THE LOST BOYS OF SUDAN

A Play by

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CHARACTERS – to be played by eight Black actors –
two women, two girls, two men, two boys

(in order of appearance)

AYOUN, a cow from Sudan

A Dinka Youth who becomes A.I. JOSH

His Father

A Dinka Youth who becomes T-MAC SAM

A Dinka Youth who becomes K-GAR OLLIE

TWELVE, a wizened “twelve” year old warlord

“Relief Workers” (they are anything but)

Guerrilla Soldier/Oil Czar

Government Soldier/Diamond Czar

COPERNICUS PTOLEMY PATRICK, the Head Master at Camp Kakuma

BONY-BEARDED MAN, a bony-bearded elder

MIRIAM MAKER, formerly of the Southern Sudanese Parliament,
administrator of Camp Kakuma

NYANDIER, African Princess

MOIRA MIDNIGHT, Student Placement Counselor, Mother of MOLLY MIDNIGHT

KOOKOOROOKOO, a Dinka Young Man, Senior at Fargo High

MOLLY MIDNIGHT, Senior at Fargo High and daughter of MOIRA MIDNIGHT

ISAIAH MIDNIGHT, basketball coach, Husband of MOIRA, Father of MOLLY

AKINYI SMALLBONES, a Nigerian woman, friend of KOOKOOROOKOO

PLACE Sudan and points in all directions including Fargo, North Dakota

TIME Sadly, The Eternal Present

(ACT ONE SCENE ONE.

Sudan.

AYOUN, a cow.)

AYOUN

My name's Ayoun

I'm a cow with a 'tude

This is Sudan

I'm your African dude

I sing of arms and the children for singing is praying twice

and once has not worked – yet.

Children, hundreds of thousands,

too many to count, but count them we must,

conscripted for armies ignorant clashing by day and night,

governments, guerillas, left, right,

each and every with the word Liberation in their names

hounding, haunting, whipping and worse

We are the Cattle of Sudan,

We are proud four-footed creatures

Dinka Boys of Dinka tribe tend our herds

where and all they can

They are students, we are teachers

This is our school, out in this bush

Where boys learn to be men

We are the rule, here in this bush

For boys twelve, even eight and ten

At night ourselves are sides, our sides are pillows

We cattle rest a little in the dark, under weeping willows

We hear the sound of insects whirring, lions purring,

hyenas laughing at us loudly

We're all a little frightened, in and out of sleep,

but still we're feeling, feeling proudly

At dawn we move - they move us - after we've moved them awake

We scatter birds, all types of fowl, even wildebeests

We look out for the cheetahs, eyeing us, so many feasts

We have our favorite faves,

We put them forth as best; it isn't fair

Perhaps, but each one, lovely, always tries

To soothe our limbs and horns and stroke each hide

And make us feel like we're the only one

These three soon to be called A.I. Joshua, T-Mac Samuel, K-Gar Oliver

(A.I. JOSH joins his cow, Ayoun.)

A.I. JOSH

Ayoun, my precious cow. You know today I am a man

But how I know this when I can barely shave

I've passed this dozen years, I know I can take care of you

And now we're out here in this bush alone

With twenty other boys and cows who're theirs

We're all, each tested

We're each of us in pairs

We face the days, the nights, the sun, the moon, as one

Ayoun, Ayoun, together we are joined as one.

(A.I. JOSH falls asleep at the edge of his village,

on the side of AYOUN.

T-MAC SAM is with us.)

T-MAC SAM

I don't want to
I don't want to

I won't go into the bush

I don't want to grow up

as they say I must

I don't care about cows

Why don't they walk on their back legs as I do

In all the generations they never heard a boy about to be a man

Once utter a complaint about going to the Bush?

Hooray for them!

I set the record

Yes, I love our cows, but they will understand

Neither of us, my personal cow or me, if we stay here,

will be the slightest bit disappointed

The Bush be damned!

(A Mother with her daughter, K-GAR OLLIE.)

Mother

We must disguise you, K-Gar. And send you to the bush.

K-GAR OLLIE
For what reason, Mother? Disguise? Bush?

Let me stay here. As myself. Let the boys go to the bush.

Mother
For the reason to let you live

You can't stay here.

You are a girl.

That's enough to destroy you.

K-GAR OLLIE
The Janjaweed we hear of, those camel riding genes?

Those Weeds that choke?

The Janja with their swords slicing heads and chopping arms?

Mother
And worse than that.

K-GAR OLLIE
Disguise me as what?

Mother
A boy. It's your only hope. Be with a cow. Live as a boy.

In the savannahs. You can do it. And you must.

K-GAR OLLIE
Yes, mother. I will be as a boy. As much as I can. I will insist upon being a boy.

(AYOUN guides us.)

AYOUN

I have a premonition – I see our children so bled-dead-tired

sleep-walking day after day

They cannot move another foot

their arms have fallen away

Hiding in the bush by day

to keep from being seen by the warplanes swooping

Running night after night

barely a step ahead of hungry animals of every sort

The Boys the Dinka Boys found us water, kept us safe

But safety's less and less these days, alas

Men are getting angry and anger doesn't pass

All of them are warriors, who worship different gods

The ones of North fight ones of South

A battle scream pours from each mouth

Children everywhere they threaten

We cows and bulls are frightened

we need some gentle pettin'

Everyone's got bad gripes and awful fears

No one says, 'I'm sorry', babies are in tears

Slashed by evil progenitors crazed with greed beyond beastliness

hacking off limbs, noses and ear

shoving the barrels of rifles up every opening

the tiniest bodies never knew they had

mothers with child disemboweled by crazed canker-cocked

dingleberry-dicked lupine losers

And for what? Oil, diamonds, cobalt, magnesium, all the precious minerals

and unobtainia that will never re-generate, once gone, all gone

Get them while you can, at whatever cost to life and love

destroying both, with not enough sand in the Sahara to dry up all this blood

What will happen to us

if these boys no longer tend us?

(A.I. JOSH asleep on the side of AYOUN.

His Father approaches and speaks over Him.)

Father

My son, I have been given a choice

The rebels say you have betrayed them to the government

They say I must kill you or they will kill our entire family

They will not kill you

They say I must do the deed

kill my son

and break the cycle of violence

I do not understand how this breaks the cycle

(He pulls a knife. He hesitates and is struck and falls.

His falling wakes A.I.JOSH.)

A.I. JOSH

Father -

(TWELVE, a wizened twelve year old, guerilla mufti, the obligatory

AK-47, appears.)

TWELVE
I am Twelve, here to protect you

Wise Twelve years bold, this gun makes me old

He was about to kill you, little one

He had his orders, and not with a gun

But with this knife he would have slit your throat

As if you were some sacrificial goat

A.I.JOSH
My father wouldn't raise his hand to me

TWELVE
Little Man
Slit your father's throat.
He's now the sacrificial goat.

A.I. JOSH
No. He cannot die.

He's raising me to head the family

Mother, sisters, uncles, aunts and Grandma

living in peace on this land

taking your hand, Pa

I won't let them lie about you

TWELVE
Twelve will show what's false and what's true

(TWELVE turns on a mini-tape recorder.)

Father's Voice
They will not kill you

They say I must do the deed

kill my son

(TWELVE clicks off the recorder.)

TWELVE
Now, Little Man, Twelve gives you the same choice.

A.I. JOSH
It was a trick and not my father's voice.

an echo, a sound from the sky

twisting his words, he cannot die

TWELVE
No matter, little one, your treachery is real

You told the government, on the run

That Twelve would be moving south

Now Twelve's here to smash your mouth

My bodyguards will hold you down

A.I. JOSH
I never spoke to anyone.

And where are your bodyguards?

TWELVE
What – I turn back fire, swallow bullets whole, my guards will attest?

I cannot be contained. Where -

A.I. JOSH
- are they? They've abandoned you.

Now I'm the father, no longer the son. What are you going to do?

TWELVE
I cannot be abandoned. I am Twelve

A.I. JOSH
And have been for many years, I think.

TWELVE
I'll teach you a bloody lesson

I'll Torch your huts

Waste your herds

Kill your girls

Emasculate your boys

Leave your skeletons for someone's toys

Leave your parents for vulture birds

Blow your village all to bits

We are the Revolution

The Twelve Year Old Solution

Right, my honies?, my sisters, my guards?

Stand not on the order of your coming

Let's hear it for Twelve!

(Explosion. Firestorm. Conflagration of village.

Enter on steed, a Government soldier. Speaks to T-MAC SAM)

Government Soldier
This village is being swept of rebel scum

We all know where they come from

(A Rebel Soldier rushes on.)

Rebel Soldier
Come from The Lord of the Peoples' Liberation Front for a United Front!

Government Soldier
Dare attack the Democratic Liberation's Back for a United Back and we'll rip apart your Front!

T-MAC SAM
I want no part of your Lord or his Back or His Front

Rip out each other's fronts and backs

I want no part of your murderous hunt

(The Soldiers fight.)

Rebel Soldier
Government Scum.

Government Soldier
Rebel Swine.

Rebel Soldier
Poisonous bunch-backed Government Toad.

Government Soldier
Quintessence of canker-blossom Rebel Slug.

Rebel Soldier
You Rampallian.

Government Soldier
You Fustillarian.

[10 page sample excerpt ends here.]