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ZACHARIAH from Blood Knot by Athol Fugard

Night. The two men are asleep. Silence. Suddenly Zachariah sits up in bed. Without looking at Morris he gets up, goes to the corner where the new suit of clothes is hanging, and puts on the suit and hat. The final effect is an absurdity bordering on the grotesque. The hat is too small and so is the jacket, which he has buttoned up incorrectly, while the trousers are too short. Zachariah stands barefooted, holding the umbrella, the hat pulled down low over his eyes so that his face is almost hidden.

ZACHARIAH: Ma. Ma. Ma! Mother! Hello. How are you, old women? What's that? You don't recognize me? Well, well, well. Take a guess. Nope. Try again. Nope. [Shakes his head.] What's the matter with you, Ma? Don't you recognize your own son? [Shakes his head violently.] No, no, no! Not him! It's me, Zach! [Sweeps off the hat to show his face.] Ja. Zach! You didn't think I could do it, did you? Well, to tell you the truth, the whole truth so help me God, I got sick of myself and made a change. Him? At home, Ma. A lonely boy, as you say. A sad story, as I will tell you. He went on to the road, Ma, but strange to say, he came back quite white. No tan at all. I don't recognize him no more. [He sits.] I'll ask you again, how are you, old women? I see some signs of wear and tear, [Nodding his head] That's true... such sorrow... tomorrow... Ja... it's cruel... your feet as well? Still a bad fit in the shoe? Ai ai ai! Me? [Pause. He struggles.] There's something I need to know, Ma. You see, I been talking, to him... ja, I talk to him, he says it helps... and now we got to know. Whose mother were you really? At the bottom of your heart, where your blood is red with pain, whom did you really love? No evil feelings, Ma, but, I mean a man has got to know. You see, he's been such a burden as a brother. [Agitation.] Don't be dumb. Don't cry! It was just a question! Look! I brought you a present, old soul. [Holds out a hand with the fingers lightly closed.] It's a butterfly. A real beauty butterfly. We were travelling fast, Ma. We hit them at ninety... a whole flock. But one was still alive, and it made me think of... Mother ... So I caught it, myself, for you, remembering what I caught from you. This, old Ma of mine, is gratitude, and it proves it, doesn't it? Some things are only skin deep, because I got it, here in my hands, I got beauty... too... haven't I?

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