

OPEN SCHOOL ON THE MOVE



"KAGISO SECHABA"

A CHILDREN'S PLAY BY: Don Mattered
Inspired by: Malatka McKenzie

CHARACTERS:

THE GOODIES'

1. KAGISO SECHABA Ruler of 'NGWANA AZANIA' a land in Afrika
2. KUTLWANO (Understanding) A young Prince and son of Kagiso Sechaba
3. TSHEPO (Trust) Son of Kagiso Sechaba
4. BOPHELO (Life) Daughter of Kagiso Sechaba

THE BADDIES'

1. THE OGRE (Gathatsio Ntwa) Ruler of the cruel kingdom of 'Ditlahl' whose main aim is to conquer and oppress the citizens of 'Kagiso Sechaba'.
2. TLALA (Hunger) Daughter of 'Gathatsio Ntwa'
3. MATLHOMOLA (Sorrow) Son of 'Gathatsio Ntwa'
4. TSHOTLEGO (Suffering) Daughter of 'Gathatsio Ntwa'

THE HEROINES'

1. LERATO (Love) A Heroine sent down by the Badimo to help free the ruler 'Kagiso Sechaba' and his people
2. KOPANO (Unity) Heroine sent by the Badimo

A SYNOPSIS:

The play is set in a far, far land called 'NGWANA AZANIA' which is ruled by a kind and loving king known as 'KAGISO SECHABA' who is

loved by his subjects and respected for his wisdom and sense of fair-play. He has three children who assist him to make the country a prosperous land, full of food and law-abiding people who love each other.

The ruler's three children are - Princess Bophelo, Prince Kutlwano and Prince Tshepo. These young people, (represented by a chorus of children - any number) help their father to make the country a pleasant land. There is work for all and families live together. There are no soldiers nor policemen because war has been abolished and crime is nowhere to be seen.....

As the children (represented by the choruses) sing and dance before their ruler in a large spacious garden, King KAGISO SECHABA also joins the celebrations. (Each group gets a chance to perform).

Then there is a loud bang and war-cries sounding from the bush. The children scatter and the ugly looking Ogre, 'Gathatsio Ntwa' jumps in front of KAGISO SECHABA and calls for his children; Hunger (Tlala), Suffering (Tshotlego) and Sorrow (Matlhomola) who are dressed in tattered clothes. They rush on to the scene and claim that they are now the rightful rulers of 'Ngwana Azania'.

Kagiso Sechaba leaves his throne and challenges Ntwa and his children (who are also represented by groups of children). The forces of evil with their weapons, arrest and jail the good people and rule their land with harsh laws which curtail movement and change the country. There is much sadness and bitterness. The crops die and the rain stays away because it fears the new and cruel rulers. The Good People despair and Kagiso Sechaba and his children pray to the Badimo for help. There is a loud clap of thunder and the voice of the Badimo tells them that help would not only come through prayers but through hard work and sacrifice.

If they truly wanted to be free, the children of Kagiso Sechaba had to unite as a nation and chop down a tree in Ntwa's garden called GATHELO BOKHITI (heavy oppression). If they achieved this, then the Badimo would send down two Heroines who would help them liberate the land. They should then plant the Tree of Freedom in its place.

In the dead of night, Kagiso Sechaba and his People manage to cut down the tree GATHELO BOKHITI. And as they plant the Tree of Freedom in its place, a loud flash of lightning followed by thunder, sounds in the sky. The Heroines Lerato and Kopano emerge to greet the frightened people.

After a talk from the Heroines the people join hands with their King and vow to rid the land of the cruel leaders.

After a short battle, Tshotlego, Tlala and Matlhomola are taken captive. The oppressive and unkind Gathatsio Ntwa is overpowered and Kagiso Sechaba is released from prison. The evil Ntwa is sent away from the land and new life begins for the citizens of NGWANA AZANIA. The pass books are destroyed and Ntwa's flags are burnt.

There is great festivity in the land, and singing and dancing ring out throughout the length and breadth of the country. The rains fall again and the drought goes away. Food and work are once more abundant.

The people sing their praises to Lerato and Kopano whom Kagiso Sechaba declares to be the Heroines of all men throughout the world who are the victims of war, oppression and hunger.

'KAGISO SECHABA'

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BY Don Mattered
For The Open School

ACT I SCENE I



THE SCENE OPENS UP TO SINGING AND DANCING BY CHILDREN DRESSED IN BRIGHT COSTUMES. THE CHILDREN REPRESENT THREE GROUPS LED BY TWO PRINCES 'KUTLWANO' (UNDERSTANDING) AND 'TSHEPO' (TRUST) AND THEIR SISTER 'PRINCESS BOPHELO' (LIFE). (EACH GROUP SHOULD BE DRESSED IN THEIR OWN COLOURS).

SEATED ON HIS IMPRESSIVE THRONE IS KING KAGISO SECHABA WHO IS OUTWARDLY HAPPY AND SHARING IN THE MERRIMENT. THE THREE GROUP LEADERS (PRINCESS AND PRINCES) TAKE HIS HAND AND BRING HIM INTO THE SPIRIT OF THE OCCASION. THE SINGING GROWS LOUDER AS THE KING GOES INTO A JIG.

KING: 'Ho Ho Ho... I'm too old for this sort of thing but dancing is good for the bones. It is good to see my people so happy and free.'



(AS THE SINGING AND DANCING STOPS, THE KING CALLS FOR ATTENTION.)

KING: 'My people, my children come closer that I may speak to you. Call my sons Kutlwano and Tshepo and my beautiful daughter Bophelo to come and stand by my side.'

EMERGING FROM THE CROWD ARE THE KING'S CHILDREN. THE CROWD OF CHILDREN CHEER THEIR LEADERS.)

CROWD: 'Long live King Kagiso! Long live Kutlwano! Long live Tshepo! Long live Princess Bophelo. Understanding, Trust and Life have kept our nation together!

(THE KING IS HAPPY AND SAYS:)

KING: 'Yes these three children of mine have really helped me to rule my people with great wisdom and you my sons and daughters of our land must always follow their example.'



CROWD: 'We will great King! We will!

KING: 'Yes there is no greater man or people than those who work for better understanding between all men; no finer work than helping to increase trust and no greater sacrifice than to enrich life.'

CROWD: 'Understanding is the child of Peace! Trust is the child of Peace! And life comes from God who is The Giver of all Peace.....'

(THE DANCING AND SINGING STARTS ALL OVER AGAIN AND CONTINUES AS THE CURTAIN FALLS. THEN THE MUSIC CHANGES INTO A SOMBER MARTIAL (WAR-LIKE) STRAIN AND CONTINUES UNTIL THE CURTAIN RISES ON SCENE II. THE MUSIC IS INTENDED TO INFLUENCE THE AUDIENCE'S TEMPERAMENT.)

END OF SCENE I

ACT I SCENE II

AS THE CURTAIN RISES, A GROUP OF BADLY CLAD CHILDREN (ABOUT 15 OF THEM) MARCH SOLDIER-LIKE AROUND THE STAGE FOR ABOUT TWO MINUTES. A SOMBER FACED MAN (GATHATSO NTWA) STRUTS PAST THEM. THE GROUP SALUTE HIM THRICE. HE SHOUTS LOUDLY, THEN SUMMONS HIS OWN CHILDREN:



NTWA: 'Matlhomola! Tshotlego! Tlala! come here!' (THREE UGLY HUNCH-BACK FIGURES ENTER THE STAGE DRESSED IN DULL, TATTERED COSTUMES. THEY BOW VERY LOWLY TO THE



OGRE (NTWA) AND THEN MOVE CLOSER TO THE AUDIENCE IN A SNARLING AND THREATENING MANNER MEANWHILE THE SINGING AND DANCING OF KING SECHABA AND HIS PEOPLE HAS STOPPED. UTTERLY TAKEN BY SUPRISE, THEY COWER INTO A CORNER AT THE SIGHT OF THE CRUEL LOOKING GROUP OF BADDIES).

NTWA: 'So you are King Sechaba - King of Peace? What Peace? There's no place for peace these days! And who are these happy, cheerful and healthy-looking people?'

KING: 'There is always room for peace in this continent and throughout the world where there is justice!'

NTWA: 'Justice! Bah - I spit on it! I hate justice and I hate peace!'

HIS CHILDREN REPEAT AFTER HIM: 'We hate Peace! We hate Justice!'

KING SECHABA'S CHILDREN ALL SHOUT: 'Shame on you!'

NTWA: 'Shame on yourself! Shame on Tshepo! Shame on Bophelo! Shame on Kutlwano! Trust, Life and Understanding are the true enemies of War. But Suffering, Hunger and Sorrow must never be destroyed!'

KING SECHABA'S SUBJECTS SHOUT IN UNISON: 'Never destroyed?'

NTWA'S PEOPLE ANSWER: 'Yes never destroyed!'



(SUDDENLY DRUMS BEAT LOUDLY IN THE BACKGROUND THERE IS MUCH MOVEMENT AND SCREAMING AMONG SECHABA'S PEOPLE. THE OGRE NTWA GIVES THE ORDER FOR ATTACK. SECHABA, HIS CHILDREN TSHEPO, KUTLWANO AND BOPHELO ARE TAKEN PRISONER TOGETHER WITH THEIR SUBJECTS. NTWA MOVES TO SIT IN KING SECHABA'S THRONE. ONCE SEATED HE LOOKS MENACINGLY TOWARDS THE AUDIENCE AND POINTING AT THEM, HE SHOUTS:)

NTWA: 'Where is Peace now; if not under my feet. Did I not tell you that War is stronger than Peace?'

SECHABA'S SUBJECTS RESPOND: 'Never!'

PRINCESS BOPHELO: 'War shall not triumph over peace and justice, for war is not greater than peace. You and your children; Suffering, Hunger and Sorrow will be overcome by Peace. It is only a matter of time!'

NTWA'S PEOPLE BEAT THEIR CHESTS AND SHOUT: 'Never!'

NTWA SHOUTS: 'Take them to the 10th floor. We'll show them who is greater - War or Peace!'

(AS THE PEOPLE OF SECHABA ARE LED OFF STAGE, THE MARTIAL MUSIC BURSTS IN FULL)

NTWA'S PEOPLE SHOUT: 'War! War! War!'

(THE CURTAIN FALLS AS THE VOICES GROW LOUDER AND LOUDER)

END OF SCENE II

ACT II SCENE I

AS THE SCENE OPENS, THE PRISONERS, KING SECHABA, HIS CHILDREN AND THEIR SUBJECTS ARE SEEN PRAYING IN A DIMLY-LIT CELL WITH ONLY A RAY OF



LIGHT FALLING ONTO THE STAGE. SOMEBODY STARTS HUMMING A DIRGE COMMONLY SUNG AT FUNERAL WAKES IN THE TOWNSHIPS.

KING: 'It is a bad day for the people of Peace and Justice. See how War, Suffering, Hunger and Sorrow grip the land. The rains stay away and drought kills the crops and the soil. It is indeed a bad day for my people.'

SUBJECTS IN UNISON: 'Yes it is a bad day, but bad days come and pass....'

KING: 'A re rapeleng (let us pray).'

(THE MUSIC GROWS SOFTER AS KAGISO SECHABA PRAYS)

KING: 'O great Badimo listen to our prayers - we the people of peace. Ntwa and his children have changed our lives for the worst. We can no longer walk as free men in our own land. We are forced to carry heavy papers that cause Suffering, Sorrow and Hunger to our people. Secret eyes spy and hold our leaders. Save us O great Badimo! Our streets are dead and our sons sing of destruction. All joy, all laughter, all prosperity have fled from us. Save us Badimo!'



SUBJECTS SHOUT IN ONE VOICE: 'Save us! Save us!'

(IT IS WHILE THE SUBJECTS ARE SHOUTING 'SAVE US' THAT THUNDEROUS DRUM-BEATING AND A STRONG GUSH OF WIND SOUND BACK-STAGE FOR THREE OR MORE MINUTES. THIS MUST CREATE A STRONG EFFECT ON THE AUDIENCE UNTIL THE ONLY RAY OF LIGHT IS PUT OUT AND DARKNESS PERVADES THE WHOLE ATMOSPHERE. THEN A BRIGHT, POWERFUL FLASH OF LIGHT SHOULD FALL ON THE STAGE FOLLOWED BY THE BOOMING SOUND OF BADIMO'S VOICE)

BADIMO: 'We hear you Kagiso Sechaba. We hear the cries of your people. But you must first rise up from your knees. Too long have the people been on their knees; too long have they been weeping and praying!'

KING: 'Then listen to our plea and wipe our tears! Save us O Great Badimo we have been in bondage and chains for many years. Save us.'

SUBJECTS: 'Yes save us!'

BADIMO: 'No you must learn to save yourself. Too long have you been praying for your freedom. It is time you did something for yourself. There is a cruel thorny tree in Gathatsio's garden called 'GATHELO' the tree of oppression. Cut it down and plant in its place this tree - the Tree of Freedom.'

(A TREE WHICH IS PLAYED BY AN IMPOSING GIRL RUSHES ONTO THE STAGE AS THE BADIMO SAY 'FREEDOM')

SUBJECTS: 'What a beautiful tree.'

BADIMO: 'Yes the Tree of Freedom is indeed beautiful but its fruits are sweet and bitter.'



(THE STAGE IS NOW TOTALLY DARK AND SOUNDS OF CHOPPING CAN BE HEARD. THE CURTAIN FALLS.)

END OF SCENE I, ACT II

ACT II SCENE II

(AS THE CURTAIN RISES, THE SAME THUNDEROUS DRUMMING STARTS UP IN THE BACKGROUND AND BUILDS UP INTO A CRESCENDO)

BADIMO: 'Now that that you have chopped down the evil tree; now that you have arisen from your knees and stopped wallowing in self-pity, I will send you two Heroines who will help to fight Ntwa and his children.....'

KING: 'Send them O Great Badimo, send them!'

(AS KING SECHABA SPEAKS, TWO BRIGHTLY-CLAD WOMEN DRESSED IN TRADITIONAL GARB, ENTER THE STAGE. THE BADIMO EXCLAIMS:)

BADIMO: 'Here they are, Lerato and Kopano - Love and Unity the two qualities that will help free all men and women of your country.'

SUBJECTS: 'Yes Love and Unity; Lerato and Kopano! Too long have we lived without you. Come and lead us to victory and freedom!'

(THE SUBJECTS LED BY LERATO AND KOPANO START TO SING POPULAR SONGS SUCH AS 'CHOCOLOZA' OR ANY VICTORY SONGS KNOWN BY THE AUDIENCE SO THAT IT MAY JOIN IN. SOME OF THE SUBJECTS AND KING SECHABA LEAVE THE STAGE AND RETURN WITH THEIR FORMER BAD - CRUEL RULERS. THE VILLAINS ARE THROWN DOWN. HUNGER, SUFFERING AND SORROW DISCARD THEIR TATTERED AND UGLY CLOTHES AND BECOME TRANSFORMED. THEY MOVE ON THE SIDE OF KAGISO SECHABA)

KING: 'Kutlwano, Tshepo and Bophelo come forward. Let us thank the Badimo for sending Lerato and Kopano to show us the way to Freedom; indeed without Love and Unity no nation can shake of the burden of war and suffering.'



(THE THREE CHILDREN MOVE UP AND THERE IS MUCH EXCITEMENT. KUTLWANO PUSHES NTWA TOWARDS KING SECHABA)

KING: 'Let the Ogre of War fall on his knees and let him be banished to a far, far place where he will never be looked upon again!'

(THE SUBJECTS LIFT KING SECHABA ON TO HIS THRONE AS NTWA IS LED AWAY. THERE IS MUCH REVELRY AND DANCING.)

SUBJECTS: 'Long live Kagiso Sechaba - Land of Peace; Land of Justice! Long live Tshepo, long live Kutlwano and long live Bophelo! Love and Unity have shown us the way....'

(THE DANCING CONTINUES AND SOME SUBJECTS GRAB MEMBERS OF THE AUDIENCE AND DANCE WITH THEM ON STAGE THE PLAY ENDS.....)

END