

COW DUNG IN MUD

By

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Cast of Characters

SUSAN MIREMBE: Sister to Byansi
TONY BYANSI: Brother to Susan
JACOB BYAKULEKA: Susan's fiance

Scene

A one-act play

Time

The action happens at night.

ACT I

Scene 1

A well-furnished, lavish living room, set on the second floor of the house. Susan, late 20s, wearing a black dress is discovered in deep mourning, sitting upon a sofa, gazing firmly at the photograph. Jacob is also present. He's dressed in a fitting suit. His shirt has seen better days. His tie barely reaches his collar and the top button is undone. He appears somewhat tired as he gently rests his hand on Susan's shoulder.

JACOB

I'm afraid you're wearing yourself out, Suzie. Look, the company needs you, everyone there has moved on already and whatever breathes is enjoying life. Even your brother. Except you who's hiding yourself in this house as though you're confined.

SUSAN

Yes, I'm confined- confined in these four walls just like my father is in his grave. Besides, I'm stopping nothing from enjoying its life. My father meant everything to me.

JACOB

(Wiggles)
Oh God! There we go again. Singing lamentations like its the only thing left to do in the world. See Suzie, when my wife died, I grieved and mourned for only two weeks--and then it was over-

SUSAN

A big contrast, Jacob! You told me she was so ill for a long time and the least you wished for her was death.

JACOB

And I also told you that before she died I had a series of mourning as I watched her lying on her sickbed.

SUSAN

Not the case with my father.

Long silence.

JACOB

(sotto)
I know it was a sudden death.

(CONTINUED)

SUSAN

Exactly.

(Sobbing)

You know very well that he lived to see us wedding. But now everything seems-

JACOB

You're not canceling the wedding, are you?

SUSAN

(Weeping)

Oh...! He wished to see me in another life. A life of a complete woman.

JACOB

Suzie, what is it in Heaven's name?

SUSAN

It was three weeks to our wedding. Why did he have to die at such a time?

[Jacob walks to her]

JACOB

It was the will of God and the Lord has given him eternal peace. You've grieved enough over it and it's time to stop. Have you forgotten that we already made reservations for the wedding?

[Susan sighs heavily]

JACOB (CONTD)

Look here-

[He puts off his coat and hangs it on the chair. He checks his brief case and whips out a clipboard. Opens it to Susan]

all our invitations are already sent out and we have guests from America that are flying in to witness us exchanging vows. It will be more tears for you if things don't go well. You don't want our guests to be disappointed, do you? *[Sighs]* Thing is, we shall not flash your father's death down the toilet so quick. No. Of course we shall recognize the loss by offering a moment of silence and wish him eternal peace, just to clear the air out. *[He thinks]* On second thought, that evening of the wedding, we can go visit his grave with gifts and flowers. He will be pleased.

SUSAN

What is the use of all these words when none of them has sympathy for me? You understand how close I was to my father. And now he's gone. A lot of responsibility
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SUSAN (cont'd)
lies in my hands. I have to manage his business, the coffee company- you heard everything when the WILL was read.

JACOB
I totally understand but-

SUSAN
I wish you did.

JACOB
I do, Suzie. I'm just afraid that you're forgetting us.

SUSAN
Jacob, I have not said no to the wedding. I love you and I want the wedding to happen but I just need some time to figure out how to manage the estate of my father.

JACOB
Really?

SUSAN
Yes.

JACOB
(Holds her hands gently)
Well, I'm hear. We can talk about the businesses then later, the wedding. How about that? You see, it hurts me seeing you drain yourself like this yet-

A bell rings so loudly.

SUSAN
(Shudders)
What is that? I'm in no moods to see no body.

JACOB
Me either. So, I was saying, it hurts me seeing you-

A bell rings again. Jacob sighs dejectedly, advancing to the door.

JACOB
I'll go see who's there.

SUSAN
No. Whoever that person is, let them stay there.

MALE VOICE (O.S)
Open up!

(CONTINUED)

JACOB

Oh God! There we go again. You know what, I'm not having another argument with him. Not tonight.

[Jacob grabs his coat to leave]

SUSAN

Wait, you can't just leave.

JACOB

Oh! A kiss.

SUSAN

No

[She stares at him expressionlessly]

JACOB

Alright, fine. I'll stay. But you know I can't stand him around.

SUSAN

He's my brother, you know.

[Jacob shrugs as Susan exits. Jacob stares around grinning like a fool. He sits in the sofa bossy-like more like the owner of the house. Grabs a magazine to read. He enacts a gentlemen who's just from work and slumps in his sofa. He manages not to laugh]

JACOB

Life is good. Uh-mm, why would you want to delay me this life Suzie? huh? A life I've longed for years; this is where I belong, it's our house now. No, my house now. Mr. Jacob Byakuleka's mansion. You can play hard on me as long as you wish but I'm ready to fall in love like a school boy just to enjoy all this.

[Footsteps approach, Jacob reverts to his seat. Byansi, mid-20's, tipsy, his shirt half tacked in and sleeves rolled up, enters followed by Susan. Byansi holds a bottle of beer in one hand that he sips on]

BYANSI

The bad thing you don't know when to talk and when to shut. You talk to much, Susan, too much.

[Surprised on seeing Jacob]

And this fool? What is he doing here?

(CONTINUED)

JACOB

Good evening to you too.

BYANSI

Off my seat.

[Jacob finds another chair]

Look how obedient he is, like a well-trained dog who comes when his mistress calls.

SUSAN

(To Byansi)

You don't own a seat in here.

BYANSI

You're right. I don't own a seat because I own more than just a seat. So, where's it?

SUSAN

Where's what?

BYANSI

Come on, I don't want to waste time for both of you.

[To Jacob]

Look at him, I don't know how long he's been waiting to get whatever is between your legs. Just get me what I want and he'll be off the hook.

SUSAN

What is it that you want?

BYANSI

(Bangs the table)

The WILL. Stop playing dumb.

SUSAN

You know I can't do that. You heard it being read by the lawyer.

BYANSI

Must I ask again?

SUSAN

I can't give it to you. It's not some piece of paper to play with.

BYANSI

Do I look like I want to play with a piece of paper?

You know what?

(Sitting comfortably)

I won't leave until I have it.

(CONTINUED)

SUSAN

Fine, stay.

JACOB

Just give him the damn Will, Suzie. After all the lawyer has another copy.

BYANSI

Hey! Family matters please! stay out this. I don't need your help.

[Susan exits to her bedroom. An awkward silence.]

BYANSI (CONTD)

It's not good manners to drink alone. Have some.

JACOB

I'm okay.

BYANSI

I didn't ask you how you're feeling. Just offering a you a drink.

JACOB

I don't booze, thanks.

BYANSI

Oh, you don't? That's really unfortunate. Sorry man! So when are you starting?

JACOB

To do what?

BYANSI

To booze.

[Jacob glances at him and ignores. Jacob's expression shows that Byansi is Drunk]

BYANSI (CONTD)

(Sipping on beer)

I'll let you think about it. Meanwhile, tell me why you want to marry my sister? We both know she's not pretty. People say my looks are even far way better than hers yet she wears make up, so just imagine if I..okay I won't go there. Anyway, she has some flesh behind but of course you can't stare at for more than three seconds. (Sips) So besides what I know, tell me why you're dying for her.

JACOB

Take what you know.

(CONTINUED)

BYANSI

So it's true.

[Under his breath]

Look, if it's money that you're marrying her for, then go marry something else. I don't care if it's a goat or anything. So long as it breathes.

[Susan strides in and plops a document on the table]

SUSAN

There you have it, now take your alcohol out.

JACOB

Thank God.

SUSAN

Go to your quarters.

BYANSI

Not so fast.

SUSAN

What else do you want?

BYANSI

And what do you think I need this thing for? You have to believe that our father didn't sign this shit voluntarily. It may have been that he didn't even know what he was signing.

SUSAN

Each word written inside there is of our father's hand.

BYANSI

It's so unfortunate that it's only me having brains to prove that this document is not of our father's consent.

SUSAN

Brains. Uh-mm, I see.

BYANSI

You want proof?

(He flips pages until he halts on one)

BYANSI (CONTD)

Now listen and listen good.

(He reads)

"I leave my son Byansi Tony out of the estate, not because I love him any less but because I think he has less need of it" So now tell me that was a sane mind

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BYANSI (CONTD) (cont'd)

writing this. (Beat) Father knew how much I loved wealth, tell me how he could forget and write this shit.

SUSAN

He wrote it and signed on it.

BYANSI

You call this his signature? This is a hand of a very ill man. Someone wrote this crap and made him sign on it on his death bed. You did that.

SUSAN

What?

BYANSI

You heard me.

SUSAN

You're crazy.

BYANSI

No. Crazy is you being so selfish to make him sign on this crap, forgetting that he was also my father. Congratulations, Susan you succeeded. But I need what belongs to me.

SUSAN

That's our father's will and I don't know what belongs to you.

BYANSI

That's not your problem. All you have to do is to disclaim part of the property to me. Write a disclaimer.

SUSAN

Tony! It wasn't my fault for the will to read as it does and you can't force me to do what you wish for. But I can offer you some property, that's after I have figured out how to go about it.

BYANSI

I don't need you to figure out what belongs to me. I'm totally aware of it. Just write a disclaimer, that includes whatever I mention.

JACOB

(He smirks)
Suzie! Ask yourself what your father should have done. How can you know his property if your father didn't name it in his will?

(CONTINUED)

BYANSI

You moron, my father didn't write this will.

JACOB

Yes he did, he left you with a small cash sum because he knew you'd sell everything out, the same way you sold off the company's property.

BYANSI

Don't listen to him. He's doing all this because he knows there's a reward. I have worked for my father for five years, he can't just throw me out of his will like a banana skin.

SUSAN

You've worked while smuggling bags of coffee out to other companies.

BYANSI

None of you can understand. We don't share departments. He's in marketing, you're in finance. How can any of you understand what happens at the warehouse?

JACOB

You're right. How can we know? Except the girls you share your body with from there.

BYANSI

Then go ask them.

JACOB

Oh please.

BYANSI

(Unwrapping a pack of weed)
Well, then go die mad about it.

SUSAN

You're not smoking that inside here.

Byansi whips out a matchbox from his pockets, lights the cigarette and starts to smoke. He sits comfortably.

BYANSI

(Puffing out smoke)
Yes, I'm not.

JACOB

(He stands)
I guess I should get going?

(CONTINUED)

BYANSI

Why guess? Just leave.

SUSAN

But you promised you would stay till we discussed about the business and our wedding. And-

JACOB

Of course I want to stay as much as you need me. But things don't seem to be normal right now.

Byansi gets up.

BYANSI

So, you're saying that I'm abnormal.

SUSAN

He didn't say that.

BYANSI

(Walking to Jacob)
No. What he actually means is, I'm mad, weird, stupid, insane. That I'm bullshit. You thinks I don't understand?

Jacob smirks, wearing his coat to leave. As he grabs his brief case from the floor, Byansi holds it firmly.

JACOB

What are you doing?

BYANSI

You see, he still asks me what I'm doing yet I'm holding his bag.

(Laughs briefly then to Susan)
He thinks I'm stupid, doesn't he?

SUSAN

Tom, leave him alone.

JACOB

Let me have my bag.

BYANSI

Oh, you want it now?

SUSAN

Tom.

JACOB

(Mutters)
Let me have my bag.

(CONTINUED)

BYANSI

No. You're not leaving until she disclaims what belongs to me. Make her write it.

JACOB

(Huffs)

I won't do it. Let go off my bag.

Byansi clasps it away from his hand.

BYANSI

No, I won't.

Jacob grabs it. To and fro they struggle for the bag.

SUSAN

Tom.

BYANSI

What?

SUSAN

Okay, now you've gone to the end of the line. Leave.

BYANSI

Not until you do what I asked.

[Susan scurries off to her father's bedroom. She later returns with a pistol that she points at Byansi. Byansi and Jacob, stilling strunggling, haven't seen her holding a gun. Suddenly Jacob sees her. He briskly lets go off the bag, leaving the zip open with files and papers scattering on the floor]

JACOB

(Out of breath)

A gun? You have a gun?

BYANSI

Father's gun? You have to include that in the disclaimer too. It's part of my inheritance.

SUSAN

(To Byansi)

Now listen. Collect everything you've thrown from that bag, arrange it, put it back and leave.

JACOB

Is that a real gun?

(CONTINUED)

BYANSI

(To Jacob)
What is it that you don't see?

SUSAN

(Huffs to Byansi)
Get out.

JACOB

It's okay. I'll do it myself.

SUSAN

No dear, it's him that caused all this mess. Let him do it.

Susan's hand starts to shake.

BYANSI

Be careful the way you hold it. You may lose your Bride Groom. You see, you've never shot a gun that's why your hand is shaky. Feeble hands can't shoot a gun.

Byansi starts to collect Jacob's files from the floor. He stops suddenly with a document in his hand. His jaws slightly drop as he looks through it. Jacob strides to him. Byansi jerks away from him.

BYANSI

Susan.

JACOB

Give me that document.

BYANSI

So this is it.

JACOB

It doesn't concern you.

BYANSI

It bears my name on it. How can it not concern me?

JACOB

It's confidential.

BYANSI

So I'm confidential to you?

Byansi picks the land title from the table and compares it with the document in his hand.

(CONTINUED)

BYANSI

(Mumbles to himself)
What is here is also here. (Then) So I was right. I
knew it, I knew it.
(To Susan)
You teamed up with him to forge this land title?

SUSAN

What is that?

BYANSI

Stop playing foolish like you don't know what I'm
talking about.

SUSAN

Jacob, what is he talking about?

JACOB

(Forcing to laugh)
I-I don't know what-what he's talking about.

BYANSI

Don't seem like you don't know what I'm talking about
yet each word written here is also in this document.
How did you come to have this land title?

*Jacob goes silent. Susan's hand, holding a gun
drops slowly, looking at Jacob.*

SUSAN

Let me see that.

BYANSI

Oh, you want to crosscheck what you wrote?

*Susan takes the document away from him. She
silently reads through.*

BYANSI (CONTD)

I'm not stupid as you may think.

JACOB

Susan, thing is, I-

SUSAN

What is this Jacob?

JACOB

I can explain.

BYANSI

(Reverting to his cigarette)
And who has stopped you? Spill the beans.

(CONTINUED)

SUSAN

Did you write this thing, Jacob?

BYANSI

Oh, you don't know too? Then who did?

JACOB

You're father signed on it.

BYANSI

From my understanding, I think writing is different from signing.

SUSAN

Jacob, did you write this?

JACOB

Yes I did.

SUSAN

What! And you forced my father to sign on it, right?

JACOB

It's called a deathbed Will.

BYANSI

Let me get this right. So, he had to sign that death- whatever in the presence of you or us?

JACOB

I was the only one in the room before he died.

SUSAN

And.

JACOB

So he had told me earlier what he wanted to appear in his will. So I- I-wrote it and I gave him to sign on it.

BYANSI

(Laughs briefly)

So, in just two weeks back you became a lawyer. Wow!

SUSAN

Jacob, I understand my father liked you as his good employee and as someone whom he approved to marry his daughter. But not to the extend of being his will executor. He had lawyers.

BYANSI

Sure. He had lawyers.

(CONTINUED)

JACOB

I told you it was a deathbed will.

SUSAN

I heard that and I know what it means. But I don't see the executor's signature which should be yours.

JACOB

I-I, okay I didn't sign but-

BYANSI

But you forged the whole thing. Admit it.

A long silence.

A mask of realization wears on Susan's face.

SUSAN

(To Jacob)
Did you kill my father?

BYANSI

What!

JACOB

What! No.

SUSAN

When I came back in that room, you quickly threw away the pillow that you were holding.

JACOB

It was the pillow his head was lying on.

SUSAN

And what was it doing in your hands?

JACOB

He was gasping for breath and I needed to-

BYANSI

To kill evidence.

JACOB

No, to help him.

SUSAN

Please tell me that's true.

A moment.

Jacob weeps.

(CONTINUED)

JACOB

Susan, it was a merciful death. I didn't want to see you suffer like I did with my wife.

BYANSI

And you killed him. Did you even think that he fathers me too or you cared about your fake love life?

SUSAN

(Sobbing)
Did you have to do this?

BYANSI

You didn't even care about her or your love. You wanted money.

JACOB

I love you Susan.

BYANSI

Shut up.

SUSAN

Tom, call the police.

BYANSI

No, I don't think that's a good idea. Why the police?

He walks to the door and locks it.

SUSAN

Call the police.

JACOB

Susan, listen to me!

BYANSI

I'm not calling the police.

SUSAN

Call the police.

BYANSI

I'm not calling it.

SUSAN

I'll call it myself.

BLACK OUT

The stage is dark. We hear a struggle that emanates from the dark that ends with two gun shots.