

CHRISTOPHE

A Play in Two Acts

by

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## CAST

A PLAINCLOTHES POLICEMAN (Mulatto)  
CHRISTOPHE, King Of Haiti (Black)  
SIR HOME RIGGS POPHAM, Rear Admiral (White)  
DUKE OF MARMELADE (Black)  
TOM GULLIVER (White)  
DR.DUNCAN STEWART (White)  
COUNT OF GONAIVES (Mulatto)  
MARIE LOUISE, Queen of Haiti (Black)  
PRINCE ROYAL (Black)  
PRINCESS AMETHYST (Black)  
PRINCESS ANN (Black)  
GRAND MASTER OF CEREMONIES (Mulatto)  
JUAN GONZALEZ, Archbishop (White)  
COLONEL PAULIN (Black)  
MARGUERITE PAULIN (Black)  
TWO WOMEN TOURISTS (White)  
Slaves, African guards, soldiers, courtiers.  
A Caribbean dancing troupe.

ACT ONE

A ramp without visible supporting columns rises steeply from downstage actor's left to upstage actor's right, and disappears from sight. Beyond and under it there is a deep, open, raked space to a cyclorama background.

On the actor's right but downstage sits a lifesize figure of wood, very ill-proportioned. He has an oval head, slit eyes and a nose like a gherkin. His mouth is half open and a long tongue hangs down over his chin. His body is long and cylindrical, and carved with decorations. A large phallus protrudes from him like a cudgel. A table stands before him.

A dim evening tropical light prevades the open area.

There is the tom-ti-ti-tom of Voodoo drums in the distance. The beat is regular, unvaried.

HAITIANS all but naked move across the open area silently. They are seen vaguely in the dimness, silhouetted. Some squat, wait. One or two are crippled.

TWO WOMEN TOURISTS, from the States, appear at the foot of the ramp. They have guidebooks, cameras. They stop and look behind them nervously. They begin walking up the ramp.

At once the figures in the open area come alive. They run and cluster round the TOURISTS, hold out their hands, touch them, begging. THE TOURISTS recoil, horrified.

Following close behind them is a sinister figure with dark glasses, a mulatto. He has a truncheon swinging from his wrist, white. He is a plain-clothes POLICEMAN, and hence-forward will be known as P.P.

Another SINISTER FIGURE with dark glasses stands watching them from the top of the ramp)

**FIRST TOURIST:** (glancing round) These people give me the creeps!

**SECOND TOURIST:** I like the creeps!

(They giggle and do on. THE SECOND TOURIST turns and speaks boldly to P.P. below)

Pardon me, sir --- is there a chance of seeing some Voodoo dancing tonight?

**P.P.:** (after pausing to look them up and down) Where you staying?

**FIRST TOURIST:** (relieved at response) At the Sunset Lodge!

**P.P.:** (only half addressing them) I bet you eat good up there!

**FIRST TOURIST:** (to SECOND) Yeah - burnt chicken livers!

**P.P.:** (disregarding this) Oysters and mussels --- turtle from the lake! Wild pigeon and ducks --- we catch 'em in traps! Potatoes grow wild in Haiti! The hedge along that garden wall (pointing offstage) has tapioca growing on it. Think of that. We cook tapioca in coconut milk. Bananas, mangoes, oranges. Palm wine, fresh lemon squash. Coffee from wild beans, sweetened with sugar cane juice! We got everything. Make a tablecloth out of dried palm leaves, plates we cut from wood, half a coconut shell makes a good cup! Hollowed-out gourd, why that's a wine glass. (to the audience) What the hell do we need you for? (cackling with laughter) We're self-supporting!

(He regains a serious expression with an effort and snaps his fingers towards the wings. TWO HAITIANS bring forward a banner)

This is our coat of arms, or used to be! (pointing with his truncheon) Palm tree, with a sansculotte cap perched on top. Sansculotte is French for without your trousers, so it's a cap without its trousers! (seriousness capsizes again) Here on one side are

P.P.:  
(contd)

flags and cannons --- meaning independence. On the other a drum and a pyramid of cannon balls, meaning strength. This is the coat of arms of a Black Republic, the first there ever was!

(The Voodoo drums grow louder, and he has to raise his voice more and more. He gestures the banner away brutally)

Lesson number two. The one you never learned, and maybe never will! The secret of our power, the secret of all power! I'll tell you something --- the black people brought it all the way from Africa --- they were chained together, they were whipped, their days were darker than the darkest of their nights, but they had this inside them!

(A bustle in the open area as dark figures come in and form a circle for the Voodoo dance. The TOURISTS are excited.)

An altar is carried on, with sacrifices of food and wine. There are Christian images and banners - a crucifixion, a Madonna and Child, saints. Prayers in Latin are heard amid the Creole)

(pointing at TOURISTS) Look at them two lame ducks! Clicking their picture boxes! They want to see some Voodoo! But do they know about the power? Shall I tell you what a man can do with this Voodoo? He can plunge his hands into boiling water and not feel a thing! He can raise up plants where there wasn't none before! That's why we're self-supporting! That's why everything grows, it's the power of Voodoo!

(The TOURISTS click placidly, whisper, gaze round at the dark figures)

Now the pounding of great drums mean that Ogoun Badagris, the blood-smeared demon, must be appeased!

(The great drums start, in a surging heavy boom-boom rhythm. The first drums invited, excited; the second compel, threaten.)

A blazing fire is simulated in the centre of the circle with spots. The MALE PRIEST enters the open area)

P.P.:  
(contd)

That's the Papaloi, the male priest. He can breathe life into corpses. Then he uses them as servants. We call them Zombies. They work at night!

(A ZOMBIE passes across the open area, moving stiffly, blindly. The TOURISTS show the appropriate horror. The BEGGARS scatter from him in panic.

The MAMALOI or Woman Priest enters)

The Mamaloi!

(WOMEN lay bowls round the fire, singing, accompanied by little drums, Damballa gomballa, k'inga do ki la. The other dancers repeat Konga do ki la clapping their hands at every syllable)

(burlesquing as compere) Ti-Roro is one of the favourite Voodoo dances. This can be seen with other dances in the nightly exhibitions given by the Troupe Folklorique d'Haiti at the Theatre de Verdure. (doubles up with laughter) Look at them two! Shall I tell you what they're thinking --- 'Is it real?' they're thinking. 'Do they mean it? have I missed something? is there something I don't know about?' And the answer to that is (shouting fiercely, to the time of the drums) YES! YES! YES!

(The scene and the drums are suddenly blacked out. We hear his last yell in the darkness and silence)

YES! They don't know about real life!

(And now, over the speakers, in the darkness, the TOURISTS are talking serenely, murmuring)

FIRST TOURIST: (over the speaker) Did you ever hear about the King of Haiti? By name of Henry Christophe? He had a court, believe it or not. A gold carriage, drawn by Arab stallions.

**SECOND TOURIST:** (over the speaker) Wasn't he the tease who gave his cronies the craziest names like the Duke of Marmalade?

**FIRST TOURIST:** (over the speaker) That's it! The Duke of Marmalade! Can you beat that?

(They laugh together serenely as a mellow light comes up slowly on the seated wooden figure.

Downstage left, at the foot of the ramp two armchairs have been placed, with an inlaid ivory table between them, all backed by a screen bearing the royal device of a phoenix with the words, I rise again from my ashes.

A HAITIAN WOMAN enters soundlessly from the right. She has wine and food. She looks offstage carefully and then faces the seated figure. Offers it food, which she places on the table before it. She is praying fervently sotto voce all the time. She takes the wine and sprinkles it over the figure. It makes a loud spluttering noise, accompanied by her whispered, ceaseless praying in Creole.

She seats herself on the figure, fingering his symbols of fertility, putting her arms round his neck, urging him, pleading with him.

HENRY CHRISTOPHE and an English rear admiral SIR HOME RIGGS POPHAM enter from the same side and stand gazing at the WOMAN. They are followed at some distance by a PAGE holding a telescope wrapped in a white napkin. CHRISTOPHE is a Black in his late forties, handsome, once described by a Frenchman as 'chilly in manner, urbane in conversation' and by a British naval officer as a man with an 'intelligent, pleasant and expressive' face. He stands five feet, ten inches in height. His nose is rather long, flat at the nostrils, and he has slim lips. His eyes are small and quick, except when he is in a rage, and

then they 'roll in his head', and grow large. He has a high forehead. His complexion is a deep red-brown rather than black. He is dressed as Colonel in Chief of the Haitian Guard --- a long red coat with black revers, collars and cuffs, white lining and braid, red epaulets, white knee breeches, white stockings, a shako trimmed with red silk lace, red braid and a red pom pom, and a gold badge bearing the royal arms. SIR HOME RIGGS POPHAM is older than CHRISTOPHE, erect, grey-haired, rubicund)

**CHRISTOPHE:** She's praying for a child. My mother did the same. If she prays hard enough he'll be a king. (chuckling) My mother must have prayed hard. I never knew her. I was sold early.

**POPHAM:** (as they stand gazing at her) Can you replace all this mumbo jumbo with the cross?

**CHRISTOPHE:** (taking the telescope from his PAGE and scanning the open area) Mumbo jumbo? It's good Creole!

**POPHAM:** (watching him with a smile) They say in London that you order more telescopes than the Greenwich Observatory.

**CHRISTOPHE:** (still scanning) The Greenwich Observatory being what?

**POPHAM:** A place for observing the heavens, your majesty.

**CHRISTOPHE:** (taking down his telescope) I observe my people! That's a very sensible thing to do when you're the king of slaves. They believe I've got special eyes. In my arse, everywhere!

(The PAGE polishes the lens before replacing the telescope in the napkin.

CHRISTOPHE and POPHAM stroll across to the armchairs)

I caught a couple kissing behind the sugar canes with that telescope. I had a priest down there in less than an hour, married them on the spot. I've got to teach these people in ten years what the rest of the world learned in centuries.

POPHAM: They tell me you married a brother and sister by mistake once!

(They laugh pleasantly as they sit down. The PAGE bows and withdraws)

CHRISTOPHE: (loosening himself at the neck) All this damned gear! (stretching his legs out with relief) But they love it!

POPHAM: You know, I'm very impressed, your majesty.

CHRISTOPHE: You're surprised!

POPHAM: I confess I didn't expect it. Not a castle with a garrison of fifteen thousand men, and enough food for a year's siege, and three hundred and sixty five cannons cast in Europe, four cannon galleries, each of them thirty feet wide and fifty feet long! And forty rooms as your personal apartments! In this jungle, too, where plants grow the height of a man overnight!. (wiping his face)

CHRISTOPHE: Eight chateaux, nine royal palaces in less than fourteen years, and none of them inferior to Versailles!

(The WOMAN withdraws from the opposite area)

- POPHAM: My God, it's a relief - - - the coolness here.
- CHRISTOPHE: I have mountain water flowing under the floors night and day.
- POPHAM: You know what people say? That you threw the architects of the Citadel off the roof with your own hands, to keep its secrets to yourself!
- CHRISTOPHE: As a matter of fact I have ten Germans locked up in the Citadel at the present moment, putting the last touches to the ramparts. If they were Black I'd murder them. As it is I'll ship them back to Europe --- blindfold them all the way to the port.
- POPHAM: But my dear Christophe --- !
- CHRISTOPHE: (pointing up the ramp) You know what that place means? We're safe against the French! The Black people are safe!
- POPHAM: But the French won't invade! Not with us out there!
- CHRISTOPHE: (fiercely) And how long can I depend on the British Navy? You talk to me here, then you go South to that fat mulatto pig Petion and talk to him! Your government has never really acknowledged me!
- POPHAM: I --- !

- CHRISTOPHE:** Yes I know you're doing your best. But it doesn't depend on you. It depends on a gentleman in Westminster who tots up figures and measures my trade against Santo Domingo's. You don't realise, Sir Home --- a French invasion means slavery again!
- POPHAM:** We've been engaged in a war against France for as long as I can remember, sir!
- CHRISTOPHE:** But your policies change! You have a powerful navy and I have none! But I shall get there, don't worry. I've won your respect with pretty castles and four cannon galleries. I can win your prime ministers with trade figures. I shall beat my people to the top! They have to work, night and day they must work! Death doesn't matter. Neither theirs nor mine. We haven't reached the individual yet, Sir Home, not like you! We are numbers, hordes, chained gangs! We haven't opened our eyes! We're still lazing in the sun, waiting for a whip to tear our backs! At night we listen to the drums and go wild, we call on the gods to help us! You see, Popham, my work isn't for this generation, not for me or them, but for wherever the Black Man is, now and in the future! Do you realise what hangs on my shoulders? I have to show what the black man can do! And my people have to suffer for that. They have to be the Christs for the whole Black Race!
- POPHAM:** You're very eloquent.
- CHRISTOPHE:** 'Eloquent', he says! (chuckling) You don't know what you take for granted, Sir Home --- What centuries of order, co-operation!
- POPHAM:** I'm beginning to realise.
- CHRISTOPHE:** I'm surrounded by traitors! Only a few days ago I found out that Brelle, my French chaplain, was betraying me to France! There were secret documents in his vestments. Today he'll be executed. Is that tyranny, Sir Home?
- POPHAM:** (rising) I must get back to my ship, sir.
- CHRISTOPHE:** (seeing him out with a hand on his shoulder) I need your country's friendship, not just a few ships off my coasts.

POPHAM: You have it while we are enemies of France.

CHRISTOPHE: And while I have a big coffee trade!

(They laugh)

Friendship has no conditions. I'm asking for unconditional friendship!

(POPHAM bows to him and leaves.)

CHRISTOPHE strides up and down in thought)

(pronouncing it the French way) Marmelade!

(The DUKE OF MARMELADE comes in from behind the screen, dressed in the simple style of George III's court)

I passed a hounfort near the gate. I prefer a Christian chapel in its place, built of stone, with a cross of solid gold. Have it up in two days.

(MARMELADE bows in silence and leaves.)

There are the drum-beats of execution. CHRISTOPHE starts, looks up. The French chaplain BRELLE passes across the open area in procession, his head hooded. On either side of him there is an AFRICAN GUARD.

The procession disappears. The drum beats cease, and there is the order FIRE! offstage, followed by the crack of muskets.

Instantaneously with the report the scene BLACKS OUT. Over the speakers comes a Haitian voice reciting a requiem.

The LIGHT COMES UP SLOWLY on the open area, and the Latin dies away. The royal device and the armchairs have gone. The wooden figure also has gone and there is a Christian altar (gilded cross) in its place, and pews.

P. P. comes down the open area from right upstage. He is carrying a long stake with a horse's skull balanced on it. He has flung a cloak over his shoulders to denote the times of George III, and no longer wears dark glasses or carries a truncheon. He talks as he comes down, holding the stake up in demonstration, with a rather hideous grin.)

**P. P. :**

This is to ward off the duppies! The duppies are the evil spirits of the dead! (he waggles it burlesquely towards the audience, causing himself to double up with laughter) You see this on graves, and you see it outside the Voodoo huts. Now to get back to Lesson Number Two. I'll tell you something about Voodoo. It runs the life of Haiti. It always did. It finds jobs. It brings them to an end. (making a slitting motion across his throat) It makes and unmakes kings! Take the first slave revolt in 1791! (gesturing, off) Drums please!

(The Voodoo drums start again --- the boom-boom of the actual dance. A microphone is handed to P. P. from the wings, on a lead, by another PLAIN-CLOTHES MAN with dark glasses)

(into the mike) We are about to witness what is called the crise de loa, the ecstasy! when the loa or god comes down!

(The Voodoo dance at its height bursts into the open area, to the deafening crash of the drums. The MAMALOI whirls, sweating. The circling figures clap hands, sway. Something fluttering is born towards the MAMALOI)

(into the mike) The Mamaloi has a live cock in her hand! At least it would be alive if you could take it! As it is, in deference to the squeamish tastes of the hardest meat-eaters in the history of white mankind, we are substituting a stage chicken and stage blood! She cuts off its head! (she does so --- glint of steel) Blood spurts out! (it does so, all over her face) She drinks it! The moment of power has come! Nature is in our hands!

(Screams of triumph. A MALE FIGURE suddenly dashes forward to the centre and screams in his ecstasy: 'TIME TO KILL THE WHITE MAN! KILL! KILL!')

P.P.:

(into the mike) He's a slave-driver called Buckman. Every Voodoo camp in the land got the same signal. Sugar plantations burst into flame. The Whites were massacred! (turning to the dancers with sudden brutal impatience) OK! OK! Break it up!

(The dance and the drum beating end raggedly. The dancers hurry off. P.P. hands the microphone back to the wings)

Slaves walked, stumbled, hopped from miles around for these Saturday-night ecstasies! It's something, to have ecstasy in your life! No food, no happiness - but ecstasy! Think it over! (again signalling, off) OK, Mister!

(A file of HAITIANS, black, Creole, white, enter and wait to be demonstrated by P.P. One of them is the SLAVE DRIVER we have just seen in the dance. He now has a long whip)

(as he brings forward the first man, a White) This one is a French planter. He brought the slaves over from Africa. The slaves were driven by one of their own kind. (bringing forward the SLAVE DRIVER) This cartwhip is made of bullock hide --- it really cuts. He whips the slaves --- can you demonstrate this please?

(SLAVE DRIVER gestures a Black to the ground. The BLACK lies face down, and SLAVE DRIVER raises his whip over him in mime)

If a slave woman had to be flogged and was pregnant, they scooped a hole out of the ground for her belly, so as not to squeeze the baby --- slave babies were precious, and a midwife could get a flogging for losing one. (to the miming ACTORS) OK, thank you. A slave was sometimes buried up to his neck

P. P. :  
(contd)

in the ground and his head was used as a jack in a game of bowls. But don't believe these men were brothers in suffering. This Creole here (SLAVE DRIVER) and this Gold Coast man here, both looked down on this Congo here, and he looked down on this Quiamba here --- excuse this use of human beings for demonstration purposes, they're all actors who agreed to come along in the interests of the diffusion of useless knowledge (hideous grin)! Now the Quiamba was about the laziest human creature ever fertilised. He was everything King Henry Christophe wasn't. But even so I bet there was a little Quiamba inside King Henry. He had to fight him every day, I bet. And he won. I mean, he created himself. That's what Henry Christophe did. I'll demonstrate all this by the end of the programme --- don't worry, I'll give you all the facts the white mind craves for, and the white mind behind the black face! Now this Nago was a notorious thief. That accounts for the deep incisions across his cheek --- (with a wink) greasepaint! But even the Nago had a higher place than the Ibo, for who I always feel a special sympathy. He's the saddest creature in God's menagerie! Know what he did? Got together with some other Ibo buddies in a hanging spree - ~~strong~~ themselves up quietly in fours and fives, and kicked off! Isn't that wonderful? Well, that was Haiti a couple of hundred years ago. These were the very raw material of first the Black Revolt, and then King Henry's state of North Haiti. But I haven't yet mentioned the creme de la creme --- the man who was neither black nor white but had a special place in his heart, of love and hate, for both: the mulatto! I don't need an actor for him because he's me!  
(bowing) We looked down on the whole damned lot!  
(doubling up with laughter)

(The DRIVER begins chaining up the  
SLAVES by the neck)

Where were we? The Slave Revolt. For three weeks there was nothing but smoke and massacre. For twelve years there was war with the French. It definitely looked like the Black Man didn't get on with the White Man! To cap twelve years of war, nine-tenths of the White Population were massacred on the night of April 20th 1804.

(Voodoo drums start again in the distance. Also distant screams - sounds of massacre)

P. P. :  
(contd)

(with a grin) Yes, the sound-effects man has always been kept pretty busy in Haiti - at least, since the Christian came!

(The LIGHT in the open area begins to FADE to evening.

SLAVE PARTY moves off across the open area, followed by the FRENCH PLANTER)

I won't try to describe the hideous cruelties carried out by Whites on Blacks and Blacks on Whites. Being the most refined specialists in violence that have ever breathed you won't need any stimulus from me. Let me just say that for the most unthinkable horrible refinements there has been nothing like it even in your civilisation (cackles with laughter)!

(Noiselessly, almost mimed, a cannon is seen in silhouette being pushed and pulled on to the ramp by six or so SLAVES under a DRIVER. It rises up the ramp. We hear their sighing and groaning, their feet skidding. Slower and slower the great cannon rises, the figures slipping and falling, their skins shining.

CHRISTOPHE enters on the ramp side and stands watching its progress with, at the beginning, satisfaction. The PAGE with the telescope is close behind him. CHRISTOPHE is now bareheaded (he has thick white hair) and holds a stout silver-knobbed cane. He is dressed much like George III in a plain swallow-tailed jacket with white breeches. His only decoration is the prominent Order of St. Henry, a great gold star)

(indicating CHRISTOPHE) Then came the man with a New Order for the slaves. He called it freedom. Others called it a new slavery. Out of the two hundred thousand slaves who built the Citadel high in the clouds, twenty thousand died!

(P. P. stands watching CHRISTOPHE. The Voodoo drums still sound in the distance.

The cannon has stopped. It is all the crew can do to hold it. We hear their gasped cries --- Peux pas! Peux pas!

CHRISTOPHE walks slowly up the ramp. His sudden appearance makes the DRIVER cry out in alarm)

DRIVER: (letting his whip fall in utter terror) On! On!

(The cannon still doesn't move)

CHRISTOPHE: (screaming) Well, well?

(He brings his cane down on the figures again and again. Peux pas, peux pas comes from them. Panting and sighing and pushing make no difference. The cannon begins to slip)

(beating them) You can! You can! You will!

DRIVER: (quivering with ecstatic fear) On, on!

(In panic the DRIVER joins the pushing and straining. The cannon continues to slip)

CHRISTOPHE: (pulling out a pistol) Up or you die! Up! You want to die?

(The DRIVER screams as CHRISTOPHE points the gun into his ear. The DRIVER lets out at his men in panic)

To the top! (pointing the gun into the ears of the straining men) To the top or you die! To the top!

(Faintly the cannon begins to move)

To the top! The top!

(It begins to race. They shout with the effort. With a great final trundle it makes the top and is quickly out of sight.

CHRISTOPHE pockets his pistol calmly and takes his telescope from the PAGE and scans the top of the ramp with it)

CHRISTOPHE:  
(contd)

(screaming after them) Into the clouds! To the top, you yawning scum! Would we rather be in the South? under President Petion's stinking skirts? Stewing in our filth! Feeding the flies!

(He turns and comes down the ramp, having evidently enjoyed himself. The PAGE recoils from him. CHRISTOPHE fumbles in his pockets)

(to the PAGE) Take these jewels! (handing him jewels) Sprinkle them in the streets!

(He watches the PAGE's utter astonishment as he looks down at the sparkling mass of jewellery in his hand)

(laughing) You wouldn't steal one would you! You wouldn't want to go through life with one ear --- one hand --- one arm! Go on, sprinkle! sprinkle! They're for slaves like you to goggle at!

(The PAGE sprinkles the jewels frantically, as if only anxious to get rid of them.

CHRISTOPHE withdraws downstage and waits until a FIELD HAND is drawn into the open area by the jewels. He is half paralysed with astonishment. He bends. He unbends quickly. He bends again, his fingers go near the jewels, but a twitch of fear makes him unbend again. The operation is repeated, and this time he very nearly grasps the jewels, until CHRISTOPHE's voice makes him leap into the air)

Take it! Take the jewel! (as the FIELD HAND starts running) Come back! Take it! Take the jewel!

(The FIELD HAND, quivering all over with terror, bends down, and once again his fingers go near the jewels)

**CHRISTOPHE:** (screaming) Take it! (as the FIELD HAND takes the jewel) A thief! A thief! You steal from the Kingdom of Haiti! (bringing his cane down on the FIELD HAND again and again)

(The FIELD HAND yells and cringes, and CHRISTOPHE beats him out, right, with the PAGE gazing on in terror.

There is a long scream, off, and then silence. The PAGE runs away.

Stealthily, ragged BEGGARS enter the open area and stare down at the jewels, their mouths open. But none of them touches)

**CHRISTOPHE:** (off) And where's my court? Marmelade! Marmelade!

(The BEGGARS scatter in the other direction.

CHRISTOPHE returns)

My brother-in-law --- the Duke of Marmelade!

(AIDES and COURTIERS appear, in a helpless bunch. And then MARMELADE suddenly appears)

General Jean Claude is awaiting new orders, is that right?

**MARMELADE:** Yes, sir.

**CHRISTOPHE:** I've made a decision! I shall fortify my southern frontier! St. Marc will be the strongest garrison in the Caribbean seas! The men of the 8th Regiment of Foot will be responsible for getting timber across for the engineers.

**MARMELADE:** There are places where even mules can't get up, sir --- !

**CHRISTOPHE:** Where the mule can't pass the human being can! I shall have an entire forest transported to my southern frontier. By the 8th Infantry Regiment. Do you hear!

MARMELADE: Yes, your majesty.

CHRISTOPHE: (to the COURTIERS) Don't stand there gaping! Get to your various jobs!

(They fly like the wind from his raised cane.

The SCENE BLACKS OUT. The Voodoo drums cease.

The LIGHT COMES UP on the royal device which is again at the foot of the ramp, with two armchairs and a table as before. A stern-looking young Englishman, TOM GULLIVER, is standing waiting, clearly rather scared. He has glasses which he keeps polishing with a huge handkerchief.

In the far distance there is a fanfare of trumpets. GULLIVER grows more restive, paces up and down. He can hardly bear it.

Suddenly CHRISTOPHE appears, bare-headed and simply dressed as before)

You may be seated.

GULLIVER: (without moving) Thank you, sir.

CHRISTOPHE: Ah, you know me. Observant. That's what I want in my teachers, Mr. Gulliver.

GULLIVER: Yes, your majesty.

CHRISTOPHE: (observing him) Severe but enthusiastic. Mr. Wilberforce chooses well. He's a friend of mine. A friend of humanity, wouldn't you say?

GULLIVER: Oh, Mr. Wilberforce, sir, I consider not only a great ---

CHRISTOPHE: (indicating his own dress) Is this what your king looks like?

GULLIVER: I haven't seen him, sir!

- CHRISTOPHE: What? You haven't seen your own king? Doesn't he visit your schools, keep an eye on things?
- GULLIVER: Well sir ---
- CHRISTOPHE: I remember getting an indignant letter from Admiral Rowley when I was a general, after I'd mistakenly fired at the good ship Hyperion. This is what he said: 'I wish to express my indignation and surprise at the outrageous acts of violence committed on our sailors. This is not the first time that officers under your orders have shown a disposition to treat the British Flag with disrespect. I demand, Sir, that you refrain hereafter from giving the least interruption whatever to British vessels employed in a Trade which His Majesty has been pleased to authorise'. (laughing with pleasure) Now, what do you think of that? I swore to model myself on a king who could get his fighting men to think like that!
- GULLIVER: (with astonishment) Can you memorise a whole letter, sir?
- CHRISTOPHE: My mind is an archive! It has to be, because I can't read or write.
- GULLIVER: This is very remarkable.
- CHRISTOPHE: (happy at the chance of displaying himself) At my coronation banquet I replied to Commander Douglas's toast with one to 'My dear brother, George III, whose life I hope the Supreme Arbiter may preserve to oppose an invincible obstacle to the ambition of Napoleon and to be always the constant friend of Haiti'.
- GULLIVER: I must say, sir --- !
- CHRISTOPHE: At my coronation I was declared 'Henry, by the grace of God and the Constitutional Law of the State, King of Haiti, Sovereign of Tartuga, Gonave and other adjacent islands, Destroyer of Tyranny, Regenerator and Benefactor of the Haitian nation, Creator of her Moral, Political and Martial Institutions, First Crowned Monarch of the New World, Defender of the Faith, Founder of the Royal and Military order of St. Henry.' That's this (pointing to his star).

(The GRAND MASTER OF CEREMONIES enters noiselessly)

MASTER OF CEREMONIES: Your doctor, your majesty.

(DR. DUNCAN STEWART, a tall, weather-beaten Scot, is shown in. He carries a small black medical bag)

STEWART & CHRISTOPHE ): Now, your majesty, how are we this morning?

(CHRISTOPHE greatly enjoys himself at this triumph of accent and timing)

CHRISTOPHE: A damned good doctor but unable to vary his speech! Have you met by the way? Duncan Stewart and Tom Gulliver.

(GULLIVER and STEWART bow to each other)

STEWART: Could I quickly take your pulse, your majesty?

CHRISTOPHE: (holding out his hand and continuing to talk to GULLIVER) Now sir, you're thinking, he's not such a fool after all! Sir Home Popham thought I'd be a savage, you took me for a fool with outrageous ideas. Which is what Mr. Wilberforce thinks of me too. He believes in the abolition of slavery as other men believe in the abolition of cages for dogs. But Mr. Clarkson --- you know Mr. Clarkson?

(STEWART has taken an instrument out of his bag)

GULLIVER: Yes, sir.

STEWART: Could I ask you to be seated, your majesty?

(CHRISTOPHE sits, and STEWART unbuttons the king's shirt to put the sounding horn to his chest, bending to listen)

**CHRISTOPHE:** Now Mr. Clarkson ---

**STEWART:** Breathe in please, your majesty!

(CHRISTOPHE breathes in)

Out!

(He breathes out)

**CHRISTOPHE:** Mr. Clarkson believes I'm human. I wrote to him last year, 'If God blesses --- '

**STEWART:** In!

(CHRISTOPHE breathes in)

Out!

(He breathes out. STEWART raises himself, replaces the instrument in his bag and takes out a tiny mallet)

**CHRISTOPHE:** 'If God blesses my labours, ' I wrote, 'and grants me time enough, I hope ---'

**STEWART:** Your tongue please!

(CHRISTOPHE puts out his tongue with remarkable rapidity)

Thank you!

**CHRISTOPHE:** 'I hope the people of Haiti, overcoming the odious prejudice that has so long oppressed them, will ---'

(While he speaks STEWART folds one of the king's legs over the other and begins knocking the knee for a reaction. There is a clear reaction each time)

'astonish the world with their knowledge!'

**GULLIVER:** You alone must astonish the world, sir!

**CHRISTOPHE:** I've done things, and I shall do things, which you had best not know about, Mr. Gulliver. This is no longer the British and Foreign School Society, Borough Road, London! Which brings me to the question of the running of my schools. You were trained according to the Joseph Lancaster system, is that right?

(STEWART inspects the king's eyes closely, opening the eyelids wide)

**GULLIVER:** Yes, sir!

**CHRISTOPHE:** His Manual of the System of Teaching Reading, Writing, Arithmetic and Needlework has been read to me several times. Now Mr. Lancaster and, no doubt, you disapprove of corporal punishment. You prefer Badges of Merit and Disgrace Marks. Now I have a new idea for my national schools, and that is six to twelve strokes of the cane for lateness, idleness, damaging school property, lying, quarrelling and all the other things that the slave-mind, once introduced to freedom, loves to indulge.

(STEWART packs up his bag)

**CHRISTOPHE:** (rising automatically) Two weeks imprisonment on bread and water for absence! (seeing GULLIVER's astonishment) Yes and I must insist on the same imprisonment for not attending Sunday devotions, for disobedience and for blasphemy! These things must be rooted out!

**GULLIVER:** But your majesty ---

**CHRISTOPHE:** (to STEWART, who is about to leave) Do you find me fit?

**STEWART:** At the moment, yes. But you're not everlasting, though you may think so! You overtax yourself and ---

**CHRISTOPHE:** (delighted with him) The same every day, to the word! Now, Mr. Gulliver's come from England to run my schools, Dr. Stewart. How would you like it if he gave you a few lessons in self-expression?

**STEWART:** (dourly passing on) I'll be on my way to the princesses, your majesty.

(He bows his way out)

**CHRISTOPHE:** Now (clapping his hands) I've put all that down in the form of an order.

(An AIDE appears)

(to the AIDE) Bring me the document on education.  
 (as AIDE goes) You will soon see, Mr. Gulliver, that you are dealing with a nation of slaves. Now being a slave is a mentality, not a fact! First you feel a slave, then somebody comes along and buys you -- that's the order of things! Your job is to root out the mentality, as I rooted it out of myself. Why, years ago my hand always rushed to my sword if a white man spoke a sharp word in my presence! A slave reaction! I had to root it out! I allowed myself no envy, no bitterness, no desire for revenge! These are slave reactions! (as document arrives) At the foot of the page you will find that pupils must bring a doctor's certificate to school with them on the first day of every term, stating that they have no contagious diseases. Working hours are from 6 a. m. to 11 a. m. and 2 p. m. to 6 p. m.

(CHRISTOPHE sits down and takes out a pen, waiting to sign the document)

It requires my signature.

**GULLIVER:** (handing him the document) But, your majesty, you can write?

**CHRISTOPHE:** Yes---one word. My own name.

(He signs with a flourish)

**GULLIVER:** (looking at the document) You spell it the English way.

**CHRISTOPHE:** Because I'm an Englishman! I was born on the British island of Grenada.

(A golden festive LIGHT comes up in the open area. In silence, moving like dolls, COURTIERS and their WIVES enter under the watchful eyes of the Grand Master of Ceremonies. They are so covered with gold lace that it is difficult to tell what else their clothes are made of. The men have enormous epaulets. Their caps have feathers nearly their own height.

They wear elegant silk hose. The basic court dress is a white tunic reaching to the knees, white silk hose and red morocco shoes with gold buckles, a gold-hilted sword and a round hat. The women have dresses of the period, lavishly gold-laced. Princes and dukes wear a black cloak embroidered with gold and red facings. Barons and knights have coats of blue or red. The plumes of black, red, white or green show a descending order of nobility. The courtiers take their places in order of eminence to wait for the king. Thrones are placed left, for the royal family.

The GRAND MASTER OF CEREMONIES enters the royal area and ushers in the king's DRESSER. The DRESSER has the king's sword and belt, his gloves and hat. CHRISTOPHE rises and is dressed.

When CHRISTOPHE is ready he is bowed out by the GRAND MASTER OF CEREMONIES.

GULLIVER is left alone with his own perplexity again, clutching the document the king has given him. He again polishes his glasses.

The GRAND MASTER OF CEREMONIES enters the open area and there is a stiffening of attention among the courtiers. Ten is struck on a great gong. GULLIVER starts. At the tenth stroke there is a fanfare of trumpets. GULLIVER leaves the royal area hurriedly.

The royal family enter the open area from the left. The queen, MARIE LOUISE, is a plump creature: her face, broad and black, beams with good nature. She is about ten years younger than her husband. Behind them come the PRINCE ROYAL, Monseigneur JACQUES-VICTOR-HENRY, a squat and corpulent youth of sixteen, looking ten years older, sulky, arrogant but good-hearted underneath. Then come his two sisters, AMETHYST-HENRY, aged twenty-two, and ANNE-ATHENAIRE-HENRY, aged twenty. The court bows low and curtsseys.

The DUKE OF MARMELADE stands behind the king's throne. The royal family is seated.

The MASTER OF CEREMONIES goes to the king and in the great hush receives a whispered order from him. He bows low and retires towards the courtiers)

**CHRISTOPHE:**

You may have heard that two French boats, a brig and a frigate, appeared this morning in the harbour. You know as well as I do that Napoleon Bonaparte was no friend. He lured our great leader, Toussaint L'ouverture, across to Paris for talks, and let him die of starvation in prison. He brought back slavery! That was his 'revolution'! And now a Bourbon has once again lowered his soft white arse on to the French throne. Louis XVIII also wants to have talks! No doubt he would like me to come to Paris and die like Toussaint in one of his prisons! He sends two boats to signal his willingness. He makes them fire their cannon! (hammering it out) He cannot bear the thought of black men being free! The King of France wants to be King of Haiti. He wants you slaves again! Impress it on the people, wherever you can, that the danger of French invasion is with us every day, every hour! That is the reason for hard work!

(He nods to the GRAND MASTER OF CEREMONIES, who goes to a woman courtier and bows low to her)

**MASTER OF CEREMONIES:**

The Countess de Rosier to step forward.

(She steps forward and makes a deep  
curtsey to the king)

**CHRISTOPHE:** Countess de Rosier! I have something to say to you!  
You are a whore, madame! You may return to your  
place, for the moment.

(A gasp of astonishment as she curtseys  
again and returns to her place utterly  
terrified)

**MASTER OF  
CEREMONIES:**

The Count of Gonaives, with a petition, your majesty.

(COUNT OF GONAIVES, under a tall  
waving feather, rises and begins reading  
from a paper nervously. Feather and  
paper quiver)

**GONAIVES:**

I humbly petition your majesty to institute an inquiry  
into the arrest of five men at Port de Paix, and their  
sentencing to death by your sovereign court for stealing.  
I humbly submit to your majesty that these men came to  
me with the jewels found lying in the street and I forgot  
to inform the gendarmerie, who found the men that  
evening in possession of the jewels, following my  
instruction that they were to keep the jewels by them  
until the arrival of the police, only I forgot to tell the  
police.

(He sits down in confusion amid  
laughter)

**CHRISTOPHE:**

(turning to MARMELADE) Arrange a court of appeal  
on this sentence. Also (raising his voice ominously)  
arrest this pretty count here and convey him to the  
Citadel for a month's diet of bread and water, during  
which time we hope he will find his memory again!

(MARMELADE bows)

**CHRISTOPHE:**

Last week a petition was presented to us at the public  
audience suggesting that our Rural Code be modified  
in the matter of hours worked. Our people is hard-  
driven. In the South, under the sleepy hand of  
President Petion, the people can sit and pick their  
noses in the heat. You would no doubt like to do the  
same. But look at our production figures. They are  
far ahead of the South's. And our importance to  
Europe and America depends on the size of our trade.

**CHRISTOPHE:**  
(contd)

We are already importing from Britain over a million pounds-worth of goods each year! Therefore I must repeat the terms of the Rural Code for all to hear --- the field-hands will rise at 3 a. m., take breakfast and say prayers. At 4.30 they will trim hedges and burn refuse. They will eat again at 8.00 a. m. At 9.00 a. m. they will begin heavy work, until midday. The second part of the day will be from 2.00 p. m. until sundown, when they will again say prayers. On the other hand our people must have holidays. The Queen's Patron Festival will be especially sumptuous this year. (a flurry of excitement especially among the women) My eight-horse state carriage will be used for the first time. That's all. Remember that for all your feathers you were slaves but fifteen years ago, and left to yourselves you would be slaves again as easily as a drunkard falls asleep.

(He rises, and the royal family follows suit. He walks down among the courtiers, his family behind him. They curtsy or bow in turn, as he pauses to talk to them genially. Trays of chocolate are brought in by pages.

After a gesture from MARMELADE two of the African guards go towards the COUNT OF GONAIVES and bow to him. He follows them out left.

There is a booming shot from the harbour. Everyone starts except CHRISTOPHE. He goes on talking.

The COUNT OF GONAIVES, bare-headed now, enters left at the foot of the ramp, the two guards slightly behind him. They begin walking slowly up the ramp.

CHRISTOPHE gradually frees himself from conversation and drifts off right with the royal family.

MARMELADE hurries after him)

**MARMELADE:** Your orders for the Countess de Rosier, sir.

**CHRISTOPHE:** (turning, for all to hear) In the old days the French used to punish their whores by riding them through the streets naked, on an ass, facing its tail. You will do the same.

(He leaves with his family. The COUNTESS DE ROSIER is ushered out. Then the court gradually drifts off, in the order of eminence.

The royal party comes downstage to the armchairs and the royal screen.

Another shot from the harbour)

MARIE LOUISE: What does it mean, Henry?

CHRISTOPHE: They're announcing their presence. If I take no notice, it means I feel equal to them, and they go away again. (to the PRINCESSES) Did my doctor see you?

(They lisp a 'yes')

CHRISTOPHE: (to the elder) Let me see your tongue.

(She puts out her tongue)

It isn't good enough. I shall have a word with your mother later. (to the PRINCE ROYAL) And you will stay a moment, sir.

MARIE LOUISE: Now leave your father to work, children. Come along.

(The PRINCESSES curtsy to the king and leave with their mother. The PRINCE ROYAL remains, awkward)

CHRISTOPHE: (sitting down) Odd, isn't it? ---I learned everything from the French---revolution, politics, how to think---and now it's all coming back in their faces! I was prepared to be the best friend Napoleon ever had, but there, he was too ambitious, and like most other Europeans he didn't take the Black Man seriously. You may sit down.

PRINCE ROYAL: (remaining on his feet) Thank you, sir.

CHRISTOPHE: Sit down, you damned fool! You're a prince not a kitchen skivvy! You offend everybody in my Court with your arrogance and then come here and play the cook! Sit down or I'll knock you down!

(The PRINCE ROYAL seats himself)

CHRISTOPHE: You aren't happy, are you? Why not?

- PRINCE ROYAL: Oh I don't know. For one thing I feel people are laughing at me. If it wasn't for you, they'd spit in my face.
- CHRISTOPHE: (quietly) That only means you haven't built up your magic, my dear Jacques. It takes time. It took a lifetime to build up mine.
- PRINCE ROYAL: All Europe laughs at us I believe.
- CHRISTOPHE: Do they? And how do you know that?
- PRINCE ROYAL: From what the Whites say. They bring back stories.
- CHRISTOPHE: You don't like Mr. Gulliver?
- PRINCE ROYAL: Oh I like him well enough. But we're an independent state, supposed to be! Why do we have to have all these Whites round us?
- CHRISTOPHE: Is any state independent in that sense? We all need each other. The Europeans need us for our coffee. One day they'll have our embassies.

(Another shot from the harbour. The PRINCE ROYAL jumps like jelly)

Look at you, man! And you wonder why they laugh at you! Don't you understand that being afraid of ridicule is being proud, and that the moment you stop being proud people stop ridiculing you? And some White Men are out to help us. Look at Mr. Wilberforce in England. His name means the abolition of slavery everywhere in the world! Why, he's got a marvellous scheme of buying the slaves in America and transporting them to me as free citizens. Do you realise that Britain has just offered four hundred thousand pounds to Spain as compensation for giving up slaves? Tears came to my eyes when I heard that! Of course they're after fat trade-agreements but you see, Jacques, in politics friendship is always mixed with interest! You just have to get used to it!

- PRINCE ROYAL: (who appears not to have been listening) They make up terrible stories about you. They say you threw me out of a palace window in a fit of rage.
- CHRISTOPHE: (roaring with laughter) You? I throw you? I'd need the help of a dozen men!

**PRINCE ROYAL:** And all these absurd names---the Duke of Marmelade, the Duke of Lemonade!

**CHRISTOPHE:** What? Are you so ignorant of your country's geography? Would you insult your country, you---it's future ruler? I've half a mind to send you to the Citadel again! Don't you know that the town of Marmelade was called so by the French over a century ago? And the same for Limonade? Learn, learn, my child, ---and then tell them the truth! That's how to stop ridicule! If you hear anyone laughing at Marmelade again, ask him what the French are doing with a Duc de Bouillon, the Duke of Soup! and a Prince of Peas!

(MARMELADE enters)

**MARMELADE:** An American sea captain has brought you a letter from the French frigate.

**CHRISTOPHE:** (after a pause of reflection) Bring him in so that I may refuse it.

(MARMELADE bows and leaves)

I give you two chateaux, a dozen servants! Horses! Above all I give you the first Black Kingdom in the history of the world! And all you can say is that people three thousand miles away ridicule you. (in a sudden fit of rage) Get out, go on! You're a slave like the rest!

(The PRINCE ROYAL stumbles out in panic. CHRISTOPHE remains with his head bowed.)

MARMELADE enters noiselessly)

**MARMELADE:** Captain Elisha Kent.

(He ushers in the American skipper, but CHRISTOPHE remains in precisely the same position)

(to the skipper) You will give me the letters please.

(He takes them and examines them)

You had no right to accept letters of this kind! Do you realise I could clap you into gaol for an affront to our sovereign?

**KENT:** (in utter bewilderment) Now---!

**MARMELADE:** You may speak when asked to! These letters are addressed to General Christophe! You are in the presence of his majesty, King Henry 1 of Haiti! Now take these letters where they came from and remove your boat from our waters or we shall blow you out!

**KENT:** (taking the letters) 'His majesty' ! (to CHRISTOPHE)  
I wish I had you in Charleston!

**CHRISTOPHE:** (slowly looking up) And how much do you think I would fetch? My dear captain, your crew honours you with your title, surely? Won't you honour me with mine?

**KENT:** I was only trying to do my best---

**CHRISTOPHE:** We appreciate your efforts.. But politics isn't for seamen. You may return to the harbour.

(KENT looks at him at a loss for words,  
and leaves with MARMELADE behind him)

Marmelade!

(MARMELADE returns)

That was a nice performance. Are you training to be a king?

**MARMELADE:** I was angry.

**CHRISTOPHE:** You made an enemy. I made a friend. Will you bring me ink and paper?

(MARMELADE claps his hands and  
repeats the order to his aide)

I shall make a Declaration to the French Government. By the way, you may release the Countess de Rosier.

**MARMELADE:** But she hasn't been taken for a ride yet! The whole town's waiting!

**CHRISTOPHE:** Release her just the same. She'll be more careful in future about how she lets Dr. Stewart in at night.

**MARMELADE:** Dr. Stewart?

**CHRISTOPHE:** He has her on her back twice a day---and the only man who notices is me! You'll never make a king without eyes! I only did it to frighten him into marriage. It won't work. My idea is to encourage black-white

**CHRISTOPHE:**  
(contd)

relationships. We must melt the races together! I shall issue an Edict offering any white man who marries a Black Woman citizenship after a year, wherever he may be in the world. I'll even pay his fare here.

(The aide brings writing material and leaves again)

(as MARMELADE writes) 'The sovereign of France has declared that in negotiating with us nothing should be done which could detract from what he owes to the dignity of his crown, to justice and the interest of his people. And we (with vehemence) we also declare that we shall not be found wanting in what we owe to the interest of our people and the dignity of our crown!'

(He has been watching MARMELADE quite closely all this while)

(standing over him) You feel it's quite a power, don't you---being able to read and write? (MARMELADE goes on writing) Are you helping to mature my authority so that you may seize it ripe?

**MARMELADE:** The idea never entered my head.

**CHRISTOPHE:** (resuming the dictation) 'We do absolutely declare that we will not negotiate with the French government on any other footing than that of power with power, sovereign with sovereign.' (stopping again) 'I've had you up there on bread and water! (pointing up the ramp) I can do it again! I know when silence is pregnant with treason! (resuming his dictation) 'We declare and affirm that, whatever be the menaces employed by the French to intimidate us, or the magnitude of the crimes and barbarity they count upon employing for the attainment of this end, nothing shall for an instant shake our determination!'

(He is about to begin his dictation again when Voodoo drums begin sounding in the distance)

(listening) Do you know what Toussaint always said? He said the true government of Haiti was the Voodoo priest. (resuming dictation) 'I accuse the French government of---' (stopping again) That's from the barracks, isn't it?

**MARMELADE:** I should think not, your majesty.

**CHRISTOPHE:**

That makes you a fool or a liar. Voodoo's getting hold of the soldiers again. And you generals can't be the gainers from that any more than I can! (resuming) 'I accuse the French government of planning a war of extermination! I accuse it of retaining the slave trade so as to replace the population of Haiti with Africans after its extermination!'

(He stands listening to the drums while MARMELADE writes.

The scene BLACKS OUT, but the Voodoo drums surge up.

The LIGHTS COME UP on another Voodoo ceremony in the open area (the thrones have been removed). There is a fire as before, in the centre, with chanting women. Christian banners, images figure as before. Swords have been placed at the altar, for the invocation of the war-god, Féraïlle. The PAPALOI enters with a cock in his hand and goes the whole circle holding it out rather like a censer. He then bites off the cock's head, squirts the blood from the neck into the fire-ashes.

CHRISTOPHE enters, stripped like a field-hand. He is exhausted from a long walk, streaming with sweat. He glances round, concentrated like the others on the PAPALOI. The drums increase in intensity. He sits down, closing his eyes like the others. They sing the Féraïlle song. Suddenly he rises, in the ecstasy. Everyone now concentrates on him. He goes into the circle, while the women chant and the drums make the air throb. Blindly, with his arms out, he makes the

circle. Only the whites of his eyes are visible. He half dances, twitches. He stamps. Suddenly he goes to the fire and plunges his arms in, with a scream that goes on long and uncannily, between pain and rapture. They are all concentrated on his movements. The drums become silent. The PAPALOI flings a red scarf round CHRISTOPHE's neck. CHRISTOPHE holds himself like a warrior, again half dances, twitching.

Suddenly, he points, stretching his right arm out, as if he had no voluntary control over it. He stands, pointing, his eyes closed. Then he collapses in a heap. The drummers, the people, disperse.

Wind is heard in the silence. Distant thunder, flashes.

After a time he raises himself, limps downstage towards the chapel. He flings himself into one of the pews and begins praying fervently. It is a jumble of Creole and Latin)

**CHRISTOPHE:**  
(contd)

(bursting out) Release me! Release me from mistakes!

(He moans and cries to himself)

Oh Gods of Dahomey! Tonight I am Ogoun Féraïlle!, patron of the warriors! You made me Ogoun Féraïlle! You made me point south! Give me armies! Let me be the power of the night, of the tree! Let my people be the limbs of that power, the branches of that tree, myself the trunk, the roots, the sap!

(He moans and cries to himself again)

Oh Gods of Dahomey! Look after Christ! Keep him safe! I am crucified after him! When I shoot, when I strike, my body receives it! Let my body be your instrument! Let it not look to its suffering, let it not look to the suffering of others!

(The wind rises and there is lightning and a clap of thunder)

Yes, yes!

(Another clap of thunder)

**CHRISTOPHE:**  
(contd)

You have given me power!

(He jumps up, crying with joy. He walks into the open area, holding his hands out as if to receive the storm. The lightning flashes over him)

**CHRISTOPHE:** (shouting up the ramp, after another clap of thunder)  
Answer, you fools! Answer the gods! Fire! Fire!

(He dashes to the top of the ramp)

Fire, bodies! Answer the gods! Fire!

(The guns fire, in a deafening competition with the thunder. He stands at the top of the ramp in a new ecstasy, marvelling at the combined flashes of the guns and the lightning.)

As the storm dies DR. DUNCAN STEWART wanders on left with a blanket over his arm. He looks round in the dimness, then sees CHRISTOPHE at the top of the ramp. He walks up. The guns cease as CHRISTOPHE holds up his hand. STEWART draws level with the king and puts the blanket round his shoulders without a word. There is silence)

**STEWART:** It's wet and chill, your majesty.

**CHRISTOPHE:** I hear something beating inside me! (taking STEWART's arm) They're beating me a message. (stopping) Petion's dead! President Petion's dead! They've freed me!

**STEWART:** I've put a warming pan in your bed.

(P.P. strolls in from the right and watches them as they come down the ramp)

The night's black, your majesty.

**CHRISTOPHE:** Everything good's black! The mouth of a cannon!  
Power! Me! God! Black as the bowels of the earth,  
as sleep, as death! Thunder's black!

**P. P.** (as they go off) Coffee's black! Unless you put milk in and then it's mulatto! (doubles up with laughter) During this short absence I've made two arrests, beaten up an innocent man in order to show a guilty one what to expect if he goes on taking coffee at a foreign embassy, and paid a long overdue visit to the brothel. Being a policeman's a busy life! Well, to get back to show business. The king's mind is working---towards the South. (imitating CHRISTOPHE's gesture under trance in the Voodoo ceremony) That's where the Patron of

P. P.  
(contd)

the Warriors pointed---south! And if it's true that President Petion's dead---why, then.... (as a LIGHT comes up in the open area) But for the moment it's bread and circuses. The Queen's Patron Festival. (with a compere's gesture towards the open area)!

(Ballroom music comes up as courtiers pour into the open area and begin dancing under the watchful eyes of the GRAND MASTER OF CEREMONIES. TOM GULLIVER dances with one of the princesses. DUNCAN STEWART dances with the COUNTESS DE ROSIER. The PRINCE ROYAL dressed in a green tunic with pink facings and green satin breeches trimmed with yellow (as commander of the Light Horse) is chatting with SIR HOME RIGGS POPHAM. The QUEEN is dancing with the DUKE OF MARMELADE. The GRAND MASTER OF CEREMONIES is waiting, right, to signal on the servants, at the end of the dance.

CHRISTOPHE enters in military uniform. He strolls at the edge of the dance, smiling. He follows one of the young women with his eye. He takes the MASTER OF CEREMONIES aside and brings him down-stage, out of ear-shot to the others)

CHRISTOPHE: Who's that charming young lady?

MASTER OF CEREMONIES: The sister of Colonel Paulin, your majesty.

CHRISTOPHE: And the Colonel isn't here to look after her honour?

MASTER OF CEREMONIES: No, your majesty. He's in St. Marc, supervising the fortifications.

CHRISTOPHE: He's one of my commanders?

MASTER OF CEREMONIES: Yes, sir. Your 8th Regiment of Foot.

(CHRISTOPHE walks abruptly back to the dance, which soon comes to an end. The MASTER OF CEREMONIES hurries back right to usher in the servants.

CHRISTOPHE strolls to the young woman and she curtseys low to him. They strike up a conversation but it is interrupted by a great roar from the courtiers as servants bring in a long covered table with sweetmeats and glasses and champagne on ice. The men come forward and take glasses from the toasts. Champagne is poured)

POPHAM: A health to His Majesty!

ALL: A health to His Majesty!

(They drink)

MARMELADE: A health to his majesty George III of England!

ALL: His Majesty!

(They - including the king - drink)

CHRISTOPHE: (with sudden passion) A health to Mr. William Wilberforce!

ALL: Mr. Wilberforce! Mr. Wilberforce!

(TOM GULLIVER excitedly thrusts himself forward, glass in hand)

GULLIVER: Gentlemen, I have seen all the sovereigns of Europe and all the troops of all nations! (surprised laughter) I have observed the laws and customs of the people of all the countries I have visited! Well, Gentlemen, I can honestly say this: I have seen the King of Haiti at the head of his troops; I have examined the richness of the uniforms, the bearing and discipline of the Haitian army; I have observed the morals and studied the laws of his country. And I have not seen anywhere in Europe any sovereign of better presence, any troops better dressed or better disciplined, nor any better order, regularity and justice than in this Kingdom. In your present situation, Gentlemen, you need fear no enemy---you are invincible!

(A great cheer spiced with laughter goes up. The men lift TOM GULLIVER off his feet and carry him round.

A shout of 'Fireworks!' interrupts this.

GULLIVER is promptly dropped and everyone rushes to the left side upstage, leaving the liveried servants and the table. A flash and a deafening crackle. The courtiers send up an excited cheer.

POPHAM takes this opportunity of drawing GULLIVER aside. They stroll downstage, GULLIVER visibly unsteady.

They go down to the chapel, and after a glance behind him POPHAM seats himself in one of the pews and draws GULLIVER to his side)

POPHAM: Now sir, how are you facing up to the heat?

(Another splutter of fireworks)

GULLIVER: Well I must say, Sir Home---

POPHAM: Should I ask for leave on your behalf?

GULLIVER: No, no! He'd take it like a stab in the back! I'd rather die here and now.

POPHAM: You look twenty years older. You must think about your health, not him all the time!

GULLIVER: I've never served a better master, never served a human being more willingly---even to the death!

POPHAM: You're trembling.

GULLIVER: I tell you, sir, I went to one of my schools yesterday and called out several of the pupils indiscriminately, all of them black, all of them sons of slaves, and will you believe me that not one of them faltered in a single line of verse which they had learned by rote? (reciting) 'Thyrsis, the music of that spring is not so mournful as the strains you sing, Nor rivers winding through the vales below, So sweetly warble, or so smoothly flow!'

POPHAM: (in astonishment) Ah.

GULLIVER: I tell you, sir, that whatever may be said of the stupidity of the negro, he is inferior only in so far as slavery renders him so! He---!

(Another splutter of fireworks and a flash, followed by cheers, causing GULLIVER to jump)

POPHAM: (with another glance round) Is it true he carries his pistols everywhere nowadays? That he's suspicious of everybody?

GULLIVER: He can be very wild! He threw the Prince Royal into the Citadel not long ago---a month on bread and water -- his own son! There, sir! -- you can hear it! --- the noise!

POPHAM: What noise?

GULLIVER: It comes in the night---

POPHAM: (jumping up) You're sick, man!

(POPHAM tries to raise him but finds that GULLIVER has slumped. There is another splutter of fireworks. POPHAM pulls GULLIVER's face up, lifts one of his eyelids)

(shouting) A doctor!

(Another burst of fireworks)

(dashing across the open area) Dr. Stewart! Dr. Stewart! (pushing through the crowd) Is Dr. Stewart here?

(STEWART pushes his way out of the crowd)

STEWART: What the devil's up?

POPHAM: It's young Gulliver. A touch of the fever!

STEWART: (hurrying down) I could see this coming, Sir Home! I told him as much!

(He pulls open GULLIVER's collar and loosens his sleeves, pats his palms.)

Courtiers follow them, and now the KING appears, hurrying down, preoccupied)

CHRISTOPHE: Who is it?

(The courtiers part for him)

POPHAM: Tom Gulliver, sir!

(CHRISTOPHE takes hold of GULLIVER and the latter opens his eyes for the first time)

CHRISTOPHE: Call the guards!

COURTIERS: (everywhere at once) Guards! The guards!

(Several of the African guards hurry down)

STEWART: Will you give him a little air, please?

(The QUEEN comes down too)

CHRISTOPHE: (to STEWART) Get him to the hospital---my own wing.

MARIE LOUISE: What is it?

STEWART: Yellow fever, ma'am.

(The African guards take GULLIVER up on their shoulders. They carry him out right, followed by STEWART)

MARIE LOUISE: (to CHRISTOPHE) He talked so strangely to Amethyst. He said that for two pins he'd marry her, only his negro blood forbade him!

(They laugh together. POPHAM remains solemn)

CHRISTOPHE: (touching POPHAM's arm) Don't worry. He won't die.

POPHAM: Is there a cure?

CHRISTOPHE: You don't think I'd leave him at the mercy of Stewart, do you, with his blood-cupping and compresses? I've got a witch doctor tucked away in the hospital grounds.

POPHAM: What, then you do believe in all that mumbo-jumbo?

CHRISTOPHE: Oh the mumbo-jumbo's a great help in delirium. But the treatment is what I'm talking about. (ambiguously) Herbs. (to the QUEEN) That was a fine speech, my dear.

- CHRISTOPHE: There were tears pouring down their faces. (to POPHAM) It's the glitter they cry about. That's where Petion fails. He doesn't give his people anything to gape at. The slave loves to gape. It is, after all, the laziest thing a man can do.
- POPHAM: Talking of Petion, he's a sick man, I believe.
- CHRISTOPHE: Yes. Poor Petion. (after a pause) He spent his life half asleep. His death won't be much of a change. (to MARIE LOUISE) Well, my dear, have I made you a good life?
- MARIE LOUISE: You made me a queen! (gaily) Isn't that right, Sir Home? There aren't many husbands do that!
- POPHAM: Indeed not, ma'am.
- CHRISTOPHE: (to POPHAM) But I swear she was happier when we were moving camp once a week. Massacres all round us, but she was happy!
- POPHAM: (to MARIE LOUISE) It must have been a hard time, ma'am. With hardly a rag on your backs, I believe, and a diet of berries.
- MARIE LOUISE: I often wonder if that isn't why the girls are poorly, because of those first years. But then independence came and things changed! I used to walk through Cap Henry on my husband's arm! He used to swing his cane --- (imitating him gaily)!
- CHRISTOPHE: (to check her) But you had a great career waiting for you --- that of Haiti's queen!
- MARIE LOUISE: Oh yes. I lost my friends. My lady in waiting hardly dares to smile at me.
- CHRISTOPHE: If she felt free to smile at you she'd feel free to hate you too. The slave has to be held in fear!
- MARIE LOUISE: Then how will they ever issue from slavery?
- CHRISTOPHE: (abruptly) Are you asking that for Marmelade?
- MARIE LOUISE: For ---?
- CHRISTOPHE: The day I relax my hold is the day of my downfall and yours!

(MARMELADE appears, left)

MARMELADE: Your majesty. An urgent message.

(CHRISTOPHE gazes at him in silence)

POPHAM: (about to leave) If you'll excuse me, your majesty ---

CHRISTOPHE: (still gazing at MARMELADE) No, stay. (to MARMELADE) You can whisper it in my ear. (with delicate irony touching his own ear) He often does, you know (to POPHAM) --- he whispers something to me every day.

(After a moment of surprise MARMELADE comes forward and whispers in his ear)

(to POPHAM) President Petion is dead. What will your government say?

POPHAM: I can tell you what I shall do. I shall send a couple of cruisers down to Port au Prince to look after our merchants in case of trouble.

CHRISTOPHE: 'Trouble' --- you mean revolution?

POPHAM: A war between the Mulattos and the Blacks, that's a possibility.

CHRISTOPHE: I've been trying to exploit such a possibility for years without getting anywhere.

POPHAM: You mean to invade the South, don't you?

CHRISTOPHE: I mean to make Haiti one kingdom, north and south, under one king! And to my mind nothing would serve your country's interest better!

POPHAM: But Westminster won't be convinced that you can take the South with you.

CHRISTOPHE: You mean Sutherland! He's a damned fool.

POPHAM: My government listens to him.

CHRISTOPHE: Then they listen to a liar! He told them I liked Napoleon Bonaparte, and intended to make myself Emperor of the Western World!

- POPHAM: Sutherland is an energetic commercial agent, your majesty. We probably have more trade with the South than we do with you.
- CHRISTOPHE: Ah!
- POPHAM: The easy-going policies of the South are more conducive to quick trade than your long-term policies are.
- CHRISTOPHE: Would it be too much to ask the people at Westminster to sit down and study the facts instead of the immediate trade figures? Or is imagination entirely outlawed in Britain?
- POPHAM: As you know, sir, I am doing my best all the time. But if you invade ---
- CHRISTOPHE: I can tell you what your government will do! It will support me if I'm successful, and drop me if I'm not. Trade figures are hard task masters, Sir Home. Sometimes I think they are the new tyranny.
- POPHAM: Of course I cannot hope for a declaration on your part that you will not invade?
- CHRISTOPHE: (thinking this over) On your side, will you guarantee that I shan't be actively impeded by your ships if I do invade?
- POPHAM: Unless I receive quite clear orders from London to impede your movements I shall do nothing but watch the situation.
- CHRISTOPHE: (with a relieved laugh) How I envy you naval people --- always watching us from the coast, while we embroil ourselves!
- POPHAM: We sometimes have storms! (to MARIE LOUISE) Ma'am, I shall miss the procession but I hope to be present at the opera. May I thank you again for one of the happiest days of my life?

(He kisses the QUEEN's hand and bows his way out, left.

The GRAND MASTER OF CEREMONIES comes downstage from the open area, with AFRICAN GUARDS)

- MASTER OF CEREMONIES: (to MARMELADE) The procession is forming, my lord.
- CHRISTOPHE: Marmelade and I will have a quick word, my dear, then ...
- (MARIE LOUISE curtseys to CHRISTOPHE and goes with the GRAND MASTER OF CEREMONIES across the open area, followed by the GUARDS)
- MARMELADE: The 8th Regiment are hardly fit to invade, but it might boost their morale. They've been on fortification fatigues for over six months.
- (CHRISTOPHE simply watches him)
- CHRISTOPHE: I could see Petion had died just by your eyes. You see a chance in his death. What chance is that?
- MARMELADE: I had no such thoughts, your majesty.
- CHRISTOPHE: You have thoughts every moment of the day! You generals want to be at war again. Is that it?
- MARMELADE: Well, that's what armies are for. If we nip in before they plant a new president we might get control.
- CHRISTOPHE: What strength can we muster, apart from the tired 8th Regiment of Foot?
- MARMELADE: Five thousand men, sir.
- CHRISTOPHE: Five thousand --- against twenty thousand!
- MARMELADE: But twenty thousand without a leader!
- CHRISTOPHE: (suddenly gripping him by the collar) Are you trying to persuade me? Why? Why?
- MARMELADE: But it was always the plan to invade the South when the time came!
- CHRISTOPHE: There's a plot in your dirty shallow eye! (releasing him) Tell General Jean Claude to stand by.

MARMELADE: (bowing) Yes, your majesty!

(CHRISTOPHE strides across the open area, followed by guards who appear from nowhere.

MARMELADE waits until he is out of sight.

The COUNT OF GONAIVES appears from the left. After a glance round they join each other)

He won't invade. Tell Jean Claude that the king's scared! Spread it in the South that he's afraid to give his troops a whiff of the seductive air of freedom down there! Say something rhetorical!

GONAIVES: And the British?

MARMELADE: They're after our coffee and sugar. As long as they get those we could have a chimpanzee in charge!

(The procession begins crossing the open area, and MARMELADE and GONAIVES divide quickly, leaving by opposite sides.

The ROYAL FAMILY walks under canopies, with guards behind. The Courtiers follow.

Bells and the Te Deum come up.

The scene and the bells fade)

ACT TWO

The LIGHT COMES UP on the chapel area. On the opposite side the armchairs and table are again in place, at the foot of the ramp, the royal device behind them.

CHRISTOPHE is on one of the pews, praying, dressed in his usual simple court uniform. This time he is kneeling straight, with his head raised and his hands clasped in prayer.

**CHRISTOPHE:** Let this doubt pass from me. You see, I don't know whether to follow gods or policies! (with sudden distraction) It happened ever since I turned this hounfort into a chapel! No! You can't say that! Did I offend the gods of Dahomey? putting one symbol in place of another symbol, and both of them symbols - just to appease Christ? But Christ is among you! And yet - ! That night I knew! I pointed south! You gave me the direction! And then I disobeyed! Christ made me stop! He made me doubt! He made me think of policy! He made me see that my army might be disloyal, and the generals too. He took away my strength! Stop the whirl of my thoughts. Let me be still. Give me another night of power like that one. Let the drums beat a message inside me. Tell me what to do! Have you finished with me? (he looks round, in the silence) Gods! (shrieking) Come back to me! Give me your decision! Let your will be mine. (again silence) There are no voices any more. It changed, ever since I put a chapel here. Yet, Christ, you're with them! You're among the gods! You're all one! You're all one power! Be in me! Please flow into me again! Let me build the black state! Let it come on the earth like Babylon, out of the hands of the gods, and let me be the instrument of that. I ask for no more. Nothing for myself. I shall go now. Let me not go by policies, like the Christians. I don't mean you, Christ. But let me not calculate, like them, let me not study the chances. Yet that's what I've done! I didn't invade! I saw a plot in Marmelade's eye, you see - a general's plot. (rising) Let me know what I must do. I shall wait for you like a lover.

(He kneels at the end of the pew towards the altar and then strolls across to the armchairs. He sits down with a sigh.

A party of soldiers struggling under a load of timber begins mounting the ramp, directed by an NCO. There are the same gasped 'Peux pas! Peux pas!' as from the previous party of slaves.

MARGUERITE PAULIN enters the royal area, touches the king's arm and giggles. He doesn't move. She sits on his knee)

MARGUERITE: Don't you know me any more? Marguerite? Marguerite Paulin? (tapping his nose playfully)

CHRISTOPHE: (absently) Marguerite ...

MARGUERITE: You promised me a walk.

(She jumps up and pulls at him. He rises absently. They walk, his arm in hers, across the open area while the timber party continues to struggle up the ramp.

Suddenly CHRISTOPHE breaks loose from her, but not violently)

CHRISTOPHE: Yes! Yes! I shall do it! Thank God! Thank God you've spoken!

(He strides off, right, across the open area, and MARGUERITE runs alarmed in the other direction)

(off) Marmelade! Marmelade!

(Two vague figures appear in the chapel area, look round stealthily. They go straight to the altar and begin wrenching the cross away from its mount.

As they work there is a fanfare of trumpets, off, announcing a movement to arms. Drums roll, calling troops together. Officers and soldiers dash across the open area. The order 'Left, right, left, right!' comes over the speakers, with marching feet.

The timber party has reached the top of the ramp and disappears.

The new archbishop, JUAN GONZALEZ, a White, is ushered into the royal area by the GRAND MASTER OF CEREMONIES. He stands waiting rather irritably.

The two men succeed in wrenching the cross clear away, and take it down. They carry it off, wrapped in a cloak, right.

P.P. enters the open area from the right and comes downstage with his staff and horse's skull)

**P.P.:** (nodding towards the violated altar) Two agents from the South, where a new president has been elected even more ineffectual than the last one. Name of Boyer. The son of a mulatto woman and a white man. His father disowned him because of his negro features, with the result that the son began to despise said features too, though he bore them in his own face. So it goes! Anyway, the one energetic point in his nature is his dislike of King Henry, his one determination to get rid of him by flooding the North with paid agents. Now you'd think that King Henry, with his shining gifts, must win, and a weak man like Boyer lose, but that's not the story. It isn't virtue that gets you on in politics. It's destiny. And weak and lazy men have as much of that as anybody else.

(He goes to the altar and plants his staff and horses skull in the place where the cross was. He is just about to leave again when he notices JUAN GONZALEZ)

That's the new archbishop. Name of Juan Gonzalez, from Cuba. His mandate is to work for Christophe, and pray for Boyer. You see, foreign empires favour the weak. And destiny, seeing the way the wind blows, follows suit!

(He bows and leaves.

The ARCHBISHOP's irritation is mounting to a climax when CHRISTOPHE enters. CHRISTOPHE kneels and kisses the ARCHBISHOP's ring)

- CHRISTOPHE: I've kept you waiting.
- GONZALEZ: You're a busy man, your majesty.
- CHRISTOPHE: You mean a busy king. I don't like that word 'man' from the mouth of a White. Not said in that tone, anyway. (seating himself) I confessed every peccadillo of my life to the last one, and he spilled the whole lot to the French. I had to assert my authority by having him shot.
- GONZALEZ: (gingerly) The Church is unlikely to send you two spies in a row.
- CHRISTOPHE: That's what I thought. You won't enjoy it here. I give you as much comfort as possible but it's uphill work. I think I can say we're near the top of the hill. Our trade's never been so good, the people are well fed and beginning to realise that hard work brings in dividends. You may be seated.
- GONZALEZ: (with an enormous sigh of relief) Thank you, your majesty.
- CHRISTOPHE: You're liverish. That's why you can't stand on your feet for long. The last chap was as pale as parchment. He also stank.
- GONZALEZ: (with disgust) Really, your majesty?
- CHRISTOPHE: The only water he ever knew was baptismal water. Now listen to me. You're to be the champion of the Black Race, do you hear that?

(JUAN GONZALEZ stares at him in  
astonishment)

There's a war on. There's work to be done. You've got to teach those poor distracted slaves outside that Christ was talking about them and not just the Whites! If you don't do that you and I and all the churches of the earth are going to be swept away! We go together! When Christ said 'ye are gods' he meant us as well as you. He was saying that every creature has a light inside him which no other man can dim! Show them where their light is! Show them to give way now to laziness and fail to build this state, will cost our race and therefore mankind another hundred years of struggle which may end bitterly, in civil war, in a fire -

/that

- CHRISTOPHE:  
(contd)                   yes! - that will lick its way across the Americas,  
and not all the water of the Atlantic will be sufficient  
to put it out!
- GONZALEZ:               (bored) Yes, your majesty.
- CHRISTOPHE:            I know you haven't heard a word -
- GONZALEZ:               Sir - !
- CHRISTOPHE:            Let me explain something. All the volumes on the  
Inquisition and the Jesuits in my library have been  
read to me. If I can speak and dictate well, if I can  
govern, dress up and comport myself as a king, it is  
because of the universal language of the Church, the  
vestments of the Church, her pomp and processions!  
She has been my teacher, and the fact that I can  
neither read nor write is irrelevant compared to the  
knowledge that poured into me as a child, every time  
I took the wafer. Now that's one fact. Here's another.  
Any power I might have - any power to talk to, to  
persuade God - to move Him into my body - came to  
me by means of Voodoo! Now! There! (roaring  
with laughter) Look at his face!
- GONZALEZ:               Surely sir - !
- CHRISTOPHE:            Voodoo means invoking nature until nature has been  
surpassed, and (fiercely) you damned prelates  
never surpass nature, you never get beyond yourselves!  
So you can't teach people how to talk to God - you've  
never heard Him inside yourself!
- GONZALEZ:               Your majesty - !
- CHRISTOPHE:            You come here fiddling with your ring! Chuck it away!  
Remove it! There's urgent work to do! It's no good  
spouting Latin at these people - their witch doctors do  
the mumbo-jumbo much better than you, only they're  
not such fools as to believe in it! (abruptly kneeling  
and kissing the ARCHBISHOP's ring) I have work to  
do. We're at war!
- (He walks out.
- GONZALEZ rises in a daze)
- GONZALEZ:               A Lutheran! In this black pesthouse!

(The MASTER OF CEREMONIES enters and bows him out.)

P.P. appears again in the chapel area)

P.P.:

Here's another political law. If you build yourself up into a legend, take care not to get sick or die. King Henry did worse. He made a mistake. He didn't invade the South when he could. And he did invade when he couldn't. That's what I mean by destiny. (the grin) You see how it works? You produce a situation for yourself, and then you can't get out of it. Now a weak and lazy man avoids situations altogether.

(Musket fire in the distance, followed by shouting. P.P. turns and listens for a moment)

The noises-off of destiny! The news is spreading fast - !'Papa Henry has lost his nerve! Papa Henry has failed!' That's one thing Papaloi mustn't do - fail like another man! You see, his army's gone on strike!

(CHRISTOPHE's voice, rasping off, 'Marmelade! Marmelade!' Then silence again. P.P. bows and leaves.)

MARMELADE enters the royal area with SIR HOME RIGGS POPHAM)

MARMELADE: His majesty has been visiting the fortifications. He should be here in a moment.

POPHAM: (stopping him as he prepares to go) I spoke to President Boyer. You know what he said? - 'King Henry's reign of terror will be over in a year.' He was perfectly confident.

MARMELADE: Ha!

POPHAM: He won't hear of a treaty! He -

(CHRISTOPHE again, off, 'Marmelade!') )

MARMELADE: (on his way out) Your maj--!

(He and CHRISTOPHE meet in the doorway)

CHRISTOPHE: Did you hear those shots?

**MARMELADE:** Yes, sir! They were musket practice!

**CHRISTOPHE:** Do they practice in the streets? Get down to the harbour, man! See what it's all about!

(As MARMELADE leaves)

(to POPHAM) I saw mutiny in that man's eyes two days ago. If you ever become a king, Sir Home, keep a traitor at your side. You can read the news in his eyes every morning.

**POPHAM:** If a traitor, isn't he dangerous at this moment, so close to the central authority?

**CHRISTOPHE:** He's a bungler, that's all. One day he'll face a firing squad! There are people born to bungling, you know.

**POPHAM:** President Boyer won't hear of a treaty.

**CHRISTOPHE:** So you told Marmelade. But I intend to beat President Boyer to his knees. (with quick suspicion) Why tell Marmelade? He might possibly replace me?

**POPHAM:** Your majesty!

**CHRISTOPHE:** You think me suspicious, insulting - but I'm being realistic.

**POPHAM:** I would say, not that you were suspicious, but that you underestimated your hold on the people round you!

**CHRISTOPHE:** (almost to himself) And if I told you I had no hold - you wouldn't believe me!

(He is restless, giving POPHAM quick glances)

My agents tell me there's hope of revolution in the south - within days, hours! My troops will be welcomed as liberators!

**POPHAM:** It wasn't my impression, your majesty.

**CHRISTOPHE:** But they're half starved, they're -

(The GRAND MASTER OF CEREMONIES enters and bows)

GRAND MASTER  
OF CEREMONIES: Her Majesty!

(MARIE LOUISE enters and curtseys to  
CHRISTOPHE):

POPHAM: (kissing her hand) Ma'am!

MARIE LOUISE: Good morning, Sir Home! (to CHRISTOPHE) Those  
shots, Henry!

CHRISTOPHE: The Duke of Marmelade tells me they were musket  
practice!

MARIE LOUISE: But my people -

CHRISTOPHE: Damn your people! They'd hear a revolution in the  
tap of a drum! Now listen to me. I spoke to Dr.  
Stewart this morning. You will have my eldest  
daughter take senna tomorrow in copious quantities!  
Her tongue is still badly coated, she needs a purge!  
I told you this as long as a year ago, and I reproach  
you for not having done it before! And now please  
leave me.

(She curtseys low to him and leaves, while  
he continues striding restlessly up and  
down)

If the army deserts me I'm finished - you know that?  
I don't mean those damned generals but the NCOs -  
they're the ones to watch! They have the hungriest  
expectations of promotion, higher pay! And  
revolutions are made out of disappointed expectations.

(There is more musket fire in the distance,  
together with Voodoo drums)

POPHAM: (to change the subject) I heard this morning, sir, that  
Tsar Alexander of Russia had written to his embassy in  
London to express his astonishment at the quality of your  
letters to him!

CHRISTOPHE: He said that?

POPHAM: He confessed that he thought of you and your people as  
savages until your letters came!

CHRISTOPHE: It's lonely here, Sir Home! If I had more friends like  
you! Among all my people I have one friend like you,

- CHRISTOPHE:** and that's Joachim, the commander of my own royal guard. One man - in half a million people!  
(contd)
- POPHAM:** I managed to get a declaration from President Boyer that, in the case of troubles here, he wouldn't invade you.
- CHRISTOPHE:** He invade me? (he stops appalled) He here?
- POPHAM:** Sir, if you were less vigilant - if you worked less hard - expected less of others - !
- CHRISTOPHE:** The Kingdom of Haiti wouldn't exist!
- (The courtiers begin forming in the open area for the levee, under the guidance of the GRAND MASTER OF CEREMONIES. Thrones are placed as before. The courtiers whisper to each other busily, in an atmosphere of anxiety. MARMELADE enters the Royal area suavely)
- MARMELADE:** You were right, sir. A disturbance at the harbour - the 8th Regiment of Foot!
- CHRISTOPHE:** (to POPHAM) We are meant to jump with surprise.  
(to MARMELADE) And the commanding officer of the 8th Regiment?
- MARMELADE:** On his way here, your majesty. The military governor had to -
- CHRISTOPHE:** (screaming at him) I saw the military governor in the middle of the night! You're six hours behind with your news!
- MARMELADE:** (quietly) But there's a new development, sir. You ordered the military governor to admonish the commanding officer, who would in turn admonish his troops. But the commanding officer of the 8th Regiment, Colonel Paulin, refused to admonish his troops.
- CHRISTOPHE :** Colonel Paulin? (trying to remember the name)  
Paulin ...

(He stands there in silence.

His dresser comes in with sword and belt, gloves etc. with the MASTER OF CEREMONIES.

CHRISTOPHE absently lets himself be dressed)

CHRISTOPHE: You weren't such a fool as to arrest him, I hope?

MARMELADE: The military governor was about to do that but I stopped him.

CHRISTOPHE: If the South could have a famine - and we relieve them - !

(He walks out before the GRAND MASTER OF CEREMONIES, followed by the dressers)

POPHAM: (to MARMELADE) Is it revolution?

MARMELADE: He has driven us too hard, Sir Home! There's no sympathy left for him! He flung me into gaol once - his son, the Prince Royal too - !

POPHAM: (coldly) Your sovereign has his levee, I believe.

(They bow to each other and MARMELADE leaves.

A fanfare of trumpets, and POPHAM leaves the royal area. The Voodoo drums have ceased.

The GRAND MASTER OF CEREMONIES enters the open area with the royal family, and they go to the thrones.

MARMELADE enters and stands behind the king's throne)

CHRISTOPHE: During the night and not long ago this morning a number of men in the 8th Regiment of Foot fired shots into the air and refused to continue their fatigue duties. They are being dealt with. If the musket fire makes you nervous, remember that your king is hale of heart and limb. As you have depended on him in the past, so you may depend on him in the future. Black Men are children. My job is to make them grow up. It is painful work for the parent. It has been painful beyond words for me! There will be no chocolate this morning.

(A surprising amount of disappointment follows this.

CHRISTOPHE whispers something to MARMELADE, who leaves at once. Then he gets up with his family, and they go down the line of courtiers. He stops to talk here and there, briefly and sternly.

MARMELADE ushers COLONEL PAULIN into the royal area. PAULIN stands waiting stiffly. MARMELADE strolls about, whistling to himself, glancing at PAULIN.

CHRISTOPHE and his family take leave of the last courtier. They walk down-stage. CHRISTOPHE is apart, pre-occupied)

CHRISTOPHE: (to the Prince Regent) You will remain with me, sir.

(MARIE LOUISE and the PRINCESSES curtsy to the king and leave via the open area. The courtiers begin breaking up)

(to the PRINCE ROYAL) I've seen your exercise book. It looks like a bad case of the pox! I've never seen such a mess in my life! You must study, not just one day but every day! You must learn tenacity! (deliberately within earshot of PAULIN) Black men can fight, but briefly! They rebel, but briefly! Tenacity is a very difficult thing for children to learn! (to the COLONEL) Now, sir - (seeing the COLONEL's decoration) The Cross of St. Henry?

PAULIN: Yes, your majesty!

CHRISTOPHE: Your name - where have I - ?

PAULIN: You know my sister, I believe, sir!

CHRISTOPHE: (unruffled) Ah, your sister. Now, sir. Your troops were beating drums half the night - they were refusing duty - bringing women into the camp - !. And you refuse to reprimand them? Why?

PAULIN: Because I felt they were right!

CHRISTOPHE: Right? To show insubordination to you? Do you realise what you're saying? - that you have no love of command?

**PAULIN:** I love my men more than my command! And they've been sweated too long for them to bear - carrying timber on their backs along mountain passes - they - !

**CHRISTOPHE:** (screaming) I know very well what fatigues my soldiers have to do!

**PAULIN:** If there was no mutiny it was due to me! That's what I told the military governor, and he didn't like it!

**CHRISTOPHE:** And I don't like it! When I need you to take my generals to school I'll elevate you to the necessary rank but not before, do you hear? Do you dare to stand there and defend your own insubordination, let alone that of your troops?

**PAULIN:** I do!

**CHRISTOPHE:** You black ungrateful dog you! (screaming) My aides! Where are my aides?

(The OFFICERS dash in)

You see this so-called officer? Strip him of his epaulets!

(They step forward to seize his epaulets but PAULIN steps back, clinging to them)

**PAULIN:** I got these by my own efforts! They're mine! But I can do without this!

(He tears off his Cross of St. Henry and flings it down in the direction of the KING. The OFFICERS rush to him and hold him back)

**CHRISTOPHE:** What? What?

**PAULIN:** The black man has no use for crosses!

**CHRISTOPHE:** You - you - tear off - ?

(He stands staring at PAULIN, aghast)

Take him to the Citadel! Fetter him!

(The OFFICERS bring in African guards, and PAULIN is led away. MARMELADE follows them.)

CHRISTOPHE sinks into a chair. His head is bowed, his hand over his heart. The PRINCE ROYAL stands there, awkward, frightened)

CHRISTOPHE: (almost in a whisper) You may not have to govern after all.

PRINCE ROYAL: Will you be with us at Mass, sir?

CHRISTOPHE: Have I missed in my life?

PRINCE ROYAL: Are you unwell, sir?

CHRISTOPHE: It hurts me here! They always hurt me here! You see, Jacques, we come on the earth to serve the gods, and we never quite know how they will use us. Sometimes they tell us their will. And sometimes they spring it on us, suddenly. My son, (pulling him closer) I've never had a life. Never once thought of myself. I only tried to find out what they want. Oh I had your mother. And one or two other women, in the last years. But they were only pauses in the work. I return to their service every time, quickly, as if they miss me if I stayed too long away! And who do you serve? (gazing at him) Perhaps they have other designs for you. Your little brother died in Paris, with no one to look after him, because I was fool enough to entrust him to the French. Suppose I bring death on my children? Jacques, why have I done it? If their will was to make me do it, and I fail, why did they make me do it? Perhaps I'm only a stage on the way - a little bit of black evolution. But I won't be that! I will win the war! I'll beat the troops to the front with my own cane! I've done it before!

(He rises, and the PRINCE ROYAL thinks this is the signal for him to leave. He bows and begins backing out of the room)

(without looking at him) Come back. Mass will be celebrated at the chapel by the gate, not at the cathedral. I don't want anyone to shoot you. They wouldn't dare take a slug at me but they might at you. (chuckling affectionately) Here, let me kiss you, my son. (he kisses him) Be brave. Give your mother strength. Tell her to put her finest coat on.

PRINCE ROYAL: Does the archbishop know not to be at the cathedral, sir?

**CHRISTOPHE:** Damn the archbishop! We'll pick up a priest from somewhere.

(The PRINCE ROYAL bows and leaves. CHRISTOPHE remains standing, absorbed.)

The OFFICERS with COLONEL PAULIN, African guards behind them, mount the ramp slowly. PAULIN walks proudly, bareheaded, stripped now of his epaulets.

TOM GULLIVER enters the open area on a stick, wasted with fever now, in the company of DR. DUNCAN STEWART. They are chuckling together)

**GULLIVER:** What struck me most was the stocks at the end of every bed!

**STEWART:** Well you know - the black man's devilish difficult about taking his medicine, Mr. Gulliver! If it wasn't for them stocks half my patients'd die!

(Sounds of firing again, and shouting in the distance. They stop, listen.)

CHRISTOPHE seems not to hear. He puts his hand over his heart again, frowning)

That's a damned unhealthy noise!

(They stroll downstage)

**GULLIVER:** I heard a rumour, Dr. Stewart, that they might pounce on us from the South!

**STEWART:** Well, Sir Home Riggs Popham was telling me this morning that there is no such danger. He gave a warning to President Boyer. 'If you do invade you'll have the British navy against you!' he said.

**GULLIVER:** But why should they want to invade? The French are the danger for both of them! Why can't they unite?

**STEWART:** Let me tell you something, Mr. Gulliver. In the South this royal regiment is looked on as a masquerade! They laugh at our balls and titles and court uniforms, and the airs this man gives himself!

- GULLIVER: The king, you mean?
- STEWART: You look astonished! Do you take him for a real king, then?
- GULLIVER: Real king? But no less than our own George - !
- STEWART: George, man? But George is half mad, he's bandy and all he says is 'what, what, what'! That's a real king. Not this one! He's a black man dressed up for a pantomime!
- GULLIVER: Pantomime!
- STEWART: I tell you, man, he's eaten away with a greed that can never be satisfied. It's a greed for time! He must have time to build up the state of Haiti, he needs another fifty, hundred years! And he's getting old! Time's running out! So he pushes the people harder and harder. He'll break them, wreck them body and soul to get there! I see it every day in my hospitals, young man. The people are done! They can't last out! And the South is just waiting for the explosion. Oh, they don't have to invade!
- GULLIVER: Naturally he believes in work - !
- STEWART: Oh, not for himself, not all the time! He has his little flirtations as well -
- GULLIVER: The king? flirtations?
- STEWART: Why, you young duck - have you never had one yourself? I heard you tell the Princess Amethyst that for two pins you'd marry her -
- GULLIVER: I - the princess?
- STEWART: Yes, Mr. Gulliver, it's interesting what we have to say in delirium!

(The prison party passes slowly out of sight at the top of the ramp.)

MARMELADE appears silently in the royal area)

MARMELADE: Her Majesty is waiting.

(Courtiers, dressed in their finest, appear from both sides of the open area, drawing the attention of TOM GULLIVER and DR. STEWART. The courtiers form an avenue along which the royal family will walk on their way down to the chapel.

A simple chapel bell begins to sound.

Further sounds of musket fire.

CHRISTOPHE leaves the royal area, and MARMELADE follows)

STEWART: They're celebrating Mass here? (loudly, into GULLIVER's ear) Because the bullets are flying roundabout the cathedral!

(The QUEEN and her children enter and stand waiting for the king to appear)

GULLIVER: It's the queen! Oh it does me good to see them all again!

STEWART: They ought to be in the stocks!

GULLIVER: Who?

STEWART: Those pasty-faced princesses! They won't take their senna pods! The Princess Amethyst hasn't been for five whole days!

(CHRISTOPHE enters with sword and hat and insignia. The family bows and curtseys to him, and he walks at the queen's side down the avenue of courtiers, who bow and curtsey in their turn.

They all crowd toward the chapel altar. GULLIVER bows low to the KING)

CHRISTOPHE: Well, Mr. Gulliver - I said you'd be back! I said I needed you too much for you to die just yet!

(CHRISTOPHE goes on, chuckling to himself in an unusual way. GULLIVER gives DR. STEWART a glance. Then he bows to the rest of the family)

**PRINCE ROYAL:** Good morning, Mr. Gulliver!

**GULLIVER:** Your Royal Highness!

(The courtiers crowd round and the ROYAL FAMILY is soon lost to sight close to the altar. The light grows on the altar. The staff and horse's skull are still there. The chapel bell ceases. The Voodoo drums are heard again.)

A sudden gasp goes up when everyone sees the skull. Some back away, recognising the symbol. STEWART and GULLIVER hurry to look)

**COURTIERS:** The duppies!

**STEWART:** What the devil?

(There are sudden cries of 'Doctor!  
Doctor Stewart!')

(pressing through the crowd) I'm here!

(The crowd closes round him)

(from the altar) Air! Give him air!

**GULLIVER:** (calling across the open area) Guards! Guards!

(The African GUARDS come running. They hold the COURTIERS back from the ROYAL FAMILY. Quiet returns. There is busy murmuring close to the altar. CHRISTOPHE becomes visible, in one of the pews, fallen back but conscious. STEWART is cutting his sleeves and necktie)

**CHRISTOPHE:** (with quiet command, to the GRAND MASTER OF CEREMONIES) Bring me my carriage. I am not feeling well.

(He is sweating profusely. STEWART dabs his face, goes on cutting at his clothes. STEWART then raises CHRISTOPHE to his feet, with the help of COURTIERS, who keep glancing back in terror at the skull. The MASTER OF CEREMONIES hurries out)

**CHRISTOPHE:**  
(contd)

(with sudden muffled anger) Remove that! And get the archbishop! Does he call this a temple of Christ?

(He shuffles, bareheaded, his clothes cut to ribbons, between the **COURTIERS**. None of the other **COURTIERS** dares to touch the skull.)

**CHRISTOPHE** suddenly turns and screams at them with all his strength)

Pull it down! Do you hear!

(The effort paralyses the right side of his face. One of the **COURTIERS** runs in panic and pulls the staff and skull down)

**STEWART:**

(trying to calm him) Your Majesty!

**CHRISTOPHE:**

You see how I have to do their thinking for them?

(**THE ROYAL PARTY** with **STEWART** move slowly out, right. The **COURTIERS** remain, in an utter hush, watching)

(shouting, off) Even when I'm dead I'll go on thinking for them!

(The **COURTIER** with the skull and staff lets both drop. The **COURTIERS** suddenly scatter across the open area, feathers flying. The scene is empty. **GULLIVER** has followed the royal party.)

**P.P.** enters from the chapel side. He goes to pick up his staff and skull)

**P.P.:**

Just before they got him into the carriage he caught hold of the faithful Tom Gulliver's shoulder and said, 'A tiny spark can set a field of sugar cane alight!' He was right. Just one man has to show defiance, and a whole people knows how it feels!

(The Voodoo drums begin in the distance.)

The **ROYAL PARTY** with **STEWART** and **GULLIVER** pass across the open area. **CHRISTOPHE** is now being carried on the shoulders of six African **GUARDS**. His clothes hang down in tatters. **THE PRINCESSES** are crying)

P.P.:

(watching them) He didn't speak after that because, as you may have seen, he was paralysed down the right side of his face. When he gets him to the hospital Dr. Stewart will take off about four cups of blood. And tomorrow morning Dr. Stewart will congratulate himself on the fact that the king's paralysis has disappeared, whereas Papaloi will have done the trick in the night. He calls on the great god Loco for advice. Loco is the god of medicine. He tells the priest what herbs to use. His day is Wednesday and he drinks a lot of rum. You sacrifice a grey cock to Papa Loco!

(The PAPALOI passes across the open area very slowly, concentrating, his eyes all but closed, his arms slightly held out before him. His direction is the same as that of CHRISTOPHE's party. An image of St. Joseph follows him. The song of LOCO ATISOU is heard, off:

Va, Loco, Loco Valdi, Va, Loco, Loco, Valadi, Va, Loco, Loco Valdi, Va, Loco, Loco, Valadi, Man, Jean Valou Loco, Loco Valadi!

(while PAPALOI crosses) That's St. Joseph: (pointing at the image) He's the same as Papa Loco! Now a fever is a decision, it's an evolution of the body. It destroys the old life and prepares the new. And Papaloi is mobilising all the force in King Henry's body --- the fish, the tiger, the snake, the root, the creeper, the tree, the hooting chimpanzee! They are all inside the body, their force has to be drawn into it, all breathing things have to co-operate! And ---- (with sudden impatience) But what's the use of talking to you about all that? You think when a man's sick a bug comes into his mouth ---- pop! ---- just like that --- no cause! ----- no explanation! (with immense fury) You're dumb! You're derelicts! Your civilisation's a mountain of crap!

(The PAPALOI has passed out of sight)

(recovering himself with effort) Yes, the king's paralysis will go. But the paralysis of the state --- that remains uncured!

(A mellow morning light comes up on the royal area. CHRISTOPHE, in a dressing gown now, is supported in by two of his AIDES and lowered gently to a chair. DR. STEWART and MARMELADE follow.

CHRISTOPHE pants, leans heavily on his cane.

P.P., complete with his staff and horse's skull again, watches the scene)

CHRISTOPHE: (to MARMELADE) You may go.

(STEWART settles the king with pillows, and sits close to him, feeling his pulse, touching his forehead.

Some time passes while the king recovers his breath. MARMELADE bows his way out.

CHRISTOPHE glances round to make sure they are not overheard, and draws STEWART closer)

Do they know I was paralysed?

STEWART: It's a difficult thing to hide, your majesty! If you hadn't shouted all might have been well.

CHRISTOPHE: Deny it in your bulletins.

STEWART: I already have!

(There are musket shots in the distance, and shouting. CHRISTOPHE is aware of STEWART starting)

CHRISTOPHE: Is something the matter?

STEWART: Nothing, your majesty! I think you should try to rest your mind.

(The morning levee begins to form in the open area. Thrones are put in place as before. But this time the COURTIERS are full of gossip, in groups, undisciplined, and the GRAND MASTER OF CEREMONIES has difficulty with them)

**CHRISTOPHE:** President Boyer told the French I was dead. They'll put that in the French newspapers, and then circulate them here. Dr. Stewart, I know every move people are going to make! ---- I wish I wasn't so aware, but I see everything --- the smallest intrigue --- there was never the smallest whisper of treason which I couldn't hear, however far away! I hear it here! (plunging his hand on his solar plexus)

**STEWART:** Tongue please!

(CHRISTOPHE shows his tongue.

MARMELADE comes in again)

**MARMELADE:** The levee, your majesty --- will you ----?

**CHRISTOPHE:** I've got my uniform on under this, you gloating idiot! Why --- do you want to park your bungling arse here when I'm gone -- you of all people --- you?

(He raises himself painfully.

MARMELADE runs forward to help him out of his seat. But CHRISTOPHE pushes him aside)

(to STEWART) Tell him!

**STEWART:** (to MARMELADE) His majesty is perfectly able to walk!

**CHRISTOPHE:** Now leave me alone, both of you.

(DR. STEWART and MARMELADE leave.

CHRISTOPHE slumps back into his chair with exhaustion, panting. He closes his eyes and puts his hands together in prayer. He remains quite still.

The PAPALOI enters the royal area soundlessly. He stands close to CHRISTOPHE. Intense concentration establishes itself between them. The PAPALOI moves his lips rapidly without uttering a sound. Gradually CHRISTOPHE, the sweat pouring from him, rises from his chair until he is erect and standing quite firm. His breathing becomes normal.

The PAPALOI leaves soundlessly. CHRISTOPHE opens his eyes and walks slowly out.

The COURTIERS arrange themselves, whispering, taking no notice of the GRAND MASTER OF CEREMONIES.

The ROYAL FAMILY enters the open area. The COURTIERS are hushed with astonishment when they see that CHRISTOPHE is as erect and unruffled as always before, and impeccably dressed. He strides slowly towards his throne with the queen.

There is further sporadic firing in the distance but the COURTIERS no longer dare register this fact by looking at each other. CHRISTOPHE sits. MARMELADE places himself behind the throne)

CHRISTOPHE: It is important that the enemy in the South should know that nothing unusual has happened. You see me in perfect health. Conduct yourselves properly. They are watching us for weakness. My downfall is yours. But there is an enemy closer at hand than the South of Haiti. He is here. In your hearts. He would like something to go wrong. He would like not to stand here for the levee like a painted doll, perhaps because a painted doll is all he really is. You see, he's a believer in chaos! He doesn't want the world to thrive! He doesn't even want to thrive himself! He wants to let things go. That's his ideal. Left to himself he would let the weeds grow up his legs from standing still so long. You laugh! But courtiers can be shot as well as mutineering soldiers! (a gasp) An emergency can be declared! (trying to raise himself) I can do away with my court --- (with a sweeping gesture) in one ---!

(He falls back, gripped with pain)

MARMELADE: (running off) The doctor!

**CHRISTOPHE:**

(straining round) Come back! And you --- (as MARMELADE returns with feigned surprise) aren't you the enemy-in-chief? you scheming viper? Would you like to be the first before the firing squad? (a hush) Would you? It can be done in a moment! Make your decision! My guards are waiting!

(MARMELADE bows obediently)

(imitating him) 'Doctor! Doctor!' Was it you put up the idea of a regency council? (screaming) There will be no regency council! Because you'd be on it, pulling the strings from behind! No, I don't want any Marmelade on my bread thank you! (sycophant laughter from the COURTIERS)

(CHRISTOPHE manages to lift himself unaided, watched by the COURTIERS with great suspense. MARIE LOUISE comes to his side but he indicates that he wants no help. And together the ROYAL FAMILY walk down among the COURTIERS as usual. CHRISTOPHE stops and converses.

Shots are heard again. MARIE LOUISE and her children look round, the COURTIERS show signs of excitement, but CHRISTOPHE does not seem to hear.

MARMELADE catches the COUNT OF GONAIVE's eye and they hurry out of the open area together.

The ROYAL FAMILY continues moving among the COURTIERS. The Voodoo drums are again heard in the distance.

MARMELADE and GONAIVES enter  
the royal area downstage)

MARMELADE: Did you see when he was shouting at me? His right hand's useless! Now spread it among the generals --- Lebrun, the Count of Gros-Morne, Prophète ---!

GONAIVES: Prophète, the commander of the King's Light Horse?

MARMELADE: Why not? Do you think there's a loyal man left? Tell them to repeat it among the men --- the king is dead! Liberty! Tell them it comes from me --- the king is ---

(An AIDE dashes into the royal area.  
He whispers something in MARMELADE's  
ear)

MARMELADE: (to GONAIVES) Fetch the doctor! Follow me!

(They all dash out.

There is more firing. The sounds of shouting, some screams. The COURTIERS are alarmed, restive, but still the king goes on quietly talking.

MARMELADE runs into the open area followed by DR. STEWART)

Your majesty!

(CHRISTOPHE turns slowly, struck more by this breach of court etiquette than anything else)

CHRISTOPHE: (seeing STEWART) You bring my doctor --- you ---!

MARMELADE: (calmly) General Jean Claude, the military governor, has just been shot. Dead. By his own men.

(The COURTIERS burst into excited chatter. STEWART comes forward to CHRISTOPHE, who totters. But CHRISTOPHE pushes him violently aside. He moves towards MARMELADE, raises

his cane at him. MARMELADE does not move. Everyone watches. As CHRISTOPHE comes within arm's reach of MARMELADE he collapses suddenly in a heap. MARIE LOUISE screams. STEWART bends down to tear open CHRISTOPHE's collar. There is chaos. The COURTIERS rush out, shouting. MARMELADE disappears. The MASTER OF CEREMONIES hurries African GUARDS towards the king. They lift him as before, but this time chair him out.

MARIE LOUISE follows with the PRINCESSES. The PRINCE ROYAL picks up the king's fallen cane and gazes at it in a dazed way.

MARMELADE and GONAIVES with other COURTIERS --- no longer feathered --- hurry into the chapel area and pull the pews round for an urgent conference. The open area clears)

MARMELADE:  
(contd)

We can't stop now, the NCOs have taken charge! Now get hold of the ringleaders and tell them they have our support! Tell them we've freed their commander, Colonel Paulin. And get rid of these damned clothes!

(Other COURTIERS join them)

Don't go near the palace! Don't touch any of the Europeans, we'll need their support later. When I've formed a government, I expect your help!

(A group of SOLDIERS burst from the top of the ramp, chairing COLONEL PAULIN. They race him down the ramp, cheering, then out)

MARMELADE: I'm in close touch with President Boyer. His troops are fifty miles away, approaching fast.

(The sound of 'For he's a jolly good fellow!' comes from COLONEL PAULIN's party off)

Do I have your support?

COURTIERS: Yes!

MARMELADE: Wherever you find troops, pass the word to rally round General Richard! That's my name from now on!

A COURTIER: Are you keeping your insignia?

MARMELADE: I'm stripping them off -- but in public! I learned a bit of showmanship from that royal jackass!

(They leave, some of the COURTIERS hanging back in undecided conversation.)

CHRISTOPHE, helped by DR. STEWART and the PRINCE ROYAL and an AIDE, comes into the royal area. He slumps down in a chair, and pillows are brought)

CHRISTOPHE: Then I shall sign with my left! Bring me the order.  
(to the AIDE)

(The AIDE leaves again)

STEWART: I can't guarantee your recovery if you go on like this! Set up a regency council now, sir, in the interests of your health!

CHRISTOPHE: And the interests of the state? I shall sign that document!

STEWART: (shouting in his ear) But you can hardly talk, sir!

(The AIDE returns with the order to be signed)

CHRISTOPHE: Where's Marmelade? Marmelade!

(More shouting is heard from outside, closer now. 'Liberty! Liberty!' )

CHRISTOPHE grips the table and begins slowly and painfully making his signature with his left hand.

A group of soldiers pass across the open area, their muskets slung anyhow, looking for trouble. They shout 'Liberty! Liberty!' A cheer comes from outside, and there is the sound of crackling flames. A red glow casts its light across the open area.

MARMELADE and several OFFICERS cross the open area too, surrounded by troops, now seen in the red glow of the flames)

MARMELADE:

I am no longer the Duke of Marmelade! No King!  
No nobility! No tyranny!

(He tears the Cross of St. Henry from his chest and flings it on the ground, and a great cheer goes up)

I am the General Richard you have always known!

(They move off across the open area, chanting 'No King, no Nobility, no Tyranny!' )

The MASTER OF CEREMONIES bows his way nervously into the royal area)

MASTER OF  
CEREMONIES:

Sir Home Riggs Popham, your majesty.

(CHRISTOPHE is still at work on his signature)

STEWART:

(in his ear) Sir Home's here sir!

CHRISTOPHE:

Send him in!

(The MASTER OF CEREMONIES leaves just as MARIE LOUISE hurries in)

MARIE LOUISE: Henry! They're shooting outside! (touching him)  
Henry!

CHRISTOPHE: (turning to her quietly) Does a little firing mean you  
abandon the proprieties? Is my room a brothel?

MARIE LOUISE: Henry! Your face!

CHRISTOPHE: Now get among the courtiers. Take the Prince Royal  
with you. Tell them I've issued an order to put down  
the rebels! I still have Joachim! I have the royal  
guard!

(He hands the order to his AIDE, who  
hurries out as POPHAM is shown in)

POPHAM: Your majesty, they're burning the town!

CHRISTOPHE: I've just sent Joachim with twelve hundred of my guard!

POPHAM: I can bring in a couple of cruisers but they'll be of  
little help! May I suggest a regency council? And  
perhaps to ask Marmelade to join it, as the strongest  
man outside the palace?

CHRISTOPHE: Outside? He's outside now?

STEWART: I must really ask you to quiet yourself sir!

(CHRISTOPHE slumps back)

CHRISTOPHE: You know, Sir Home, a king always wonders in his  
heart of hearts when he's going to be disobeyed. For  
years I've given orders with that in the back of my  
mind. And now it's happened. And it's a relief ---  
like coming back to life. They don't need me any more.

POPHAM: They? You mean the people?

CHRISTOPHE: Oh! --- the people are neither here nor there!

POPHAM: You should at least go to the citadel sir.

CHRISTOPHE: I shall send my family there perhaps.

(More sounds of firing. The flames  
grow.)

MARMELADE dashes into the open area  
again with OFFICERS and MEN)

**MARMELADE:** He sends the royal guard to crush us! Four cannons and twelve hundred men against five thousand. But a million men would be useless against us (cheers) ---! Because they believe in liberty too! The king's own guard believes in liberty! All twelve hundred of them! (more cheers) No King! No Nobility! No Tyranny!

(The chant is taken up. There are drums close at hand, calling the troops to gather.

MARMELADE and his party move across the open area as an AIDE dashes into the royal area)

**AIDE:** General Joachim has returned sir! Without his troops! He awaits you at the Citadel!

**CHRISTOPHE:** Without his -----?

**AIDE:** They defected to the other side!

**CHRISTOPHE:** (trying to rise) Why then, call my family. (to POPHAM) You've been a kind friend, Sir Home. Go back to your ship. (to STEWART) You sir ----

**STEWART:** My job is to stay with you!

**CHRISTOPHE:** (smiling, to POPHAM) You see what a doctor I have. It's because I haven't paid him yet!

**POPHAM:** You can joke now, with your capital in flames?

**CHRISTOPHE:** I set light to it myself! I'm burning it down myself! I've lived in death since I was ten, it's nothing new to me --- do you think I don't know what it is? (screaming at the flames) I've done it myself, do you hear? I taught you revolt! I showed Marmelade the way! It does me good! A defeat! I'm a man again, I wanted to be a man again!

**POPHAM:** But nothing's finished, it's just a riot!

**CHRISTOPHE:** (relaxing into his chair again) Do you know something, my old friend, we've been chatting together for twelve years or more, and I don't even know if you're married! Would it be too personal to ask, now?

- POPHAM: Not only married, sir, but with two daughters and a son about the same age as your own.
- CHRISTOPHE: And have they been told about me?
- POPHAM: I have to give them a new instalment every time I dock at Southampton! You're a fairy tale for them! They grew up with it!
- CHRISTOPHE: I was for my own people too, a fairy tale. Did I do wrong, do you think? All these uniforms ---!
- POPHAM: Monarchy, sir, ensures political continuity.
- CHRISTOPHE: (laughing) Ah! Let that be your last remark! Bless you for bringing Westminster here! Westminster's a fairy tale too! People remember fairy tales all their lives.
- (A fresh burst of firing and shouting close at hand, but CHRISTOPHE is quite undisturbed)
- Do you know, Sir Home, I am so expert, so trained, I know my people so well, that I can calculate the precise moment at which they will break down my doors. Marmelade gave you a safe conduct?
- POPHAM: Yes.
- CHRISTOPHE: See that Gulliver gets it too. And this fellow. (meaning STEWART) He thinks it's all because I had a heart attack! But I had the heart attack because my time had come, my people were too weak to go on. That's the order of things.
- POPHAM: I'm afraid he's a doctor, sir, he could never see that!
- CHRISTOPHE: If I should be separated from my family, you will bring them to England?
- POPHAM: I give you my solemn word.
- CHRISTOPHE: Take them first, please, to Mr. Wilberforce. He won't be pleased to see them, because he doesn't really like black people. But Mr. Clarkson will take them in. Oh God! what it is to know human beings!
- POPHAM: I can get you all across to one of the Virgin Islands now --- you could fight it out from there --- collect new men! We can smuggle you down to the harbour!

**CHRISTOPHE:** My duty is here, dear friend. Besides, I'm interested to see how far the riot goes.

(The GRAND MASTER OF CEREMONIES enters with little ceremony)

**MASTER OF CEREMONIES:** Her Majesty is waiting with your children sir!

**POPHAM:** May I repeat my offer?

**CHRISTOPHE:** I shall stay with my people. You see, it's all being played out here! (touching his solar plexus)

(They embrace)

**POPHAM:** I shall have a boat lowered, waiting for you, for two days.

**CHRISTOPHE:** In two days I shall be Emperor of the Western World!

**POPHAM:** Emperor?

(POPHAM bows low and leaves. The MASTER OF CEREMONIES ushers in the rest of the royal family. The PRINCE ROYAL is frightened and stumbling, while the PRINCESSES are collected and quiet)

**CHRISTOPHE:** (to MARIE LOUISE) Come closer my dear. I'm sending you and the children to the Citadel with Dr. Stewart. You may have to get used to being ordinary citizens again.

**MARIE LOUISE:** (fiercely) We shall stay here, with you! They're slave - trash - they smile and fawn until you're down! Look at that one (indicating the MASTER OF CEREMONIES) his heart's outside with the rebels --- get out, go on! Join them if you want to! Here's the bravest man in Haiti, the only rebel you ever had, but you couldn't see it!

(The MASTER OF CEREMONIES bows his head and remains)

**CHRISTOPHE:** (to MARIE LOUISE) You will go now, my dearest.

MARIE LOUISE: And you? We won't leave you here!

CHRISTOPHE: Those are my orders. I shall follow you there in time. Stewart, my staff will look after you. There's a year's supply of food at the Citadel.

(STEWART bows, and one by one the royal family takes leave of the king)

(to the PRINCE ROYAL) Now pull yourself together!  
(to MARIE LOUISE) Do you know, I knew all this long ago --- it was on your Feast Day, I felt so happy I knew something new was about to happen!

MARIE LOUISE: Henry --- !

CHRISTOPHE: (kissing her) You're a brave woman. God be with you.

(They all leave. CHRISTOPHE is alone.)

More drums outside, more firing.

Cries of Liberty! This reaches his ears, and he chuckles to himself, repeating 'Liberty!'

He strains round to the table and manages to pull open the drawer. He takes out a small silver pistol, which he inspects and loads calmly. He tucks it into his tunic)

Let Christ receive me first. So many murders! Disappointments, hurts! So many curses on my head every day! (trying to rise) Let me do it! (pleading) Oh gods of Dahomey --- before they get in --- let me do it! Oh Christ, move them to let me do it!

(But he cannot rise, and breaks down into weeping.)

The PAPANOI appears in the open area, stands quite still. He simply watches CHRISTOPHE.

(There are shouts close at hand. Banging at one of the palace doors)

CHRISTOPHE:  
(contd)

They're here! (with terrific effort to raise himself)  
Help me to my room! I must lie on my bed! They must see me in state! (insisting) Help me! I know my people! (relapsing into helpless tears again)

(Suddenly he sees the PAPANOI)

(with tremendous relief) Ah-h-h-h!

(He raises himself quite easily, and walks across the open area towards the PAPANOI, then out. The PAPANOI follows noiselessly.)

The scene is empty. It is night. Only desultory flames light the open area.

There is the sound of a single pistol shot, then silence again.

Confused running, then an alarmed cry. We hear MARIE LOUISE scream, and one of the PRINCESSES cry)

STEWART:

(off) Guards! Guards!

(There are more hurrying footsteps. TOM GULLIVER suddenly appears in the royal area, dishevelled, his eyes starting out of his head.)

STEWART dashes in from the other side)

STEWART: Where are those damned guards? (seeing GULLIVER)  
(contd) Good God! What brings you here?

GULLIVER: They're almost in the --- is the king safe?

STEWART: He's shot himself man! Through the heart! A clean bullet wound --- with his right arm --- it was paralysed!

GULLIVER: The king is --- ?

STEWART: Your idol's dead, Mr. Gulliver.

(The MASTER OF CEREMONIES enters, right)

MASTER OF CEREMONIES: I've bribed some of the guards, sir --- they'll take him up to the Citadel! (he leaves again)

STEWART: (to GULLIVER) Get down to the harbour! They won't touch you. Go on! Are you still sick, man?

(GULLIVER turns blindly to go)

Not that way, man!

(At this moment a few AFRICAN GUARDS, no longer in dress uniform, carry CHRISTOPHE's body across the open area, with the QUEEN and her FAMILY immediately following. Leading the party are the MASTER OF CEREMONIES, armed now, and another mulatto COURTIER. GULLIVER watches it all, dazed.)

The ROYAL PARTY moves towards the ramp and DR. STEWART joins them. They mount the ramp.

GULLIVER stands alone in the open area, gazing up at them. The GUARDS strain under the king's weight, urged on at gunpoint by the MASTER OF CEREMONIES)

MASTER OF CEREMONIES:

Forward, go on!

(Shouts of Liberty! come this time from the top of the ramp. Suddenly ragged SOLDIERS rush from the top of the ramp, colliding with the ROYAL PARTY)

SOLDIER:

The king! Throw him off the ramparts!

(But the silence of the ROYAL PARTY and menaces from the GRAND MASTER OF CEREMONIES stay them)

MASTER OF CEREMONIES:

Stand back!

(The SOLDIERS watch the ROYAL PARTY pass, then run on down the ramp shouting, 'The king is dead! The king is dead!')

There is a great banging at the palace doors below.

As the SOLDIERS reach the foot of the ramp others burst in from the right. The palace doors are down)

SOLDIERS:

The king is dead! The king is dead!

(They tear down the royal phoenix, tip up the armchairs and tables, go to the thrones and upset them. They take no notice of GULLIVER, who stands gazing at them in stupefaction.

The voodoo drums can be heard again.

There are unearthly screams from the top of the ramp which make the SOLDIERS below turn their heads.

A SOLDIER runs down the ramp waving a bloodstained bayonet)

**SOLDIER:** The Prince Royal is dead!

**SOLDIERS:** To the Citadel! To the Citadel!

(They storm up the ramp.

**MARMELADE** rushes in with his party, left. They hasten after the SOLDIERS up the ramp)

**MARMELADE:** (to his AIDES, who run ahead) Get hold of the queen! See that she's safe!

(The scene is again empty save for GULLIVER. Gradually the voices die away.

He gazes round at the upturned furniture. He manages to put the royal phoenix upright again. He stands looking at it, at the words, I rise again from my ashes.

He gives it a last look and then walks off across the open area, upstage right.

The scene is empty. The flames gradually die down.

There is silence. In the distance Voodoo drums are heard.

**THE END**