

A COUPLE OF POOR, POLISH-SPEAKING ROMANIANS

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translated from the Polish by Benjamin Paloff

**DRAFT, with additional notes from the translator.**

*Dramatis Personae*

Blighty and Gina: a couple of poor, Polish-speaking Romanians  
*(Blighty and Gina are both Poles pretending to be foreigners.—Trans.)*

Driver  
*(Male, in middle age, nervous.—Trans.)*

Woman

Geezer

Police Officer

Bartender

Halina the Hatcheck Girl

Roscoe

*(The play opens with voices offstage recounting, as for a police or court record, some strange events.—Trans.)*

Martini and Rossi, Martini and Pickup, Martini and Spit up.  
Martini and Rossi, Hyundai Sonata, Los Trabantos, Buenos Aires.  
Suzuki Katana, Cinquecento, Seicento, Fellatio.  
Volare, o-oh, Cantare, Romy Schneider, Coffee and Tea.

He's belting this shit out, and she says, Shut up. And he says, But this is our Romanian national anthem, babe. Don't renounce tradition. And they left some doodles back here, because they were all over each other, and as soon as I got going, they just scratched away. And that there's metallic black paint, the most expensive there is.

This weird thing happened when I was driving from Warsaw to Tczew...

And these two people, they were acting all crazy, and they introduced themselves... We're from Romania: I can show you the flag. What flag? What flag???

I said to them: What do you mean, do I have any scraps of meat? What the fuck is that, scraps of meat? Put your chick in the car, give me your address, and I'll send you your scraps of meat. You'll finally get that Chick-fil-A sandwich you've been dreaming about. Now fuck off.

My wife and I stopped off at the Texaco, and these two people came up to us acting all weird. One of them, the woman, she was pregnant, and they're passing themselves off like they're Romanians who speak Polish. The wife's in chemo. She's missing a tit. I can never remember if it's the left or the right, and...

But the girl, I mean, she was like one of those girls who holds on to the door and doesn't want to let go, even when I'm moving. And I was like, No. No fucking way.

It's an abomination. Unacceptable.

I said no, because I can't let them into my car, you know, seeing as the car's registered to my business, and you can see the screen in back, and you know, I can't take them, so they say...

And they just stood there staring, all crazy. She had that exact same expression on her face like, you know, a fish in jelly. My husband said that unfortunately there was no way we could take them with us. When we refused, they started crying and cursing up a storm.

I said: No. Because no means no.

So if that no-good broad lies down on the ground, that's her fault. You're just going to lie there, oh, I said: That's a new one. Come over here, slut, I'll lay you out right good. And oh yeah, I'm heading right for her. Boy did she take off. She blew up dust. Like she was all jacked up on something.

I filled up, went inside to pay. When I get back my ten-year-old son asks me if there's such a thing as Polish-speaking Romanians. I say of course there isn't, because he's an anxious kid, sort of talks too much, kind of slow for his age, and he thinks up these stories.

They were like so nice, like so nice, but when I saw their teeth, whoa, I totally said no to giving them a lift. I'm not saying that it's such a big deal, but these days it's no problem, all you have to do is stop by some five-and-dime and buy yourself the cheapest toothbrush they have, and give yourself a good cleaning twice a day, brush-brush, rinse, straightedge for life, and that's it. You got to take care of that. It's called manners. Amen.

ACT 1

SCENE 1

*Winter. A gas station. The two poor Romanians pile into the Driver's car.*

BLIGHTY: My wife's called Gina.

DRIVER: But this girl, about twenty, pregnant, she didn't say a word. She just sat there, but I figure she's an accomplice to the murder. Whose murder? Me, my murder, get it? Though that may seem unrealistic.

BLIGHTY: Just call her Gina. Gina, what's your last name?

DRIVER: He asked her last name, and she still didn't answer. Just sat there. But her name was Gina, which was probably short for Regina, and that's the bloody glove right there. Now they can catch these murderers, because that's an uncommon name, and that's what I'm demanding, that they arrest these killers in the name of all taxpayers, who could very well find themselves assaulted and killed by these two.

BLIGHTY: She doesn't have a last name. Just Gina. A beautiful name for a girl like that. Actually, both a name and a first-name-last-name, and at the same time a stage name. Gina's a good girl. No stealing, no barfing. The child she's carrying in there is living proof. You know, that's life. We're poor, honest Romanians who happen to speak Polish. The wife's pregnant, she's going to a doctor in Wrocław, to a specialist, because she's got some metastases, some cysts, because it's just a mess there in her belly. And so on. So we'll all go where you're going, huh?

DRIVER: To Wrocław! You hear that, Detective? And this is on the road to Gdańsk!

BLIGHTY: To Wrocław. But we're not picky. Maybe Gdańsk would even be better. They have all kinds of specialists. The sea, iodine, mussels, ships. Maybe Gdańsk, then. I don't want to argue.

DRIVER: I told them I'm going nowhere. Just to Elbląg. And anyway, then I'm coming right back. I was all calm about it, because that's the way I am, calm.

BLIGHTY: Well, then, to Elbląg, or wherever, and then she'll make do. She always makes do. Always. We Romanians, whoaaaa, we're feisty. She'll even sing you something when she straightens herself out a bit, huh, Gina? You'll be alright, dear. A very nice girl. Well, sit yourself down. Yeah, come on, pookums, is everything alright? Is that a new hair band? Now when did you buy that? Just now? I don't believe it. You're too cute, you know that? What are those, chicory blossoms, those stones?

DRIVER: It's actually hard to say how it happened. It just took a minute.

The man she was with, I knew his face from somewhere: he was definitely one of those famous mob guys. Knuckles, or that other one they show, and I'd just turned away, because he yelled at me: Look out! The Romanians are coming! or something like that. And I turned around, and of course it was a set-up, and he stuffed her into the front seat, with all her crap, her bags and stuff, and I say, Hang on there!...

And he says, Gina. This is Gina.

I was worried, Detective, which I think makes sense. I say to him, Hey man, what Gina, what's this about Gina now, what do I care about somebody's wife named Gina? That's what I asked.

She could be named Slim Shady, for all I care, but get her the hell out of here. I'm in a hurry. I'm on my way to work. What the heck kind of nonsense is this?...

BLIGHTY: Actually, her name's Novalgina, but she tells most people to call her Gina.

Novalgina, Aspirin, Caffeine, for us these are traditional Romanian women's names.

Saint Novalgina, in Romania she was, you know, the patron saint of drunk girls coming home in the dark. Right? That sort of thing happens. Girls such as she. But she tells most people to call her Gina. I don't know, sort of a caprice on her part. Please don't call her Novalgina. Just call her Gina. Show some respect for the feelings of this perhaps great artist.

DRIVER: But what's it to me? Get out, you...Romanians. Because I'm about to call the...

All this time the pregnant girlfriend I was just telling you about, she was pretending not to be listening. But I had this little scented pine tree, and she was playing around with it, probably planning a way to steal it undetected.

So then he tells me to look at how pretty she is, and what on earth does that have to do with me, if she's pretty or not. All I know is that she smells like frying oil, like some awful deep-fryer, and just get away from me, shithead, and take your princess and her brat with you!

I'm not going anywhere.

GINA: But you said you were.

DRIVER: Did I? My mistake.

I was being ironic. Because I was already getting irritated with this antagonistic and unnecessary circumstance.

GINA: This thing's fucking awesome.

DRIVER: And the girl-shithead was playing around cynically with the pine tree, trying to change the subject.

GINA: Did you buy this, or did you make it yourself?

DRIVER: What do you mean, make it myself? Make it myself?! Lady, you can buy these anywhere. Just go into the station, and there are tons of them! What planet are you guys from, anyway?

BLIGHTY: Just look how pretty she is. Oh, you little rascal. Well, her teeth need a bit of work. But that's from a hard life, right, dear? We don't have it easy in Romania. In fact, we've only eaten butcher's scraps our whole lives, and that's murder on the old bones. And, you know, zirconia. Chicory. And for dessert we like Pepsid. You know, for heartburn.

DRIVER: And he tells me about his cosmic odysseys, how they have it there in Romania, how they ate bones, weeds, rocks. Well, maybe so, but HEY, we had marshal law here, too. There was rationing, and HOLY COW, WHAT'S ANY OF THIS HAVE TO DO WITH ME! Please stop talking to me! Because I'm not listening to you! I'm not listening to this anymore! I'm not listening.

*He covers his ears dramatically.*

GINA: Or vanilla-sugar, dry. For example. Some AquaFresh, but very rarely, very rarely, only when mom pawned something, like the family crystal. We had tons of that, because she whittled veggie sticks all over Romania and was very famous.

BLIGHTY: Anyway, I'm not going to hide the fact that the pot is calling the kettle black. That's a saying back in Romania. Because I don't have such great teeth myself. A nice cover of teeth, but with some blank spots, yes indeed.

DRIVER: And he shows me his teeth, these foul brownish pegs, just like cigarette butts. I nearly lost my lunch: How can you have teeth like that and still procreate?... And the girlie with that little pine tree, is that any way to behave?

GINA: Oh Jeez, I'd like to have one of these...

DRIVER: And he says:

BLIGHTY: Well then just take it, he has two. You're not going to be offended anyway, right?

DRIVER: You get that? He said for her to take it. My private property, mine. Foreigners, who I'm laying eyes on for the first time in my life.

GINA (*trying to hang it around her neck*): But where should I put it?

BLIGHTY: You know, it's not easy with her, once she insists. She won't relent, because she's, you know, relentless. Why don't you just give it to her? Please, do it *for me*. We don't have these little pine trees in Romania. We don't even have anything *like* a pine tree, just other kinds. Oak. Bloke.

DRIVER: Bloke! Have you ever heard of a tree like that, Detective? Because I haven't! Please get away from my car. And leave me be. I'll take appropriate measures. The girl, too. Take your old bag and fuck off. This is my car, and I don't have time for this. And I

tried to drag her out of the car. And get the fuck out, bitch! And let me tell you, that brought her around.

GINA: Oh yeah?!!

DRIVER: And she grabbed her bag and hit me with it here, right in my neck bone...

GINA: Bully! Get your big paws off me!

DRIVER: And I have this boil right near there, and that could have caused an irreparable threat to my health and my life. I started to scream: Somebody! Anybody! Help! Because I wanted to call for help, but they prevented me, they terrorized me, and then they wanted to kill me.

BLIGHTY: Hey, man, what's up? Have you lost your mind? You want to beat up a pregnant woman, a big man like you? You don't see she's smaller than you? She's all skin and bones; she doesn't stand a chance against you. You just stay where you are, Jean Genie. Undo your boots. That's right, my little sunflower. You know you got a little booger in your nose? Other side. Well, my little Gina likes to walk around with boogers in her nose. Know what I mean? The little whore. But she's a sweetie. Let me get that for you.

GINA: Nooo, I'll do it myself. I'll do it!

BLIGHTY: No, let me do it. *Let me do it.* Come on!

DRIVER: And he's all cool and shows me her gunk, her disgusting snot from out of her nose. You see, I'm sensitive to that sort of thing, I... It reminded me of when I was in grade school, when the other boys, with their spit, wet willies, you know, they lit their farts... *I'm not going! I'm not going anywhere! I'm staying right here! I'm staying here! I'm staying! I'm biding my time! Because I love the cold!*

BLIGHTY: Fine, have it your way. So now I'm just going to have to kill you...

*Blighty shows him his pocket knife.*

DRIVER: And that's when he first threatened my life.

BLIGHTY: I'll kill you, though I don't really know how. I don't have the technique down, so maybe it'll hurt more than anything you've ever felt before. And then after that you'll go to hell, and I wish you all the best. And you'll do your time in hell, your nuts will burn off, you won't like it, and you'll think to yourself: It wasn't worth it. Oh, how it wasn't worth it. And in the end I'll get to Elbląg anyway, and now fuck. They throw an innocent man—meaning me—in jail...

GINA: And he was such a big shot, like he was too cool for school. And all you had to do was flash him your vegetable peeler and he shits his Underoos.

BLIGHTY: And you don't even know where this knife has been. Maybe I scraped the walls of an aquarium. Or maybe I cut some dog shit into slices, huh? Or maybe it's dull. Because maybe I use it to open envelopes. With letters inside. From my relatives in Romania. Letters they write on tree bark, with urine and feces. And Easter-egg dye. Little cousins all begging for me to send them a piece of paper. Laszlo wants a Snickers, and Dickwad a Mars, and Bam-Bam a Twix, while Cincinatti's dreaming about this cardboard French-fry holder, you know the kind. And you think I send them this stuff? I do. It really means a lot to them. A whole lot.

*Knife in hand, he opens the back door and gets into the car.*

Get in. I said get in. Stop fucking around: Get in, get in, get in. We Romanians have a lot of patience, but any Romanian is eventually going to tell you: Enough. Let's get going.

## SCENE 2

*Driving.*

*Gina and Blighty take out some smokes and, in a terrible rush, start smoking two at a time. They cough.*

BLIGHTY: Enough, already. But it's a good thing I didn't kill you. And Christ, I came close close, but I'd have paid for that in the morning. Sure, you know, I went to this party, it was cool, no big deal, but then I killed some strange guy I didn't even know! It just makes me sick. Faster, friend, faster. Let's show some respect for each other's time. But don't get so upset. Because you're sweating, and you'll catch a chill.

*He massages the driver's shoulders tenderly.*

BLIGHTY: Hyundai Sonata. Nice ride, huh, Gina?

GINA: Like a bullet out of gun, right? No stopping a car like this.

BLIGHTY: Or a Chevy Cavalier. Now those are some wheels. You know, when we tell them in Romania how we got there, look out. Our relatives'll burn down our lean-to, just out of jealousy. Hyundai Sonata. It's not a car, it's a religion. They're going to shit themselves, you'll see. Why don't you fucking let her rip! Fuck yeah. Like a hot pussy, you know? Like a hot pussy, you got a car with that kind of potential, and you let it float there like a sea monkey in soup. Gina's going to hurl...

GINA: Now you just hold on there. I don't think I'm that drunk.

DRIVER (*apparently falling to pieces*): My assailants were constantly humiliating me, egging me on, forcing me to drive faster and faster, against all good sense and the rules of the road. I've been driving for fifteen years. I have this little habit: when another car is coming the other way, I read its license plate. I can't control myself. The same with road signs, Gdańsk 153 kilometers, etcetera, Hława, etcetera. I add all the numbers and divide up the sum. I always have this hope that it'll come out even. When it's even, I'm happy. I take it as proof that, somewhere out there, there exists something like symmetry and order in the world's most elementary structures. But the worst is when it doesn't come out even.

BLIGHTY: I'm going to take my boots off, okey-dokey? Perky? Puerto Rico? Martini seicento fellatio?

DRIVER: I keep quiet. I don't say anything. The most important thing with murderers is not to provoke them.

BLIGHTY: What I just said, that means "thanks" in Romanian. But I haven't slipped off my slippers yet. Oh yeah. Like porn. Because it's like, we're here in our own intimate little circle, huh?

*He yawns, settles down to sleep.*

DRIVER: I just keep saying to myself: It's okay. It's okay. It's okay, it's okay, it's okay. Because maybe this isn't even happening. Maybe it's just a dream, I just don't know it yet, and I'm getting worked up over nothing... But it wasn't a dream. And now he's almost asleep, almost passed out, and I was hoping... I was thinking...

BLIGHTY: Damn, man, it stinks in here. Gina, did you fart?

GINA: I didn't fart. It already stank in here when we got in.

BLIGHTY : Right. But it's getting nasty. But it's not me.

GINA: Yeah. It's not me, either.

BLIGHTY: Someone let one rip, that's for sure. But definitely not me.

GINA: Me neither, no way. Not you, not me. Who do you suppose released the hounds?

BLIGHTY: Piggy. And he was sitting here all quiet like a church mouse, huh.

DRIVER (*falls to pieces*): What?! IT WASN'T ME!

GINA: Who, then?

BLIGHTY: YOU! It was you! It had to be!

GINA: Stinker.

*The Driver throws himself hysterically at his cell phone and tries to make a call.*

BLIGHTY: And just what do you think you're doing with that phone? Who do you want to call? Tell us. Maybe the police? What kind of friend are you? Give me that phone. Give it to me.

*Pause.*

You're driving. That's ridiculously unsafe. I'll dial the number for you: just tell me what it is. Oh my, get over here, hurry, for the love of Christ! A pregnant woman! Frozen! Unarmed! She's sitting in my car! And she's driving with me, and I'm taking her somewhere! I don't know what I'm doing! Help! Save me!

My God! You're fucking useless, a real asshole. How could you?

*He settles down with the telephone and falls asleep.*

DRIVER: So then he finally fell asleep. And then I knew that this was my only chance to speak with that woman: she's a woman, which lent her certain human qualities. Women can never be quite as evil as men can be. As far as I'm concerned, that's the whole basis for the world's existence, since they have to give birth to children, and they're not alcoholics. But that gave me hope, so I say to her: Do you know how to speak, or what?

GINA: I learned once, you know? But somehow it didn't take. I didn't have a knack for it.

BLIGHTY (*in his sleep*): We're just a couple of poor, honest, Polish-speaking Romanians... We sailed here on the coal barge *Advil*... We don't have these little pine trees where we come from. We have other kinds.

DRIVER: This one here's your boyfriend?

GINA: Who? Him? No. My cousin. That means he's sort of like my lover.

DRIVER: Your Romanian here snores a bit, huh?

BLIGHTY (*in his sleep*): It's the septum.

GINA: Because of the septum: he broke his nose in jail. Now he has a terrible complex about it. Don't say it too loudly, because he'll get pissed, and he'll cut us down like dogs for fondling each other and plotting against him.

BLIGHTY (*in his sleep*): No, no, no, no, hold on, what's going on here?

*Pause.*

DRIVER (*wiping his face with a cloth handkerchief*): It's his kid?

GINA: Whose?

DRIVER: Your kid.

GINA: With my kid?

DRIVER: Well, you know, that thing you're carrying around in there. Is it with him?

GINA: Me? Oh, Jesus... What? No!

DRIVER: It's not his?

GINA: No. I like only just met him yesterday... And what does it matter to you, anyway? My mother keeps asking the same thing, and I tell her: it's a kid, it's just a fucking kid, and that's it, get it? It's my son. And he's mine, because, well, that's how it turned out. It's my kid. I definitely didn't have him with you. And she says: You should take care of him, but no: you smoke, you drink, you party, you pull down your panties for whoever walks by, and then you wake up at 5:30 in the afternoon and are surprised you don't feel good. Why don't you do something about it, like, grab the vacuum cleaner and... But I... Fine, forget it. It's fine. It's a good thing you reminded me.

*She takes out a tube of glue and pretends to sniff it.*

GINA: I'm totally addicted to this shit. To tell the truth, I don't even like it anymore.

DRIVER: And this monster, this awful woman, I don't even want to call her a woman, she reaches into her crap, into all that garbage, and she takes out a tube of Crazy Glue. And she looks herself over in the label! Like in a mirror!

BLIGHTY (*in his sleep*): Gina's an artist.

DRIVER: And that, uh, that doesn't, you know, hurt the kid?

GINA: Come on, man... But I keep it under control. Anyway, the doctors said that my kid is already used to it, and if I stop it would be a worse shock than a little Christmas cheer. That is, the kid could come out retarded, and it's better for me to have a sniff than for me to get into a bad mood and the kid to come out all fucked up. In small quantities it's probably even healthy. You should give it a try. It'd chill you out, and then you wouldn't just sit there. Hey, check out those tanks, there's going to be a war.

DRIVER: Nooo! Never!  
I screamed.

The stink was horrible. I started to get dizzy.

GINA : Know what?

Because the worst fucking thing is that the world wants to turn a person into a camouflage rag saluting in line, a passer-by passing across the street. A passenger on the fucking tram sucking on a tube, with this face, ugh. Without any features. Without any face. Like you have. Cold-cut Man. I don't want to be like that.  
(*Terrified.*) Hey, what's your name? Oh, Jeez! Look out!

(*Gina thinks she sees someone else in the back seat and tries not to look.—Trans.*)

Tell me something.

DRIVER: What? What is it?

GINA: Tell me something, but so that she won't figure it out, you get it? No! Not like that, don't turn around! Is that my mother, sitting there in the back? Just tell me, because I don't want to turn around. Brunette, older.

DRIVER: Nooo! That's your boyfriend, the one you came here with! Your cousin!

GINA : That bitch is following me. It's just that I lost all her alimony yesterday, and now she wants to kill me for sure. It wouldn't surprise me if she was sitting right there behind us. I have to keep a close watch at all times, I can't turn around for one second, because she'll pop out of nowhere and say: Why don't you take care of it, that's your son.

DRIVER: Who is? Him?! (*He points at Blighty.*)

GINA: My son? Are you out of your fucking mind? I don't feel so good. Maybe I'm having the kid. Call Dr. Lubich.

DRIVER (*almost crying*): How? Your cousin took my phone!

GINA: Chill, chill, chill. If that's how it is, I can just hold it in. Hee hee. But relax. I'm just fucking around.

*They drive.*

DRIVER: Look, lady, that's no joke. When my wife gave birth, there were some complications. They had to tear out her asshole... Her bladder was damaged. How the woman suffers...

BLIGHTY (*now awake*): She doesn't have an asshole.

DRIVER: Of course she doesn't... But I was suggesting no such thing...

BLIGHTY: Gina doesn't have an asshole. She's not that kind of girl.

GINA: Shut your pie-hole, alright? Go back to sleep. Don't ruin it for two people engaged in refined conversation.

BLIGHTY: Shut up yourself. Don't come crying to me about how he's insulted you...

GINA: Goddamn fucking son of a bitch.

BLIGHTY: Turdy shit super-shitstorm. Pee-pee. Armpit.

DRIVER (*on the verge of losing it*): Stop... FOR THE LOVE OF GOD... People... Must you talk to each other like that, call each other names?! Carry on?! Have you no shame?! Lady, you're pregnant, you huff Crazy Glue, you curse, you stink up the car, that kid hears and sees all of it! It gets recorded in his fetal state! Then he'll say it, like when you have people over! The first words out of his mouth! God...

BLIGHTY: You hear that, Freddy Mercury? Give her a break, man, she'll calm down. She's a dumb Romanian, a simpleton. Her whole life she's been working away, material girl in a material world, and all that: she's doesn't know how to behave around people. You see what you've done? He's nearly had a heart attack from listening to your bullshit.

GINA: Yours isn't any better!

BLIGHTY: Now that's just what I'm talking about...

Gina: No. No. No, and still no.

BLIGHTY: Right! Exactly!

DRIVER (*bursts into tears and stops the car*): Stop! I'm begging you... It's yours... I'm done! I'm done driving! I don't want to, I'm giving it to you... The car is yours... I'm giving it to you! I'm getting out... I'll go on foot... I want to take a walk. There's this forest here, that's the place for me, I'll find myself some old root and build a house in it... I'll carve out some plates, spoons, hangers, um, some musical instruments...

BLIGHTY: No, no, no, my dear, absolutely not. Stop whining. Calm down. Calm yourself this instant. We're under a tight deadline, too. We're trying to get there on time.

GINA: No, let him cry himself out, he needs the release. He has to let it go.

BLIGHTY: No, don't defend him.

GINA: Go ahead, now, cry, it's very cleansing. Now I, for example, when I had a bladder infection, you know how it is, I was moping around, I couldn't find a place to go, I just always felt like I had to pee. I'm running here, I'm dashing there. I'm letting it out on my legs! I'm sprinting, the hundred-meter dash for Romanian women with bladder

infections! I open my fly! I'm already all pissed! I sit on the throne and make three hot, triumphant little drops, and it feels just like someone's pricking me with needles. You know. Like my body's been tossed under a sewing machine. Sort of like an orgasm. Only worse.

DRIVER (*crying the whole time*): Detective, I owe the fact that I'm alive solely to myself, to keeping it cool, to my control, to the fact that I didn't provoke them, that the entire time I didn't react to their attempts to rob me of my mental faculties, because now I have no doubt about it... And then I saw a patrol car stopped by the side of the road. For a minute I was afraid it might be a mirage, that they were trying to drive me all crazy and insane, that they'd put it there, plotted against me, so it was like it was there to provoke me, to get me going. And then they were laughing at me, making fun of me...

BLIGHTY: You punk-ass motherfucker, you see what you've gotten us into? No, my friend, this is not how friends behave. What you're up to now, it's scandalous.

DRIVER: And then I don't even know, it just took a second. Despite the killers' attempts to terrorize me and dump it on me and instill in me a sense of guilt and responsibility for that patrol car and to persuade me to keep driving, I succeeded in turning off and driving straight for that patrol car.

POLICE OFFICER: What's the problem here? Why are you stopping?

DRIVER: I was driving too fast, Lieutenant, General, sir. You have to arrest me. I, I was, um... You can't see it back there, but there's a hill. I sped up at the bottom, I crossed the double solid, and I hit someone. You didn't know that, but I confess to everything, even more. I would like you to arrest me. I throw myself on the mercy of the court. Please arrest me, it's all I ask. I'll give you the details a little later...

BLIGHTY: Daaad... Dad, come back to the car...

POLICE OFFICER: What's that? What this all about? What's going on?

BLIGHTY: Everything is absolutely fine. We're a couple of poor, honest, Polish-speaking Romanians. Dad here has Alzheimer's. There's a whole plague of it in Romania: it makes it driving with him a real nightmare. He's not himself since they let him out of the camp, these horrific bad dreams keep reminding him, the trenches...

DRIVER: I didn't write down the badge numbers of those two police officers, but I'd guess it'd be pretty easy to find them. One's not too tall, the other's taller, blond. If you ask me, those guys are guilty, and they should be suspended from duty for failing to provide assistance to an abducted person, and what's more, for collaborating with thieves and murderers, believing their nasty lies, as if I'd been in the trenches and lost my identity there.

POLICE OFFICER (*to Blighty*): Is that a problem? Isn't it dangerous to let him drive?

BLIGHTY: He's doing just fine, General, sir. Is this the right way to Elbląg? That is, are we heading in the right direction? Because Dad's totally confused. My sister and me, we have no idea where we're going, and we're in a hurry to catch a ferry. To Romania, in fact. Actually, it's this coal barge, the *Advil*. Maybe you've heard of it?

POLICE OFFICER: But there's no coastline in Elbląg.

BLIGHTY: Of course not. Because it sails on a lake. Lake Elbląg.

DRIVER: A coal barge called the *Advil*. Awful name. Please locate that one as well. Maybe they're still on it.

### SCENE 3

*Still driving. The Driver is driving, sobbing hysterically, and he's spazzing out behind the steering wheel.*

BLIGHTY: STOP BAWLING!

GINA: Leave him alone...

BLIGHTY: He'd better stop, or else I'm going to start bawling.

GINA: Stop it. Let him cry it out, it helps.

BLIGHTY: No, Genie, because I can't work under these conditions. I can't stand it when a person is as hysterical as he is.

DRIVER: The feeble winter sun, like a crappy little coin, had long since fallen beyond the horizon. There were bodies of run-over dogs and animals cast all over the highway. Last year's ice-cream ads, faded by children's lustful glances, swayed on the wind over the cheap bars. I saw the darkness. I touched it.

BLIGHTY: HEY, MAN. Listen to me. We're terribly grateful that you wanted to give us a ride. It's a long time since we've seen so much kindness from a total stranger who really had no reason to help us out, that kind of sympathy in a tough situation, but who wanted to and did. Such human kindness and sympathy really means so much to us...

*He starts to dig around in the mesh bag.*

Now we have to get going. It's not far from here to the ferry. Your offer to give us a lift, your doing that voluntarily, you didn't have to do that, but it was a huge help. Thanks to

you, we will soon be back in our homeland. Romanians don't mince words, that's our motto. That's why we wanted to reward your goodness and kindness.

*The Driver looks in disbelief at Blighty, who removes wads of bills and various other things from a plastic shopping bag.*

I'm the Wonderful Wizard of Oz. I came here in disguise to see if people are good and do good deeds. You'll be rewarded to the tune of five thousand, paid in a lump sum. One, two, four, five. And my MP3 player as well. And three Euros. And sunglasses, or maybe not—I'll need these tomorrow. You know how they come in handy. Here you have the controls with the headphones. You download a bunch of stuff from the internet. You transfer it from your computer, and you can take five thousand MP3s wherever you go. Anyway, there are a couple of CDs on there, but I don't know if you'll like them. Actually, I might have thought about it earlier; if I'd known I could have ripped you some, you know, some of that Neil Diamond, Benny Hill. Duran Duran. Monty Python.

So, we're out of here. Come on, Gina, get dressed. That's real money, no funny stuff. Buy yourself something nice. A Cuisinart. I recommend it. Me and Gina, we have one in Romania, and it's worth it. It bakes its own bread. Gina goes out early to the fields, gathers some grain. Then we mix it up in the Cuisinart and we have such fresh bread, with none of those E1939 or E1968 isotopes: now that's what I call LIVING.

GINA: Hey, are you nuts? I'm as tired as a second-day whore, and all I see are woods. Berry patches.

BLIGHTY: COME ON.

*They walk away.*

DRIVER: And Detective, the worst part was at the very end. He put a knife to my throat and demanded my money and my keys, and she pointed at me with a pistol she took out of her handbag, and the safety was probably off. They wanted to kill me and rob me. They demanded my valuables, all kinds of jewelry, home appliances. They were especially interested in a Cuisinart, which I don't own and have never owned, only my mother-in-law had one once, and I don't keep in touch with her. I don't know how they found that out. How did they know that? You know what I'm thinking is, they had to have followed me earlier. For years I've suspected someone was watching me. And then they fled into the forest without a word, without even thanking me. They didn't leave me any money, not a penny, not a red cent as thanks. And Detective, I would like it to be noted that if they're caught, I hope I'll be able to look them in the eye one more time. But I can't forgive them. I won't. I won't. Not ever. Did you write that down? I won't. Fine, then.

ACT 2

SCENE 1

*Evening. Gina and Blighty are walking along the highway, crying, in a total psychological meltdown.*

BLIGHTY: Please. Please. Please. Don't rub up against me while you're walking, I'm oversensitive to that. What? Why?

What do you mean, I gave him five thousand and an MP3 player?! What, like I just gave it to him? To who? To our friend with the screw loose? You got to be kidding me. I gave it to him? For free? But that guy was abby-normal! And you didn't say anything while this was happening? What do you mean, I said I'm the Wonderful Wizard of Oz? I said I was a wizard? Maybe you'd say something like that, but me?

Actually, I remember feeling like a wizard, but it's not like I'd just give something to someone because of that. And you let me do it, you didn't say anything and just let me give him all that stuff?! Five thousand?! Have you lost your mind, woman? You think I found it in my Christmas stocking? I worked my ass off to make that. And I gave it to him? Maybe I sold it? Maybe I sold it to him? No, that's crazy. That doesn't make any sense.

Where's that bag? Sorry. Gina. What kind of name is that, anyway? They couldn't think you up a better one? Are you guys Indians? Peruvians? Regina? What's your last name, Salve? Hee hee. Sorry. I have to hand it to myself, that in the biggest shitpile life has to offer, at rock bottom, I always manage to exude a sense of humor.

No, come on. Let's calm down. Let's be serious. That's what we need here, we need to explain a few things. So there was this party, that's a fact. We got a little fucked up. I understand that that's when I met you. But something was off with those drugs. I don't remember a damn thing. You could tell me whatever you want. But where did I get five thousand? Did I take it out of my savings? Aha.

Impossible, no way. If I'd taken it out, I'd have remembered. And I gave it to him? All of it? And you let me? And there wasn't even ten zlotys left?! Look in your bag, there's got to be something. I need some coffee. I need to get my head in the game, to take a shower. Give me a mirror or something. I have to be on set tomorrow at eight. And what about that MP3 player? I gave that to him, too? No way. I had everything on that, all my favorite songs. And where's my phone? What do you mean, you don't have it? Look in your bag, it has to be there. And my ID. What do you mean, it's not there?! Not there?! Give me that. It has to be in here.

And maybe you've fucked me over, huh? Come on, don't get all upset, I'm just asking. I don't know you, I'm laying eyes on you for the first time in my life. I don't trust anyone anymore. I have to be at work tomorrow at eight, I have to be on set at eight, get it? Do

you understand what that means? I have to be on set at eight, and if I don't fucking show up, it's going to be my fucking ass. This sucks. I don't believe it. Do you even have a job? Do you know what that means?

GINA: No.

BLIGHTY: Then where did you get the money for all those good times, huh? Maybe I gave it to you?

GINA: I don't know. I got it out of the ATM.

BLIGHTY: And it just landed there from out of the sky?

GINA: Nooo, maybe it was the alimony.

BLIGHTY: What alimony?

GINA: Well, I went to the ATM. I figured there wasn't anything there, I swear. But there was five hundred. So maybe that was the alimony, I guess. So I bought myself a hot dog and a couple other things, then that party...

BLIGHTY: Right, fine, but what alimony? Like, child support?

GINA: Well, yeah, child support.

BLIGHTY: And what the hell did you do with the child?

GINA: With what child?

BLIGHTY: I don't know, with your child. You said you had a kid, right?

GINA: Oh yeah, I did...

BLIGHTY: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. You have a kid.

GINA: I left him somewhere. Wait. So maybe I took him to preschool?

BLIGHTY: When?

GINA: I don't know. In the morning.

BLIGHTY: What morning? Which morning?

GINA: Well, yeah. Exactly.

BLIGHTY: That's right.

GINA: Day before yesterday, maybe. No, maybe yesterday, it was yesterday. No. Because I don't think it was today.

BLIGHTY: So, what? He's still there? Hah hah.

GINA: Listen, you have anything to drink?

BLIGHTY: Just relax, don't freak out. I'm just asking. I don't give a fuck, lady, I don't even know you.

GINA: I don't know, but how should I know? Maybe my mother picked him up. Sometimes she picks him up when I can't.

BLIGHTY: Well, that's just great.

GINA: Well then don't ask me questions when I can't do anything about it now.

BLIGHTY: You're right.

GINA: The main thing is that he doesn't get bored. All you have to do is turn on his "Heroes of Might and Magic" and he has fun. He mostly keeps to himself.

BLIGHTY (*starts to shout*): Exactly! Exactly! He keeps to himself! And I just got fucked out of five thousand, and that's that! Enough, goddammit, I've had enough. Enough with these parties, enough with the drugs, enough of those fucking awesome parties that end in such a fucking stupor I give five thousand to some neurasthenic ass-backward grandpa. And I wake up dressed in a cardigan from the Salvation Army, pulled off some corpse back in '72, and it's just fucking swell. Since eight in the morning I'm pretending to be a Romanian who speaks Polish, and I'm talking about the detrimental effects of eating butcher's scraps all the time, only all of a sudden it turns out that I'm a Pole coming down, a fucking Pole coming down and speaking Polish. And I wake up in some field, on some berry patch in East Bumblefuck, on the border with Kazakhstan, in a Kazakh cardigan that reeks of moths, and with my teeth all done-up with marker that I can't even wash off. And I have to be on the fucking set tomorrow at eight, because it just happens that I play Father Ted in a respected and beloved TV show. Father Ted. In top form, as always.

*Pause.*

BLIGHTY: But these drugs are really bad. We... I just want to ask you one more thing. It's very important. Maybe it's stupid, so pardon me. Did I, that is, you and me, did we have sex? I'm just asking.

SCENE 2

*The Tasty Grub. The Bartender and Halina the Hatcheck Girl are watching TV. From outside we hear the approaching turmoil and commotion. Enter Blighty and Gina on the verge of a breakdown, all sweaty, on the edge of madness.*

BARTENDER: We're sitting there minding our own, and just then I hear this sort of screaming, like a scuffle. So I say, Now what's it going to be, Bulgarian chicks shooting worms out their cunts and all screaming like that? And I go check it out. And then the door opens, and this two-man isolation ward walks in, I don't know, drunk or fucked up on something, or they escaped from the nuthouse, them and all their paper-or-plastic. They come in. Oh yeah, and that countess there is all pot-bellied. And yeah, so they come in.

Can I help you?

GINA: I would like a lot of boiling water. I'm having a baby. Have granny strip the bed.

BARTENDER: And she points me to Halina. Granny! And she was tossing her handbag around. So I say: We don't have anything like that, boiling water. There's coffee, tea, we got borsht, French fries. Just what it says here.

GINA: I'll have the croquette.

BLIGHTY: No no no—she's such a kidder! None of that. None of that, if you ask me. Out of the question. Please excuse us for a moment.

Look there. Hold this. Turn around and look there, and hold this, and don't say a word, I'll do the talking. You stay here and look there and don't move.

I beg your pardon on behalf of this unstable individual. My friend is sort of coming down. She's not even really pregnant, you know. She just has this pillow stuffed in there, oh, hah hah. And stop laughing, stupid, because this isn't even funny anymore. A psycho-junkie, this one. But those drugs'll fuck you up, if you'll forgive my saying so.

I'm terribly sorry, but something's happened, and I'm in a bit of a pickle. Might I kindly ask you ladies: what is this lovely town we find ourselves in?

BARTENDER: What town is this, and where are they! That's what he asks me!  
Ostróda.

HAT-CHECK GIRL: It's Ostróda.

BLIGHTY: Oh, Ostróda. Really, it's lovely. So is that more to the south, the north, the east?  
Because I can't really place it.

BARTENDER: Well, it depends.

BLIGHTY: Uh-huh.

It depends. Quite right.

You see, because we're in this unfortunate situation: we ended up here by accident. It's not our fault. We're from Warsaw, and we wound up here, well, it's just...

BARTENDER: Uh-huh. I'm from Warsaw, too. Halina, too, she's from Warsaw. We're all from Warsaw. We came here on vacation. We just got back from sledding.

BLIGHTY: Well then, there you have it. A fine thing, sledding. It's lovely weather for a sleigh ride together with you, as the poet says. You know, the great poet.

But to business, my ladies, because all joking aside, this occurrence, well, it occurred, that is, it's really unclear to me, hard to explain how it all happened. In fact, it might sound a bit unreal. In a word, I found myself here under mysterious circumstances, and tomorrow I have work at eight, but sadly I don't have my phone on me. And I have to call.

What this basically means is—I don't know how to prove this—I don't really look like this. I don't look like this. I was just fooling around, dressing up, having fun, and you know, it all ended badly, real...badly. I'm a professional actor. I play Father Ted in that TV show. I'm sure you've seen it, Father Ted, oh yes, that's me. I was wondering: What time is it?

BARTENDER: But, sir, this is a disguise, too. That there is Princess Diana in disguise, and I'm Danielle Steele. It's ten pm, as you can see right there on the clock.

BLIGHTY: Ten pm. That can't be. No time to sleep before I have to be on set. What a fucking nightmare. Goddammit, Gina, do something. Say something to them. Tell them who I am. You know.

GINA: We'll have two orders of stew.

BLIGHTY: NOOOO!

HAT-CHECK GIRL: Hey, Roscoe!

BLIGHTY: No, come on, what do I need this Roscoe for? And who is this Roscoe, anyway? For the love of God, you ladies don't have any appreciation for the fix I'm in. And who is this Roscoe? What's he to me, this Roscoe? *People!* People. For the love of God. I'm Father Ted. Help a fella out, I have to be at fucking work tomorrow at eight.

BARTENDER: At eight, for what, collecting cans?

GINA: We Romanians are a feisty people.

BLIGHTY: Would you please shut up? Not a word—keep quiet. Turn around. Turn around. Turn around now. Please shut up. You left your kid at preschool. Now stay there and think it over, whether that's a motherly thing to do. She left her kid at preschool. Three days ago. Went to get herself a hot dog. A psycho and a junkie, this one.

BARTENDER: And what did she say? That you're some kind of Romanians or something? Great.

GINA: But I'm sure my mom picked her up, for sure.

BARTENDER: The cheapest phone card is fifteen seventy.

BLIGHTY: But I'm broke!

BARTENDER: Fifteen seventy.

BLIGHTY: Come on, lady, all I need is one call's worth. Just enough to yell: Get me the fuck out of here!

BARTENDER: Roscoe! Come here! We have a bit of a problem.

BLIGHTY: LET ME MAKE A CALL! FUCK! ONE CALL! ONE CALL! IT'S JUST A FEW CENTS!

BARTENDER: Just a few cents, sure, but the cheapest card is fifteen seventy. I don't know if you're some kind of troublemaker, a priest, or even a Ted. That's how much the card costs, and that's money, and it's not like any old head-case can mosey on over from the funny farm and call wherever he pleases. That's what I said, right, Halina? And then Roscoe came in.

ROSCOE: So what seems to be the problem here?

BARTENDER: It's right here. This is Father Ted. With his wife, the nun. And their kid, the altar boy. Hee hee.

ROSCOE: Alright, what do you want?

BLIGHTY: Greetings, Mr. Roscoe, sir. So here's the deal: I'd like to make one phone call, and these ladies here are all for it. They just say I still have to check with you if it's okay...

ROSCOE: And you have to make such a ruckus?

BLIGHTY: Certainly not, but...

ROSCOE: And do you have to make such a ruckus?

BARTENDER: But what the hell, for an hour now this con artist's been telling us stories about how he's some rich actor from Warsaw, but he can't buy himself the cheapest phone card, because he can't spare the money. They're junkies or something. But I know that mug from somewhere. Hey, wise guy, you're the one who steals the eggs from my henhouse.

BLIGHTY: That's not true, I... Fuck you! To hell with you, to hell with you all! I fucking curse you! That your fucking microwave blows you all to hell!

### SCENE 3

BLIGHTY: It's worse than Romania. A nightmare, a nightmare in waking life.

But that's poetry. I'm speaking poetry.

GINA: Getting back to the kid. But I'm sure my mom picked him up from preschool. When was that? Wait, the day before yesterday. Thursday. I took him to preschool. I definitely remember that, because he was just wailing, like, blaaaah. I swear. But did I pick him up? You don't know? I didn't say anything about that, that I picked him up?

BLIGHTY: Hold on, let me concentrate. I'm thinking about something else right now.

GINA: Try to remember. I didn't say anything?

BLIGHTY: I don't know, dear, because on Thursday I didn't know you.

GINA: True that, true that. Right. I think she must have picked him up, because she always picks him up, because, for example, I can't. You're right. And that's what happened. That's it. He was standing there and screaming. Boo hoo. What do you think? Maybe that's what happened. Maybe she wanted to spite me and didn't pick him up.

BLIGHTY: Does he have house keys, just in case?

GINA: He does.

BLIGHTY: So then he went home.

GINA: You think so? *(Pause.)*

He doesn't have keys, he's four years old. Idiot.

BLIGHTY: Sorry, but don't "idiot" me, we're not at that level of intimacy, pal. But you're kind of right, though: How could I just give someone five thousand? No way, there's no way. Five thousand, you know how much money that is? For five thousand people would eat their own shit, for that much you could buy a whole field with a house, a fence, a villa in Białystok.

GINA: Actually, I'm not even sure I dropped him off. It's quite possible that maybe he stayed at my mother's. Entirely within the realm of possibility. He plays "Heroes of Might and Magic," he likes his Lego's. He'll manage to keep himself occupied.

BLIGHTY: Stop getting off the fucking point. Enough already, because tomorrow at eight I have to be on set, and that's the most important thing we have to do now.

GINA: I'm not making the call. Just get lost, alright? Don't even try to convince me, I'm not going to call. So that she can tell me what? I can say it myself. She tells me all kinds of shit. Yesterday I blew all the child support. She's not going to let that slide. She'll make me get a real job.

#### SCENE 4

*Night. A field. A woman in smeared makeup, forty or fifty years old, stops her car, gets out, opens the trunk, takes out a bottle of vodka and drinks, then puts it back. Meanwhile, a couple of poor, Polish-speaking Romanians run up to her car, losing their shoes as they throw themselves on her hood.*

*(The Woman is very drunk. Everything she says is heavily slurred.—Trans.)*

BLIGHTY *(in tears)*: Warsaw plates... Are you going to Warsaw?

WOMAN: Warsaw.

BLIGHTY: You miracle of God, you. The Almighty of the Universe, that's what you are. I called for you and you came. Promise me you're not a mirage! A miracle. Miracles happen. To Warsaw, how far is it from here?

WOMAN: Huuuh?

BLIGHTY: How far is it to Warsaw?

WOMAN: About a hundred kilometers.

BLIGHTY: A hundred! A hundred. That's what I was saying. A hundred kilometers is like, oh, it's as easy as taking a stick and beating the shit out of dog. We're rescued! Saved! Madame. Queen. You're beautiful. We're coming with you! We're coming with you! Oh, it's so warm in here! So nice! We're normal people! We just look like this. Please. We'll behave like cultured folk! No breaking wind!

WOMAN: Pease. You're a godsend. This isn't even my car. It's a Cavalier. Press that there, and you're all set.

BLIGHTY: So my friend can come too, right?

WOMAN: What's it to me?

BLIGHTY: Come on, Gina, she's going to let you come along, too. I set it up. I vouched for you. She DOESN'T STINK. She just looks like that.

*Driving.*

BLIGHTY: So what's up? How's life? Weather's not so good this year. Terrible winter harvest this year.

*Silence.*

WOMAN: Of course. The weather. The pressure. Super-duper.

*Silence.*

BLIGHTY: And do you always drive this fast, Ma'am? To be honest... Perhaps you could go a little straighter?

WOMAN: But over there... If you see anyone coming at us the other way, you just let me know. I took my contacts out and put them somewhere over here, but I can see just fine. So? Where are you going? Students, you're students? What do you study? Don't worry about me, I'm not drunk. Don't worry about a thing, just let me drive.

BLIGHTY: We're not students, we're Romanians who speak Polish. We're lesbians, fags, Jews, we work for an ad agency. Like I was saying, you know how it is, we're going to Israel to plant trees, the goddamn people out here don't want to give us a ride, not one centimeter. I'm Father Ted from the Presbytery. I have to be on set at eight. I still have to get some sleep so as to be in shape tomorrow, have a bath.

WOMAN: And does one of you maybe have a driver's license?

BLIGHTY: Well, to be honest, um, no. Aaah. Maybe she has one, but I doubt it. Look out!... Jeez, lady, what are you doing?

WOMAN: Well, if you don't, what the hell do you want with me? I thought you did, and that's why you came along. Shit.

No, it's fine. Don't get upset, we'll just keep going. The Lord gaveth, the Lord takethed away. No doubt about it... Or maybe I'll show you: here's the clutch, here's the shifter, and you're all set. Or no, I'll drive. It's a car, it's a ride, it's all on credit... Fine, cool, everything's under control. Fuck, I'll tell you. I'll tell you, but I'll tell you. You're so happy, so young, and this car cost fifty thousand. For fifty thousand it can't be bad.

GINA: Sorry—this is an embarrassing question—but you got anything to eat?

WOMAN: Oh fuck. Hungary, Romania, Turkey, I know, really beautiful country. Everybody says, Romania's a mess, shit everywhere, sewage, Islam, kids eating shit from pine trees. That guy, the dictator, Cincinnati, he's in charge, and people eat rocks. But it's a great country, they have peppers and fruits, and vacations, and my husband and I go skiing there. Just great. You go. No things, no luggage, no credit cards, no money, you just keep going, you'll be free from all that food and all that crapping all the time. You have no idea what a mess it is.

GINA: You know, sometimes we find something in the garbage. These days people throw out such great stuff, like whole chickens, hot dogs. Garbage cans. Sometimes when I'm on my way to the garbage something tempts me, so, you know. So that when I take out the garbage, I'm in no hurry to let go of the bag.

WOMAN: That's right, they just throw it out. Garbage is a sacred thing. Once I even found a Secession lampshade. Everybody asks about it.

*Silence.*

GINA: Well that's all well and good. But I want to take a leak.

WOMAN: What? You can let it out wherever you want. This is my husband's Cavalier. I don't give a shit, I'd be glad. Adieu.

*Pause. The Woman drives increasingly in zigzags. The Romanians are starting to worry.*

BLIGHTY: Hold on there, Countess. You know, you're a great driver. A fine conversationalist. But if you were to bust out some coffee, we'd be grateful, huh?

WOMAN: What? You can't tell me what to do, sweetie, because I picked you up, because I thought you had driver's licenses. So no complaints.

*They keep driving in a zigzag.*

BLIGHTY: But you see, the coal barge *Advil*, which is supposed to take us certain places, including Israel, is sailing soon... I have to be on set tomorrow at eight, and you're really going out of your way with these zigzags. And it's just that we'd prefer to live, which is just a matter of... A couple days ago my friend here left her kid at preschool. To this day he's probably sitting there, playing with his blocks.

GINA: And why did you have to remind me, asshole? Too late. I'm reminded.

BLIGHTY: He's sitting there, no bedtime story, no cap, in undies that need changing. It's just tragic. We're going to rescue him. If we don't get back she's going to get told off by her mom like you've never seen, boy.

GINA: Asshole. Stupid prick.

WOMAN: But hold on there, now, kids, and listen. I'm not having anything to eat, because it's a fact that me, I'm feeling a little fucked up. I admit it, I'm fucked up, but there's no sense you getting out. No, because this is wild Polish wilderness, there are marshes out there. Something will come up, like a gas station, civilization. Then you can get out, but here, I just don't have the heart to let you go.

*She takes a bottle out from under her legs and drinks, and she passes it on.*

Bottoms up, hah.

BLIGHTY: Lady, I can't believe you. Keep your head in the game! What the fuck is that, no bottoms-up now, just get some fucking focus, because my nerves are shot. Me, an old Romanian who's seen a thing or two. Where the hell are we? Białowieska Forest? Stop the car. I said, stop the car!

WOMAN (*stops with a screech of the tires; it is the middle of the forest, and there isn't a single light or sound*): Go ahead. Walk into the forest. We aim to please. All you had to do was say so. Send me a text message tomorrow or sometime, if you find some mushrooms.

Hah hah.

*They keep driving; the woman drinks straight from the bottle.*

Just a second, someone's calling me.

*The phone is ringing; she answers.*

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And. And. Nooo, I'm not drunk. I'm driving. With my friends, if you have to know. What are your names?

BLIGHTY: Laszlo Shambo. And this is Regina. Last name Salve.

WOMAN (*into the phone*): Regina and Shmeges, my friends. No. No, I'm not crazy. They're just very nice, easygoing, cool young people. No, I'm not drunk. Come on! You've been waiting for me for three hours? No, I'm not drunk. And who's that talking in the background? Nobody? Is that her? Well you don't have to be all secretive about it, some girl just dropped in to play around on the computer, and you're talking for hours on the telephone, and she's getting bored, naked and sad, and cold, catching a chill, so go to her, go lick her cunt. No, I'm not drunk. I'm not. And maybe I am, so what if I am? I don't know where I am, because there's no signs here, to tell the truth. But there's some field, some woods, actually. Branches and blueberries: maybe it's Norway? I'll be there presently, you go ahead and make me some dinner. Dinner. You burnt it and used too much salt. So it's burnt. And too salty. But that's the way I like it. Because if I don't fucking kill myself, I might come home very hungry. Bye. Adieu.

BLIGHTY: Gina, you hear? We'll be there soon. Not long now. I'll make it to the set. Could I borrow that phone? I have to make a call.

WOMAN: Watch the hands. Sorry about my husband. He's terribly worried I'll fuck up his car. I get it. His lover is there, he was supposed to have a romantic evening, she was making up a class after school, she changed her diapers and came right over. You know how it goes. It's true love, he has her on the phone pretending he's Valentino. He's all furious, pacing from window to window with his limp prick, and he says to her, Sit down here, love, you need to trim your nails. Sorry. And he stands there in that window and shits his pants that his Cavalier is going to pull up, first one wheel, then another, and I'll carry in the rest in a plastic bag. Hah hah.  
Hee hee hee.  
AAAAAAAAAAA!!!

*There's an accident; the car hits something in the dark.  
The Woman, bloody, is lying on the airbag, and nothing has happened to the Romanians.  
A wild boar is lying in front of the hood.*

BLIGHTY (*outraged*): Now what? What the hell is this?

WOMAN (*losing consciousness*): Hedgehog.

BLIGHTY: A hedgehog... A hedgehog! I'll show you a hedgehog.  
Hey, lady, come on, wakey wakey. Jeez, the Countess has bought the farm. Now we're really out on our asses, in the middle of nowhere, in the goddamn sticks.

GINA: So, give her first aid.

BLIGHTY: Me? And you think it's as easy as apple pie? I don't have time; I'm in a hurry. She's probably done for, right?

GINA: How do you know?

BLIGHTY: Is she alive? She's alive. Life's the first thing. She'll be fine now, she has charisma, see for yourself. She sort of has a moustache. The kidder.

GINA: Maybe you're right. There's no point now. What are we doing?

BLIGHTY: You see her phone anywhere? I have to call and let them know I might be late to the set.

GINA: Maybe it got fucked up.

BLIGHTY: What?! No way.

*He throws out a smashed telephone, looks under his legs, pulls out the Woman's bottle of vodka and drinks deeply.*

You want a swig? There's a little left. I can't get fucked up, because tomorrow I have to be in shape.

Come on, let's take her watch. You have yourself a lovely watch, dear, a Seiko. Those little diamonds are the height of fashion. Don't think badly of me; I'm desperate. Twelve-fifteen. That can't be; maybe it's stopped. So it's around eleven, so there's still a chance I'll make it.

*He puts on the watch, digs around in the Woman's purse.*

Alright, she has a purse, so maybe she has some cash. I need to buy a phone card. No, you dig around in there. I'm just sick about this, morally. I've never stolen anything in my life. Except maybe for some dalliances in preschool. You know. No, give it here. I'll look. I can't trust you: you're a nutcase and a junkie.

Gum—we can split that. Birth-control pills—that's gross—you want them?

GINA: Get that away from me.

BLIGHTY: Well, take them, they'll give you great hallucinations.

GINA: Leave me alone, you jerk. Take them yourself: we definitely need to cut off your gene pool.

BLIGHTY: So take them. You can use them. Aw, fine, I was only joking. Anyway, this bitch has already sucked down half. An old drunk hag like her, and you can still call her Miss Jackson if you're nasty? That's gross.

GINA: Will you shut up?! I can't listen to you anymore, you idiot. Fuck off, and put down her purse. If she's already lying there dead don't rummage around in a corpse's purse.

BLIGHTY: What. Maybe she's not fucking around, maybe she takes them for acne? You think? Calm down. Makeup, scribblings, markers, eyeshadow: I'll take that for you, it's all good. Trust me, you could use it: you don't know what you look like, but I see. If you don't want it, give it to someone else. Wait, maybe she has another phone. There's a wallet. Thirty zlotys. She has THIRTY ZLOTYS! Jackpot. When we get to a gas station we'll buy ourselves some Q-TIPS.

*To the Woman.*

You douche bag. You've drunk all of it. I'll show you.

## SCENE 5

*A grave. They get out of the car and start to hobble through the total darkness.*

*(Evidently, Blighty and Gina have buried the Woman.—Trans.)*

BLIGHTY: No mother, no father, alone at last to the bitter end. Well, I'm on board. Some drunk hag picks us up, hits a boar, but of course there are boars in the forest. He could have attacked us. But people have no sense of responsibility. She could have killed us. People are hopeless. I have to call, or there's going to be trouble.

GINA: Would you just shut up? Shut up, shut up. That's all I ask.

BLIGHTY: Fine, great, you shut up. I hate you. I always hate the girls I screw when I don't love them. It's disgusting, disgusting, sex without love. It's porn. Strip down and bend over.

GINA: What? What did you say? I didn't fuck you. I already told you. I didn't fuck you.

BLIGHTY: And how can I believe you, how can I believe you, why should I? Lady, you have amnesia since I don't know when: now you remember, now you don't, the Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away. How do you know if you slept with me or not, when I don't even know? Please. Don't make me laugh. I had a suspicion I slept with you because now I feel like shit, and it's probably because of that, because of that, that's how I know. I hate mechanical, industrial sex with strange women for whom I don't even feel contempt, just blinding zero and zilch. Some strange body under my hands, it may as well be some strange animal's body, a strange, faceless body, bam-bam, and after it's all over you just lie there. You lie there. Breathing. Your breath like a passing car, like a siren going by, like a shadow falling. It's all so ridiculous. Spit and sperm dry up like rain. Because those are the juices of love, the juices of love. Spit! Sperm! Egg whites! And water mixed with potato flower!

GINA: I didn't fuck you. No way, no way. I told you. Definitely not.

BLIGHTY: Of course we did! You took advantage of my being unconscious and unarmed!

*They walk in silence.*

BLIGHTY (*he can't stand it*): And what a lovely mother you are. You abandoned your kid. Great, don't say a word about it, I prefer not to think about it. Fucking kid at preschool day and night, even the cleaning ladies have gone home, the janitors have gone home, and he just sits there in a puddle of urine and smashes his Hot Wheels. Because what else is he supposed to do, what now? All the toys reek of him. Okay, okay. Time out. If I cross the line, you let me know.

*Pause. They're walking; no one drives by.*

BLIGHTY: Sorry, but I have to say something. Because we're going to fall asleep. And we're going to freeze. I'm cold. This cold is driving me nuts. How did they stand it in these woods back in the day?

GINA: So lie down.

BLIGHTY: Very funny. Veery funny.

GINA: Don't you think I'm cold, too? Cold as a cold cunt.

BLIGHTY: So what, now you want to blackmail me into giving you my jacket? No way. Though I'd probably hit the afterlife in about fifteen minutes. You could take part in my beatification.

*Pause.*

BLIGHTY: So you think we're going to die? Now? Just like that?

GINA: Yes.

*Pause.*

BLIGHTY: Such hopelessness. What a bummer.

But something is telling me to give up the drugs, not to fool around with that crap anymore. It's everyday stuff for you junkies, but for a normal person it's really destructive. And please. Someone tells me: it's a costume party, it's called "Poor Whore Score," Eva's inviting you, in Mokotów. So I dress up, I color my teeth with marker, I put on some stinky rags, and the cab driver doesn't want to take me. I get there. I meet this chick, namely, YOU, and it's supposed to be a good time. People are dancing,

someone offers me something they've cooked up, and then BAM: Operation Romania! I'm a Romanian! I'm on my way somewhere, I'm handing out my money! Me, decent Father Ted, a bachelor. You're the one who talked me into it. Why did you remind me? Now I'm pissed off for nothing, and everything's come back to me. Late for the shoot—check. Going to die—check. But not like this. This is crazy.

To be honest, in spite of it all, I'm afraid that I won't receive eternal salvation. That is, God knows that theoretically I was more good than bad, and in the best light I was okay. But then the Catholic Church starts fucking me over with its gospels, confessions, fasts, and I'm screwed. Me. They fuck Father Ted.

GINA: Oh, Jesus—I see a light.

BLIGHTY: Impossible. It can't be.

GINA: Is that a house?

BLIGHTY: A house! We're saved! Warmth! Tea! Not to mention food! A clean bed! I'll call Warsaw, tell them I'm running a little late, but I'll be there for sure.

ACT 3

SCENE 1

*Blighty and Gina are standing in front of the door of an unfenced house, which is built in the middle of an open field. They're banging hard on the door:*

Help! Help! Hello! Save us! Open the fucking door!

*Finally we start to hear the sounds of the opening of many locks, bolts, chains, more and more of them, and the head of an unshaven Geezer pokes out.*

GEEZER: Is that you?

BLIGHTY: Yeah, it's us. In the flesh.

GEEZER: Are you alone??

BLIGHTY: Of course we're alone.

GEEZER (*removes the last chain*): You sure?

GINA: Yes, we are.

GEEZER: Come in. Just hurry.

*Inside the Geezer's house. He collects garbage. Everything's dirty: two tubs, shoes, all the garbage in the world. The television is on.*

GEEZER (*looking them over*): Father Ted? But it's the priest!

BLIGHTY: Yeah, that's me. I'm the guy who plays him...

GEEZER: What an unexpected and pleasant surprise! At night—at such an hour! Father Ted! At last! The priest has finally come to see me. This is the best, a real pleasure. And this woman, this girl, who is she?

BLIGHTY: My friend, an acquaintance.

GEEZER: An angel?

BLIGHTY: Yeah. She used to be a prostitute, a junkie. You know how it is, my son. I took her in—we did.

GEEZER: But where's your cassock?

BLIGHTY: What cassock?

GEEZER: It would be pretty cold in the cassock, eh? It's howling balls out there. You came in your civilian clothes.

BLIGHTY: Alright, old man, give it a rest. I'm blushing. You have something to eat, grandpa? Something warm to drink? I'm freezing my ass off. My girl, too.

GEEZER: No, no, I don't. I was hoping... I was waiting for the priest to help me do the shopping. I can't go out.

BLIGHTY: You can't? Why not?

GEEZER: Don't ask, Father—you don't want to know. As soon as I go out, they come, they come. I'm walking, I'm walking, and I hear scratch-scratch, they're coming. They turn the locks, and they hurt me, they hurt me. They come in and hurt me. Oh, Father, you see. I can never go out, because I have to come right back.

BLIGHTY: You have a telephone, gramps?

GEEZER: Somewhere over there. I had one. But they were calling.

*He lies down on the bed.*

Here are the marks. This is where they hurt me. This is where they hurt me. Here are the marks from when they hurt me. They come, they come and do such terrible things. I can't leave here for a moment, not for one moment, because they come right away, right away. And they hurt me.

BLIGHTY: Now that's just great.

GINA: Could we maybe sleep here, grandpa? We'll fall flat—on our faces. We came on foot, all the way from Kazakhstan. From Uzbekistan. We just want to get some sleep. We won't cause any trouble.

GEEZER: Get some sleep. Forty winks. Seems, it seems... For Father Ted, always. But you have to be careful. They don't sleep. You have to be on your guard. But maybe they'll see, they'll notice it's you, Father Ted, and they'll come to their senses.

## SCENE 2

*Blighty and Gina are lying on a bed, covered in rags. They look at the watch, chewing gum, in a claustrophobic room filled with garbage and a gurgling sink. Gina is playing with some string.*

*(The watch is the same one they took from the Woman.—Trans.)*

BLIGHTY: Well? So? You got what you wanted. It's your party, your own private "Poor Whore Score" costume party, which cost me five thousand and my job. Let's have fun! I don't know, let's play a word game.

GINA: A word game.

BLIGHTY: Don't repeat what I say. I'm not going to make it to the set. I've lost my faith. They'll wait, they'll call, there's going to be this big scandal. They're going to kick my ass out of there, that's for sure. And they'll pick up some ridiculous actor. They'll tell our viewers that Father Ted was in a fire and had plastic surgery and now he looks totally different! What a mess! I'm totally fucked!

GINA: Fucked.

BLIGHTY: Where's my cell phone? Where did I leave it? Maybe you jacked it? No. Better you think about your kid. Leave a kid at preschool. What a moral accomplishment that is. Better not to have kids at all. What's his name? It's a boy, right?

*Silence.*

Well, say something. I'm falling asleep. Grandpa will come in the night with a metal pipe and will think we've come here to hurt him, and he'll kill us. I'll keep watch. But let me ask you: Why do I have to keep watch? What about you? Why, in spite of everything, do I have to be the responsible one? Who the hell are you? What do you do? Professionally?

GINA: I'm a life-artist.

BLIGHTY: Oooh. That's exactly what I thought. And what else do you do?

GINA: Like I know? Not so much.

BLIGHTY: Right.

GINA: I used to fill out invoices...

BLIGHTY: I need to call my agent. He's going to be pissed.

GINA: My mother set it up. But I went there with a hangover, and I those numbers just tripled before my eyes. Because there were these columns, rows, boxes, and there were these sluts sitting there in their festering sweaters, which they'd crocheted and measured out against me. I'm a hundred percent sure that in those hours of work they put my tits through the photocopier and looked over how they came out.

Oh yeah, and I worked at this stand during the summers. I fried up kielbasa, fries, you know, by the square meter, me and a hundred-and-fifty-liter vat of three-year-old cooking grease. That's me, Miss Oil. But I always jacked something, ten zlotys maybe, and that evening I had ten zlotys, TEN ZLOTYS. And I went to the club for a brew, all proud of myself, and I sat there with my snout all red like canned Spam. Miss Kielbasa, and the oil dripped from my hair onto the table, and my mother said: finally, finally, finally something, finally.

BLIGHTY: Well that really sucks. You have to do something with yourself, take something up. Or maybe you just don't have any talent.

GINA: So then I hang out, I go out and hang out, I go in and go out. Generally I just fuck around with various dickheads like you, though I don't really want to. I just go to their place because I want to get a decent night's sleep, no one screaming bloody murder in my ear when I wake up with a hangover. You know, we have a studio apartment, seventeen meters. If someone slams a teapot or a pan, that's no joke when you're hung-over, when you're dying and your kid brings his toy piano to the bed and starts to bang out "Three Little Indians" or "Baa Baa Black Sheep." And they think I'm going to their place because I want to have the greatest sex of my life in seventeen positions and no mercy. Even if they don't give a shit, they still have to stick it in and pull it out at least once, or else no, no, no, it doesn't count. And in the morning it's: Oh God, where are your clothes, you must be in a hurry, I sure am, are you still drinking that tea? If you want, I'll get you a thermos!

Hah hah. Hah hah. And now I'm on the tram, on my way, just like that. I run up the stairs, I open the door. Where were you?! Look what you're doing! That's your child! Mommy, Mommy, who was Copernicus's father? A better question would be, who was *his* father, right?

God. Who else could it be?

All day he was playing "Heroes"! And finally he pissed himself. I'm sorry, but I'll take the vacuum. Mommy, baa baa black sheep! Baa baa black sheep! Have you any wool? Yes, sir, yes, sir, three bags full! Mommy! Mommy!  
But the way I read it, that sheep peddled its ass, too.  
No, you'd better listen how he learned to play a hymn on his toy piano! Listen! Every verse! Now backwards! Go get your piano and play for mommy. Not there, dummy. And just look at yourself! Don't you have a home? Did you sleep in a dumpster?

BLIGHTY: Well, I can't help you there, sweetheart. But that really does suck that you act that way; you should quit it, meet someone who won't treat you like a whore. And have you been tested for HIV? You should. Let's be serious: you have to find yourself a guy who, maybe he loves you, maybe he doesn't, but you can't keep tearing yourself up. Maybe you have some kind of subconscious complex; maybe it's caused by a bad relationship with your father.

GINA: God our Father.

BLIGHTY: I, personally...

GINA: Could you lend me five zlotys?

BLIGHTY: Me? To you?

GINA: My kid is really dirty. All the other women have their normal kids. Why do I have a dirty kid, and not a normal one?

BLIGHTY: I hate random sex with women who just thinking of me as Father Ted. And they think that this way they're affirming their existence in the world, that they've slept with me. I slept with Father Ted, I'm no longer a nobody, la la la. I slept with Father Ted, girls, it was such a turn-on, I thought I'd go crazy.

GINA: I can't go back. She'll kill me.

BLIGHTY: I hate it. But the worst part is that they always pull me in with some ruse: we have some albums you'd love, we have a collection of rare stamps, we have various flavors of tea. Come on. These shelves are from Ikea. We have this, and we have that, isn't it COOL?

GINA: I have to take a piss.

*She goes into the bathroom.*

BLIGHTY: We have this, and we have this, and here we have some titties. Don't you peek, now. There's this, and that. And these are our stockings: let's throw them there. And oh, who do you play again, is it this one, or is it that one, because now I'm not sure? And here we have a scar, it's awful, simply an awful scar, but that's fate. Here you have it, look it over, there's this and there's that, and I'm going to take a bath. Oh, I'm back already. Well? Not bad, eh? So now what? You're sleeping in your clothes, are you insane? Come on, I'll show you where you're going to sleep. And to tell you the truth, I'm going to sleep there, too, with you, can you believe it? Watch. Me and you, you and me, and me and Father Ted, because you're totally wrong that I'm just some bartender at Café Café, just some girl at the newspaper stand on the way to the university. It's absurd that you'd think I'm just anybody, since I'm not just anybody. On the contrary, because you're here and I know you.

And I lie there like a burnt-out whore in a burnt-out house.

I wonder if I left the iron on.

I wonder which tram to take home.

What fucking Romania is this? What solitude.

Oh, you've already shot your wad. That's actually a good thing. I'm overjoyed. Now I'm going to sleep. Oh, I'm up already. You've left already? Where have you gone? The girls

will be here any minute to see you. They say you're terrible for me, just terrible! And that a girl like me! And they say, if you're going to be like that, well!  
And I take the tram. There I go. No mother. No father. Alone till the end of the line.  
And now they've fucking fired my ass. No—they will fire my ass, in three hours. I'm nobody. I'm finished.

*In a fresh burst of euphoria, he stands at the bathroom door.*

Gina! Gina? Hey.

Now I know what your problem is. I just got it, it's real easy.

GINA (*trying to tie herself a noose*): Yeah?

BLIGHTY: Just don't get offended. You haven't found love! It's as simple as that! It's just that nobody loves you! Nobody loves you, and that's why you're so unhappy. You screw those guys who don't love you, and it's pointless, it's empty, it doesn't mean anything. Love is the most important thing in the world, having someone who won't tell you to fuck off in the morning. Well, you know. Gina? Love will cleanse you.

Hey, now, what are you doing in there?

You taking a bath? What for?

Come out. I don't want to sit here alone. I'm afraid. You went into the bathroom by yourself, and you left me here.

I won't peek.

What are you taking a bath for?

I'm not going to fuck you, and that's that, even if you scrub yourself with boiling water.

Hey, Gina!

I was just kidding, moron.

Open the fucking door.

Open the door!

*He pulls on the doorknob; the door opens.*

*Gina, who in the meantime has hanged herself, is hanging in the middle of the bathroom.*

Now what have you done?! What did you do that for?!

How could you?! What is this? What's this? Get down from there this instant.

AAAAAH!

GINA: So I hanged myself.

BLIGHTY: So just go on hanging, because I'm out of here.

GINA: Fuck no, you can't just leave me here by myself.

BLIGHTY: Save it. I'm gone.

*And what's next, and what I'm writing, what would happen then: Blighty runs out, and Gina cuts herself down with the pocket knife and runs after him. Along the way they knock down the horrified Geezer, in his long johns. Praise the Lord, we're rushing to catch our ferry!*

*The coal barge Advil sails up on the snow. They run onto its deck, where the Romanian crew and the passengers greet them enthusiastically: Finally, finally! They hand out candy wrappers and flyers for language schools, and everyone kisses them on the hand. An ecstatic prom of welfare recipients. The participants eat branches and dirt. They hold droopy old balloons in their hands, and they sing shrill Romanian songs. The waiter says to Blighty: Mr. Bulacz, this is a great honor for us. Specially for you and your wife we have prepared an entire pepper stuffed with butcher's scraps! Would you like a taste?*

BLIGHTY: Of course, but I have to wash my hands. I've been on the road all day.

*He goes into the bathroom. Gina is hanging there.*