

TREE OF LIFE

Scene One

[We are in a jungle. It is idyllic. Trees, greenery and mountains surround a small village. There is a temple at the centre and on top is a large tree which branches cover the entire village. There is a sense of celebration and joy amongst the people. The elders stand beside the tree with Kawana. Cue Song 1: Song Of Our Spirit.]

ALL

OH WAY OH ... OH OH OH OH OH WAY OH OH
OH WAY OH ... OH OH OH OH OH WAY OH
OH WAY OH ... OH OH OH OH OH WAY OH OH
OH WAY OH ... OH OH OH OH OH WAY OH

THIS IS OUR JUNGLE
THIS IS OUR LAND
IT TELLS US OUR HISTORY
LIKE LINES ON OUR HAND
AND ALL THAT SURROUNDS US
IS ONE WITH OUR HEART
TOGETHER UNITED WE ARE

ONE WITH OUR NATURE
ONE WITH OUR KIND
BORNE OF A SPIRIT
AS ONE WE'RE COMBINED
WE LIVE BY THE RIVER
BY MOUNTAINS AND TREES
WE AS A TRIBE LIVE IN PEACE, AND WE SING

OH WAY OH - THIS IS THE SONG OF OUR SPIRIT
OH WAY OH - THIS IS THE SONG OF OUR SOUL
OH WAY OH - THIS IS THE SONG OF OUR FUTURE AND PAST
WE ARE ONE - TOGETHER WE'RE WHOLE —
WAY OH ... OH OH OH OH OH WAY OH OH
OH WAY OH ... OH OH OH OH OH WAY OH

[Konane runs on and is intercepted by Neema.]

Konane - where have you been?	NEEMA
Oh you know, around.	KONANE
But you're missing the celebrations!	NEEMA

KONANE

Neema, they happen every year! I've seen them before.

NEEMA

Stop being a stick in the mud. Come on!

[Kawana comes down from the Tree Temple and approaches Konane.]

KAWANA

Konane!

KONANE

Hello mother.

KAWANA

You promised you wouldn't be late! Where have you been?

NEEMA

She's been with me.

KAWANA

NEEMA - you really need to stop covering for her.

KONANE

But I'm here now!

KAWANA

Yes you are my child. Come. Join us.

[Kawana takes Konane up to the Tree Temple.]

THIS TREE IS OUR PRESENT
OUR FUTURE AND PAST
GIVEN BY MYSTERY
TO HER, WE HOLD FAST
A CIRCLE UNENDING
THAT'S WRAPPED US IN CARE
THIS IS THE HOPE THAT WE SHARE

ALL

GOVERN US WISELY
KAWANA

KAWANA

OTHERS

...I DO
MY HEART'S FOR THE PEOPLE
AND IS ALWAYS TRUE
SO LET'S STAND UNITED
WITH EYES TO SUN
AND LIFT UP OUR VOICES AS ONE

OOH
OOH
AAH

ALL

AS WE SING

OH WAY OH - THIS IS THE SONG OF OUR SPIRIT
OH WAY OH - THIS IS THE SONG OF OUR SOUL
OH WAY OH - THIS IS THE SONG OF OUR FUTURE AND PAST
WE ARE ONE - TOGETHER WE'RE WHOLE
WAY OH ... OH OH OH OH OH WAY OH OH
OH WAY OH ... OH OH OH OH OH WAY OH

KAWANA

My people, please welcome Princess Konane.

[A large cheer goes up from the villagers.]

KONANE

Mother, you know I'm ready to be Queen.

KAWANA

(Laughing) Not yet, my child.

KONANE

But why?

KAWANA

You have much to learn.

KONANE

I know it all - I've watched you long enough.

KAWANA

Very well then, speak to the people.

KONANE

Easy.

[Kawana raises her hands.]

KAWANA

My people, the princess wishes to express her thanks to you.

[The villagers look to Konane.]

KONANE

THANK YOU FOR ALL THAT ...

[She can't find the words ... and her mother saves her.]

KAWANA

... YOU GIVE TO OUR HOME

KONANE
AND THANK YOU FOR ALL OF ...

[Again, Konane can't find the words ... this is harder than she thought.]

KAWANA
... OF THE SEEDS THAT YOU'VE SOWN

KONANE
I PROMISE MY PEOPLE ...

[Kawan steps in - they are not Konane's people: yet.]

KAWANA
... BY HER, SHE MEANS WE

KONANE + KAWANA
OUR NATION WILL ALWAYS BE FREE

ALL
SO WE SING

OH WAY OH - THIS IS THE SONG OF OUR SPIRIT
OH WAY OH - THIS IS THE SONG OF OUR SOUL
OH WAY OH - THIS IS THE SONG OF OUR FUTURE
OH WAY OH - THIS IS THE SONG OF US ALL

OH WAY OH - THIS IS THE SONG OF OUR SPIRIT
OH WAY OH - THIS IS THE SONG OF OUR SOUL
OH WAY OH - THIS IS THE SONG OF OUR FUTURE AND PAST
WE ARE ONE - TOGETHER WE'RE WHOLE
WAY OH ... OH OH OH OH OH WAY OH OH
OH WAY OH ... OH OH OH OH OH WAY OH

KAWANA
Asante my people. May your day be one of happiness, joy and peace!

VILLAGERS
Ndiyo! Amani!

[The villagers leave.]

KAWANA
Elders - Asante.

ELDERS
Asante, Malkia.

[The elders exit.]

KONANE
Well, that went ...

[Neema exits.]

Konane...	KAWANA
I know, I know!	KONANE
You have duties to perform.	KAWANA
I know.	KONANE
And a princess ...	KAWANA
Is always on time. I know. And I know all the lessons. I can recite the <i>sheria</i> our ancestors made. There's nothing more for me to learn!	KONANE
So you know everything there is to know?	KAWANA
Well, maybe not everything.	KONANE
Finally, a moment of humility.	KAWANA
But I know enough to be Queen.	KONANE
<i>[Mocking.]</i> And now she wants to take my place! Oh, she thinks I'm ready for the grave!	KAWANA
Mother, I didn't say that. You still have many years to live.	KONANE
Perhaps you should remember that.	KAWANA
Perhaps.	KONANE
<i>[Sighs.]</i> There is still much for you to learn, Konane. And some things cannot be learned in lessons. They have to be taught by life. But today, you need to recite the <i>sheria</i> of our people.	KAWANA
Again?	KONANE

KAWANA

Again. Begin.

[Kawana sits and listens to Konane speak.]

KONANE

[Tiredly] Moja: We are at one with the jungle. We give to the jungle, and the jungle gives to us.

KAWANA

Continue.

KONANE

Mbili: The Tree of the Temple is sacred, and only the Queen may approach it.

[Cue Song 2: Ready Now. We begin to shift into Konane's thoughts.]

KONANE

Tatu: We are to be hidden from others, lest strangers interrupt our way of life. Nne: We are to give ...

MOTHER SAYS THAT I'M NOT READY
MOTHER SAYS I HAVE TO LEARN
MOTHER SAYS I MUST BE PATIENT
BUT I CAN'T 'CAUSE IN ME BURNS
A FLAME THAT'S LIKE A HUNGER
AND IT'S CLAWING AT MY HEART
HOW CAN I WAIT
WHEN I WAS BORN TO START?

I KNOW EVERY LAW AND COVENANT
I KNOW EVERY RITUAL
I HAVE PRACTISED SINCE A CHILD
THEY'RE ALMOST ... HABITUAL
BUT EVERY TIME I SAY TO MOTHER
"I KNOW IT ALL, WHEN IS MY TURN?"
SHE SAYS; "EASY CHILD,
THERE'S SO MUCH MORE TO LEARN."

BUT I'M READY NOW, I'M STEADY NOW
SO WAVE THE FLAG, LET'S GO
I'M ABLE NOW TO HAVE THE LABEL NOW
AND NOT JUST A CAMEO
LET ME SAY THAT WORDS THAT MATTER
YOUNG AND OLD, I WILL IMPRESS
I'M READY NOW
SO MOTHER JUST SAY "YES!"

THERE'S A PART OF ME
(AND I CAN'T DENY)

THAT TELLS ME I SHOULD WAIT
BUT I AM YOUNG AND STRONG
SO NOTHING COULD GO WRONG
OR AM I TEMPTING FATE?

MOTHER SAYS THERE'S MORE TO LEADING
THAN JUST SHOWING YOU THE WAY
STILL I KNOW THAT ANY MORE TO LEARN
CAN BE TAUGHT ALONG THE WAY

I'M READY NOW
I'M STEADY NOW
SO JUST GIVE ME THE SIGN
I'M ABLE NOW
TO HAVE THE LABEL NOW
AND LET MY LIGHT SO SHINE
LET ME WRITE THE ACT OR CHAPTER
LET ME PLAY THE ROLE BY HEART
I'M READY NOW
TO TAKE THE VOW
YES, I'M READY NOW TO START!

[We shift back into the real world.]

KONANE

Kumi, the Queen has the final word on all matters of the village.

KAWANA

That's right, I do.

KONANE

Is that my lesson for the day? Can I go to the river now?

KAWANA

Not yet.

KONANE

What?

KAWANA

Come, there's something I need to show you.

*[Kawana and Konane approach the Tree of the Temple and sit at its base.
The elders enter and gather around the tree.]*

KAWANA

This tree is our guide.

KONANE

Yes, yes. I understand. One tree ...