

Once upon a time

A play created by the Young Peoples Theatre Company and Staffordshire Buddies was the centrepiece for the World AIDS Day 2008 commemoration. This year was doubly significant, marking the 15th anniversary of the founding of Staffordshire Buddies in 1993 as well as the 20th anniversary of the first World AIDS Day in 1988. The drama told the emotionally charged story of a young woman and ignorant attitudes to HIV in a country far away that contrasted with the informed support in a place not very far from here. Splendid performances all round in words, movement, and music made this a fitting tribute to this historical event.

The play tells the tale of two little girls, Kudakwashe (Kuda) and her friend Rudo. When they grow up, Kuda marries Tapiwa (Tapee) a bad lot, against her friend's advice.

*Kuda she was simple and innocent and shy
To be a good housewife her best she did try
She cooked him nice food, and brought him his pipe
But all round the village the women would snipe*

*It seems they knew Tapee much better than she
For with his affections, he was generous and free
He'd get extra bread, and butter, and fish
Then he'd wander back.... for a nice home made dish*

*When Kuda went shopping, they would laugh and make fun
How could such a bright girl have turned out so dumb
It was several months later she was itching in private
It had gotten so bad that she couldn't disguise it*

*Off to the doctor at last she did go
Who told her to grow up and not to be slow
The doctor looked Kuda straight into her eye
And told her the itching was an S T I*

*But how could it be and how could it happen
This little girl's world the doctor would shatter
"It could only have happened through having sex
with an infected partner so ... what to do next"*

*"You must tell your husband he must were a rubber
He'll infect you again and also the others....."
Poor Kuda in tears went home and was frightened
She'd have to tell Tapee that she was enlightened*

*She made him his food and got him his pipe
He pulled her towards him his passion was ripe
She gently but firmly pulled down his hand
Please put on a condom was her gentle demand*





*Her husband was filled with a murderous hate
 Her body he beat she thought death was her fate
 He kicked her and punched her made her face blue
 And he warned her he'd kill her and she knew he spoke true*

*As she walked through town her scarf hid her face
 The others they smirked and they knew her disgrace
 She'd have to try harder to be a good wife
 Or he'll throw her aside or else take her life*

*Despite having a baby girl who dies and being shunned by her
 neighbours because of her HIV status, the story has a happy ending.*

*She packed up her bag and with it her pride
 To relight an old friendship she now did decide
 To Rudo she journeyed to have a fresh start
 When Rudo saw Kuda it near broke her heart*

*Now there lives in a place that's not far from here
 Two fabulous friends who are close and so dear
 The sickness that took Kuda's baby away
 Is now held in check and kept well at bay*

*Kuda has a good doctor who helped her to see
 How life can be positive with HIV
 Now she has a chance to dream of a life
 With a man and a child as a mother and wife*

*We would all like to tell you that our stories a tale
 But in our ambition we then would fail
 To urge you to think, and to feel and to act
 For all of this story is based on fact*



The script, based on real life, was written by Sue Moffat

Photographs: Andrew Billington