one

lifetime. I was a speck of dust before the Big Bang, I was a particle, a globule of energy floating through whatever the universe before the universe was what it was.

What was the universe before it became what it became? Before the chain of events causing this universe and this earth to form in this particular way, the random confluence of events causing this earth to be inhabitable by this particular form of life, this earth with its water and carbon and nitrogen - and oxygen! - and single-celled amoeba evolving into multicellular organisms evolving into fish as happy as fish in the water evolving into things (driven by curiosity perhaps) crawling out of the oceans evolving into reptilians who ruled the earth until their mammalian brethren came saw and conquered evolving into apes evolving into the missing link evolving into... into this.

