

HOLD FOR RELEASE

Written by Jennifer Bryson Moorcroft

CHARACTERS

To be performed by five to six female actors, although the character of Silva could also be performed by a male actor, if desired.

Zeah Kami, the journalist:

Zeah is twenty-something, mixed race and dating casually. She has a bubbly personality and a big heart, but she doubts herself at times. Zeah is a passionate advocate and feminist. She has recently started working at Africa News Network and is very excited about making a good impression. Her best friends from university are Lerato and Abi.

Lerato Ji, the fashion designer:

Lerato is smart, sassy and creative. A glamorous black twenty-something singleton and recent university graduate from UCT; she got the opportunity to be on the prestigious reality TV design show, Ultimate Designer. She is funny and self-deprecating. She is desperate for success, having come from an underprivileged background and wanting so much more...

Abi Su, the social worker:

Abi is seen as the kind, pacifist, humanitarian one, which leads her into a job as a social worker at a Child Welfare Children's Home. She is white. She is loyal, patient and gentle – always there with advice and compassion for the other two. She is an Evangelical Christian and waiting for the right man to get married to. She hopes to make a difference, but is up against unexpected challenges...

Silva Monsingh:

Silva is a funky fifty-plus makeup artist with plenty of attitude. She is Indian/Asian. She has worked at Africa News Network for a long time and brings wisdom and wit to her job.

Macey McWilliams:

Macey is a famous news anchor on Africa News Network. She is a polished, egocentric and snobbish middle-aged white woman. In front of the camera, she is a great actress – tender and emotional, truly able to sell a story.

Inspector (Social Work Inspector):

This is the corrupt senior supervisor who visits Abi's orphanage. She can be doubled up and played by the same actor as Silva or Macey, dressed in more conservative clothing and more matronly mannerisms.

Voice (TV Crew):

This is the voice calling for people to get ready at the TV studio – professional and courteous. (This could be voiced by Macey with changing accent and speech patterns or pre-recorded).

Voice (Adjudicator):

This is the voice of the judge on Ultimate Designer. It should be bossy and posh. (This could be voiced by Macey with changing accent and speech patterns or pre-recorded).

Voice (Indigo Farm):

This is the contact at the raw indigo silk company. The speaker has an Indian accent and although very friendly, comes across as suspicious and mysterious. (This could be voiced by Silva, changing accent and speech patterns).

SETTING

This is a contemporary story set in 2017/2018 in South Africa. It takes place in a big city, not specified, and Lerato's shop is in the fictional suburb of Greenmore.

REALITY TV SHOW SET (medium lighting)

This set features a manikin showing the latest garments and a table with sewing equipment. A sign indicates that the studio is to the left.

LERATO'S SHOP (medium lighting)

This set also has a manikin and sewing equipment, but it features more of Lerato's clothing on racks and some advertisements.

TV NEWS STUDIO (strong, invasive lighting)

This set features a news counter, a TV screen (or projector screen), microphones and other TV studio paraphernalia.

THE CHILDREN'S HOME (drab, soft lighting)

This set has an old desk, boxes and some filing cabinets. This is Abi's office at the Children's Home.

WAREHOUSE (dim lighting)

The warehouse is dark, dingy and sparsely decorated. It features a sooty fireplace, for that Cinderella feel. Lighting can be used to outline the slavers as the shadow of the person Zeah is talking to. This shadow should be long and looming to add a grotesque and ominous mood.

USE OF SCREEN

A projector screen could be used throughout the show to establish and explore the media context of the story and as indicated in the script.

Scene 1 – Reality TV Show Set – Ultimate Designer

Lerato is speaking directly to the audience. There are cameras and lights set up to mimic a TV show being filmed – Ultimate Designer. The spotlight is on Lerato, with her manikin next to her. The manikin is dressed in an unflattering outfit.

VOICE (*adjudicator*): Lerato Mi...You're up next!

LERATO, *nervously*: Okay...Well, this is my design...and I drew inspiration from -

VOICE: In this dress...you basically took a checklist of everything that can turn tacky and combined it into one garment...

LERATO, *surprised*: Damn...

VOICE: This outfit is just sadness personified...

LERATO: Really? That's cold...

VOICE: Truly. But it's an unbelievably tight race for most hideous today...

LERATO, *to herself*: Please let me be safe...please let me be safe...

VOICE: So consider yourself lucky...Lerato...you're in. By the skin of your teeth and the width of a thread...

LERATO, *crumbling*: Oh thank you...I promise...I've got so much more to show you...

VOICE (*crew*): And cut! OK, perfect Lerato. That's all we need from you for now.

LERATO, *shocked and stunned*: That's all I've got to give!

Lights brighten. Lerato relaxes into a slump on the floor. Immediately after that, Zeah and Abi run up to her and give her a big hug, while cheering and clapping hands.

ABI: I always knew one of you would become famous.

ZEAH: Yeah, you just always thought it was going to be me!

ABI: Shut up, they want none of your diva styles here or they'll throw us both off the set!

ZEAH: They just switched off the cameras so you can relax...,

ABI: I wasn't looking at the cameras!

ZEAH: Oh yeah? They were probably looking at you –

ABI: It's entirely possible!

ZEAH: Keep telling yourself girl –

They are finally interrupted by Lerato, who has been watching them.

LERATO, *cooly*: Guys, I'm right over here. Did you come to see me, or what?

Zeah, *gushing*: Oh my goodness, you were amazing!

ABI: We are so proud of you – I mean, look at this!

Abi holds up the garment next to Lerato.

LERATO: Don't touch that – please just be careful with -

ZEAH: At least I know how to handle myself in a studio...

ABI: You've only been at thing-ama-channel for one week – you probably haven't even seen the inside of the studio...

ZEAH: You won't be saying that when I'm on TV...

ABI: Hey, Lerato is already on TV! She's the star! Don't steal her shine!

LERATO, *embarrassed*: Keep it down, all right...it's nothing like that...Behave!

ABI: It's huge! Huger than huge!

Lerato folds up the clothes.

LERATO: Yeah...it's pretty dope.

They start helping her pack away her sewing tools into a box.

ABI: Just imagine...making it all the way to Fashion Finals...

Lerato drops the scissors on the floor. There is a flash of fear in her eyes.

ABI: Lerato...?

There is a loaded, awkward pause.

LERATO: I don't think I'm gonna make it to Fashion Finals. I got shredded this last crit. They don't really get my vibe – they think it's boring.

ZEAH: Are these judges blind or something?

ABI: Your designs aren't boring!

LERATO, *picking up the scissors*: Everything in fashion is a recycled idea anyways...but... for the next challenge - 'fresh fabrics' - I need to dig up some new kick-ass material...I don't know the first place to start. I'm all dried up.

ABI: Mmmm...like cover your model is newspaper?

ZEAH: Or send her down the runway naked?

ABI: You know pineapples are really fresh... Ever made clothes out of actual fruit, Lerato?

LERATO, *grabs them both*: Now you guys are just being cray. It needs to be an actual fabric. I need stuff people can wear and buy. From me!

ABI: Does Miss Journalist have any ideas?

ZEAH: No...I do news, not reality TV...no offense to either of you...

VOICE (*crew*): Lerato for interview in office A-6 in five.

LERATO: I've got to go...it was life seeing you guys...we're on lockdown until filming is done. Too many spoilers.

ABI: How are you gonna find your fresh fabric if you're stuck here?

LERATO: I'll phone around and get something delivered.

ABI: We'll try to help if we can!

ZEAH: Abi will, at least...

Lerato, *awkwardly*: Don't worry about me...I get it, it is MY competition, not yours.

ABI: Celebration cocktails as soon as filming is done?

LERATO: Celebration...commiseration...either way, I'm game...

Lerato holds the scissors tightly in front of her – tension radiating off her. Zeah catches Abi’s concerned expression out of the corner of her eye.

BLACKOUT