



OUR LADY OF KIBEHO

BY KATORI HALL



DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.



OUR LADY OF KIBEHO
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Inspired by true events ...

PRAYER TO OUR LADY OF KIBEHO

Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Word, Mother of all those
Who believe in Him, and who keep Him in their life;
We look upon you in contemplation.
We believe that you are with us, like a mother in the midst of
Her children, even though we do not see you with our eyes.

You, who are the infallible pathway to Jesus the Savior.
We bless you for all the favors you gratify our life,
Especially since you humbled yourself
And chose to appear miraculously in Kibebo
At the very time our world needed it most.

Grant us always light and strength,
So that we may worthily keep in us
Your message of conversion and repentance
In order to live in accordance with your Son's Gospel.
Teach us how to pray truly, and love one another as He loved us,
So that, as you willed, we may always be beautiful flowers
That produce nice flavor to everyone and everywhere.

Virgin Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows,
Grant us to value the cross in our life,
So that we may complete in our own bodies
All that has still to be undergone by Christ
For the sake of His mystic Body, the Church.

And when we come to the end of our pilgrimage on earth,
Let us live with you for all eternity, in the Heavenly Kingdom.

Amen

CHARACTERS

The Trinity

ALPHONSINE MUMUREKE, 16-year-old Rwandese girl, cultural name means “Leave her alone, she speaks the truth.”

ANATHALIE MUKAMAZIMPAKA, 17-year-old Rwandese girl, cultural name means “One who settles arguments and brings peace.”

MARIE-CLAIRE MUKANGANGO, 21-year-old Rwandese young woman, cultural name means “Woman.”

The Church

FATHER TUYISHIME, head priest at the school.

SISTER EVANGELIQUE, head nun of the school.

BISHOP GAHAMANYI, the town bishop, head of the Butare Diocese.

FATHER FLAVIA, Italian, an investigative priest from the Holy See, the “miracles office” at the Vatican.

The Chorus

NKANGO, Anathalie’s father, a farmer.

EMMANUEL, young boy who is cured of AIDS.

GIRLS 1–4, classmates at Kibeho College.

VILLAGERS 1–4, Kibeho villagers. Villager #2 also plays BLIND MAN and FORMER BLIND MAN.

PLACE

Kibeho College, an all-girls Catholic school in Kibeho, Rwanda.

TIME

1981–1982

NOTE ON LANGUAGE

The Rwandese characters would probably be speaking French and Kinyarwanda to each other, but for an English-speaking audience, a French-based Rwandese accent is ideal.

- / denotes overlapping dialogue
- denotes continuous dialogue
- denotes interrupted dialogue

OUR LADY OF KIBEHO

ACT ONE

Scene 1

Kibebo, Rwanda. 1981. Lush hills can be seen rolling in the distance. Passion fruit and bananas hang from towering trees. Fact: It is the most beautiful place in the world. Even God goes on vacation here. The sounds of girls singing a hymn in an exquisite four-part harmony in Kinyarwanda can be heard echoing through the corridors. Alphonsine, a teenage girl, sits outside an open door. She is conservatively dressed with her hands folded in her lap, looking down. She has no shoes. Her slender thigh pulses up and down, making her foot pat the concrete floor. She is nervous. The choir can be heard beneath the following exchange:

SISTER EVANGELIQUE. She is a liar! Just a / liar!

FATHER TUYISHIME. Sister Evangelique!

SISTER EVANGELIQUE. I don't know who this little snot thinks / she is!

FATHER TUYISHIME. Sister, why do you have to speak such nastiness?

SISTER EVANGELIQUE. I wouldn't have to say such things if she wasn't such a liar.

FATHER TUYISHIME. What if she is telling the truth?

SISTER EVANGELIQUE. Do you believe in tall tales now?

FATHER TUYISHIME. No, of course not, / Sister!

SISTER EVANGELIQUE. She could not have seen what she said she saw. She is just trying to frighten the other girls. Keep them from sleeping at night.

FATHER TUYISHIME. It *is* a good story.
 SISTER EVANGELIQUE. It is blasphemy!
 FATHER TUYISHIME. Sister!
 SISTER EVANGELIQUE. She must be punished! We let her get away with this, the whole school will crumble under the weight of blasphemy, / ANARCHY!!
 FATHER TUYISHIME. Sister.
 SISTER EVANGELIQUE. She will cause the other girls to begin lying, too!
 FATHER TUYISHIME. Sister!
 SISTER EVANGELIQUE. If she thinks this is the way to get an A in Catechism, well —
 FATHER TUYISHIME. SISTER! (*Beat.*) Did you punish her yet? (*The singing stops. Beat.*)
 SISTER EVANGELIQUE. Just. A little. Bit.
 FATHER TUYISHIME. Sister ...
 SISTER EVANGELIQUE. I leave the rest to you. (*Beat.*)
 FATHER TUYISHIME. Alphonsine! (*Alphonsine grips the side of the chair. She does not get up.*) ALPHONSINE!! (*Sister Evangelique, a tall brown woman dressed in all of her blessed nunnery, steps out of the office.*)
 SISTER EVANGELIQUE. Do you hear Father Tuyishime, my child? Or have you been struck deaf and dumb again?
 ALPHONSINE. Yes, I—I—I mean, no. Yes, I hear — I heard him, Sister.
 SISTER EVANGELIQUE. Hmmmm. Well, you better go get your licks then. (*Father Tuyishime walks out and leans against the door. He is a handsome man. Charming and young. The Sister waits.*)
 FATHER TUYISHIME. You can come in, Alphonsine. (*Alphonsine stands up softly. She passes Sister Evangelique, who gives her a stern look. The Sister waits. Beat.*) The other girls might need your ... loving presence, Sister Evangelique.
 SISTER EVANGELIQUE. (*Sincerely.*) You think I have a loving presence? (*Beat.*)
 FATHER TUYISHIME. Please, Sister.
 SISTER EVANGELIQUE. Fine. Shall I come by later? To help you with the —
 FATHER TUYISHIME. I can fill the jerricans myself, Sister.
 SISTER EVANGELIQUE. Well ... I guess my work here is done.
 FATHER TUYISHIME. Yes. Sister. It is. (*The Sister walks away, leaving the two alone. A picture of Jesus floats above their heads.*)

The Father looks to it for some strength. Beat. The Father turns to Alphonsine. He sighs heavily. He opens a file on his desk.) Alphonsine Mumureke ... Tutsi ... *(He looks at her features. Nods to himself. Closes the file. Beat.)* Would you like a sip of water?

ALPHONSINE. Please don't send me home. My mother would be / so disappointed.

FATHER TUYISHIME. First. Let us get you some water. *(He walks to a jerrican and pours Alphonsine a cup. She gulps it down. He pours her another. She bangs it back gladly. She finishes.)*

ALPHONSINE. Thank you.

FATHER TUYISHIME. Must be parched. Tongue must be toasted from all those tall tales you have been telling.

ALPHONSINE. No. I am. Just. Hot.

FATHER TUYISHIME. Amen. *(He takes off his collar and places it on the desk. Alphonsine's eyes bug out and she bursts into laughter.)*

Shhhhh! Don't tell. *(Alphonsine laughs louder. Her smile is like the sun rising above the hills in the distance.)* Tutsi you are indeed. Tutsi women always have the prettiest smiles. *(Alphonsine stops smiling and looks down.)* I'm sorry if that makes you uncomfortable. *(Alphonsine's thigh begins to pulse nervously.)* I did not mean it. Like that. I mean – I am one who cannot tell a lie.

ALPHONSINE. As well as I. *(Beat.)*

FATHER TUYISHIME. So I must “punish” you somehow. What do you think your “punishment” should be?

ALPHONSINE. I can help you here in the office.

FATHER TUYISHIME. *(Smiling.)* Oh, that would be a punishment, eh?

ALPHONSINE. Yes. No ... *(Giggling.)* Maybe.

FATHER TUYISHIME. It would. I wake up in a such a foul mood most mornings. Wooo watch out! *(Alphonsine laughs again, bringing more of the sun into the tiny cramped office.)*

ALPHONSINE. You are a very honest man.

FATHER TUYISHIME. I try to be, Alphonsine. Are *you* honest?

ALPHONSINE. Yes. I try to be.

FATHER TUYISHIME. So are you telling the truth? About what you saw?

ALPHONSINE. Yes.

FATHER TUYISHIME. Alphonsine, I think you *imagined* / that.

ALPHONSINE. No, no! I saw. I *saw*! Almost like I could touch Her, smell Her.

OUR LADY OF KIBEHO

by Katori Hall

7M, 8W, 1 boy (doubling)

In 1981, a village girl in Rwanda claims to see the Virgin Mary. She is denounced by her superiors and ostracized by her schoolmates — until impossible happenings begin to appear to all. Skepticism gives way to fear, causing upheaval in the school community and beyond. Based on real events, OUR LADY OF KIBEHO is an exploration of faith, doubt, and the power and consequences of both.

“Transfixing ... The play has the gripping intensity of a thriller, in part because pricking at the edges of our consciousness throughout is the knowledge of the horror that engulfed the country a little more than a decade after the events of the play ...”
—**The New York Times**

“Faith is contagious in Katori Hall’s thrilling play ... [OUR LADY OF KIBEHO] resounds beyond its own plot; questions of poverty, sexism and inter-ethnic tension echo throughout the story. Hall’s passionate play renews belief in what theater can do: It awakens you into a trance.” —**Time Out New York**

“[OUR LADY OF KIBEHO] is the real deal ... Religion and politics play a big role, [and] Hall got the dosage just right. ... Throughout, Hall shows us how everybody [believes] what they want to believe when it’s most convenient.”
—**New York Post**

“Hall’s brilliant play, a simultaneously straightforward yet clear-eyed presentation of a recent bit of Catholic mysticism, leaves you grasping for answers and straining for connections days after the final blackout.”
—**TheaterMania.com**

Also by Katori Hall

CHILDREN OF KILLERS

HOODOO LOVE

HURT VILLAGE

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