

Virginia of Rwanda

A One-act Play

By

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VIRGINIA OF RWANDA

A one Act Play

Synopsis

The play is based upon historical facts: In 1997 Rwandan schoolteacher Virginia Mukankusi, a Hutu, was executed after being convicted of committing genocide against Tutsis in 1994.

Scene 1:

Takes place in 1994 in a classroom where the schoolteacher Virginia explains the historical logic and reasoning behind her actions to 2 prisoners, a black Tutsi and a white aid worker. Aided by her former Hutu student Kenneth, they constantly berate and threaten the 2 prisoners. Peter, the Tutsi, is accused of many crimes against Hutus. Phillip, the white man, is taunted for his hypocrisy and pretending to want to help the Rwandans when, in fact, he is just on a guilt trip. As the angry words progress, Virginia's ever-present machete plays a larger role and as the scene ends the horrified Tutsi is threatened with death.

Scene 2:

Takes place on June 7, 1997 in a Rwanda courtroom, where a judge, prosecutor and defense attorney attempt to discern the motivation behind Virginia's genocidal rampage. As they ask questions, Virginia weaves a tale of God inspired revenge and compares herself to Joan of Arc. As the judge tries to make sense out of Virginia's testimony the deadly machete is presented as evidence. The machete inspires a whole new line of testimony from Virginia causing all present to question her sanity. In the end, Virginia is convicted and sentenced to death.

Scene 3:

Takes place on July 14th 1997 at 11:45AM in a jail cell. Execution time is 12-noon. As Virginia repeatedly questions the jail guard about the time, he decries her violence as she claims God's duty. A priest comes to hear Virginia's last confession and as he attempts to elicit a plea of forgiveness from her she becomes defiant claiming God has already forgiven her and demands the priest be removed from her cell. As the clock ticks down to 12 two nervous escorts enter to accompany Virginia to the gallows. A calm Virginia asks once more for the time, then leads the 3 men in one final prayer. As the 4 leave the cell for the gallows the crowd can be heard chanting, "God is great!"

Cast of Characters

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| <u>VIRGINIA:</u> | a black female Hutu teacher, outwardly calm but driven by hatred and historical vengeance, approx. 35 years old |
| <u>PETER:</u> | a black male Tutsi prisoner, in the wrong place at the wrong time, approx. 35 years old. (Scene 1 only) |
| <u>KENNETH:</u> | a black male Hutu insurgent, dedicated follower and student of VIRGINIA, approx. 20 years old. (Scene 1 only) |
| <u>PHILLIP:</u> | a white male American prisoner, lawyer and aid worker, savior of the poor and oppressed, approx. 30 years old. (Scene 1 only) |
| <u>JUDGE:</u> | Scholarly, middle aged man with suit and tie. (Scene 2 only) |
| <u>MR SMITH:</u> | Attorney for the defense, black male about 50 years old. (Scene 2 only) |
| <u>MR JONES:</u> | Prosecutor, black male about 30 years old. (Scene 2 only) |
| <u>ROBERT</u> | A jail guard. (Scene 3 only) |
| <u>FATHER HENRY</u> | A priest (Scene 3 only) |
| <u>ESCORT 1</u> | (Scene 3 only) |
| <u>ESCORT 2</u> | (Scene 3 only) |

Scene 1

A one-room school house in a small village near Kigali, Rwanda

Time

June, 1994

SETTING: One-room schoolhouse with teacher's desk (center) with chair and a student table/desk left and right. Blackboard behind teacher's desk. Classroom materials spread on desks.

AT RISE: VIRGINIA sits/leans on front edge of teacher's desk with a machete and a phone on the desk beside her. She is very calm and collected. KENNETH enters escorting, somewhat roughly, PETER and PHILLIP into the school hands and feet bound lightly with rope and stops near VIRGINIA.

VIRGINIA
Kenneth how many bullets do we have left?

KENNETH
Only 3 left.

VIRGINIA
And how many Tutsi's are left?

KENNETH
About 20 - so why don't we raise the price? Supply and demand as they say.

VIRGINIA
That is an excellent idea, Kenneth. You were always my best student and you have learned your lessons well. Lets make the new price \$2 per bullet instead of \$1. Put the white man over there

[pointing to the table on her left]

and the Tutsi over there.

[pointing to the table on her right]

VIRGINIA
[KENNETH sits both men down as instructed. He moves to VIRGINIA and hands her a sheet of

VIRGINIA cont.

paper then goes to stand guard to the right of her desk nearest PETER]

[VIRGINIA picks up the machete and walks around behind the teacher's desk.]

VIRGINIA

[as if lecturing a classroom of children]

You are here in the schoolroom where I have taught for the last 15 years. Outside there is a revolution going on but in here it is quiet, at least for now. What I am going to do now is educate you on the revolution you are witnessing today. I will explain its history and the social and political implications of that history. At this moment, you are the students and I will ask you questions and you may, at appropriate times, ask me questions.

PHILLIP

[blurting out]

What is to become of us?

VIRGINIA

Oh be patient Mr. ...

[pauses as she looks down at paper handed to her by KENNETH]

“Phillip -White man” it says here. There will be plenty of time for that answer as we move on.

PETER

People are being murdered – slaughtered - for no reason – this cannot go on. You must protect us.

KENNETH

[Angry]

You are the reason you thin nosed Tutsi – you are an exploiter worse than any white man. An imperialist from Ethiopia.

VIRGINIA

Hutu's have a higher HIV rate because you Tutsi disease carriers are raping our women – go back to Ethiopia and rape your own women.

[pause]

I have been raped many times by Tutsi's and you look familiar – did you rape me?

PETER

I am a Tutsi but I have never raped anyone nor ever taken advantage of a Hutu. In fact I have married a Hutu and befriended many more. My children are half Hutu and

KENNETH

[interrupting]

You are thin nosed and tall - we are broad nosed and short. There has never been a time when you have considered us equal – never.

VIRGINIA

Only with your death will justice be done – and your children will thank us because then their Hutu half can come out of its shell and be real Africans.

PETER:

[half standing]

But my wife is

VIRGINIA

[interrupting]

As for your whoring Hutu wife she has violated nature by spawning Tutsi evil from her womb and if I find her she will die also.

PETER

[leaning forward]

But I have always been good to my fellow Rwandans whether Hutu or Tutsi. Look at my face – it is not pure Tutsi my nose is too wide and I am not that tall. I am the result of many compromises between Hutu and Tutsi.

VIRGINIA

You are the end result of many rapes of Hutu by Tutsis and if for no other reason than this you must die.

PETER

[pleading]

Please let me return to my home – allow me to gather my family and leave this madness.

VIRGINIA

Begging is disrespectful – why? - because we begged for decades and you killed and enslaved us. Better to be a slave to whites in America than a slave to blacks in Africa. You, Tutsi, were the black enslaver.

[moves around to the front of her desk staring at PETER while she slaps the machete against her leg. The prisoners look terrified].

[turning her gaze to PHILLIP]

And you the white man why are you here? To save and protect the black man I suppose

VIRGINIA cont.

[pause, shaking her head “no”]

no, I don’t think so.

PHILLIP

[looking very frightened]

I came here to help the people of Rwanda not to exploit them.

VIRGINIA

[pointing at PHILLIP with the machete]

Why don’t you whites let us Africans alone? Is it guilt, the guilt of 30 million dead that drive you to “help” when it is not help? Guilt is never helpful it is always aggravating.

PHILLIP

[with a little bravado]

I am a lawyer and I must object under UN resolution 918 that guarantees all political prisoners an opportunity for review before an international court.

VIRGINIA

And how many court appearances have there been for blacks in front of white judges in the last 200 years? White justice in a white court was always death for the black man.

KENNETH

Now we will finally have black justice in a black court and the result will be death to this black Tutsi also.

PETER

But no one should die - this is not the 19th century, this is not a time of vengeance but a time of reconciliation.

PHILLIP

A rusty machete is a weapon not a solution. Only logic and discussion will allow us all to move forward together.

VIRGINIA

This machete is logic

[looks at PETER]

–Tutsi logic – death and rape and dismemberment is the way of the Tutsi towards those who, though in the majority by number, are in the minority in rights.

[Moves back behind her desk and places the machete on the desk].

KENNETH

[Looking at PHILLIP]

You speak of togetherness but where were you whites in the 1960's when the Tutsis murdered 100's of thousands of us with impunity. No white man stood up and said [sarcastically] "let's be together".

VIRGINIA

[with a smile looks at PETER]

So Tutsi did you know white Americans made fun of you some years ago? They made up a funny song and called you "Wa-wa-tutsi" not Tutsi's. You were an image of derision not royalty. Only here in Rwanda could your exaggerated sense of importance fester and bloom. In white mans land you were a fool. And now on the verge of death you are a fool again.

PETER

[mystified]

When we came here hundreds of years ago you were a poor, warlike people without leadership or purpose. We put an end to the wars and established a long peace – why would you attack peace?

KENNETH

[angry]

Peace to you is genocide to us. Generations of hatred will be in every blow we deliver.

PETER

Only when blacks stop killing blacks can we force the white man to leave Africa.

VIRGINIA

Why do you say black rather than African?

PETER:

Are not the Bedouin white, the Berber? They refused to be captured, they refused to be slaves - they died first. So the white Africans remain free, the black Africans remain enslaved – enslaved to their murderous past.

VIRGINIA

You know, of course, only a black could deliver a black to the ship. A white man would die within days if he went into the interior - of malaria, yaws, fever, snakebite.

PETER

So why then did blacks deliver other blacks to the ships?

VIRGINIA

I will tell you why – because the white man would pay more for slavery than the black man would pay for freedom that is why.

PETER

Slavery is the fault of white Europeans not Tutsis.

VIRGINIA

The white man was the original exploiter and for white mans' gold the Tutsis gathered up the Hutu and took them to the English ships.

[VIRGINIA walks to the blackboard and writes the word "Tutsi" in very large letters lecturing]

But in the end the ultimate exploiters were the Tutsi's – decade after decade they enslaved Hutus, long after the white man had given up slavery. That is the history of devils

[pausing to erase the word "Tutsi"]

and they must be erased in order for Africa to be free.

PHILLIP

[standing up suddenly and blurting out]

We whites apologize for our exploitation.

[Everyone turns and looks at PHILLIP]

VIRGINIA

Did your family own slaves?

PHILLIP

No we never owned slaves or lived in Africa but I still apologize for all whites.

KENNETH

[Moving toward PHILLIP]

How can you apologize for those you do not know?

PHILLIP

[sitting down]

We whites as a race have a terrible record in civil rights and especially here in Africa have abused blacks for centuries.

KENNETH

[moving to PHILLIP's table, leaning over and placing his hands on the table]

How silly of you to assume your apology would be accepted by any African. I do not want your phony apology. If you want to apologize to me then pick up a club or a knife and help me kill these imperialist Tutsis.

PHILLIP

[looking down at his hands]

I know I speak for most white men when I say I am sorry for the way we have treated you.

KENNETH

[looking over his shoulder at PETER]

Only the Tutsi, who should have known better, should be sorry.

[looking directly at PHILLIP]

You, sir, are a hypocrite and if you want to prove your sorrow I will allow you to substitute yourself for this Tutsi. I will hack you to death and this man will go free if he agrees to return to the Ethiopia where his verminous ancestors came from. Are you that sorry white man?

PHILLIP

[reeling back in horror, hands clasping as in prayer]

No, no please no..

VIRGINIA

You cannot be sorry – we do not even know you. If your ancestors had been slavers then maybe you should apologize. But if not then what are you apologizing for?

[VIRGINIA walks around her desk as if thinking then looking at PHILLIP]

It must be some concept of guilt related to your color - that is stupid.

However,

[pointing at Peter]

This Tutsi needs to apologize for his ancestors taking our ancestors to the ship and he should die, then his debt will be paid and his children may live in peace.

PHILLIP

But he is not responsible for what his great, great, great, great grandparents did.

VIRGINIA

Then how can you be responsible for what some white person unrelated to you did 200 years ago? Better a Tutsi deny my claim to my face than a whimpering white man apologizes for something he did not do.

KENNETH

[looking at PETER and moving towards him with great hostility]

We must burn the seed and scorch the earth it lies buried in or it will come back and destroy us again – there must be no sign, no instance, no breath of Tutsis ever again.

VIRGINIA

[pulling KENNETH away from PETER]

So Tutsi why would you think cattle are more important than corn?

KENNETH

[moving towards PETER again]

Why are cattle raisers superior? We who raise the grain feed the most. How can Tsetse flies and dung beetles be better than plowing?

VIRGINIA

And how can sucking blood from the neck of a cow be superior to cooking corn over a fire? Cattle may be wealth but they are not godliness or superiority.

PETER

[standing up, staring, angry]

Only animals that need husbandry eat corn. Corn eaters whether cattle or men need to be herded.

KENNETH

[coldly]

For that comment we will take our time and pleasure in killing you.

[moves behind PETER and makes chopping gesture with his hand to the side of PETER's neck. PETER recoils in horror]

With one blow you will no longer be taller than us.

[another chopping gesture]

With one blow you will join us in the lower ranks.

[laughing]

Perhaps then corn growing will appeal to you.

VIRGINIA

[smiling, holding up the machete]

We are sorry but we have nothing to sharpen it with. It will take many blows to kill you I am afraid. Please bear with us as we do our duty – you must of course die and we must be the ones to kill you.

KENNETH

However, Tutsi, if you have a \$2 for a bullet then I will bring my friend Paul here to provide you with the ultimate demise - a bullet to the brain. Do you have \$2 Tutsi?

VIRGINIA

It is time for truth and justice...

[VIRGINIA slowly approaches PETER with the machete raised. PETER recoils falling off of the chair onto the floor covering his head, sobbing]

[The phone on the desk rings.]

[VIRGINIA standing over PETER with arm raised looks at KENNETH in alarm then moves to desk still holding the machete and picks up phone. KENNETH follows.]

Yes?

[listens for a few seconds]

How soon?

[listens again]

OK meet us at the roadhouse – leave now.

[hangs up the phone and looks at it for a moment.]

VIRGINIA

[turning to face KENNETH]

We have to leave - UN soldiers will be here in 5 minutes.

KENNETH:

[reaching for the machete in VIRGINIA's hand]

Then we must hurry and complete our work before they arrive.

[VIRGINIA pulls away as KENNETH grasps at the machete]

VIRGINIA:

No, no there must be no blood or bodies in the schoolhouse or they will come directly for me. We must leave right now and join the others.

KENNETH

[moving to stand over PETER staring down at him]

The Tutsi gets a reprieve – a temporary reprieve. We will be back for you Tutsi and you best have \$2 when we find you again.

[VIRGINIA and KENNETH exit]

PETER

[lying on the floor sobbing]

Thank you God, thank you God.

[CURTAIN]

Scene 2

SETTING: A courtroom in Kigali Rwanda, Judges desk stage right, Witness stand center, Lawyers table stage left.

RISE: VIRGINIA in witness stand, attorneys at table looking at papers, judge in chair.

TIME: June 7 1997

JUDGE

[Banging gavel]

[Loudly]

The 15th national court of Rwanda is now in session. Mr. Jones would the prosecution like to continue questioning the witness?

MR JONES

[Standing]

Yes your honor we would like to continue.

[Approaches the witnesses stand and stands to the left of the witness]

Virginia you were teacher at Kigali school number 12 for how long?

VIRGINIA

Fifteen years.

MR JONES

And during that time how many students did you teach?

VIRGINIA

The classes averaged about 40 students per year.

MR JONES

And how many of those students were Tutsis?

VIRGINIA

Oh many, many were Tutsi children – and how I loved them all!

MR JONES

On or about June 7, 1994 did you kill Vincent, Gregory, Paul, Mary and 14 other people in your schoolhouse?

VIRGINIA

I do not remember.

JUDGE

[Incredulous]

You do not remember killing 18 people?

VIRGINIA

I do not remember how many or what their names were. In fact I never knew any of their names.

MR JONES

So you do admit killing more than one person sometime in 1994?

VIRGINIA

Yes of course.

MR JONES

And how many of those 18 were children?

MR SMITH

[Standing and raising his right hand towards the JUDGE]

I object – the age of those killed has no relevance to this case.

JUDGE

Over ruled – I think it is pertinent to understand the thinking of the accused at the time.

[Looking at MR JONES]

Continue.

MR JONES

Virginia, how many of those 18 people you killed in 1994 were children?

VIRGINIA

[Wistfully]

Four – Paula, Mary, Thomas and Vincent.

MR JONES

Can you explain to the court why you killed these children?

VIRGINIA

[Looking upward]

Because I loved them.

MR JONES

You loved them but you killed them is that correct?

VIRGINIA

[Looking at MR JONES]

I sent them to God before they could become rapists and murderers. I saved them from the devil

[Looking at the JUDGE earnestly]

I loved them so much.

MR JONES

[Moving to the table and picking up a machete with a tag on it]

Your Honor, I would like to enter into evidence this machete, exhibit #1.

JUDGE

It is so entered.

MR JONES

[Moving back to witness stand]

Virginia, is this your machete?

[Holding machete out to her]

VIRGINIA

[Examining machete closely]

Yes I recognize these nicks and scratches and.

[Looking at JUDGE with a smile]

the mahogany handle was made especially for me by one of my students, Thomas.

MR JONES

[Quickly]

The same Thomas that you killed?

VIRGINIA

[Pausing, looking upward]

Hello Thomas, I know you are there and you are happy now with God. Thank you for the mahogany handle – it is so beautiful...

MR JONES

Virginia, please answer the question - did you kill Thomas, your student and the boy who made you the mahogany handle for your machete?

VIRGINIA

Yes, God told me he wanted Thomas in heaven even more than I wanted Thomas here on earth so I sent him to God as commanded.

MR JONES

And Virginia, the stains on the blade do you recognize those?

VIRGINIA

Oh yes, that is devils brew – Tutsi blood.

MR JONES

So you do not deny using this weapon to kill Paula, Vincent, Thomas, Mary and others on June 7, 1994?

VIRGINIA

[Somewhat upset]

I told you before I did not know these people.

Mr. JONES

Let me re-phrase the question – do you admit to using this machete to kill anyone in June 1994?

VIRGINIA

[Looking off in space]

Oh yes certainly - this was God's tool of redemption - I will never forget it....

[Looking at machete]

MR JONES

So although you do not remember the names you do remember using this weapon - with its nicks and cuts and mahogany handle and blood – to hack people to death in 1994?

VIRGINIA

Not people

[Brief pause]

Tutsis.

MR JONES

No more questions your honor.

JUDGE

Virginia, I am a Tutsi as is your attorney Mr. Smith. Would you kill us if you had the opportunity?

VIRGINIA

Oh no your honor – the war is over and we have won. There is no need for killing anymore.

JUDGE

[Pauses, shaking his head then
Looking at MR SMITH]

Your witness.

MR SMITH

[Rising while picking up folder of paper and moves towards witness]

Virginia do you remember anything about June 7, 1994 or is it like a dream to you?

MR JONES

[Rising]

Objection, leading the witness.

JUDGE

Sustained. Mr. Smith let Virginia do her own talking she is apparently very good at it even without your leading her.

MR SMITH

Let me rephrase the question – on June 7, 1994 did you see visions or speak to God?

MR JONES

Objection your honor the same question as before.

JUDGE

Overruled, Virginia answer the question. On June 7, 1994 did you see visions or speak to God?

VIRGINIA

[Enthusiastically]

Oh yes I speak to God everyday.

MR SMITH

And on June 7 what did God say to you?

VIRGINIA

[Loudly, rising to her feet and pointing her right arm out in front of her]

Kill the Tutsi

MR SMITH

Did God say kill all Tutsis, some Tutsis or only certain Tutsis?

VIRGINIA

[Quietly, sitting back down]

He said all Tutsis – man, woman and child.

MR SMITH

But you said previously that you taught many Tutsi children and you loved them all – why then would you kill them?

VIRGINIA

I must because they are infected with the Tutsi curse.

MR SMITH

And what is the Tutsi curse?

VIRGINIA

They must kill and rape Hutu's whenever they can.

MR SMITH

And how did you know Tutsis rape and kill?

VIRGINIA

Because I was raped and my sister was killed by Tutsis.

MR SMITH

When was that?

VIRGINIA

[Softly, looking downward]

When I was 13.

MR SMITH

And how did you know those who raped you were Tutsis?

VIRGINIA

[Looking up, angry]

Because they were tall, thin nosed and evil.

MR SMITH

Does God only love Hutus?

VIRGINIA

Oh no God loves Tutsis too – he especially loves dead Tutsis.

MR SMITH

Virginia, what religion were you raised as?

VIRGINIA

I was raised as a Catholic.

MR SMITH

And do you still consider yourself to be a practicing Catholic?

VIRGINIA

Yes I still take confession and mass every week.

MR SMITH

And of all the historical Catholics which one do you identify with the most?

VIRGINIA

I am the most like Joan of Arc.

JUDGE

So you think you are Joan of Arc?

VIRGINIA

No I am not Joan of Arc, I am Virginia of Rwanda and like Joan of Arc I have saved my country from invaders and devils. She used a sword, I used a machete.

JUDGE

Joan of Arc was executed – burned at the stake...

VIRGINIA

[Interrupting]

Long ago God told me when my work was done I would be killed by apostates just like Joan was.

[Pausing]

My work is done and I will be joining Joan in heaven soon.

[Virginia looks upward, hands clasped together.

JUDGE, MR SMITH and MR JONES look at each other for a few seconds]

JUDGE

Mr. Smith, Mr. Jones do you have anything to add to this proceeding?

MR SMITH

No your honor.

MR JONES

Your honor the prosecution rests its case.

JUDGE

Then it is my duty to pass judgment in the matter before the court.

Will the defendant please rise and face the court.

[VIRGINIA stands, calmly faces the judge with hands folded in front of her.]

The defendant is accused of 18 counts of genocide each of which is punishable by death.

[Pauses looking at VIRGINIA]

JUDGE cont.

Does the defendant have anything to say before the court passes judgment?

VIRGINIA

I am Virginia Mukankusi and I am blessed by God. In 1994 I was told by God to defend the Hutu by killing the Tutsi. I did my job as God told me to do it.

[Pauses and looks up]

The Tutsi were invaders from a foreign country just like the English were foreign invaders of France when Joan of Arc came to France's defense. I came to the defense of Rwanda.

[Looking straight ahead]

I have taught many children over the years Hutu and Tutsi alike and I can say without reservation that all children are holy in the eyes of God. But children who become adults are not holy in the eyes of God – there are devils amongst them. Thin nosed Imperialist Tutsis' were once children – as dangerous as rabid bats in the night air. Would you hesitate to kill rabid animals?

{Pauses again as if thinking}

There is no crime in the execution of God's command. I was commanded by God and I did as I was told. You and others who try to condemn me are wasting your time – only God can judge me you are mere mortals and your opinion matters not. I go with God and I hope you do too. I am a witness for God's judgment of Tutsis not your judgment of me.

[looking at the judge]

That is all your honor.

JUDGE

[looking at VIRGINIA]

Virginia Mikulusli it is my duty to pass judgment on your actions of June 1994. Those actions included the horrific killing of at least 18 people including at least 4 children. Witnesses and evidence has been provided to overwhelmingly concur in your guilt. I thereby pass down the following sentence: You Virginia Mukankusi are hereby condemned to death by hanging on July 14 at 12 o'clock noon. May God have mercy on your soul.

VIRGINIA

God has enough mercy for all of us judge... for you and me and the children.

[Looking straight ahead]

God is great, God is great!

[Curtain down]

Scene 3

SETTING: A jail cell with cot, bed and chair. A chair outside of the cell with a door stage rear. Large clock set to 11.45. Cannot be seen from cell.

RISE: VIRGINIA is sitting on her cot in the cell, ROBERT sitting on the chair outside of the cell reading a paper with a gun on the floor beside him.

TIME: July 14, 1997 11:45AM

VIRGINIA

Robert what time is it?

ROBERT

[Looking at clock]

It's 11.45. They will be coming for you in a few minutes.

VIRGINIA

What was that cheering I heard earlier this morning?

ROBERT

Oh that was the crowd shouting, "God is great".

VIRGINIA

Why were they shouting, "God is great"?

ROBERT

Because they feel God is finally going to punish you for your crimes. After all it has been 3 years and many people thought you were never going to be punished.

VIRGINIA

But God is not punishing me.

ROBERT

He's not?

VIRGINIA

No of course not. He is getting ready to take me to join him in heaven.

ROBERT

How could you go to heaven after killing all of those people?

VIRGINIA

I did exactly what God told me to do – kill the Tutsi.

ROBERT

And the poor children you hacked to death with a machete – no one will ever forgive you for that – including God.

VIRGINIA

But God has forgiven me – he forgave me when he instructed me to do it - and the children are with him now and I will see them soon.

ROBERT

You are going to hell Virginia and Satan is waiting for you.

VIRGINIA

[Pausing as she looks away from the guard]
[Suddenly she falls to her knees and begins praying slowly out loud]

Oh Lord,
I am the lost sheep
I cannot see my shepherd
I cannot return to the flock
For I am far afield.
But I will guard the flock
Here, beyond the view of the shepherd,
For there is much evil and I am the protector.

[Pausing looking upward]

Oh God, please forgive Robert and the others for not believing me for in denying my inspiration they are denying you.

[Pausing again]

I am ready Lord, for you to take me home.

[Rises and sits on cot, hands folded]

ROBERT

[Shaking his head before looking at VIRGINIA]

Virginia perdition awaits you – there is no forgiveness for what you have done.

[A priest enters from the rear]

FATHER HENRY

Hello Robert,

ROBERT

Father Henry they did not tell me you would be here today.

FATHER HENRY

I am here to hear Virginia's confession. Could you let me into her cell and excuse us for a few minutes. Lock the cell afterwards if you like.

ROBERT

Certainly Father...

[ROBERT unlocks cell door FATHER HENRY enters and ROBERT leaves via rear door]

FATHER HENRY

Virginia I know I heard your confession last week but I thought perhaps you would like to have it again.

VIRGINIA

Oh thank you for coming Father. I am sure I have sinned mightily since last week and I do indeed want to go to my Lord unburdened.

FATHER HENRY

[Pulls chair next to cot, puts scarf around his neck, makes the sign of the cross while mumbling a quiet prayer]

VIRGINIA

[Kneeling hands in prayer looking down]

Bless me father for I have sinned. In the last week I have had the sin of cowardice.

FATHER HENRY

The sin of cowardice?

VIRGINIA

Yes, Father I sometimes feel I do not want to die I want to live and be free but I know God wants me with him and I should have the courage to join him without having any doubts.

FATHER HENRY

Neither courage nor fear is a sin Virginia, we all have those feelings and doubt too at one time or another. God understands that.

VIRGINIA

But God was so explicit in his commands then that now I sometimes think he has forgotten me or perhaps I misunderstood his commands. But then I pray and I know I am just cowardly and weak.

FATHER HENRY

What you did was a sin Virginia but God will forgive you if you just ask him. Have you asked him for forgiveness?

VIRGINIA

[Looking up at priest]

But why would I have to ask for forgiveness when I obeyed his command? Wouldn't I have to ask for forgiveness if I had not obeyed his command?

FATHER HENRY

God would never ask you to commit a sin.

VIRGINIA

Didn't God command David to slew Goliath and give him the weapon to do so just as God commanded me to slay the Tutsis and gave me a machete? And Joan of Arc and her sword what about that?

FATHER HENRY

God would never ask you to commit a sin, Virginia.

VIRGINIA

Then David and Joan of Arc were committing sins when they obeyed God?

FATHER HENRY

No one knows whether God actually spoke to David or Joan. That may just be a story. But Catholic doctrine states clearly that God will never ask you to commit a sin.

VIRGINIA

But in Samuel 17, David says to Goliath "This very day the Lord will deliver you into my hands and I will kill you and cut off your head."

FATHER HENRY

Virginia just ask for forgiveness what difference does it make?

VIRGINIA

So you do not believe God spoke to David or Joan or me do you? Then who was it that told us to do these things - the devil?

[Angry]

And you ask what difference it will make? It means my entire life has been a lie and without meaning.

FATHER HENRY

God speaks thru the Pope and the Pope thru the priests that is how it works.

VIRGINIA

[Standing staring at FATHER HENRY]

Just because God never talks to you does not mean he never talks to anyone. You are a fool and you do not know anything and you need to ask God for forgiveness.

FATHER HENRY

Please, Virginia, here on the eve of your Judgment Day, ask God and he will forgive you, I know it.

VIRGINIA

You are a waste of my time and I do not have much time left I will talk direct to God I do not need you as an intermediary because obviously you have no knowledge of what God has told me. You are the apostate God warned me about. Go to confession yourself and ask Gods forgiveness for doubting me.

FATHER HENRY

[Makes the sign of the cross and begins praying quietly]

VIRGINIA

[Shouting]

Get him out of here before God tells me to kill him too.

ROBERT

[Rushes in worried]

Father, what happened?

FATHER HENRY

Virginia will not ask for the Lord's forgiveness, there is nothing more that I can do but pray for her in her hour of need.

VIRGINIA

[Walking to the end of the cell]

Better the gallows than another moment with this God denier. Satan's assistant would make more sense than he does. Get him away from me.

ROBERT

But you should have a priest with you

VIRGINIA

God is with me I do not need the Pope's pimp.

ROBERT

[Opening the cell door, priest leaves cell and exits rear]

It is ten til noon they are getting your rope ready Virginia.

VIRGINIA

[Calm now]

It is not a rope Robert it is Jacobs ladder and with God's grace I will ascend it to heaven.

ROBERT

[Shaking his head]

One of us does not understand God then...

VIRGINIA

Only God needs to understand – your understanding is not important.

[Two escorts enter from rear entrance
one carries a black eyeless mask
the other carries a rope with a noose]

ESCORT 1

We have come to escort Virginia to the gallows.

ROBERT

[Looking at clock]

You have time yet it is not yet 11.50.

ESCORT 2

But we need to give the crowd a few minutes to view her – otherwise they may tear the gallows down and tear her apart limb from limb.

ESCORT 1

And us too...

VIRGINIA

But why do they hate me when I have saved Rwanda – at the command of God?

ROBERT

God was nowhere near you in 1994. You abandoned him and made a pact with the devil and now the devil will have you.

VIRGINIA

[Looks at ROBERT not understanding]

ESCORT 1

There must be 100,000 people out there.

ROBERT

[Amazed]

100,000?

ESCORT 2

At least – and they are out for blood screaming and yelling.

ESCORT 1

“God is great, God is great”

ESCORT 2

And “Virginia die, Virginia die”.

VIRGINIA

[Confused]

Of course I will die – God has planned this from the beginning don’t they understand?

ESCORT 1

All they understand is this is a blood day – your blood for all the blood shed 3 years ago.

ESCORT 2

Virginia do not fight this, please. They will kill us if you do not show up and act contrite.

ROBERT

Do your duty Virginia and go to the gallows as directed - whether by God or Satan.

VIRGINIA

Neither they nor I have anything to fear today. God has ordained what is going to happen. I have accepted it and so should they.

ESCORT 1

Open the door Robert – we must take her now.

ROBERT

[Slowly looking for his keys]

VIRGINIA

Open the door to heaven Robert. God is waiting for me.

ESCORT 1

I don’t know about God but 100,000 others are certainly waiting for you.

ESCORT 2

I wish we had the mask instead of her.

ROBERT
[Unlocking cell door]

It is time Virginia.

ESCORT 1
We need to bind your hands Virginia please turn around with your hands behind you.

VIRGINIA
[Turns with hands behind her]
Do not put the mask on – I want to see heaven all the way.

ESCORT 2
[Enters cell and binds VIRGINIA's hands]

ROBERT
[Holding VIRGINIA by the arm as he walks her out of the cell]
Easy, easy now.

VIRGINIA
[Turning and looking at her captors]
Please join me in prayer.
[Falling to her knees]
[The others look at each other briefly then kneel with VIRGINIA]
Yea though I walk thru the valley of the shadow of death...

ROBERT
I will fear no evil for thou art with me...

ESCORT 1
Thou restoreth my soul...

VIRGINIA
[Loud, looking up]
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Amen.

ROBERT
[Looking at VIRGINIA]
For your sake Virginia I hope so.
[Everyone rises]

ESCORT 1
We must go now.

VIRGINIA
[Looking at clock]

But we have 5 minutes...

ROBERT
Virginia it is time to share yourself with the people of Rwanda – it is God’s will.

VIRGINIA
Yes it is God’s will – you are right. God is great.

**[ROBERT turns and leaves rear. ESCORTs take
each of VIRGINIA’s arms and follows
ROBERT]**

[Off, chanting loudly]
God is great, God is great, God is great, God is great.....

[Curtain down]

