

## SCENE 1

*(Southampton airport, late April. A notice reads 'WELCOME TO BRITANNIA - CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE'. TOM enters, pausing to look at the banner before taking a seat)*

**TOM** Twenty years of freedom? Maybe. Sure, we're not an Ashanti colony any more. There's no African governor to tell us what to do. But the Ashanti are still here. You can't go anywhere without tripping over some African advisor. Is that independence?

*(KOFI enters and looks at the banner)*

**TOM** See what I mean? Mr Agyman, Finance director of the British Livestock Board. As he was in colonial times.

**KOFI** Amma must be twenty as well. Things change without you noticing.

**TOM** Too stuck-up to give me a nod. Sometimes I wish independence was just ten years ago. Don't think I'm going daft. The Ashanti empire is dead and good riddance. But Dad's generation had hope. We get the disappointment.

**KOFI** I made a promise Independence night. Britannia might be a poor child in a rich world, but I'd love her. Just as much as I'd love our child when it was born.

**TOM** Even when Dad's back, he'll be hanging around. I betcha.

**KOFI** I've kept that promise.

**TOM** You won't believe this, but I asked him to stay once. Well, I was only four.

**KOFI** I said to Yaa, if it's a girl, let's call her Britannia. She started crying.

**TOM** The first day back after Independence Dad was so hung over he forgot his lunch. Mum went down to the Livestock Board to give it him.

**KOFI** Yaa was always crying then, wanting to go home. The baby. That's what I thought.

**TOM** Mr Agyeman was there. 'Mummy, why hasn't he gone home?' She turned bright red. Dad was just a clerk then, see. Mr Agyeman said 'Britannia's my home too, Tom'. And he gave me one of the bright new British pennies with Queen Elizabeth on them instead of the Ashantehene, and I said, 'Mr Agyeman, you mustn't go away. Not ever. I won't let you.' That was twenty years ago. Agyeman's still here.

*(The arrival of flight ASH 708 from Kumasi is announced. **KOFI** and **TOM** both spring up to watch the plane land)*

**TOM** Hello, Mr Agyeman. Meeting Dad?

**KOFI** I'm sorry?

**TOM** I'm -

**KOFI** No, don't tell me. Er... Um...

**TOM** Tom.

**KOFI** Tom. That's right. Tom Glover. Your Pa will be on this flight, won't he? I must say hello.

**TOM** Don't put yourself out.

**KOFI** I should welcome home the hero.

**TOM** Seeing it was you that sent him.

**KOFI** He earned his further training.

**TOM** It took time coming. It'll seem strange when he's in charge, won't it?

**KOFI** I'll be around to advise.

**TOM** You won't be retiring.

**KOFI** A need to work a few more years yet.

**TOM** Of course. Where is he?

**KOFI** They let the big men out first.

**TOM** Like your friend?

**KOFI** That would be something, wouldn't it? Ah, here comes economy.

*(KOFI pulls out a photo and compares the passengers against it)*

**TOM** There he is. Hi, Dad!

**KOFI** He won't here you. You can't see a young lady, can you?

**TOM** Several. Where are they going?

**KOFI** Passport, baggage, customs. Not like the old airport. Airside, landside - all one room. No waiting about then.

**TOM** We've made progress.

**KOFI** All the same... Look, I'll speak to someone. They may let us into Customs.

**TOM** I'll do it.

*(He gets up and looks around. KOFI points the way. TOM exits. KOFI rereads his letter. TOM soon returns)*

**TOM** It's not allowed.

**KOFI** I'll have a word.

*(KOFI exits)*

**TOM** You don't make the rules now, mate.

*(TOM pulls out some papers. KOFI returns)*

**KOFI** The man will call us once they are through passport.

**TOM** How did you manage that?

**KOFI** He knows me.

**TOM** He was at school with me.

*(He goes back to his papers in a bad temper)*

**KOFI** You're very like your Pa. He was a studious man. I always knew he'd be my star.

**TOM** I'm giving a talk at the library.

*(He rummages around for a shoddily printed leaflet, which he gives to **KOFI**)*

**KOFI** Gold Gleaming Brightly - Reflections on the Importance of Wessex in World History. Very interesting.

*(He offers it back)*

**TOM** Come along? You might learn something.

**KOFI** You never know. Tom...

**TOM** What?

**KOFI** I was wondering... What do young people your age like doing?

**TOM** Dancing; drinking; pulling. Why?

**KOFI** I don't want Amma to be bored.

**TOM** What does he like?

**KOFI** She's always lived with her mother.

**TOM** A girl... Horses.

**KOFI** Horses?

*(**KOFI** starts making a note in his dairy)*

**TOM** Posh girls love horses.

**KOFI** If she's more ordinary?

**TOM** Boys.

**KOFI** She's just finished art school.

**TOM** Definitely boys.

**KOFI** Oh. Ah, we've got the call.

*(**TOM** hurries forward. **KOFI** stops him)*

**KOFI** They won't let us go any further. Do you think that girl over there could be Amma?

*(He shows **TOM** the photo)*

**TOM** She's pretty enough.

**KOFI** She's very like her mother.

**TOM** It definitely could be.

*(**KOFI** tries a tentative wave)*

**KOFI** Amma? It is!

*(**AMMA** enters. **KOFI** hugs her)*

**KOFI** Welcome back!

**AMMA** Pa! *(Seeing **TOM**)* Hello.

**TOM** Hi.

**KOFI** This is Glover's son.

**TOM** Tom.

**AMMA** Glover?

**KOFI** My number two.

**TOM** He was on your plane. He's been doing further training.

**AMMA** Good for him.

**TOM** Well... thanks.

*(**GLOVER** enters)*

**KOFI** Glover! Welcome home. You remember Amma, don't you?

**GLOVER** This is Amma?

**KOFI** She wrote - right out of the blue.

**GLOVER** You used to be knee high to a grasshopper.

**KOFI** It's certainly been a long time.

**GLOVER** When I saw you getting on the plane I thought who's that lovely lady. And it's little Amma.

**AMMA** Pa said you were doing further training.

**GLOVER** Six months. Sounds like a sentence, doesn't it?

**KOFI** It means promotion.

**AMMA** Congratulations.

**KOFI** We've worked at it, haven't we, Glover? (*Putting his hand on Tom's shoulder, which TOM doesn't like*) Don't leave your Pa with too much of a hangover for Monday. (*TO AMMA*) Would you like a drive through town, or go straight home?

**AMMA** I just want to sleep a million years.

**KOFI** If that's what you want. Hey, Porter!

**TOM** Enjoy your stay, Miss Agyeman  
*(AMMA and KOFI walk away. TOM watches them go)*

**GLOVER** Yes, she is pretty.

**TOM** He didn't recognise her.

**GLOVER** There's a story to that.

**TOM** The one with Tunde Bah?

**GLOVER** Maybe. And I've had a great time, thanks for asking.

**TOM** Sorry.

**GLOVER** It's a different world, Tom.

**TOM** We'll catch up.

**GLOVER** They've given themselves a hell of a lead. Funny, though, what you can't find in Ashanti is a decent pint.

**TOM** That's a hint?

**GLOVER** What do you think?

**TOM** You'll want somewhere posh now you've been to Africa.

**GLOVER** No need to be cheeky.