

THE MORAL ANIMAL

By Thomas Geoghegan

Cast

Ann Donovan, about 44

A geneticist, famous for her work in extending the human life. But now, she has given it up (a la Sakharov) to be Chief Physician at the County's Public Hospital, which cares for the poor. She is often sipping a bottle of Evian, and though now 46, she looks eerily "younger."

Jim Donovan, about 32

The City's new assistant "Corp. Counsel," just hired by Rob Spencer from Sidley and Ellis, a big private firm. At midnight, he goes out for music in bars.

Rob Spencer, also about 44

The Mayor's Chief of Staff... Ann's college classmate: It may be she once spurned him, but perhaps he'd have become a "neo-liberal" anyway.

Kasia, about 28

A translator at the same Public Hospital... Her secret, not revealed in this play: in addition to Pascal, she has a passion for punk rock.

German Consul

Though he buys rugs at Ephesus, he is a passionate social democrat. Often carries a Le Monde Diplomatique, and is sad that he's not French.

The other two actors, "**First**" and "**Second**," play multiple roles: Waiters, Patients, Cleaning Ladies, and Roland, the German boy who is raped in the County Jail.

THE TIME IS FEBRUARY 1993

Prologue

Ann

(holds Evian water bottle, sips)

Yes, it's true of us, of me, of every great scientist, which I think I am, that at too soon an age, by 30, at least, when my education and understanding were now so much greater, that for no reason, poof, it's gone, I've lost my power. My daemon. My gift. Yes, it's over when I'm 30, though I still hung on for a few more years. How annoying since in every other way I'm so much better at my work, and yet I finally had to admit, Yes, it's over. I was hoping it just happened to the men. But no, it happened to me. I could win at 60 the Nobel Prize but only for something I'd done at 20, when I had my power. All that was left to me was to wait out the rest of my life as an elder statesman till one day I get the call to go to Oslo, in the winter, in the dark, and I want to do more than that. God, how I'd suffered under these old men, over 30, who once had been great scientists. First of all, they're vain. They're like children. They throw tantrums. They fume over you in the lab. Why? Because they've lost their powers. Einstein or Rutherford or Watson and Crick. Even Madam Curie, who tried to poison herself. Look at Jim Watson! In his 20's feverish, he discovers the double helix, he unwraps the mystery of DNA, of life itself. Maybe one day, of immortality. And he's in his 20s! And then for the next fifty years, he's been simply chasing girls. I should know. I was one. The bastard, I wanted to beat him. Not just beat him off. If only I had more time, I might have discovered what Watson and Crick did not... Well, I didn't. And one day I woke up and I realized I had

lost my powers. I didn't want to hang on. I didn't want to pretend. Once you lose your powers, you become abusive and behave tyrannically. So I came back to my home town of Chicago. I decided there are many other ways to change the world.

Because I don't want to be abusive or tyrannical. And so then I thought: Hm, well, why not – politics? And so I snapped at the chance to run this whole place, this County Hospital: be the first woman to run it, of course. But then some have said OK, Ann, why not be the Mayor? “Oh, I couldn't, please.” Which means, in politics: “O my God, please!” Please, please, yes, I want to run for Mayor: what pleasure it would give me, too, to fire Rob. “Oh Rob, it's not your little half wit boss, now I'm the one who's Mayor. See, the people on the left, all the Harold Washington people, they elected me! Then I'd watch him writhe? “Rob, *you* won't be my chief of staff, no, not if you were the last man on the earth! Rob, Rob... shame on you! A 'mere' girl friend, that's how you thought of me back in college, when you were dreaming of your little Rhodes – ha, and you didn't get it! But you had no trouble getting me - the Girl, a little wonkish, but The Girl, right, right: that's all I was! Ah! Though had a heart attack when you saw me in a bikini, but you were off to Oxford, right! Oh, Rob, now, now, what pleasure it would give me to be the Mayor, and to come in and say... “You're fired. Now you go off to work for Clinton!” (*holds up letter*) Ah, see! See, look at this letter, from the President! Uck. He's behind this: Rob, he wants me to take this rotten little job with Clinton! Oh be the head of National Institutes of Health: head up NIH. I wouldn't head up INS, I wouldn't head up IRS, I wouldn't heat up anything for him, or Rob, or any of them.

And I've got him now – I've got the Miller file!

Act I

Scene One

(Rob Spencer, the Mayor's Chief of staff, throws a paper ball at Jim Donovan, the Assistant "Corp. Counsel.")

Rob

She's got the Miller file! Damn it – she's your sister, I want you to go down there and get it back – she hates me, she's blackmailing me.

Jim

(shakes head) No, Rob! She just wants a little money for...this, uh, tuberculosis!

Rob

(retrieves and unrolls paper ball) How'd she find out this German kid was raped! And now this Miller, she claims, this guy who raped him, he's HIV

Jim

(innocent) Why is it such a big deal that a German kid is... *(trails off)*

Rob

Raped? *(waves hands)* How's it look? The Clinton people are all upset! 'How's it look'? A kid comes to Chicago, he's out at O'Hare, he's picked up for having a little bit of dope, some tiny little peck of pot, and we take this kid, some bonehead, some bonehead in the INS, takes this kid off to the County Jail where he's raped. Raped!

Jim

(wary) It's unfortunate, but it's, well, that unusual...

Rob

(annoyed) Not to you, not to me, not to most Americans... but this is a European kid. To the rest of the world, how does it look? Last year... an American kid in Singapore gets a caning. Now... a German kid gets picked up here for – what? A little bit of dope? Then off to County Jail, and somebody has to rape him! In Chicago! And Clinton's in, and they're very sensitive, in D.C., to our image abroad.

Jim

But Rob, you told me, the Germans want to hush it up too—

Rob

Oh sure, Bonn, Kohl, he knows if it broke loose back there – (*snaps*) let me tell you, secretly these Europeans hate us! They hate us! And over in Europe, they're all socialists, and they're all ... Look, let's just say, it's a dangerous world, and you're sister is just the type who would leak it... And I know her.

Jim

I know you know her.

Rob

And I know you know I know her. (*bitter*) Doctor Ann! The Nobel laureate: Shit, she's America's sweetheart

Jim

No, she didn't win the Nobel.

Rob

No? She will...

Jim

She wants to help to poor.

Rob

(*stops, glares*) She wants to run for Mayor!

Jim

(*shakes head*) Rob, she doesn't want to—

Rob

No, she wants to run for President, she wants Clinton's job, she—(*calms himself*) God, what's the matter with her? Why doesn't she just extend human life instead? Make us all immortal and just, you know - stay out of trouble! But no, I've never said this, but back in college, she treated me as a mere 'Boy' ... she was going to get a Rhodes, well, she did get a Rhodes, and... that was the last I saw... (*intercom buzzes*) Of course I have no hard feelings... (*picks up phone*) WHO THE FUCK IS IT? (*lower voice*) Not the

German consul? No, keep that whining little jag off out of here... How, if she's just the head of County how'd she find out the German kid was—

Jim

As head of County, she's in charge of the Jail Infirmary, in fact, she goes over to the Jail—

Rob

(uncrumpled note) We've got this note, of course it's not to me but to the Mayor... "I recognize it's a time for discretion, and..." *(fumes)* READ IT, SHE'S BLACKMAILING ME...

Jim

(glances at it) I did read it... Come on, it's innocent, it doesn't say anything. She's asking for money for you know this tuberculosis thing, among the homeless.

Rob

There isn't any tuberculosis! How many times does the Mayor have to say, There isn't any tuberculosis!

Jim

(gently) Rob, he can't say it even once; it's like a five syllable word...

Rob

Then he can say, "There isn't any TB, because there isn't, it's not here..."

Jim

But it's in New York, it's in Boston, and at least, you know, they're spending money...

Rob

Why do you worry what they are doing in the East? Oh New York, Boston... my god, people here, they're all so insecure...

Jim

But Rob, maybe we should spend some money, or it won't be just the homeless... we'll have tuberculosis in the trattorias, and ...

Rob

Jim! *(spits out the words, harshly)* There's no TB in the trattorias! *(to himself)* Though if there were, imagine the self righteous little speeches she would give! Damn it! *(clenches fist)* No, you know why she wants more money? It's to build up her little empire down at County, I'm telling you... she wants to run for Mayor...No, TB or not TB, I'm not going to give that woman more money!

Intercom

Rob, it's the White House on three!

Rob

(pounds table) Shit, she's already leaked it!

Intercom

(a squeal) Ooh, Rob, it's GEORGE STEPHANOPOLOUS!

Rob

(into intercom) Hold him off! Damn little Clinton brat... I have to think...

Jim

Rob, Rob, she isn't going to leak it! *(Softly)* Yet.

Rob

No?

Jim

No, I know her!

Rob

(closer) I know you know her...

Jim

And I know you know I know her, and I know... *(stops)* I think you know it's why you hired me!

Rob

No I know why... It's because you know what you're doing. And you know you're happy out of Shaw and Mamet! Aren't you? Sure, leaving a big firm like Shaw and Mamet, you took a whopping cut in pay; I know it was a hit...

(paces) (points) I hate to ask, what *are* you making here?

Jim

(grim) Not very much... it's only \$90,000... how can I even get married...

Rob

(puts arm around him) Of course it's public interest work. Look, Jim, maybe we can get you a little raise...but look you've got to get your sister to take the job with Clinton!

Jim

To head up *HHS*?

Rob

To head up *NIH*!

Jim

I don't know if I can talk her into that!

Intercom

ROB, COME ON, IT'S THE WHITE HOUSE...

Rob

OK, I'll take it! No, no, say - I'll have to call 'em back! *(brooding, to self)* She wants to run for Mayor, that's what this is all about! Damn, why won't she take the job with Clinton?

Intercom

ROB!

Rob

(blows up) I said... I'LL CALL THE WHITE HOUSE BACK!!!

Intercom

(static clears) No, it's the German consul! Rob, he's coming in!

Rob

DAMN IT, HOLD HIM OFF! *(to self)* I'd like to knee-cap the little...

Jim

What are you going to tell this German consul guy?

Rob

I'm going to tell him – this boy, Roland, he isn't HIV! And why? Because we don't even know if the assailant is HIV

Jim

We do know!

Rob

We don't know! We only know your sister says he is. No one else has seen the file. His name is Miller something. I've checked. The file has disappeared!

Jim

(irked) Maybe she's got it—! *(exasperated)* Never mind.

Rob

Of course she's got it! This guy, who supposedly raped the kid, some doctor took the file. Now who do you think? I know damn well who's got it... She took it! It's gone! So I don't know if this Miller guy is HIV or not. I bet anything he's not. No, this Miller, he's not HIV at all. Who put out this story, you know, this kid being raped?

Jim

The County Jail, a guard, a -

Rob

(goes on, more urgently) No, I don't mean the rape! I mean, the fact the guy who did it's HIV, huh? Jim, think... who put out the story?

Jim

(still back on "Number One") The Hospital... oh, I see. You think my sister...why would she make that up?

Rob

(takes breath) Blackmail, to get me to give her money, for TB, for... you know, building up her little empire...

Intercom

Look out, this Consul guy, I can't hold him, he's coming in—

Rob

(breaks away) Shit...

Jim

Come on, these Europeans are pussy cats, Rob...

Rob

(mutters) They're all on the left... this guy, I'm sure he'd love this HIV thing to come out, you know, to knock America, but thank God, at least we've got a German, so he'll have to follow orders... I just hate it he's come down here!

CONSUL ENTERS

Consul

Spencer!

Rob

(mock friendly) Consul! *(offers hand)* Greetings, I was hoping you'd come down here...

Consul

(scoffs at open hand) Why don't we skip all that, Spencer! Well? The boy! Is he HIV or not?

Rob

I'm sending Jim here to... *(nods)* to, uh, review the medical record! We don't know, really, for sure, if the assailant is HIV..

Consul

You don't know? Spencer, I am not a doctor, but you simply check the file...

Jim

(trying to sound adult) I, uh, I take it, the Bonn government, your government in Bonn, I take it it's concerned...

Consul

(sardonic) "Concerned"? That a German boy is raped? No, in Bonn the

government is not concerned...no, the government is relieved! For of course what can happen to him in this country now, after being raped...except, maybe now he has gotten AIDS, and maybe the TB... but then, after this, there is no worry.... maybe he will get hay fever...

Rob

There isn't any tuberculosis! That's a lot of crap!

Consul

(irked) Spencer, I read the papers... It is in New York, it is Boston... *(paces, sputters)* At the consulates, they are screaming...the Russians, the Poles... they've seen all sorts of cases!

Rob

(drily) Not the Germans though.

Consul

(sardonic) Spencer. We do not get TB. We are not... homeless people, like Americans...

Rob

(approaches) Consul, you will be, one day... the day is coming...

Consul

(moves toward him) It bothers you, Spencer, we are more affluent than you are? Does it bother you we have more Mercedes per capita...

Rob

(mocks) I don't need your little left wing rant... *(smug)* Look, Germany, the U.S, we have two different systems, and one day... one day... we are going to bury you!

Consul

(moves toward him) I think we will bury you, when you are all.. DEAD WITH TUBERCULOSIS!

Rob

(moves to Consul) TUBERCULOSIS! There's no tu -!

Jim

(breaks them up) Wait, let's... let's step back here....

Consul

(to Jim) Is the boy HIV or not? I want to see this file...

Jim

We are going to see the file... I'm going to see... but Consul, don't worry, we're taking care of it. The boy, you know... it's OK, he's under the care, he's under the personal care of Dr. Donovan

Consul

(repeats) Doctor... *(amazed)* it is *the* Doctor Donovan? This is...Doctor Ann Donovan?

Jim

My sister.

Consul

(to Jim) She is extending human life! Your sister? *(stops, in awe)*

Jim

She isn't any more. I mean, she's still my sister.

Consul

Then you must know her! She is... I am overwhelmed! You see, one night, at the Goethe Institute, I, I...sat next to her at dinner, and I... *(starts to squeeze Jim's hand)* Please, remember me to her... *(squeezes tighter)*

Jim

(winces) ... Sure if you...let me have...my hand back... *(gets free)*

Consul

I do not understand why she gave up her great work of extending human life...

Rob

(under breath) Well, we're hoping she's going back and – head up NIH....
and

Consul

(wakes up) Spencer, I must get back to my question: the boy, is he HIV or not?

Rob

Jim here is just going to find out – *(urgent to Jim)* will you go?

Jim

(closer) Uh Rob what am I doing?

Rob

(urgent, in low voice) You're going to call your sister and get the file, and make sure she's not - I mean my worry is, this Miller, the file, right now, as we speak, the whole thing's being shredded!

Consul

(overhears) Wait! A file is being shredded?

Rob

(clearing throat) No, no, I said a file is being started... *(hesitates)* a file... yes, it's on the...spread of AIDS! *(pushes Jim)* Go on! Get down there to the boy, before your sister—!

JIM EXITS

Consul

It's 1993, and you're only starting a file on the spread of AIDS? May I suggest - it is also time to start a file for all the children shot with handguns? And to start a file on all the babies born with crack? And to start a file... on this new tuberculosis!

Rob

(moves toward him) “TUBERCULOSIS,” “TUBERCLOSIS”! THERE ISN'T ANY TUBERCULOSIS!

Scene Two

(At the Jail infirmary: Ann Donovan, Kasia, the German boy. Ann tries to examine Kasia, while she is on a cell phone with her brother Jim. They speak urgently, but not so loud as to wake the boy.)

Ann

(to Jim, over Kasia's cough) – yes, they've sent over a translator, and she's got tuberculosis! *(into cell phone)* Yes, she's come over to help me talk to the German boy... now I'm worried he's going to get it too... See, I need this money! Wait... *(goes to Roland)* Do you have tuberculosis? *(into cell)* No, not you Jim... I'm talking to this boy, but he doesn't understand me... *(Kasia coughs)* No, I'm not coughing... that's this translator, this... I was just looking at her resume...it's Katy, or Katya, or

Kasia

(correcting Ann) “Kasia.”

Ann

(into cell phone) But come by! You want to see the Miller file? Why? Rob doesn't think I'd make anything like this up? I'll show you his record... I'm holding it as I—Wait, Jim, wait... *(under breath, to Kasia)* Katya...

Kasia

“Kasia”!—*(starts toward boy)*

Ann

(stops her) Kasia, don't go near him! *(in cell)* No, not you, Jim. *(to her)* Before you go near him... I want to know how sick you really are... *(into cell)* No, not you Jim - and for that matter, I'm not even talking about Rob... You can come and *look*, I said “look,” at the file of this Mr. Miller. Let you have it? Absolutely not – Jim, you're breaking up! AH! I hate these cell phones... *(talks back in phone)* I was going to say, it's not you, but I don't trust Rob... he might tamper with the Miller file *(takes out a single piece of paper and smiles)*... That's right he's capable of it... While I of course wouldn't take out of it even a single sheet of paper ... *(a little softer)* unless it's just a little sheet that isn't needed... for then maybe I'd slip it in a lit-tle drawer... *(puts a paper in desk drawer and shuts it)* Anyway I've got this whole file... and it's fully, or pretty fully intact, more or less, and I don't want Rob to get his hands on it... And Jim there is no doubt that this William Miller is HIV. But of course, that doesn't mean the boy is! *(puts cell aside and speaks to Kasia, in a different tone)* Ms... ah I'm blanking on your name. *(pats table)* Anyway, I want to take your temperature... *(hears something and speaks back into cell)* No Jim, I don't want to “take your temperature”! I'm talking to this, uh, translator they sent me... Ms. ... Ms...

Kasia

“Kasia.”

Ann

(firmly) Stick in this thermometer. Well, this chart on you says: You have TB all right. But Katya... sorry, KASIA... Kasia, don't worry. Or I wouldn't worry. Oh it's true world wide, 15 million women your age die from TB every year. But in America we have the pills to save you... unless it mutates... So take the pills... you should live a normal life...happy... I mean, unless it mutates...

THIS COULD BE THE POINT WHERE STAGE DARKENS AND KASIA STEPS OUT AND SINGS THE TUBERCULOSIS SONG. THE IDEA IS THAT SHE STEPS OUT OF THE ACTION TO SING IT. THE OTHER CHARACTERS STEP BAC INTO DARKNESS.

Kasia

(starts spitting) Oh! Oh! Sppptttt-! OH I think thermometer is breaking! Oh I am spitting glass!

Ann

No, no, don't spit it over *there*. No, not in the tainted blood! Here when you spit out glass spit it over here. Ah, some of our thermometers, they go back to the Civil War! Of course at City Hall they won't give me any money for a new one! God I'd make a better Mayor.

Kasia

I am bleeding... no, I am OK... maybe, I should see nurse...

Ann

Have you noticed? There aren't any nurses here. It's a little scary. No nurses, I saw a guard or two... but it's very understaffed. Do you know why?

Kasia

I am just translator, for German boy.

Ann

Shh, let's not wake him. They sent me your resume with your chart. You're some kind of graduate student, aren't you, in philosophy? And look at all the languages you know: Polish of course, English, but here we are... German, French, Spanish.

Kasia

Please, is for doctorate, and for doctorate, is necessary..

Ann

Yes, well I'm a doctor and it's not necessary for me. Why do you need German?

Kasia

German? I must read Cardinal Ratzinger.

Ann

And French?

Kasia

Oh, I must read Jansenists of course.

Ann

And Spanish?

Kasia

Oh, this is for fun only. I like to read, oh, trials of Spanish Inquisition.

Ann

(alarmed) Wait, what kind of book are you writing?

Kasia

It is my thesis, in Philosophy - God Owes Us Nothing! Of course there is beatific vision. But this is for later. Doctor, you know this. We cannot be happy here.

Ann

But I'm looking at the universities you've been. I'd sure be to be at these.

Kasia

Is true. They are nice. I was not happy.

Ann

You're not happy because you're happy?

Kasia

Firs for study I am in Krakow in Poland. And Poland, I am allergic to it maybe. And it is bad, but it is good. But then for study I must go in Berlin. And have you been? Berlin, Berlin is so nice. Except for Germans. Then I am in Amsterdam. And this is nicer. And then I am in Paris. And Paris: It is Paradise. And in Paris I am with friends, and they are Polish, and they are French, and we are in bistro, and in café, and there is talk, and talk, and there is Merlot, and so we talk more, and we talk for three hours! And of course since we are Polish and we are French we are pessimists – but to be in Paris and be a pessimist, you see, I am happy. (*starts to pace in circle*) But how is it possible that I am in Paris and a pessimist and talking for three hours every night and drinking Merlot if God owes us nothing? Do you see? I am in crisis. I am going in circle

Ann

Stop! Here, come over here, I'm going to take your blood...

Kasia

But now it is good. Here I am. It is America. I have TB.

Ann

I see. Well it's lucky for your doctorate. But look, there's no nurse here, so I'm going to take your blood – do it myself – I can still do that, after all, I don't need a nurse – but how'd you end up here in Chicago?

Kasia

You see, my Aunt, she is sick in Niles – very sick, and I am sent by mother... but now, is very sad, she has died... and so I am here for whole year, but now I must go back..

Ann

(*to Kasia*) Well except you've got TB... I wonder if they'll let you back... no, no, don't worry... I know you got it working here... Look, open your mouth... say AAHH

Kasia

AAAH

Ann

Let's try a tongue depressor here... As a student of philosophy, in Poland, under Communism, you must have read a lot of Marx....

Kasia

(turns away depressor) Bleech!! No, under Communism, we read Augustine, Doctor of the Church.

Ann

Doctor Who?

Kasia

He is not like Doctor Who, on your television. He is Augustine. He is Doctor, like you.

Ann

But he is not Doctor like me.

Kasia

But are you not Doctor like him? You see, Doctor, of course I know who you are. When I am in Paris, I am reading about you in *Le Monde*. You are famous. You are like hero for my thesis. You say, we cannot live forever, we cannot extend human life. We are pilgrims. Is this not what Augustine says? We are pilgrims, in this city, it is earthly city, and we must hurry to the other city, heavenly city, yes, we must not stay, not here, no, not even Paris... we must hurry, we must hasten on, we must go to other city, we must..

Ann

What? That isn't what I said.

Kasia

No? But this is what I read.

Ann

I'm a scientist: I don't believe in any kind of... after life.

Kasia

But really, you are like Augustine, in a way. You are like Woytila, you are like the Pope

Ann

Me? Like that awful man – do you know that man's philosophy?

Kasia

Yes. Phenomonology.

Ann

No, not Phenomonology. I mean on abortion, on stem cells – I'm not at all interested in what you're interested. Science is not interested in God.

Kasia

God is not interested in science. Why should he be? But did you not say in Le Monde, we must die, we must leave our bodies, and we must, we must hasten on...

Ann

Oh I see what you mean. No, I was saying... I was saying we shouldn't extend human life for a Darwinian point of view... I mean what is immortal in us is the gene, it's not the body, and it's the gene, which... which jumps from body to body... and which keeps mutating so we can survive... the longer we live the more we slow down the process of adaptation... and what with global warming, and toxics, and all that... we humans should not be living longer... and holding off having children... no, no, we should just be letting the gene, the little gene inside us go... go... why do you need your body after you've let it go?

Kasia

To finish thesis, this is all...

Ann

So I was saying, and I was just speculating... it might be better if we didn't live so long... for it's the gene, that's the thing, just let it go...

Kasia

But...

Ann

What... you're blushing.. say it...

Kasia

You did not let yours go!

Ann

I'm going to take your blood

Kasia

No, I am sorry I say this...

Ann

It's all right, my feelings aren't hurt. I'm sorry if this hurts... I'm only going to take a little....

Kasia

Doctor I am sorry, I know you are great scientist...

Ann

Ah, I came so close to extending human life. I was so close! You see, it has to do with the telomere. Do you know what I mean by a telomere?

Kasia

It is like a cell phone?

Ann

No it's like the lining of a cell, and when I was young I knew just how I was going to fix it. Oh it seemed like I might take the human cell and turn it into a whole new kind of running shoe, with a whole new kind of sole, put a bit of rubber on the edge of it, but I, I – suddenly I couldn't do it. I lost my power, I... *(goes on in new tone)*.

Kasia

(weakly) Doctor, please... is enough blood?

Ann

Uh oh, are you going to faint?

Kasia

No, no, I am Polish, I do not faint...

Ann

So you said, Doctor why did you not let your gene go? I should have. But there's my brother Jim of course. He has the same genetic structure I have... except I'm always on time, and where is he? And so he can still pass on his gene. Of course he's a man, it's not fair. Still, I say to him, what I say to

you... he should marry, you should marry...

Kasia

(gulps, looks at vial filling with her blood) But I do not know him!

Ann

No, I don't mean to each other!

Kasia

Why? I am not worthy of your gene? Please, Doctor, is... is enough blood?

Ann

Oh God, I took too much. Here, let's take this out.... You look like you're going to faint...

Kasia

(woozy) I am Polish, I do not fa-, fa-, fa-.... But I must sit down.

Ann

Here, have a sugar cookie... Here is one right here in the desk drawer...I'm sorry I went on about genes, and...

Kasia

Doctor do you think gene is trying to get out, really?

Ann

I was speaking, oh, figuratively here.

Kasia

But no, no, not here I think. You think gene is saying, OK, Kasia, let us out? We want to jump out into baby? I think not here... not in this country... no...

Ann

What's wrong with here?

Kasia

(stands) Doctor you must ask? Every day I am translator. In Hospital, everywhere I see: Baby is sick. Baby is shot. Baby is... fired from job! Or baby is starting out on crack! You think gene is saying, Kasia, let me out? It

is saying, No, Kasia, I am not going... (*stares at cookie*)

Ann

Shh, don't wake the boy.... Here, sit, sit, down... and... just try the cookie...

Kasia

(*raps cookie, metallically*) I must get water, I must... I must get... where is sink with faucet... I...

Ann

Here it's down this hall.... I can't turn the light on, but you can just hear the thing leaking...

Kasia

What?

Ann

I said listen for the leak...

Kasia

(*off stage*) Listen for what?

Ann

For the leak... do you hear me... there's a big leak somewhere!

JIM ENTERS (overhears)

Jim

You mean there's been a leak, already? Aw, Ann, Rob will have a stroke!

Ann

(*turns to her brother*) Oh let him have a stroke! What took you so long, anyway?

Jim

Hey, kids out there, they're already trying to steal my car. (*serious*) Ann! You have this file? "Miller" or whatever? (*whines*) And anyway, who'd you leak it to? Wasn't NBC Dateline was it?

Ann

It's not a leak like that!

Jim

Oh, well if it's the print media, I don't care. (*sees Roland*) Is this the kid? I forget his name.

Ann

Roland.

Jim

(*kneels by boy*) Where do Europeans get these names? "Roland." Why don't they have simple names like...Sammy Sosa?

Ann

(*dryly*) Why don't we call him "Rob"?

Jim

(*back to duty*) Will you please give me the Miller file?

Ann

(*innocent*) Whose?

Jim

Miller, who raped the kid!

Ann

Shhh!

Jim

(*urgent*) If you made this up about the HIV, just...to get money for the TB... then... this is no joke...my God, he'd love to prosecute!

Ann

(*snaps*) Who? Him? He wouldn't dare!

Jim

(*amazed*) Rob?? (*pleads*) Ann, forget the file. Just let me take the boy...

Ann

Technically, he's a prisoner—

Jim

Oh come on, I'm from the City, stop being technical...

Ann

I'm from the County I like being technical...

Jim

(blows up) Fine! THEN JUST GIVE ME THE FILE!

Roland

(wakes up, as if from nightmare) OH, OH... *(gasps)* AH! VER-...BER-...
VERBRECHER, VERBRECHER!! *(keeps wailing)*

Jim

Hey, the kid is freaking out! *(goes over to Roland)* Hey, SH, SH BOY...

Ann

I told you, don't wake him!

Jim

Well, give him something... *(nervous)* Can't you put him back to sleep?

Ann

Where is... *(goes to door)* KATHY? I mean, whatever... *(calls offstage)* oh
can you come here? Please, he's speaking German!

Roland

(mechanically) VERBRECHER, VERBRECHER, VERBRECHER OH,
OH...

KASIA ENTERS

Kasia

Yes, I am back now...

Jim

(rises, gasps) K-KASIA!

Kasia

(runs to boy) Roland, schlafst du gut, ja, eben bitte? Roland?

Jim

(as Roland still moans) Kasia, it's me!

Kasia

(turns from boy, gasps) James!

Roland

(stares at Jim) VERBRECHER!

Ann

Here, I'm going to inject him, the two of you hold him...Jim, take his arm...
(puts Jim's hand on Roland's arm)

Jim

Yes, I've got him.

Kasia

(holds other arm) I am ready, yes...

Ann

(injects needle in arm) Roland, Roland...relax, there...there...

Kasia

(to Roland) Du schlafst, ist gut...

Jim

(back to declaiming) Kasia!

Kasia

(so startled she crosses herself) Oh Mother of God...oh no, Mary, undocumented alien...pray for us!

Ann

What...

Kasia

(goes on)...she is undocumented in Egypt *(half to herself)* And mother of political prisoner... *(completely to herself, as in monologue)*...pray for us, or

just tell me what I am to say, for he is lawyer!

Jim

Kasia! *(turns to Ann)* Don't you see? Ann, we've met before!

Ann

Certainly! I'm your sister.

Jim

Not you and me, her and me! *(turns to Kasia)* At this bar, where you're a waitress you got up, on the stage, and you sang. *(Kasia turns pale, shakes head)* What was the name, Green Mill? Or no... *(gravely)* Stop and Drink!

Ann

(turns to Kasia) You?

Jim

(to Ann) She was just waiting tables!

Kasia

(in confusion) But this was not me! Or it was me, but I am substitute.

Ann

(ironic) Just "temping" for yourself.

Jim

Maybe she was subbing, but you should have heard her sing! It was... "The Girl From Impanema," but with that Polish accent, it was like "Impanema" was a beach in Poland, and it was winter, and you could hear the bells. *(to Kasia)* It was the first time I saw you.

Kasia

(shakes head) No, is not true. I did not say this, James, but... we met before...

Jim

When?

Kasia

It...oh once, it was at midnight...

Jim

Not me! I'm a lawyer! I'm in bed at midnight!

Kasia

(groans) Oh! *(starts to wobble)*

Ann

Jim, you're making it worse! *(goes to Kasia)* Oh no, are you going to faint?

Kasia

(mumbles) I, I am P-p-polish, I...I cannot fa-, fa-, fa-...but maybe if, if I try...

Jim

(snaps) Ann, please! *(gravely)* Have you ever heard the saying, "Two's company, three's a crowd"?

Ann

You're right, I'm sorry. *(to Kasia, and at last gets her name right)* K-... Kasia, will you excuse us?

Jim

Not her!

Ann

(to Kasia) Maybe "freshen up" some more?

Kasia

Yes. James... oh!

KASIA EXITS

HERE SHE COULD STEP OUT OF ACTION AND SINGS EVERY GENE TO A GIRL. WHEN SHE FINISHES ANN AND JIM STEP BACK OUT

Ann

(smiles) Ha. Another Polish woman!

Jim

(tries to cut this off) Will you please give me the FILE?

Ann

What is it with you and Polish women?

Jim

What's wrong with them?

Ann

They never smile.

Jim

Ann don't you see? If she had smiled...I'd have turned to ashes!

Ann

(smirks) She must like you, cause she didn't!

Jim

(uneasy) Ann, she's wrong, I didn't meet her at midnight. Anyway... *(in a whine, hand out)* will you give me the Miller file? Rob isn't going to tamper with it...

Ann

In a minute...go on...

Jim

(paces) I didn't even talk to her at Stop and Drink! But the next afternoon I ran into her, by accident, at Brown Elephant. She was buying a top for two dollars. And then... *(big sigh)* Oh we went for coffee, and we talked for THREE HOURS! And it was like my Starbucks was Merlot...and we talked about Paris, and it was like I knew right then, my real life was never being a "lawyer," working every day, every weekend in America...no, all this time, my real life, it'd been ticking away over there, with Kasia, in Paris...

Ann

So, this mean you're going to move to Paris?

Jim

Of course not! God, I'm a lawyer, what would I do in Paris? *(uneasy)* That's, that's what I told her, and then...she got up and ran away! *(Amazed)* I only just saw her now!

Ann

Oh Jim can't you see?

Jim

What?

Ann

She can't have a baby here!

Jim

I thought we'd just go out to dinner!

Ann

(rattles on, paces)... Because she's listening to her gene, which is talking, which doesn't want to come out into this world of murder, and AIDS, and even tuberculosis...

Jim

You're talking about Darwin, I'm talking about a date.

Ann

Well I'm talking about procreation. As a student of Darwin, I had to notice...you and her, Kasia...do you know that your ear lobes are very similar? *(starts to reach)*

Jim

(breaks away, turns to her) GIVE ME THE MILLER FILE!

Ann

Of course you don't mate through the ear – exactly, but that's her, she's the one who I sense could carry your baby.

Jim

Stop! *(paces)* Oh, I guess, I'd like to marry someone like her...

Ann

(smiles) "Marry"? You'll never marry her! For one thing, she's going back to Europe.

Jim

Wait, I thought you were plotting some kind of procreation.

Ann

(nods) I am!

Jim

But what's the point if she's going back to Europe?

Ann

Oh Jim! *(smiles)* When the female threatens to leave the sperm count of the male goes up...so? To make her unavailable to other males, you impregnate her, and that's—.

Jim

(stunned) Come on! You think I'd—? Ann, have you ever heard of something, like, contraception?

Ann

(with mock innocence) I have. Has she? This woman's the kind of Catholic who reminds you of a Communist, I mean, she'd have to consult an encyclical to pick out a mascara!

Jim

(shocked again) No, no...hey not me...this is like some papally improper impregnation, but that's NOT why I'm here! *(changes tone)* ANN, I WANT THE FILE!! I'm serious, don't try anything—

Ann

You think I'd try blackmail? Just because any minute in this city...we could have an epidemic of TB?

Jim

(uneasy) There really isn't any TB...is there?

Ann

Jim, look, really, I don't want to embarrass Rob or the Mayor over this German boy, no...look at him sleeping *(looks at him)* shh...but I need the money, because there really IS new strain of tuberculosis... *(pause)* and by the way... *(pause)* ...you know, of course, that Kasia has it!

Jim

(stunned) K-Kasia has...TB?

Ann

So for me, and for Kasia... *(she coughs)*

Jim

TB? It's like 1993, how could, how could anyone get TB?

Ann

Well it's a new strain, and you get it the same way people got it in 1893... overcrowding, poverty...

Jim

I can't betray Rob...

Ann

No, Rob, no, you can't, I understand...I just, well, think of poor Kasia, spitting up blood... *(coughs delicately)*

Jim

Ann! Oh... Now I don't know what to think...

Ann

Jim, here is Mr. Miller's file! It's yours! *(walks to desk, picks it up, holds it)*
Go ahead. I wouldn't dream of touching it...it was just, oh, my last chance to help Kasia. But it's all right...

Jim

Ah... *(turns)* damn it... *(weakens)* I don't know...

Ann

(purrs, very softly) Jim, please, be a prince...I'll stand with you, but just, for Kasia's sake, for my sake, be a...

Jim

(snaps) Yeah, be a "prince"! You mean like Prince the dog... Actually *(starts to plot)* OK, just let me think, without you...SHOUTING! Okay, you can't actually leak this to the press, okay, but I SUPPOSE you could say to

Rob you were going to hold a press conference, and not say about what...and I think it would so freak him out, who knows, hell, you might blackmail him a bit into stopping TB...

Ann

(happy) My brother, the lawyer! *(a kiss)*

Jim

(as lights flicker) Hey! What's happening with the lights?

Ann

Oh no! *(stage goes dark a second)* It's a brown out!

Jim

(shocked) In February?

Ann

(mocks) Yes, not that you and Rob care—

Jim

(as lights keep flashing) Let's call someone! Are you here by yourself?

Ann

It's the Jail, the wiring is really shot!

Jim

(as lights flicker) Look, out the window...in the other buildings. Are they lit?

Ann

(as both look out) Oh, they're still lit...ah, where are the staff? I don't understand.. Maybe, maybe it's President's Day, or... or maybe it's....*(waves hand)* "Lincoln's Birthday." Or now it's his former birthday. Or maybe it still is his birthday. But ah! Now I'm here...and now what? Oh! WHERE ARE THE GUARDS?

Jim

(as lights flicker) I didn't even know you had an office here.

Ann

(fumes) I've never been here in a brown out...

Jim

Or a black out.

Ann

(shivers) Don't say it. They'll go out!

(THE LIGHTS GO OUT)

Jim

Shit, they did go out!

Ann

(panics) Kasia, where is Kasia?

Jim

I'll have to look for her, you stay here. Ah, where are the guards? *(shouts)*
I'll be back!

JIM EXITS

Ann

Wait! *(tries to stop him)* Oh, damn! Now what? *(to Roland)* Roland, Roland, are you all right? Hm, sleeping, I guess. I wonder what would happen if I open this door here... *(Ann opens the door, just as Kasia is about to enter, pushing door at same time)*

KASIA ENTERS

Ann

AHHH!

Kasia

AHHH!

Ann

Well let's not BOTH scream! *(breathes heavily)* My brother, did you see him?

Kasia

(upset) No, no! Too dark! He will be back maybe!

Ann

Yes, but the patients! Someone has to check on them! *(noise off)* Stop! Who... goes there? You a guard?

GUARD ENTERS

Guard

(shines light) Hey, “Doc,” “Doc,” is that you ... *(familiar)* “Doc”?

Ann

(coldly) No I’m just “Coach”! Of course I’m “Doc.”

Guard

(stammers) Yeah! These lights, they’re out all over...

Ann

Will you explain why there’s no one here?

Guard

Well it’s their Daley Days.

Ann

What?

Guard

You know, Daley Days. It’s a union thing. See in the City, in fire, guard, nurse, it’s you work a whole day, 24 hours, then you get two days off, but then like at the end you got these extra days they can’t fit... can’t be at work, or can’t be your two days off either, so it a like a “no exist” day, when you don’t exist... so like when it’s the middle of February, everybody takes a Daley Day...

(A sound, like KA BOOM)

Ann

What a thundercrack! It’s like the whole building is shaking... Look, I didn’t know there’s about this... We’ve got to check the patients. Can you check them on the third floor? I’ll look on the second. Do have an extra flashlight?

Guard

Just this one!

Ann

Do we have candles? Something else? (*rummages drawer*)

Guard

(*holds flashlight*) Wait, here's a second flashlight.

Ann

Give it to Kasia. (*to Guard*) Go! Go! Third floor. You go upstairs, and I'll—

Guard

(*interrupts*) What about him? The boy?

Ann

(*puts flashlight on Roland*) I'm going to leave him with...with something! Leave him with this candle!

Kasia

Do we light it?

Ann

Yes, Kasia, I hope, as someone with TB, you do smoke? Good! (*takes her match*)

Guard

Wait! Give a candle, any kind of fire, to a prisoner? No, no way! No way!

Ann

(*ignores*) Kasia, another match! (*to herself*) I don't care if he does burn it down. We don't have any staff. (*lights candle*) Ah, got it lit... now, Roland, here...use this flame for the good of mankind! All right we have to go! (*she hands the burning candle*)

Guard

I said, a prisoner can't have a weapon! That includes a burning candle! Put it out... Doctor! Now!

Ann

He's not a prisoner!

Guard

He's in here!

Ann

Oh that's just technically. He's my patient.

Guard

Technically? It's against...what? Illinois Revised Statutes, Chapter 122, Section, uh, uh...

Ann

I'm Doctor Donovan!

Guard

Yeah? And you could be prosecuted!

Ann

(barks) No one's going to prosecute anyone!

Kasia

Maybe is not good idea, though.

Ann

I am the hospital's chief physician! Got that? I'll be responsible for what happens... *(candle goes out)* Damn it, have to light the thing again!

Guard

(gloomily, stares at candle) You! You listen, you're going to get us all convicted!

(There is another Ka-boom)

Ann

(coldly) "Convicted"? I'll be the judge of that! Kasia, you have that flashlight? *(Kasia waves it)*

(There is frantic knocking on the door)

Guard

(loud knocking) Goddamit, what's that wild knocking at the door?

Ann

I CALLED DOMINO'S FOR A PIZZA – just go up and check the floors!

Guard

Good-bye! But just remember... you could be prosecuted!

Ann

(determined) Last time, let me light it... *(she does)* Burn, will you? Bye, bye, Roland... *(to Kasia)* how do you say it in German?

Kasia

Tschuss!

Ann

(misunderstands) “Cheers?” He's not British!

(ROLAND TAKES KASIA'S HAND)

Kasia

(tender) Tschuss, Roland.

Ann

Kasia, you come with me...

Kasia

(looks back) Bye, Roland. *(to Ann)* I worry.

Ann

(go downstage) I sense somebody...breathing...

Kasia

(prays) Mary! Undocumented alien...pray for us!

Ann

(keep going) You'd think some hand will creep out...and...

Kasia

(suddenly) AHH!

Ann

What?

Kasia

It is like hand touching me...

Ann

(takes breath) Maybe...it's just the "invisible hand" of the market. I often feel it on me too. Let's just be brave and keep going.

Kasia

Mary...unwed mother...pray for us!

Ann

(whistling in dark) Say, what's the thing about this woman "Mary"? I mean, like our Filipino nurses! After open heart surgery, they're all off fingering their beads... It's like we're still dancing around the fire!

Kasia

(nervous) Fire?

Ann

(continues) What is the "miracle" you expect from this Mary?

Kasia

Miracle is...to be like Mary! *(pause, softly)* Have trust, like her.

Ann

Hold it... Ok, we really are at the first bed. *(Kasia and Ann approach bed, with man groaning)*

Kasia

Maybe he has gun!

Ann

Come on, can't you see? He's just rolling, rolling on the bed.

1st Patient

(chants as he rolls) YAA, YAAAA...YAA...

Ann

Your “average” American: and they say we don’t speak a second language?
(pause) I think we have to sedate him. Take his wrist, Kasia.

Kasia

What if there is gun?

Ann

(puts her hand on wrist of man) His wrist, please! HOLD IT!

Kasia

Ah! It is bone!

Ann

(scoffs) See? He couldn’t lift a gun! *(injects needle)*

1st Patient

Yaaa...

Kasia

Is madman? *(lets his wrist go)*

Ann

Yeah, and the public defenders, they like ‘em in here... ‘cause you can get them out of here, but not if they’re “committed”... OK, he’s OK, to the next bed.

(KASIA AND ANN APPROACH SECOND PATIENT)

2nd Patient

Hey, f— you, huh? Get out of here, get out...

Kasia

We are going!

Ann

(shines light) See his skin, how it’s purple?

Kasia

(gasps) Oh! Is AIDS?

Ann

No, think of something much more ancient!

Kasia

(guesses) Ha! “Leprosy”! I have never seen it!

Ann

No, it’s more ancient than leprosy – it’s...torture, by a local cop, by an official of our local government! We have a captain, his name is “Murge.” He’s at Harrison, and when Mr. Murge is in the mood, he likes to take off his captain stripes and put on...his “sergeant” stripes and put on a few of these stripes...here, go on *(pulls off sheet)* Look!

Kasia

(hides, turns) Please I cannot look...

2nd Patient

Hey... GIVE ME *(grabs sheet)*...my...sheet! *(wraps himself)*

Ann

See how his nail is split in two? Don’t touch, just look...

Kasia

(shrinks) I, I can’t...

Ann

While he was being beaten, the story is, he was trying to carve in the wood, the wood of his chair, with his nail, this little nail...the two little words, “NOT GUILTY.” *(pause)* Interesting.

Kasia

(takes finger, as if to touch) Oh, there is blood, he might have AIDS...oh! I touched him.

Ann

You didn’t, relax.

Kasia

I touched him.

Ann

(sighs) Oh, don't worry! Each month they have to test you here, and I have to call up, "Well," I say, "positive or negative?" "Yes, or no?" And there's a tiny pause, and she says, "No." And I get this...almost libidinal pleasure...the only one, really, I still have left...of waiting for that.

Kasia

(nods) Yes!... I mean, "no"! How awful, *to have this* thing in your body.

Ann

I thought someone like you doesn't care about the Body.

Kasia

Oh, is sin of Pride, sin of the Flesh, not to care about the body! St. Bonaventure says, "We cannot be happy in Heaven without the body."

Ann

Come on! You think you get your body back?

Kasia

Yes, is back, at end of time.

Ann

Come on, you want it back? Your smelly old corpse... *(grabs Kasia's arm)* after some dog has licked it?

Kasia

(looks around) Do - dog?

Ann

(woman-talk) Come on, Kasia...aren't MEN bad enough?

Kasia

(stammers) I... I would not know!

Jim

(baying, dog-like from offstage) Kasia! Oh Kas-ia!!

Ann

That's one of them now... Jim! Jim! We're OVER HERE! Did you get lost?

Kasia

Oh James, where are you?

JIM ENTERS

Jim

Kasia, there you are! Ann, I've been all over, no guards, nothing. Hey, who's the guy who's in the bed?

Ann

(drily) An expert on local government.

Kasia

(stares at patient) James, this place...we are...in Dante's Inferno.

Ann

(pats patient) No, no, these are just "people from the neighborhood."

Kasia

In Dante's Inferno it is people from the neighborhood.

Jim

But Ann, where's the kid? The German boy?

Ann

We had to leave him. *(raises voice)* Well, Don't stare at me that way in the dark, what else could I do?

Jim

No! Ah, no – you left him alone?

Ann

(nervous now) Look, I'll go back and try to find him, after I check the fourth floor...you, just go down and check these other beds!

ANN EXITS UP STAGE

Jim

(protests) Hey, wait, don't run off! *(runs after)* Ann! She's gone. Well, come on Kasia let's check the bed up here...

Kasia

James, I want to go back! I'm afraid.

Jim

Why? These guys aren't convicted of anything. They're just broke, too poor to get out on bail...

Kasia

Why is it, I see brown ones, black ones...but why, are there no white ones?

Jim

(leads her) You don't want to see any white ones. If they're in here and white, it means like...they're serial killers.

Kasia Jim *(leads her)* You don't want to see any whiteones. If they're in here and white, it means like . . . they're serial killers.**Kasia**

(crosses self) Then may there be no white ones!

Jim

I hear something cracking: what are we stepping on?

Kasia

James, we are stepping on bones of dead canaries.

Jim

(mutters) It's darker than a sports bar in here... Here's a guy...

Kasia

(gasps) Oh! He is...white!

Jim

(to 3rd patient) Be careful...

3rd Patient

(fumes) SHIT, WHO ARE YOU? YOU KIDS FROM... No, you aren't from the neighborhood.

Jim

(wary) You OK?

3rd Patient

Am I OK? What do you think? I'm in this damned Jail, aren't I? HUH? You know what I'm here for?

Jim

(aside) Kasia, I smell smoke...

3rd Patient

(annoyed, to Jim) I SAID, YOU LISTENING...? YOU KNOW WHAT I'M IN HERE FOR?

Kasia

(sniffs) James, no, I do not smell it. *(politely to 3rd)* What for, yes?

3rd Patient

Dogs! I killed some dogs, and so what, shit, I used to kill 'em when I was in the Army, an MP... But no, no, you can't do that up in Lincoln Park, huh? *(reaches for Kasia)* Come on, little girl, come over, let me see you in the light... Don't be afraid, I just killed me a few little dogs, up there on dog beach? You been on "Dog Beach"? That's it, darlin'...come on...closer...I bet you walked your little share of dogs in your time, I can tell...come on, little closer...huh-huh, yeah-yeah...

Jim

(brusque) Dog man, stay in the bed...I got a needle.

3rd Patient

(sing song) "Got a needle"...whoa, huh...big man..."got a needle."

Kasia

(alarmed, points) Oh! He is...climbing out of bed!

3rd Patient

(approaches) Oh yeah...rise and shine – *(sing song)* “got a needle” huh? Let me see it...

Jim

(panics) I, I have a gun!

3rd Patient

(sing song) “Got a gun”? No one in here has a... *(climbs down)* gun...not even guards here got a gun... And there is no guard, is there? You see a guard? *(GUARD ENTERS FROM BEHIND AND INJECTS HIM WITH NEEDLE)* I said, you see a guard?... Ahh! I’m stabbed!

Guard

(steps from behind, holding needle) I just sedated him...that’ll knock out... come on, let’s just drag him back over to his bed. Well...help me.

Jim, Kasia

Yes, yes... *(they assist)*

Jim

Is this the one who killed all the little boys?

Guard

No, he really did just kill some dogs, he’s right about all that...but they don’t mess with that up in Lincoln Park.

Kasia

Three beds, we now check... Oh, who is in fourth bed here?

Guard

(moves to bed of fourth prisoner) This guy? Come up from Mexico, got a nasty head wound...

Jim

(to Guard) Anyone smell smoke?

Kasia

James, this man, I...I think I have seen him.

Guard

(sniffs) Yeah, I smell...something... *(to Kasia)* Ah, miss, you can't remember who you see. Know how many go through this Jail? Hundred thousand, every year...

Jim

And notice how they all, like, "freak," when they see us...like we're ghosts in reverse, you know? Like we're the ones who're made of flesh, and they're the ones who're made of air...

Guard

Yeah, but that's just the damn drugs... A lot of 'em after a while put on a little weight...

Kasia

I... I know him now! *(goes closer)* My, my, my SECOND DAY of work, there is man, and, and...is this one, standing, walking into ER... Kasia, they say, he is Spanish, so I translate. "Oh pardon me," he says to nurse, "But knife is sticking in my head!" And, oh, oh...it is! He is fighting with wife, and she... *(gulps, goes on)* jabs knife, and... *(points to bridge above her nose)* KNIFE IS IN HIS HEAD! "Oh ho," says doctor, "he is lucky...Kasia, in Spanish, tell him he is lucky, the knife is sticking in a little dead space, where no brain is..." And so, I, so I, I... *(she starts to wobble)*

Jim

Oh, Kasia... Easy.

Guard

(catches her) Hey girl, you sit you down...

Kasia

(gasps) I am Polish, I do not faint! *(faints)* Oh!

Guard

Ok, grab her, I got her... You know... Shit, I really do smell some smoke.

Jim

Yeah, let's just peek a little out this door! *(opens door, there fiery roar offstage)*

Guard

SHIT, CLOSE ah... THAT.

Jim

(with guard's help, closes door) My God, I've never seen fire like that!

Guard

No! Not even on TV!

Jim

(frightened) It was red, it was white, it was like a solid sheet!

Guard

Miss, hurry, wake up! *(slaps Kasia)* It's okay, she's coming around...

Jim

Come on, Kasia, there's a fire.

Kasia

(woozy) Oh... Oh, what? A fire? Oh, James! We will be cremated... without our bodies!

Jim

No, we're going to get our bodies out.

Guard

There's a trap door, it goes down and down, and then way, way down there you get to like...well, it's supposed to be... It's like some old national landmark, where they keep all the old electric chairs...the old sparkles.

Jim

(cuts him off) Let's go on down...what choice is there?

Guard

Here, this may be it...it's a trap door! This probably is it, but oh, look down... Man, is that a drop!

Kasia

(gasps) I cannot breathe...

Jim

(looks down) You mean we have to jump? There aren't any steps?

Guard

(looks down) Well? You want to wait up here?

Kasia

James I am passing out, I...

James

OK, let's send Kasia first, she may faint again... Wait, now what did you say is down there?

Guard

I ain't ever seen it, but it's supposed to be a little museum deal, little mannequins of Clarence Darrow down there, and Nelson Algren, you know, all the famous people who, like, used to come and see the Jail.

Jim

Nelson Algren...the writer...?

Guard

That French girl, they got her too... Come on, this fire is as hot as shit.

Jim

Kasia, you ready?

Kasia

I cannot go, I am scared.

Jim

(soothes) But did you hear? He says Algren, Beauvoir, they're all down there!

Kasia

(as two men pick her up) Who is down there?

Jim

(lifts her up) Got her up on your side?

Guard

(helps carry her) Hang on, lady, and may the Good Lord have mercy!

Kasia

(being carried) But what if...what if...God owes us nothing?

Jim

Kasia, once, just for once, can we drop the whole Thesis? Like...NOW!!

(THEY DROP HER) KASIA THROUGH HOLE IN FLOOR)

Guard

Come on, you next! Come on, jump!

Jim

(hesitates) You think Nelson Algren did this?

Guard

Go!

JIM DROPS THROUGH HOLE

Scene Three

(Consul approaches a fireman, who's watching the Jail burn)

Consul

(shouting) Spencer, here she is, over here, the Doctor... Doctor... *Doctor*, you have rescued the boy!

Ann

You're the German consul, aren't you? Yes, it's the least I can do, don't you think? I started the fire.

Rob

I understand you've talked to a lawyer...

Ann

Someone, a Dan Webb, called me... I know the consequences...

Consul

What are the consequences?

Rob

Prosecution.

Ann

I violated some Illinois Revised Statute – I let, I...

Rob

Her conduct, she's the cause of the fire

Ann

It all leads back to me... that's what they tell me... I'm the proximate cause, as the lawyers say..

Consul

But this is absurd, they can't prosecute...

Rob

Of course she could take the job with Clinton.

Ann

Get away from me!

Rob

Ann

Ann

No, get away!

Consul

I can't believe they're going to prosecute...

Ann

They should – do you realize, tonight, what I did? I burned down the Jail, look at it, blazing

Consul

Well it is only one building of it, the other eleven, they are fine

Ann

And I killed my own brother, and the girl, and maybe a third – everyone else got out, but I killed them, they're dead!

Consul

I'm sure they won't prosecute...

Ann

Of course they won't. Not if I take the job with "Clinton," *Clinton*. Everything is fixed! They won't have the courage to prosecute me... Consul, look at me, what do you think I'm going to look – look at me: this face, what it's going to look like, when night after night, in all the years ahead, I'm going to be alone, and thinking, late, every night, I killed him, I killed my own brother, I'm the cause, I'm the one who killed them all...

Consul

Ann, I may call you Ann?

Ann

(collapses in his arms) They're all dead!

Scene Four

Kasia

(walks out to center stage in eerie half life as she feels head) Such a bump... *(shivers, hears drums)* Did I really drop from...? *(shouts)* James! *(No answer)* Oh, no, I...I am DEAD! But I see a light...so, maybe I am dead, and light is me! Or...James...YOU are dead, and light is you *(softly)*. Or, I am dead, and dark is me! *(drums resume)* But James, if I am dead, then let me be a light...and glow, so you can see me! *(she coughs)* But no, is ridiculous, I am coughing! Oh, James when I cough, do I blink for you? And dead, dead, am, I...like lighthouse in Paradise? *(wheels in circle, arms out)*

OLD WOMAN ENTERS, PLAYED BY THE SAME ACTOR WHO PLAYS THE "GUARD," AND GOES UP TO KASIA

(screams at OLD WOMAN) Oh!

Old Woman

(BULKY, GUARD-LIKE, BUT WITH WOMAN'S WIG) Name? Come on, empty the pockets, we got a detector.

Kasia

Who are you?

Old Woman

Cook County Sheriff! Hey? *(pats revolver)* You got a County ID? No? You gotta go through the detector... Oop, you set it off! Arms out! You're lucky this is Tuesday!

Kasia

Why?

Old Woman

(frisks her) Free day at the Museum! Don't know that? Go to a private school?

Kasia

(being frisked) Museum? Is for...?

Old Woman

Oh, a lot of historical things...sort of like the City's treasures *(picks up gun)* see, the handguns we used to use to shoot the cows with in the stockyards. And over here...are all our condoms *(picks one up)* these go way back, way before this stuff with AIDS...they can carbon-date 'em...go on, it's safe, take one *(holds out condom)*

Kasia

No, please, I... *(takes it reluctantly.)*

Old Woman

This one you got there, that's from 1959...you know, '59, go go Sox, last year city had a pennant, huh? Got a ton of 'em from '59... And now, over here? Here we got the Room of the Old Mayors!

Kasia

(repeats) Please, they are... *(puzzled)* Horses?

Old Woman

Old Mayors! No, they're all in there like the Pharaohs, all of 'em,

embalmed, mummified, with the gold bars they took still in their pockets, huh? Course' in this neighborhood, we got a lot of problems with looters! Kids always breaking in!

Kasia

(distracted) Please, I am looking for someone...

Old Woman

(nods) I know, everyone wants to see Mayor Daley...

Kasia

No, please, it is...

Old Woman

Oh the writers, I know who you're looking for... Algren and Beauvoir... They're over here... You must be from Denmark? We get a lot of people, three or four, every year, who come in from Denmark, they want to see the show.

Kasia

Algren and, and...there is show?

Old Woman

Sure, every day, five times a day, we got a 2:00 o'clock, got a 4:00, I think the four is starting now...shh...the light's coming up, we have to be quiet...shh...here they are... *(lights come up on Algren in T-shirt, playing Solitaire as Beauvoir paces)*

Nelson

(played by actor who plays "Rob")

(bitter, slaps down card) Ah! Why'd you write that?

Simone

(played by actor who plays "Ann")

Mon Cher, sil vouz plait, I have told you...it was only for a women's magazine.

Nelson

Ah, this stuff about "women's equality"... *(rises)*

Simone

But this is only “Ladies Home Journal”! *(goes over, hugs him)* Darling I do this to make money, for us! Do you think it is serious?

Nelson

I dunno. *(turns on her)* Is it? Come on, the Sox are in town with the Indians...

Simone

(shivers) Not tonight! *(pause)* Nelson, it is snowing!

Nelson

(bursts out) Rather be in New York, huh? What’d ya do there, anyway? Meet Sartre?

Simone

(huffy) I did not “meet Sartre.”

Nelson

Ca-moo? *(mocks)* “The Rebel”?

Simone

(haughty) I have “other friends”! And I do not want to see the-Sox-with-the-Indians. I have seen...as you say...the-Sox-with-the-Indians!

Nelson

(shrugs) How ‘bout...Maxwell Market?

Simone

(upset) Ohhh! With ze peddlers? Selling, ze pickled pig ears, and ze...ick, possums? Possums! *(shivers)* With little pink mouths like, like schoolgirls in Nantes...and they are dead possums, hanging by little pink tails...oh, after I saw ze, ze...oh, for nights, I have zese possums in my dreams!

Nelson

Well where do you want to go?

Simone

(puts arm around him) Where?

Nelson

Yeah, where?

Simone

Take me back to the...Electric Chair! Please!

Nelson

Now? At night?

Simone

(begs) ONE time at night!

Nelson

Ah, it's so dark down...no, let's go to a show!

Simone

(pouts) Non, vraiment Sil vous plait!

Nelson

“Electric chair”! What, what do you French get outta all that, huh?

Simone

(gravely) Because...there is No Exit! Oui, even for ze innocent...

Nelson

How'd ya know they're innocent? Which ones?

Simone

At ze moment of Death, it is the angle... *(holds her hand)* ze Geist... Dasein, how it leaves ze body...with a JOLT! Oui, one can see!

Nelson

I dunno, it's goddamn dark...

Simone

But did we not do this, on “first...date”? Was it not this?

Nelson

(thinks back) No, that night we did what I wanted to do, which was the Sox!

Simone

(offended) “Sox”? We did not have “Sox”! We saw zis, ze “Chair,” I said, “Yes, now...death has come from Europe to, to here...”

Nelson

Yeh, well, death is still in Europe...

Simone

(brusque) And why are not we? Paris, Rome, zere at least we’d have a life!

Nelson

(paces) C’mon! I...have to live here! For my work! So I can write!

Simone

(sniffs) In Midwest, you “write”! But who will ever know? Not even Brecht will know! In fifty years, zey will say, “Nelson Algren, who is he? Who? Who?” Because you are in Chicago there is no one out here, no one...out here, tree falls in forest, and turns into book no one reads! *(declaims)* “Being and Nothingness”? You have neither one! Just ze days and days when it is as if you-do-not-exist!

Nelson

(puzzled) You mean like your “Daley Days”? *(pause)* We all work in this country, for a paycheck! We don’t have time for all this *(scoffs)* “Being and Nothingness”!

Simone

Oh, we have time in Europe! One day we will have as much money too! But you will have just work...we will have Paris...but you, in Chicago, you will have nothing but...your possums!

Nelson

And the Sox!

Simone

Oh? And do you think, one day, perhaps zey will not leave? *(after thoughtful silence)* Darling, I am woman, and women, zey are from...oh, it is like planet, maybe... *(gets idea)* ah, Venus, do you know? On Venus, there is atmosphere, zere is air, because zere is something, like volcano, deep

within, and we who are from Venus must have air...but you see, you are man, and men, zey are from...oh, it is like planet, but which one? Ah, it is like... *(gets idea)* Mars! And Mars, zere is nothing, zere is no air, zere is no atmosphere, nothing deep within...because it is like Chicago, and all they do is work...and so also, we, who are Europeans, we are like women, we need... oh, we need ze atmosphere, our air... But you see, in America, oh... *(gasps)* we are on ze planet, zer is no... *(coughs)* is hard to breathe... *(gasps)* Oh... no, I do not faint...but oh, oh...zere is no... *(wobbles)* no atmosphere, no air . . . no . . . oh, Nelson, oh no, Mon Cher, I *(wobbles)* Ohhh . . . *(faints and falls to ground)*

Nelson

(rushes to her) Darling!

Old Woman

(stands up) OK, show's over! Go on *(chases off actors)* come back for the 4:00... *(turns to Kasia)* How'd you like it? Hello? *(looks down, sees Kasia has passed out)* She's, shit, she's fainted. *(Slaps her wrist)* Come on, come on, let me rub this... Wow, hardly any pulse... Help, help... *(runs off)* HELPPP... *(exits)* *(for a second, Kasia lies alone on ground, but Jim enters, with flashlight)*

Jim

(enters) H'lo? Did...anyone here? H'lo... *(turns back to Guard, offstage)* Hey come on will you?

Guard

(enters) Got to be careful here...it's dark... I bet what's her name, Kasia, when she dropped down, she passed out... so we should find her...

Jim

I hope we find her... God, oh God, there she is... *(takes flashlight and shines it)* Kasia, Kasia...good pulse, she's coming to...Kasia, are you all right? Are you?

Kasia

Oh, James *(sighs)* you have taken on a body.

Jim

Didn't really take it off – Oh Kasia! Here, I'll lift...

Kasia

Yes... *(as Jim pulls Kasia up, without thinking they kiss)*... Oh...James!

Jim

(confused) I, didn't mean...

Kasia

Now I am awake!

Guard

Hey, we don't have a lot of oxygen!

Kasia

Oh, this is wrong, James, we should not – *(they kiss again)*

Guard

Lady, come on, we can't have a lot of heavy breathing!

Jim

(breaks away from Kasia) I guess he's right... *(looks up)* Think they're up there above ground looking for us?

Kasia

Oh, it was the boy! When she gave the candle to—

Jim

God, I shudder to think of her up there with Rob... *(to Guard)* How do we get out?

Guard

I don't know... *(points)* If that's west, then we go west till we hit Deep Tunnel!

Kasia

What is Deep Tunnel?

Jim

Wait, you think we can just walk straight through into Deep Tunnel???

Guard

(shrugs) I think it's guarded by Andy Frain. *(snaps finger)* But I know a guy who could get us in.

Jim

(shouts) Well I-know-a-guy-who-could-get-us-in, too, but he's not here is he??

Guard

(shouts) You're using up...AIR! *(soothes)* Hey, this place, where we are... ah, it's no worse'n getting your car towed! *(pause)* Now if that's east... I figure we can hit the river...

Kasia

River?

Jim

He means the, uh, Sanitary District Canal...you're right I can smell it... But wait, isn't that thing full of piss?

Guard

We're not gonna drink it...we're only gonna wade...should only come up to 'bout... *(puts hand to his throat)* here.

Jim

(disgusted) Ugh...ah, if only we had a cell phone...

Guard

Yeah...

Jim

Yeah... *(looks at guard)* WAIT!

Kasia

WAIT!

Guard

WAIT!

All Three In Unison

WE DO HAVE A CELL PHONE!

Guard

Who should we call?

Jim

(starts to dial) Rob, I'll call Rob. *(hits Speaker Phone)*

Voice on Speaker

Mr. Spencer's line.

Jim

Look, it's me, Jim, we're trapped, and...

Kasia

(shouts) We're running out of air!

Voice on Speaker

He's away from his desk. Would you like to go into voice mail?

Second Voice

Hi! This is Rob Spencer, I'm away right now...

Kasia

(as Jim slams phone) I am running out of, of...air...!

Guard

Try 911! *(before Guard can dial 911, phone rings, and Guard answers it)*

Rob's Voice On Speaker

Well where the hell are you?

Kasia

We're running out of air!

Rob's Voice

(louder) Jim, we got a letter from Clinton! And what do you think it says?

Jim

(weak) Rob, come on!

Kasia

(clutches Jim) I... I can't breathe...

Rob's Voice

She burned down the Jail, didn't she? But I'm not going to prosecute her, don't worry! But first, I want you to call her... Tell her, she's got to take this job at NIH...

Jim

(louder) Rob...help!

Rob's Voice

Oh for God's sakes, of course we're going to "help." *(pause)* Here I'll put on the Captain...

Captain's Voice

We've got a signal...you should be hearing shovels...

(There's a scraping of shovels...)

Guard

I can hear some voices, too!

First Voice

Hey, Charley you were at that strike in Aurora...

Second Voice

No, but my first wife was.

First Voice

It's a real shithole out there!

Kasia

Oh, I am losing air!

Second Voice

Hey last night, what about his Airness, huh? Michael...??

First Voice

Holy shit, I think it's game time...!

Kasia

James, I am...passing out!

Jim

Help, can you hear me!

Second Voice

Oh my God! IT IS GAME TIME...!

Jim

Can you HEAR???

First Voice

CAN YOU HEAR, TURN UP THE RADIO COME ON, LET'S PUMP IT UP!

Kasia

OH I AM DEAD! (*passes out*)

First Voice

(*sing-song*) OH BULLS...I CAN'T HEAR EM!!! COME ON, LET'S PUMP IT UP!

(*Blackout*)

End of Act I

Act II

Scene One

(*Kasia, rescued, sits up on bed at County Hospital, as Nurse ENTERS*):

Nurse

If she said, take the T.B. pills, why'd you stop? (*Nurse pops a pill.*)

Kasia

I did not stop – (*pauses*) or, please, was accident, I will tell to Doctor Donovan...

Nurse

(pops another pill) She may not be here much longer...*(smiles)*

Kasia

This is impossible!

Nurse

I hear they're going to force her to resign.

Kasia

Why?

Nurse

WHY? She burned down the Jail.

Kasia

This is not true!

Nurse

(half smile) Oh, she'd been dying to do it! Heh, heh... *(pops pill)*

Kasia

This is not very funny...

Nurse

(stops laughing) Come on! Lighten up! She hasn't even been indicted!

Kasia

(annoyed) Yes, I get dressed, I am leaving...

Nurse

(sees Kasia get out) Hey, where are you going?

Kasia

(under breath, as she dresses) It is air, I cannot... *(louder)*... *breathe!* I worry about her...the Doctor...

Nurse

(stops her) Worry...? Don't you think, possibly, you may have some issues in, uh, managing stress? *(pops pill, smiles)*

Kasia

(throws on cloak) No.

Nurse

(startled) Hey, wait! What about your pills? You got to take SIX of them!

KASIA EXITS

Scene Two

(Rob, Jim and Consul: they are waiting to see Ann in her office at the County jail.)

Rob

Oh, come on! *(slaps Jim on back)* They got you out didn't they?

Jim

(fumes) Yeah, oh sure! At the half! If the Luv a Bulls hadn't come out—

Consul

But did they not find other bodies?

Rob

(brushes him off) A bunch of old dead mayors, Mayor Cermak, and – we're not going to prosecute her for those!

Consul

(to Jim) When is she coming? Look at her office – it is magnificent! *(takes down plaques)* Look at all these plaques –

Jim

She's only missing the Nobel Prize! Rob, you can't prosecute her – just because she won't work for Clinton.

Rob

What? She's too good, too moral for the Clinton Administration?

Consul

I should think so.

Rob

I should think not. Look, have you seen this Miller file? She was lying to all of us about that... It turns out, it says here, he was never “HIV.”

Jim

(picks it up) I thought she kept this file with her round the clock...

Rob

(pulls it away) No, I have GOT IT! *(raises it)* I can't stand it when people blackmail...

Consul

It's only when you do it, that it's all right...

Rob

Consul, I'm not blackmailing... I'm just saying if she doesn't take the job with Clinton, we should prosecute... Of course the Mayor has no control over what the State's Attorney...

Jim

(to Rob) What, “prosecute”? She just gave the kid a candle, she didn't burn the...

Consul

The whole thing was an accident.

Rob

Jim, you're supposed to be a lawyer? You know the law... it's the chain of causation, if it all leads back to her.

ANN ENTERS, UNSEEN

Consul

What is this chain about...?

Jim

It's like a chain of causation, you know, it's like a chain...

Ann

(announces self) And it all leads back to me...

Jim

Ann!

Rob

Not if you take the job with Clinton...

Ann

I said, I'm not taking the job with Clinton. So go ahead...prosecute! I want to be in chains...

Rob

And you'd like that, wouldn't you?

Ann

I burned the Jail... I want you to prosecute...

Jim

Oh Ann! *(to Rob)* Look, Rob, she doesn't know what she's saying...

Rob

Of course she does! She's trying to blackmail me! Like with Miller! *(holds up file, goes to her)* How could you tell me, tell the Mayor, that this guy Miller was HIV?

Ann

Where did you get YOUR Miller file! Let me see it!

Jim

Let her have it Rob... She's not going to shred it! *(pause, hesitant)* You aren't, right?

Ann

(takes file) Let me see it... Oh Rob, God, you're such a bozo... *(starts laughing)* Think it's the file of William Miller? It's the file of William... comma...Miller. Which means it's the file of Miller William...

Rob

Not William Miller?

Ann

No. The file you want is William without-a-comma Miller...

Rob

This isn't it? Some idiot got... (*shouts at Jim*) Jim, come on, I want the file of this Miller William, I mean William without-a... No, I mean Miller without-a-comma... No, just get me the Miller Miller or the William William...or the...

Ann

Don't shout at him, I've got it!

Rob

You have Miller comma William...

Ann

I... Well, I've got the right file, and he is HIV... And I took the file because I knew you'd try to take it from me.

Rob

Give it to me!

Ann

No!

Rob

You know what position you're in?

Ann

Standing.

Rob

You want us to prosecute?

Ann

I'd like to see you prosecute a white person for a change!

Rob

Are you calling me a racist?

Ann

Because you fire all the black staff around here? Sure, yes, I'd call you a racist—

Rob

Really...that's... I'm really sick of all that... left wing college shit...you little sophomoric...

Jim

Rob, don't say it.

Ann

No let him say... what did I do to you sophomore year?

Rob

You dare to bring that up? NOW? YOU HEAR ME... I COULD...

Ann

You can say whatever you want... Rob, get over it, it was twenty years ago, more than twenty...

Rob

Look nobody in the City wants to prosecute...

Ann

I think you have to prosecute—!

Rob

Take the job at NIH, damn you!

Jim

Rob, let me just squeeze in here between you...can we separate, maybe? Ann, he's right...think of it, think of all the power you'd have in Washington.

Ann

No one, not even Clinton, has any power in Washington! If I wanted power, I'd be an idiot to work for Clinton... I'd be an Oprah, a Mother Theresa...or someone like Madonna...you think they work for Clinton?

Jim

But it's Washington: think of all the good you can do in a place like DC?

Ann

Well can't I do my "good" out here? Take care of the sick, feed the poor...

Jim

Feed the poor? That's the coward's way out... I'm talking about grants for extending human life...the work you were doing...

Ann

I abandoned all of that you know...

Jim

You'd get back all your power, but it would be in a new way...

Ann

Maybe I don't want it back! Maybe we should not be extending human life, or at least the life of the rich...you know how this country works...the poor would go on dying...people like Rob would live 200 years...you forget that since our sophomore year you've changed... I'm still a social democrat...

Rob

While I've become a Democrat!

Ann

No you've become a bully!

Rob

And you've become a—

Jim

(stops Rob) Hold it right there everyone! Rob, you and I, we need to huddle.
(Rob and Jim walk out of earshot)

Rob

(off to side) Look, if she wants to be a martyr...we're going to have to prosecute!

Jim

Oh, I think she's ready to go!

Rob

What? Are you mad?

Jim

Don't prosecute for God's sakes. It would destroy her...she just needs a little push...now if the Mayor would talk to her?

Rob

The Mayor? She hates the Mayor.

Jim

No, but if he spent a little more time with her he could schmooze her, you know?

Rob

(incredulous) The Mayor?

Jim

I think he'd have an effect, you know, charm her.

Rob

The...Mayor?

Jim

(irked) Yes, the Mayor... I know he's not the most articulate guy, but seriously...we could set up like a dinner, or...?

Rob

(grumpy) Well, his schedule's free this Monday... I don't know, let me run it by him... *(new tone)* But if she want to play the martyr, fine, we'll prosecute...

Consul

(comes over) What's going on?

Jim

A little diplomacy.

Rob

So it wouldn't interest you.

Jim

Go back, leave me here. Let me talk to her...

(Rob glares at her as he EXITS, in a huff)

Ann

(alone, with Consul, Jim) Jim, you're just waiting your—

Jim

(pleads) I want you to talk with the Mayor...

Ann

Does he know how to talk? Oh, just let me be prosecuted!

Jim

(shouts) Will you stop acting like Saint Joan!??

Ann

(shouts) Will you start acting like a Prince??

Jim

If I had the money of a Prince, I would!

Ann

What, your \$90,000 with the City isn't enough?

Jim

It's a sacrifice. *(pause)* Suppose I wanted to get married...not that I am. I'm not saying, you know, like...Kasia, but...but... *(very grave)* Ann, where is she? Is there a problem?

Ann

(evasive) No, no "problem," exactly.

Jim

Well, she's not working in the ER, I was looking, and... *(pause, with alarm)* Ok, what is the problem?

Ann

(new tone) Jim *(pause)* Kasia...is not well. *(pause)*

Jim

(alarmed) What do you mean, “sick”? I mean at least her TB, that’s still under control...isn’t it?

Ann

It was under control. But down there *(points to floor)*...she wasn’t on her medication, and up here in the hospital...well, in the ER of course the nurses are wonderful, but if you’re up on one of the floors above, where she is recovering...

Jim

She didn’t get her pill is that it? *(blushes)* You know what I—

Ann

(clinical) So now, her bacillus, the TB, it’s become resistant, it’s mutated, so we can’t treat it, or tell if it’s responding to...

Jim

(interrupts) Well she can’t die from it, can she?

Ann

You know how many young women like her die every year from tuberculosis? Over three million!

Jim

You...you mean she could die from this...

Ann

We have a Doctor Cohen here who’s...

Jim

(interrupts) I can’t believe this! You must be kidding! She can die from this...? Where is she?

Ann

Well I can’t have her in the ER can I with drug resistant TB? So I had to put

her up in Software Application...no one's up there.

Jim

Where is Soft—? Ah, never mind, I'll find it... (*about to EXIT, pauses*)
Ann, will you meet with the Mayor? Will you? I can set it up, this coming Monday... Let's try oh some place nice like Paris Bistro. OK? Paris Bistro! Please? But...ah damn it! Ah! (*EXITS*)

Ann

Maybe, this first meeting, we should start at Wendy's...

Consul

This is awful, about the girl...

Ann

Incompetent nurses here...what...ah, bungling! But I have no money!
None...

Consul

(*moved*) Yes, I know. Ann, what you just said then, about being a socialist—

Ann

No, no, a social democrat...

Consul

Oh I can see, I can see you are a socialist! You see, I come from a socialist country. (*smiles at his joke*) Oh, of course, over here, we say we are not. But ever since Communism collapsed...we are the true rival to America. Of course we must say this in a whisper, only to certain people, like you. We are afraid of your country... but if you want to come over...

Ann

Come over? You mean defect...

Consul

Your work, extending human life...do it in Berlin...

Ann

Berlin?

Consul

Or Brussels if you like. Or Paris. The European Union. Then whatever you do... because we are socialist, although we must be quiet...shh...everyone will share. If you extend human life, it will be everyone, rich and poor...if there were any poor, but there aren't...

Ann

Oh Heinrich...

Consul

You see in Zurich, in Milan, in Stockholm, it is so nice, no one want to die.

Ann

I'm touched, but...

Consul

(nervous) Now may I tell you something personal...for so long I have—

Ann

(alarmed) I'd rather you didn't—

Consul

No, please listen, I know you are not... *(takes her hand)* ready for me to say this... I am not sure I am ready *(laughs, nervously)*...

Ann

Please Heinrich...

Consul

Ann, tell me, why...why did you give up your work, extending human life? Because of...the rich?

Ann

Let's just say one night, I came back here... I saw a ghost.

Consul

What?

Ann

A ghost...BOO!

Consul

You are making fun of me... I am sorry, just now, I was awkward...

Ann

(tender) No, I'm not making fun of you...

Consul

I suppose it is ridiculous that you would be interested in someone like, like...

Ann

Like you...no, I...I wasn't ready, as you say...

Consul

If you extend human life, I...you see, I will be able to wait...

Ann

Ah, that would be a good reason, wouldn't it? I'm sorry...Consul, I mean Heinrich, I...it's late, and I have some work to finish up...

Consul

Yes...good night... *(with emphasis)* Doctor...please finish up...your great work... *(there is an awkward pause)*... Ah, good bye...schuss...or, or...yes... *(embarrassed, the consul moves downstage, and is alone as the light falls on Ann. He wrings his hands nervously as he speaks.)* She wasn't "ready," oh but she may never be...ready!

Why couldn't she confide in me just now? Why did she have to talk about, about a...

(lights dim on Consul who EXITS stage and rise on Ann)

Ann

(finishing his thought) ...Ghost! How sad, Heinrich, I did confide in you! Hm... could it be I do like him? No. Oh well... Ghost! Why should he believe me? I don't even believe myself. It was in this very office... I mean, my old one, when I was still in research. Somebody had said, "Ann it's a seance." Who, was it Barbara? I said Barbara, a seance? Barbara, we are doctors. I was nervous because...it sounded like something "they" would say only women doctors would do.

(she sits) We sat like this. *(holds out hand)* I took Barbara's hand. I shut my eyes. There was a medium, not Barbara, a very old lady, her name was... anyway this old woman, maybe 90, oh, suddenly...

AHHHH!

She screamed. And it was a young, a woman's voice, very Eastern European...and all I knew is that somehow she had died, or was dying...

And I tried to laugh when it was over, but I had the feeling she was calling me...and Barbara said it too, "Ann, do you think she was calling you...?" But what she wanted I didn't know. I said No, she wasn't calling me, but she was...and Barbara said, "Oh Ann, I'm scared," and I said, "Barbara, I'm going back to work," and she said, "To the lab? Right now? You're going back alone...?" Of course... *(rises)* I did... I was back in my office, and I came in, and I knew...if I flipped this light, as I'm doing now...all in white, but, but...she was in tennis whites, she had a racquet...

(She turns around, and there behind her is the actress who plays "Kasia" but dressed as if she is out of Elle, with a different cut of hair. Swinging a racquet at times, she is "white," like a ghost.)

Misia

What? You are frightened? Do not be...

Ann

(startled) My God, how'd you get into my office?

Misia

You are very hard to reach. I'm calling all day... *(laughs, mocks)* calling, calling, calling. Oh, the line is busy! You need cell phone, yes?

Ann

I...heard you, tonight...

Misia

(laughs) Oh is not me...is substitute...it is some other girl... Oh so many books! Ah, it is awful, I have no time to read...

Ann

Take any of those books you...

Misia

(frowns) Oh, there is so much Darwin... *(picks up book)* "Darwin, Darwin." *(shrugs)* What do you care about this man? *(lets the book drop)* Oh I drop it...

Ann

What do you know about Darwin?

Misia

I know...he is British. So probably, I think, he does not like women...

Ann

Tonight...you didn't say your name?

Misia

What is it? "Misia."

Ann

And can you tell me where you are from?

Misia

From? *(laughs)* Can you not tell from dress? I am from... *(giggles)* "court."

Ann

(looks at tennis whites) What court, Wimbledon?

Misia

(laughs) You are funny. May I smoke? No it is a very different court, and it is gone now...this court, I am from, it was in Prague...

Ann

The Czech Republic?

Misia

Let me tell you...it was no republic. Where is a match?

Ann

I don't have them... I'm afraid of fire...

Misia

(flings cigarette) Oh but it was Czech, it was... I could say Rudolph, it is his name! But Rudolph, who is it who knows you now? But then, oh, it was the court to which everyone in Europe came...the great ones, I mean the alchemists, cabbalists, oh like Kepler, and Bruno, and the Englishman John Dees...this one, he did like women, I remember...

Ann

Tell me more...this was like a court?

Misia

Yes, it is like University of Chicago. Of course, you know this?

Ann

Yes, of course, I live there.

Misia

Well... Oh? I am sorry... *(looks out window)* I think, this place...maybe, is like trap for women, yes?

Ann

(stutters) No, the University, I... I like it very much...

Misia

(stares) You are serious? OK, we do not talk about this... But Prague, oh, it was... greatest of all courts, I think, and for...thinkers, for them! And maybe the greatest of them...it is my brother Michael! *(Pause)* Do you know him?

Ann

Was...he an alchemist?

Misia

No, no... Oh, I tell him, "Michael, you should be alchemist!" We would be rich!

Ann

Cabbalist?

Misia

Michael? No...not so good with numbers...

Ann

Then what did Michael do?

Misia

He was herbalist. Like you! And I have found out, you are working on the very thing that he was, yes, I read about it in Le Monde... Why do you look puzzled? You know, the thing, the “telomeres,” only Michael had a different name for them...it wasn’t “telomeres,” or Teloman, I don’t know what the word he used...

Ann

He knew about telomeres... Is he alive now?

Misia

(irked) No, you see, that is the problem... It is why I am here...alive, no, he is not, and it was so stupid! When was it, some year...19...44? He was in Berlin, I know that.

Ann

He was a...a Nazi?

Misia

Michael? *(laughs)* No, he was not a “Nazi.” Michael was...always a Hussite. He really was! “Michael, you are a heretic...,” I say to him. But no...I do not know what he was doing there...

Ann

What did you say about...telomeres?

Misia

Oh we did not really talk about it! We would only meet every fifty years... *(bitterly)* After...after he made me drink this thing, the thing you know about...

Ann

Made you drink what? How old are you? You can’t be over 30...

Misia

(sips Evian, laughs) Oh I am a little bit older...than 29...

Ann

You have been living for...

Misia

Long, long time... After he made me drink – and this was not my idea...

Ann

(interrupts and grabs her arm) Tell me what is it like to have lived for... for...for four hundred...

Misia

(breaks away) Why did you not take my calls? I am calling, and calling—

Ann

(waves this aside) No, tell me...it's a dream, I know, but tell me anyway, what is it, to live for...four...hun-...hun...?

Misia

Well, you keep forgetting things. You have to keep a diary. I wish I had done that...

Ann

So can you remember...I mean, what cities you lived in?

Misia

Some... *(mutters to herself)*... I do not remember this one!

Ann

And can you remember...say, like, all the men you met?

Misia

(laughs) Doctor, you talk like Austrian!

Ann

(rephrases) Can you remember, even...the men you slept with?

Misia

(confiding) Why? Can you remember all of them? *(pause)*... It is Michael I feel sorry for...

Ann

Why?

Misia

He said, “Misia...I... I saw the face of God, now...now, it is twentieth century, and...and...and I have forgot it!” Well, I said, Michael, you should write it down! But he did not... He did not write down anything...and now he is dead...do you see? That is why I come...

Ann

Come...come about what...what can I do?

Misia

Oh of course you know! He made me drink, is not my idea – but now he is dead! Effect is wearing off!

Ann

What is wearing off?

Misia

(sullenly) You know, of course... *(looks up, at Ann)* this thing, of what I drank! But now...you are doing the same thing, what Michael did, with “telomeres,” or I do not know what the word is, but... I read about it in Le Monde...

Ann

But I...you’re trying to threaten me! Get away... I don’t have any “thing” for you to drink...

Misia

(willful) But Doctor, you are lying! I read about it in Le Monde! *(comes toward Ann, in a menacing way)* Yes, telomere, I do not know what it is, but...I want this thing to drink! *(stops)* Do you think I want to live...and live, and live? No! Is wrong! At first when Michael told me of this, I said Michael, this is wrong...but then...then... *(speaks to herself)* you see, it was the Time of the Plague, and outside, you see, there were the dead carts, full of the dead... I am frightened, but no, I do not want to drink, and then...one night, it was there, black things, yes, *(she points)* right here, on my thigh, oh, I couldn’t breathe, and then another, black, it was here, and my mother, she saw them, she began to scream, she screamed, I was going to die...and there

was a man, two men, watching the house, not to let me out, and Michael had to break in, and... “Oh, Michael, I’m going to die...” oh, and I am only 29, and maybe this is old, but...oh, I am going to die, and he says, Misa, you will drink, and... I drink, and (*stops, to catch breath*)...is awful, I am like this...is impossible to die...

Ann

But now the effect is wearing off...but I don’t have it...

Misa

But you are lying, I read about it in Le Monde...

Ann

This makes no sense, this is what you want...now, like Michael you can die...

Misa

No, you do not understand...the butterfly, she is lucky...poof, she is gone... no time to think...and you, you are lucky...you live, what...60 years, then... like butterfly, poof, you are gone...you have no time to think...but what if it is three hundred, four hundred, four hundred YEARS...is awful, is frightening. You see? There is too much time to think!

Ann

I want you to leave. Do you hear me?

Misa

(*approaches*) I am so sorry, but you do not know what this is like...
(*takes out knife and cuts her*)

Ann

Good God, you’ve cut me! (*holds up bleeding arm*) Look, I’m bleeding... you cut...you cut a vein...

Misa

I want what you have...

Ann

You cut...you cut a vein (*to herself*)

Misa

I take now...only a little blood... See you will help now...

Ann

A little blood...you cut an artery...

Misia

You do not know what it is like...300, 400...

Ann

You cut an artery... I don't have any time to think... *(sits down)*... I'm going to die...

Misia

And you will find, when you die...this is what I know now...there is no little gene, talking...and there is no God either... I think, this will not bother you... *(kneels down next to her)*...but here is what you do not know...this other thing, posterity, the people who come after you? When you die, you find out, there are no people who come after you! You are the last one... *(stands, laughs)*

Ann

Please, dial, 9-1-...1, or the campus... I'm... I'm going to faint...

Misia

Oh you are always fainting. Here you do it, I give you phone...9-1-1...see, it is simple...9...1...

Ann

(woozy) N-nine...oh... *(Ann stumbles and falls. There is a blackout, and when light rises, MISIA is gone, and a paramedic is leaning over her)*

Paramedic

(leans over Ann) See, there you go...c'mon doc, you OK?

Ann

I'm...I'm bleeding, I'm... But I'm not! I'm not bleeding... What are you doing?

Paramedic

You fainted... I'm going to take a cardiogram...

Ann

I don't need a cardiogram...

Paramedic

Come on, doctor, you know the rules... I got to do it...

Ann

Yes, yes...but how'd you get up here?

Paramedic

Oh, one of the maids, she saw the light on, she called security...

Ann

I had a bad dream, that's what happened...

Paramedic

Have a bad dream? I get 'em too...

Ann

I don't want another, I don't want another like this one...

Paramedic

Try to drink more Starbucks, that was the end of them for me... *(phone starts ringing)* Somebody's calling...should I answer?

Scene Three

(Jim, alone in room of boxes, under a sign: "Software Applications")

Jim

(calls) Kasia!!... *(annoyed)* If she's got TB so bad, how can they let her come back to work? Of course, Ann says, they don't really "know" yet if... she... I can't believe she could die from this... *(calls)* Kasia...are you up here? People just don't die like that, at least in this country... Hey, uh, Kasia!! *(pause)* It's like a warehouse up here... Look at all these files they're inputting... *(calls, softer)* Kasia...

Kasia

(speaks up, unseen, from behind a box) James...James! I am over here...

Jim

Are you in the box?

Kasia

I am behind box...help me move it... *(Jim and Kasia move box)*

Jim

Kasia...

Kasia

Oh James... *(they almost embrace)* Wait, I am mad at you.

Jim

For what?

Kasia

You are asking her, your sister, to leave the city... *(with emphasis)* Is true, is the rumor...

Jim

(protests) No, I'm not! *(pause)* Well, I'm sort of... *(holds her)* look, are you all right?

Kasia

Why should I not be all right?

Jim

I mean, you're not dying or anything...are you? No of course not. What am I saying? You're fine.

Kasia

(coughs) Yes... *(coughs)* I am fine...

Jim

Oh my God...

Kasia

What is the matter?

Jim

Kasia, I... I love you!

Kasia

James I love you! (*coughs*) but you see for us it is impossible...

Jim

You mean you're going to (*stops in horror*)

Kasia

(*nods*) Yes...yes... I have been waiting for word, and it seems... I am going to Paris...

Jim

(*relieved*) Paris...

Kasia

I have a fellowship...and can bring mother...oh James, you see, I would not be happy here, and your would not be happy in Paris...

Jim

(*offended*) Of course I'd be happy in Paris...

Kasia

No, you are American, and...you would not be happy. Everyone know this, the whole world. Yes, yes. (*wrings hands, paces*) What do Polish want? Freedom! Hungarians? Comfort. Germans? Order. English? (*pause*)... hm...order, but is different kind. And French? (*smiles*) Pleasure...but what do Americans want?

Jim

(*hesitant*) To be on television.

Kasia

(*vehement*) No, is to work! And work, and work...in Paris, in our school, there was boy, American, he went back he was so unhappy in Paris. But you see, all he wanted to do was work...

Jim

That's not true that all we want to do is work... (*tender, takes her in arms*) Kasia, with all my heart, at this moment, all I want is—

(Maid enters with buckets, broom)

Maid

Lo! Is me, Maria!

Kasia

(turns, smiles) Maria... James, she is here to clean, we must move...

Jim

(groaning) What a time for the cleaning lady. Can't she come back later?

(Maid dumps one, then two buckets, drops broom, etc.)

Kasia

James, it is her job. She will be fired if...

Jim

No, just if she came back later... *(Maria turns on vacuum)*... No! Come on turn that off... *(to Maria)* Just hold off on that for a moment, can't you?
(Maria flips off vacuum)

Kasia

But you see, this is America! Do you not remember where we met at midnight?

Jim

No, where would we have met, at midnight?

Kasia

Where else, James, but at your work?

Jim

Oh you mean at the firm? Oh...oh, God, yes that must have been when we were doing the merger and acquisition, and...but Kasia, what were you doing there? You mean... *(looks at Maria, then back to her)*... you mean you were the...?

Kasia

No, I was not Polish cleaning lady! I was in PC pool, yes, that is where I saw

you...one night, you did not see me, I brought you a biscotti...

Jim

Oh Kasia...I'm... I was probably too busy even to...oh, I'm sorry...but Kasia, one day, if I were your...well, husband, or you were, well...my wife, or both...I'd be doing that for you!

Kasia

But where would I be?

Jim

You'd be out in the suburbs, in a big wonderful place, with many wonderful things...

Kasia

I am in... I do not understand... I am in B-b-best Buy?

Jim

No, not in Best Buy.

Kasia

(puzzled, confused) Home Depot?

Jim

No, Kasia, in our home! Our home...look I can't live like you do in those socialist countries, where you get six weeks vacation and retire at 48...no, I admit, I'm an American. I don't get these cushy little European deals. But I'd be doing it for you! *(Maria turns on vacuum)* Please could you turn that off! *(pause, back to Kasia)* I'd be doing it for our baby...

Kasia

But what if our baby is shot?

Jim

No, no! Our baby isn't going to be shot...

Kasia

Oh, but what about all these babies...?

Jim

What babies?

Kasia

Babies on discs...babies, in Software Applications...

Jim

I don't know what you mean...

Kasia

Do you know what I am inputting, up here? James, let me read... *(picks up disc and hands one after the other)*...they are all orphans, how many? Fifty thousand... Foster Children: Sexually Abused...and here... Foster Children: Severely Sexually Abused...and here... Foster Children: Severely Sexually Abused and Schizophrenic... oh...

Jim

But this won't be our baby!

Kasia

(holds up disc) Yes, but these will be her little friends...

Jim

No, these won't be her little friends...

Kasia

Oh James, I am not so stupid! I understand how country works...

Maid

Sí!

Kasia

Yes, Maria...I understand...have baby...we should adopt one of these...

Jim

Adopt? We could adopt a foreign baby...but these kids, they're Americans, we can't adopt American...

Kasia

James, I am scared here...I am scared...how can you not be scared, when you see what they are doing to your sister? How, how is this...possible...? *(starts to cough)*

Jim

(alarmed) Are you all right?

Kasia

I am fine...how, how did she get in such terrible trouble? How? *(Kasia goes behind Maria, places hand on her)* She want to help people...is scary here, you can get in terrible trouble in America...yes Maria?

Maid

Sí...

Jim

All right. Fine. Go. Run away, if you want. Typical European, right? Any time there's trouble in the world, you Europeans, you run away... Let the Americans do it...we can't give up our little life styles... Yes, my sister is in terrible trouble, and I'm trying to help her, though you may not believe it... but what are you doing for her? You're running away...

Kasia

I'm not running away...

Jim

Typical European. Look at Bosnia right now...

Kasia

I am not a typical European, but...but I am not lawyer, I cannot be lawyer for her...

Jim

Nobody's asking you to be her lawyer...

Kasia

I wish I could be her lawyer...

Jim

And I wish I could adopt one of these kids...but I can't... Look, you're right, let's forget it, huh?

Kasia

Yes, we will...forget it!

Jim

(fumes, hesitates) Yes, just forget it, I...well, go, just go, you know? Leave this little North American island, you...just go running back... *(angry)* go running back to your cozy little Eurasian land mass, and just, just, I don't know, go skiing in Gstadd! Ah! *(turns from Kasia)*

Kasia

(turns from Jim) Ah!

Jim

(turns back) Kasia!

Kasia

(turns back) James!

(Jim, Kasia both throw up their hands, and turn and Jim EXITS and Kasia RECITES)

O Nation you are not so Great!
For babies here are Tiger Bait!
But I stayed and it's too Late!
Yes I'm in love on Island – ah!

Yes, I know, is awful fate,
For no here can speculate!
What do they at night on Date?
But I'm in love on Island – ah!

And all the men who live like Faust!
And why? To have a bigger House!
But with their Boss, they act like Mouse!

(pause)

But this will be my Island – Now!

AMERICA! Here I am come already!

KASIA EXITS

Scene Four

(At Paris Bistro, for big showdown, with Rob, Consul and Jim waiting at a table.)

Consul

Jim, the great event has come...at Paris Bistro, tonight, Ann Donovan meets the Mayor!

Jim

I can't believe it's happening.

Rob

Where is she, though?

Jim

What's holding up the Mayor?
(They are all quiet)

Consul

Uh...ahem...back in my town, of Hamburg, I was hoping to open one of these Starbucks. But I can't.

Jim

Why not?

Consul

It's Europe! So they want you to collect all the paper cups. They say, "This is your responsibility."

Rob

Ha! No wonder there's so much unemployment.

Jim

What's holding up the Mayor?

Consul

Collecting paper cups?

Rob

No, it's threatening to snow...he's worried about a snow emergency... *(takes*

out cell phone) Let me see if I can reach him... *(connects, lapses into baby talk)* Yes, Mr. Mayor...yes do, do I see? Yes. Snow. Flakes. That's right. Snow. It's snowing... That's right...

Bus Boy

(to Jim) Sir...sir? *(picks up Jim's newspaper off floor)* Sir? Your newspaper...

Jim

Just leave it... *(waves him off)*

Rob

(baby talks to Mayor) "Yes, sir, it's a city. We are in the city. *(nods)* Snow. Yes, I see it. It's snowing. *(he is repeating what the Mayor is saying)* I understand. City. Snow... *(louder)* It's in the city."

Bus Boy

(still holding) Sir...PLEASE! *(thrusts)* Please will you... *(to Jim)* if someone comes and sees it on the floor...sir...

Rob

(to Mayor on the phone) Snow. I see it. We're sending out the crews. Sir: we can't catch every flake.

Bus Boy

(continues, more)shrilly to Jim)... It's my job sir!

Consul

It's his job, Jim.

Jim

(to Bus Boy) OK, I'll hold the paper! *(takes paper from floor)*

Rob

(gets off phone) All right, I reached the Mayor.

Consul

Good talk?

Rob

(snaps) Why do you have to be here anyway?

Jim

(smiles, puts hand on Consul's arm) Because I think he's a little smitten with my sister...

Bus Boy

(reaches for Consul's salad) Sir...sir...can I take your salad?

Consul

(annoyed) Why do you have to take my salad? I, I...just got it, I...

Jim

You've had it for a while...

Consul

(nervous) Where is your sister?

Rob

(smiles) So you're smitten with her.

Consul

I'm here to protect her!

Rob

Her? Protect her? What about this Roland boy?

Jim

He may be HIV, now that we know who the real Miller is...

Rob

We tested him, he's not.

Jim

Rob, you won't know for months.

Rob

I'm satisfied enough. Where the hell is she? *(stands, paces)*

Bus Boy

(quietly) Can I have your salad sir...?

Rob

If she doesn't take the Clinton thing...

Bus Boy

Sir...it's my job...

Consul

It's his job...

Jim

But Rob, you can't prosecute her...even if she gave the kid the candle...

Rob

(to Jim) I don't want you to be her lawyer...

Jim

And if you prosecute, the whole thing about the kid being raped is going to come out...

Rob

Yeah, well that was before she burned down the Jail...someone's got to go to Jail for that...

Jim

Come on, she didn't mean it...even if she gave a candle to the kid...

Rob

Do you understand? You're not to be her lawyer...

KASIA ENTERS

Jim

Well let's go and find a lawyer...

Kasia

You do not need to get this lawyer James...

Jim

Kasia!

Kasia

I have come with boy, and I will help explain...

Jim

Kasia, what are you doing here?

Kasia

The Consul, he told me...

Jim

(to Consul) YOU?

Consul

She is helping me.

Rob

Helping you do what?

Consul

(sharply) Last night, I took the boy. I have him at the consulate... Yes, I could keep him now on German territory...but you see, the young woman and I have talked to him... You say he is traumatized, and this is true, he is... He is here now Spencer, and... I admit, you must bear with him...but this boy, he can tell you your sister, she did not burn down the Jail...she did not start any fire... Spencer, we will show you now...there is no case... *(to Rob)* You have NO CASE AGAINST DOCTOR DONOVAN!

Rob

Oh come on, the kid's completely bonkers...but go ahead, I'll listen, let him have his say...

Consul

Thank you. Kasia, I ask you, go out and bring the boy in... Yes?

Jim

(to Kasia) You took him out of the Infirmary? Consul, why is she involved in this?

Consul

She has talked to him, the boy... She is the only one he trusts. Kasia, please, go and bring him in here...

Kasia

(touches him) I will show you... *(coughs slightly)*

KASIA EXITS

Jim

(more to himself) I wish I knew what's going on...

Consul

(puts hand on his arm) I think, perhaps, you are a little smitten with her...

Jim

I thought I would be the lawyer...

Consul

Maybe you let her do it... Maybe it's the better way...

KASIA RE ENTERS

Kasia

We are back...both of us... Roland, please, come in now...

ROLAND ENTERS

Rob

Here's the kid...after you, the German consul, kidnapped him!

Consul

I am the German consul! I have this right—

Rob

You're the one I'd like to prosecute!

Jim

(intervenes) Rob, let the kid have his say!

Rob

So far I haven't even heard him speak! All right, go ahead... I'll listen...

Consul

You will hear. Go on, Kasia, this is America, you are like a lawyer, just ask a question...

Kasia

PLEASE! (*gets between them*) May I ask question...?

Rob

Your witness, go ahead, and ask away...

Consul

The boy trusts her, you will see...

Kasia

(*looks at Jim, raises hand to hush, then speaks in a kindly way to the boy*)
Roland... Deutsche oder Englische?

Roland

Englische bitte...

Kasia

Bitte, gut. Roland, we begin the old way, yes? (*she holds out her palm*)...
Ja, write your name...(giggles) write...Roland, it tickles...(he writes on her
palm) R-O-... no, no (*laughs again*) Roland, do not write that!

Roland

(*stops, grins at her*) No...problem!

Jim

(*softly*) Kid really is a little catatonic, huh?

Consul

(*scolds*) Shh...

Bus Boy

SHHH!

Kasia

Roland...*(takes out candle, unlit)* You remember fire? The night? Is it OK... *(nervous)* to remember this, is it...?

Roland

(smiles, hesitant with his English) No problem!

Kasia

(nods, grateful) Ok, no problem... Now Roland, can we light the candle? Yes? *(The Bus Boy leans too close, Kasia pulls away)*

Roland

F-fire...

Kasia

Yes, I am holding it... Who am I like, Roland?

Roland

(points to Kasia, slowly) Like her.

Kasia

(urgent) Now, Roland, who is the "her"? What is her name? *(no answer)* Roland, is she, the woman, is she...white? Or maybe black, or brown, or is she...?

Roland

(firmly) White! Then...*(trance-like)* she is red, and then...she is yellow, she is blue...

Kasia

Then?

Roland

(pauses) She goes away. She is...gone. *(waves)* Tschuss!

Rob

(angry, cuts in) THEN WHAT? *(barks)* Come on, speak English! Then what?

Kasia

(annoyed, to Rob) Please! May I ask? *(back to Roland, holds candle)* Now, here is candle... I am woman, I light it, yes? It is burning, yes? Roland, the name, what is name of what is burning?

Roland

(points at candle, burning) The name of...what is burning...it is...BLUE!

ANN ENTERS, AS OTHERS LOOK UP ANNOYED

Ann

Sorry I'm late... What, it's somebody's birthday? Goodness, it's Kasia and the boy!

Consul, Jim, Bus Boy

SHHH!!!!!!

Ann

(takes off coat) Is the Mayor here? I think he and Roland might hit it off...

Rob

(barks, loudly) QUIET! Go on, ask the next question...

Kasia

(picks up burning candle) Roland, see the blue... Roland, what happens to the blue, do you want to touch it?

Roland

I...the blue...yes, I want to...touch it...

Kasia

(softly) How?

Roland

I want to...touch it hard...

Kasia

Roland, I am taking your finger...*(holds up index)* Watch now, did it go...?
(moves it to the flame)

Rob

(cuts in) Wait, she's leading!

Jim

Yeah, Kasia, you can't lead.

Consul

This is a German court!

Kasia

(motions all to hush) No, it is America... Roland, you must show us, I cannot help you...

Roland

(cries, uneasy) There is someone, it is woman...she takes my...finger...

Kasia

Roland, who is this woman?

Roland

(goes on) ...she takes my hand.

Kasia

Who? Who is taking it?

Roland

(excited) See, look...my hand, it is floating...with the woman's!

Kasia

And your hand, it is floating... *(moves both her hand and Roland's closer to the flame)* is it over flame?...

Roland

(watches their hands) Yes, it is floating...it is over flame...

Kasia

(lets his hand take over hers) And is it floating and does it come down hard... *(he and she put out candle)* And Roland, now do we put out flame...?

Roland

(stares at smoking candle) Y...yes, she, I...we put out the flame...no more

fire...

Kasia

And?

Roland

It is out. There is no more fire.

Consul

(triumphant) See, look at it, the candle's out. You don't have any case against her!

Rob

Come on, this is GIBBERISH! That's your witness?

Jim

(picks up smoking candle) Hey Rob, the kid is our witness...if he said it was out, it's out...I mean it breaks the chain of causation...

Rob

(points to Ann) Damn it, I know she set the fire... I know it... Look at her, smug...

Jim

(shakes head) But no, the chain of causation is...

Consul

(interrupts) The chain is broken...

Rob

Even if it's broken, it still lead back to her! Who else could have done it?

Kasia

An angel...

Rob

(stares at Ann) She isn't any angel...

Jim

(softly to Kasia) Kasia, you did great! *(loudly to Rob)* Rob, that's not our

burden...the point is, the chain of causation...it's broken, snuffed out, like the candle you're holding... This whole thing is over...

Kasia

(chimes in) Yes, you cannot trace it back to her! Oh, James, am I lawyer now or not?

Jim

Lawyer? You're like a Lincoln.

Rob

Lincoln? She's not even a Yugo.

Consul

Wait a second, Spencer...

Rob

(to Consul) And this kid? *(growls at Roland)* Little firebug, like all the Germans...!

Ann

(steps in) Stop! *(as others hush)* The boy has it completely muddled! I did check on him later *(takes candle from Jim)*, saw he snuffed out his candle, I don't know how...and I...*(stares at it)* relit it.

Jim

(groans) THANK YOU, ANN, FOR THAT HELPFUL CONTRIBUTION!

Ann

Of course it was my fault...it does lead back to me! Kasia, you were brilliant, but Rob is right...*(to Rob)* go ahead, prosecute!

Rob

Soooooo... *(smiles, looks at Kasia)* So the chain is "broken," is it? Now where does it lead, huh?

Jim

Ann...ah shit...as her lawyer I don't know what to say...

Kasia

James, is no problem... I know what to say...

Jim

You know what to say?

Kasia

I am graduate student from Poland... I know what to say...

Consul

(offended, to Jim) Spencer, she can explain this whole chain of causation...

Rob

(muttering) Fine, go ahead...but remember this is America, so make it snappy.

Consul

(ironic) Yes, Kasia, we have to go back to work...

Kasia

I explain chain of causation in this case... Long ago, there is British man, he is lawyer, he goes to India, he sees Holy Man: "Holy Man, Holy Man, what holds up World?" And Holy Man, he says, "World, it is hold up on... Big Elephant," and British, he says, "Yes, but Holy Man, what is holding up Elephant?" And Holy Man, he says, "What is holding up Elephant... is Big Turtle," and British, he says, "Holy Man, what is holding up Turtle?" And Holy Man, he says, "What is holding up Turtle is... is other Turtle," and British, he says "And what is holding up other Turtle...?" And Holy Man, he is getting tired, this man, remember, he is lawyer maybe, and he says, "Look, after this Turtle... it is Turtles all the way down!" So now I ask, in case of fire, why is it you stop with Doctor? After her, it is... you see, many, many Turtle go on after her!

Consul

Really, you're saying the chain of causation leads back to God! You're saying... God is the last turtle, really!

Kasia

I do not, this is St. Thomas only...

Rob

Hold it, let's stop, STOP!

Consul

(to Rob) This is an INTELLECTUAL DISCUSSION! *(snaps)* We don't expect Americans to take part...

Kasia

(continues) But...no I do not believe God is last turtle. For if God is last turtle, God owes us nothing... And I do not believe this any more... James, do you see what you have done? Now I do not believe Thesis any more...

Consul

Good! That's good, when the heart overrides what we think in the mind...

Kasia

No, Heart is like light that goes off in the mind! For James and yes for everyone, now I know – how can last Turtle be God? For what is it that causes God? What made this God, if God is Love, be God? What can it be but LOVE! It is Love that must come first, before there is the God, and that is where the chain leads. James, everyone: does it not lead back to Love? And so I think even if with God, if God is Love, God has no choice, God must be God...and this is all because of Love! *(paces stage)* So this is why I say, it is not Doctor, not the boy, it is Love that burned the Jail.

Rob

(pause) What?...

Kasia

(goes to Rob) You who are in the law, why not trace it back to Love?

Jim

(tenderly) That's uh...clear enough...

Consul

Of course it's clear enough. Ann, it's true, isn't it, if you burned the Jail, you did it out of Love?

Ann

No.

Rob

(agrees) No.

Ann

(irked now to Rob) What do you mean “no”?

Rob

Well, what did you mean “no”? No, I’ll tell you what I meant. I’ve never seen you do anything, and I mean anything out of Love. You and love? It’s all B.S....ever since I’ve known you.

Ann

You don’t think I’m loving? I think I love a lot.

Rob

You love a lot of causes... *(hurt)* But people? Even your brother. Look at you, look at you: never, never do you notice anyone, never “notice,” never “listen,” never—

Ann

(barks) Yes, I do! I notice and I LISTEN— *(pauses, then softly)* I’m sorry, go ahead.

Rob

Where was I?

Ann

(louder, to Rob) “Never...listen,” come on, what else?

Rob

You’re just into power and control...

Ann

“Who” haven’t I noticed?

Rob

“Who”? *(incredulous)* You don’t remember that night, the one before our graduation, when you...

Ann

(panicked) No! No! Don’t you even...DREAM of bringing that...up!

(sighs) Oh go on, bring it up.

Consul

Bring up what?

Rob

(sneers) What happened that night? No, I won't! *(changes mind)* You know, maybe I will bring—

Ann

(preempts, cuts him off) Yes, it's true, sometimes I don't notice...people. But neither do you. Yet Rob, the two of us, we could be, oh, doing something else, couldn't we? This whole "corporate" culture, isn't everyone I know "in" it, in some way...except you and me? *(pause)* So why do I HATE YOU so much?

Rob

And why do I hate you? *(shakes head)* I don't know.

Ann

Maybe it's just being here, in this country... God, when you think what it all could have been after the 60's, how did things get so screwed up?

Rob

(quietly) I don't know. How did we get so... *(half-grudging)* Ann?

Consul

(sees chance) Oh Spencer let her off...

Jim

Come on, Rob...we won't tell...

Rob

(changes, back, harsher) After what I just heard...? Look, she's admitted that she— *(confused)* I, oh I give up! Just... *(becomes helpless)*... No, wait, what am I doing? No, I'm sorry... *(to himself)* Oh, OK, OK, OK!!! ALL RIGHT!! I suppose we can have some commission conclude, oh, that no one is at fault... *(sadly)* So I guess there'll be no prosecution...of course, I have nothing to do with it...

Jim

No, we'll have Alderman Natarus...he'll, you know, work on it... Ann, just thank your lucky stars...

(watches Ann move slowly to Rob) Ann! (But Ann keeps walking to Rob, and may even pause, but she goes on, hesitant. Now she is in front of Rob and her hand starts toward his hand. Though Rob tries to pull his right hand away, she takes it; and with a gulp, she holds Rob's hand palm up...and with her right hand, like God's in Michelangelo's Fresco, she slightly grazes his palm)

Ann

I'm...sorry.

Rob

(frightened) Come on, what do you mean?

Ann

(deep breath) Hurtful, terrible things, calling you...

Rob

(touch of anger) So, it's not, not just...being here, in this country, and all of that?

Ann

(with emphasis) N-no, it's not just...that. *(sighs)* Oh hell, now what damn thing have I done? *(turns from everyone)*

Kasia

(fervent) This "thing," I do not know if it is love or "caritas," or what, but it will let you do anything!

Jim

(nods) And Ann, if you've got it, who knows, they may still end up naming some building after you, just like they will with the Mayor...!

Kasia

(nods) For children. And little ones...

Rob

(to Jim) Jim, if your sister's really had a change of heart, tell her...to take

this job with Clinton! But tell her, I'm not going to blackmail her any more...I'm done with that...

Ann

(groans) Now what do I say? Aw! Help...mother of a political...*(mocks self)* prisoner! Should I... *(turns away)*

Jim

(grim, closing on Rob) She will...but what about the money for TB?

Rob

(backs away) I don't know about money for TB—

Jim

TB...TB... There's going to be TB, or there's going to be no deal.

Rob

Bullshit... *(hits table)* TB is not on the table... *(Kasia coughs, in alarming way)*...*(mutters, looks down at table)* OK, maybe it is on the table... OK, you got the dough...

Jim

(turns to Ann) I got the deal! Go on Ann, go on, say it: YES!

Consul

Oh no, Ann, say it: NO! You must not be blackmailed like this...

Ann

Well I'll have to decide... *(paces)* I can't say what the decision will be, not at this time. But something will be coming soon... *(halt in despair)* and I will try to expedite it.

Rob

See, she must be going to D.C., because that's what they all say: "I expect a decision from ME very soon."

Jim

(shy) Well, Kasia, thank you...for arguing as her lawyer.

Kasia

Oh James I did this for you! I know now, to live in America, everyone must be lawyer...

Consul

I wish I had a lawyer for this boy, our Roland...it seems his family in Germany has renounced him...he's really here, as an orphan...

Rob

So not everything is paradise, in Germany...

Consul

(drily) If it were, why would I be the German consul in Chicago?

Jim

So...he really is an orphan. *(walks to boy)* Oh, Kasia, if you can be a lawyer, for my sake, maybe I can adopt, be like a mother for your sake?

Ann

Jim what are you saying?

Jim

Consul, would there be any problem if I adopted Roland?

Consul

Why for us, I mean for Bonn, it would be very convenient.

Ann

Wait, Jim, I'm head of this family: I think I should adopt him!

Jim

I asked first!

Ann

Jim, let me! I want you to be passing on your genes, instead...

Kasia

Oh James would you do this for me...?

Ann

To some young woman like... *(points at Kasia)*...

Kasia

Oh James...for me, you adopt him (*kisses*)

Ann

(*upset*) Oh, I don't understand it!

Consul

Don't "understand"? What we want Ann...oh, it is not to reproduce... No, it is to double ourselves...

Ann

Of course I could clone myself... I've already thought of that...

Consul

No, I am speaking of a different thing...a German sociologist, he says...a man, and a woman...when the love is real, they double themselves...they trade...one acts, the other observes...then the other acts, and the first one observes. But if one is always acting, and the other is observing...like when the man always drives, and the woman does not...this is bad... And that is why, you see, we know now... Love Dies in the Front Seat...

Kasia

Yes, James, that is why I must be the lawyer sometimes too.

Ann

Well, my point is... I adopt, he can reproduce...

Rob

(*to Ann*) Hey, why don't you just observe!

Consul

(*snaps at Rob*) Ann, you must let others act...sometimes. (*tender*) What each of us must do is not really to pass on our gene but to double ourselves instead.

Ann

(*misunderstands*) You mean with...with (*half sick*) with Rob? (*now understands*) Oh no...no, you mean... (*tender*) oh Heinrich...

Consul

(ignores slight) Ann, I do not want to be any more the German consul in Chicago, and I have come to a...a great decision... If you allow, I will *(takes breath)*... I will become a citizen of America!

Jim

Wow. You have any idea what that means?

Consul

Yes, I must remove half my brain.

Ann

Heinrich, I'm so touched, but I can't permit that...

Consul

Ann, please...

Rob

Oh come on Consul, I wouldn't get in the front seat with her. It's going to be a scary ride.

Ann

You really can be a dreadful man.

Rob

Look, right now, she sees her brother adopting...look, she's already stepped on the gas...

Jim

(annoyed) Rob, wait...

Ann

No, Jim, he's right...that's just what I was doing. *(pause)* Jim, Roland belongs to you... *(looks at Kasia)* the two of you if you, if you...know what I mean...

Jim

(takes Kasia's hand) Yes, yes, we, she and I, we will think about it...

Ann

And Henrich, I'm sorry, but...

Rob

(to Jim) Jim, you realize what you're doing, the risk here...he may have HIV...

Ann

You! Of all people, to say that now!

Jim

I said, I would raise him. *(to Consul)* I suppose there will be a lot of paperwork...

Consul

Oh yes, and one other thing, which I forgot to mention...in return for being guardian, you will, of course, receive an income.

Jim

Income?

Consul

Yes, from the German government. This is a welfare state, you know.

Jim

(puzzled) How, how...well how much do I get?

Consul

Oh mein Gott, what a complicated formula, but it is, I think...80,000 marks a year.

Kasia, Jim, Ann, Rob

(more or less in unison) EIGHTY THOUSAND MARKS A YEAR.

Kasia

(hugs him) Oh, James, you will not have to work.

Jim

(squeezes her) We, we, Kasia, we can both be Europeans!

Rob

(goes up to Consul) Of all the, of all the...nerve! That you would do this to these two young people...*(to Jim)* Don't do this, Jim, Germany...Germany's going to collapse.

Kasia

I am very sorry, but he will take the money! *(to Jim)* James, say yes.

Jim

Yes. I...I will take the money.

Ann

It's the American way.

Jim

Ann, about the boy, I'm sorry it's not my own flesh. I don't want to betray you genetically...

Kasia

Unless he has reason!

Jim

(stammers) Of course Ann, you know, I want to be l-loyal to my body.

Ann

(takes hand of Kasia, then that of Jim) Oh, it has my blessing, though I'm an atheist. But remember, as they used to say, about the Emperor or the Empress, "The Empress has two bodies," her own and the body politic... And that is true of all of us, in America, now. There is another body we must take care of... Now and in the years to come, we must all of us remember that!

Jim

But Kasia, I worry, after Paris...do you think could be happy with me out in, I don't know, whatever tollway we end up off of?

Ann

(Bogart-like) But the two of you, you'll always have Paris, even if...even if you end up beyond O'Hare!

Kasia

James, am I not in Paris now? We must take care, though, of both bodies...

yes?

Jim

You bet... Ever since I saw you at the nightclub, ever since I saw you on a stage... I'm glad, glad each of us has two bodies...thank God, God didn't do it any other way! *(They kiss, all applaud)*

Epilogue

Ann

(steps out, alone, on darkened stage)

So...what did I do? *(smiles)* Oh of course I took the job with Clinton, and now, only now at last am I stepping down after doing what I wanted. How perfect, everyone thinking, Oh, she is hard at work extending human life, since I told everyone that was my goal, my priority, and I ended up in charge of everything. I handed out grants during the day and to the stupidest people, so that I looked like I was...trying to help you, all of you, live longer but of course I was doing just the reverse...in the light of day I was doing one thing, while in the dark like Penelope I undid it all... And since there are so many incompetents clamoring for grants, I was able to make sure there wasn't any breakthrough...because now I know that if one day the rich, or should I say the superrich, ever get what I almost got them, they won't just be the rich, or the superrich anymore... They will be a whole new race, a whole new species, an animal such as Darwin could not imagine, and the residue of the rest of us, what we like to call the human species...they will destroy or turn us into slaves... Just as we did, of course, to the poor Neanderthals...yes, long ago, they were like the staff at Paris Bistro. One day we will be the staff at Paris Bistro, too...the super-humans like Misia will be in charge... I often dream of her, that girl...how often she has come back to me, in dreams... You think it was only going to be just once? No, many times since, she's pursued me, and I wrestle with her, fight with her, until the dawn... I feel her getting stronger every visit...how badly she wants this thing I have, the thing she read about in Le Monde... I don't know how much longer I can hold her off.
(BLACKOUT)