

BOYKIE AND GIRLIE

By

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CHARACTERS

Boykie	a man
Girlie	a woman

THE SCENE

An old block of flats (apartments) ; a kitchen and bathroom in one of the flats (apartments).

SET

A kitchen table; two chairs; a stove; a side unit with storage space which stands next to the stove; a rubbish bin; a clothes horse; a pot plant; a few pots and pans; tins of food; mainly empty bottles of alcohol; a toilet with a door.

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B brays off stage; strolls in with a book. Begins to read aloud.

B: "Box 3, spool 5." (*Brays. Pause.*) "Slight improvement in bowel condition." (*Brays. Pause.*) "Memorable equinox." Now, that's a really peculiar line. (*Brays. Shakes his head. Laughs. Takes a pot out of the side table. Places it on the stove.*) "Hard to believe I was ever that young whelp. The voice! Jesus! And the aspirations! And the resolutions! To drink less, in particular." (*Stops. Brays. Opens one side of the side unit, looks at the array of bottles of alcohol inside. Shakes his head. Close sit . . .*) Drink less . . . (*Brays. Enters the toilet. Sits.*) "Good to be back in my old den in my old rags. Have just eaten I regret to say three bananas and only with difficulty restrained a fourth." (*Brays. Laughs.*) If only . . . (*Brays. Concentrates on shitting. Gives up. Continues reading.*) "Spiritually a year of profound gloom and indulgence until that memorable night in March at the end of the jetty in the howling wind never to be forgotten, when suddenly I saw the whole thing!" (*Brays. Stops.*) The whole thing . . . fuck it. (*Brays. Tries again to shit. Gives up. Resumes reading.*) "How do you manage it, she said, at your age. I told her I'd been saving up for her all my life." (*Brays. Throws the book down. Stands, pulls up his pants.*) Mister Krapp! Whatcrap!

G: (*Enters carrying shopping bags. Sets them down, takes off her 'smart' shoes, arranges the delicacies. Lifts the cover of the pot on the stove. Looks around.*) Boykie! How did it go today? (*Pause.*) Get anything done? (*Boykie emerges from the toilet. Anything from your agent?*)

B: (*Brays. Points at the shopping bags on the table.*) Don't you think you've overdone it?

G: Why?

B: There's food here for a month.

G: Nonsense, there's barely enough for a week, my darling.

B: No, really Girlie, it's a waste – of food *and* of money.

G: Let me be the judge of that. (*Places bags on a sideboard.*) After another day of thankless struggle in the human jungle . . . yes, that case didn't go to well today, they had a long line of very dodgy witnesses but did that make His Worship a little disbelieving, oh no, the good man lent his ear to their nonsense. Yes, that was my day. But still she spent her *hard* earned time and cash on picking up rare delights, exotic pastries and pies to please her *hard-to-please* mate. (*Spins round with two small boxes.*) Look what I've brought for you!

B: Don't try and sweet-talk me. (*Slight pause.*) You've gone overboard.

G: Eat now or later?

B: Nothing for me.

G: Pity, I'm ready for more than just a bite. And I'm sure you didn't cook for yourself. So you must be hungry.

B: Are you deaf? I just said I'm not hungry. (*Pause.*) You know full well why I don't have an appetite.

G: I do?

B: (*Mockingly.*) I'm starving for my art.

G: (*Points to some groceries.*) Please put this stuff in the cupboard.

B: No.

G: (*Slight pause.*) You're really not hungry?

B: No.

G: But I can't leave you every morning knowing you're on a *hunger* strike.

B: Strike one, strike all.

G: Never mind my *wasting* good money on food for the two of us, you'll *waste* away. Ag, don't turn our little love nest into a *wasteland* . . . ha, ha. (*Slight pause.*) You know, you look terrible. This has got to stop. You must start eating normally again. (*She begins arranging vegetables on the kitchen unit next to the stove and places a cutting board on the table. She then lights the stove and places a large pot on one of the plates and takes a large kitchen knife and starts to chop them up. Throughout the play she will busy herself doing this as she prepares a meal.*)

B: What's the fucking point?

G: (*Puts her arms round him.*) Come on, I'll make something special. Something light.

B: Something so light I won't even *feel* it.

G: It will flutter about in your guts . . .

B: (*In a fake accent.*) Without making you feel that you've consumed the slightest morsel of life-giving substance. (*Brays.*) You're a bloody marvel.

G: I *am* a marvel. The restorer of lost desires.

B: Ja, the filler of holes. But some holes can't be filled. Not even Girlie the Marvel can fill certain holes. (*Getting up from the table, claps his hands.*) I'm off. (*Slight pause.*) I'm going.

G: (*Dryly.*) To the cemetery? I mean, that's what you call your study these days.

B: Study? What is there to study?

G: Nothing, of course. But I won't be nasty. And why not? Because a graveyard is a cheerful place to make a relaxing meal of yourself. (*Pause.*) Boykie, have a snack. Humour me.

B: Alright. (*Slight pause.*) Just . . . one dry biscuit.

G: No, five crackers with a little something on top. (*Slight pause.*) Eat all of them and I won't stop you having another midnight snack with my sister-witches on top of a mouldy marble slab in memory of Lady Macbeth.

B: No doubt you'll join me in that fitting tribute to all ambitious wives. (*Slight pause.*) Where's the spade?

G: What do you need a spade for?

B: Don't play dumb. You've pointed the way. (*Slight pause.*) I need a *spade* to dig a *grave*.

G: My Boykie, a grave digger? Ag, shame— such hard work on an empty stomach. (*Slight pause.*) For chrissake, go and lie down. Have a nap. I'll call you when the food's ready.

B: I'm going to finish off what I started.

G: Started. Yes, always finish off what you've started. (*Slight pause.*) Fact is, you've only managed to dig about *half way* down to the necessary depth. You know . . . (*SHE mimes digging a grave, using a broom.*)

B: No, deeper, much, much deeper.

G: Come to think of it, you were deep enough only minutes after you were thrust out of your *mother's* unloving womb.

B: (*Takes the broom from her and starts miming digging.*) I dig and dig but there's still not enough room for my carcass. The soil flies out, but then, for some damn unfathomable reason, it keeps falling back in. (*Acts out the scene.*) Ah, the soil. . . *Mother Earth's* dank and shitty soil . . . (*Mimes digging up soil and sniffing it.*)

G: Ah, so it's the *shit* in the soil that's saving you. (*In a preacher's voice.*) "Oh brother, who can tell from whence salvation will come." Now get out of the kitchen and have a little sleep. Maybe you'll wake up in a better mood.

B: My mood is . . .

G: Sombre, mournful, funereal . . . and has been for how long now?

B: Back off. My mood is irrelevant. It never interferes with my commitment to the task at hand. And if I perform it diligently, it will save you hiring someone to finish the job. Then that saving can be used for something more . . .

G: Life-affirming? (*Caresses his cheek.*) I promise that after a good rest and a snack you can go and meet Dr Death and his bunch of 'last resting place' inspectors. They will check if you've reached the required depth of . . . shall we say *depression*. (*Punches him affectionately.*) Get going already!

B: Don't talk to me about *depression*.

G: No, I won't. (*Affectionately mocking.*) Let's rather talk about love – mine for you, you for me, you for you, me for me. And finally – our love for our love.

B: No, Girlie, please! Spare me this . . . this little . . .

G: Why, what are you risking? Aren't you a regular junkie?

B: Aren't we both. But I pass on this domestic drama. Besides, I risk letting you down even more than I have.

G: So what? You've walked the tightrope more or less successfully for long enough.

B: No, I haven't.

G: Yes, you have. We forgave each other when lines were crossed so long as we didn't deny responsibility. And we're both still here. Even though you, my fine friend, are seriously guilty of ignoring a chance to plant a very sweet-smelling flower on top of your half-empty, half-filled . . .

B: But Girlie, it's not you. It's not you that I can't live with. *I'm* not strong enough to deal with . . . (*Embraces her. Breaks off*) It's all . . . it's all so absurd, so trivial, so demeaning . . .

G: Hey, you're vomiting over a pretty full plate.

B: (*Sneering.*) Ja, despite the ongoing wave of capitalist *accumulation* there are still millions of children starving in South Sudan. (*Slight pause.*) I'm not being self-indulgent. I resent your saying that. (*Moving away from G.*) Ok, I *am* whining. But it's the truth. I've got nothing . . .

G: Going for you right now?

B: (*Sitting down again.*) I'm bored. I'm . . .

G: (*Sharply.*) Come on, stop this. I'll make something light.

B: I've done nothing today. Nothing. I need something, dammit . . . something . . .

G: Challenging? And am I supposed to confess that you're *my* challenge? (*Laughs.*) Alright. How about washing the floor? There's the mop. Get cracking. Wash the floor down. Give it a good shine, Boykie. No doubt about it, it *is* your turn. (*Sings.*) 'Turn, turn, turn – for every season, there is a turn, turn, turn . . .'

B: (*Pretending to whine like a child.*) No, no. Anything but the floor. I'll do the next lot of dishes. Leave me the *next* full sink.

G: Yes, go full sink ahead.

B: I swear I'll do it.

G: Don't. I know all about your vows. Their shorti-ti-vity.

B: Wait a minute . . . I cooked the last few meals. And the one who cooks doesn't also wash up – a very *fair* division of labour.

G: Rubbish. There are hardly any dishes – for obvious reasons. And most of the time you get takeaways.

B: That's not being lazy. That's being smart.

G: Yes, you are *smart*, though lacking in . . . more basic intelligence. But I must say, when there's absolutely no way out, you do cook rather well, my darling. And always have.

B: Ah! Recognition of my magic concoctions.

G: Especially those laced with rhino horn.

B: A rhino horn or two, thrown into the stew. . . (*Starts to strut around thrusting his pelvis. Stops.*) Me. I'm not a chef – I'm just a stirrer, a simple stirrer . . . just chuck it all in and . . . stir the pot.

G: A sir of a stir! Yes, what a stirrer! You're such a stirrer it's no mystery why you got kicked out of every bloody organization you ever joined.

B: What do you expect me to do? Stand by and watch power games run riot. And then have to kow-tow to petty egos once they're entrenched.

G: Exactly! Why bow down to petty egos? They've none of the grandeur of your little specimen.

B: Mine is a rare species of ego. Sometimes a little swollen but never to the point where it overwhelms others.

G: No, no, never one to seek the limelight.

B: Limelight? You think I'm looking for fame? (*Brays.*) Come on, Girlie. That reminds me of a great insight, made decades ago, mind you, by old whatshisname . . . Andy Warhol. And what did he say? He said not to panic. The new technology will ensure that we'll all be famous for fifteen minutes, every one of us known by the world, held in utmost esteem, for a full fifteen minutes. (*Slight pause.*) But these days it's gone down to fifteen fucking seconds.

G: Well, that's more than *zero* seconds.

B: It doesn't matter how much attention you get. Today, after your latest acquisition/hit record/starring role/top award/knighthood/first prize/gold medal/inauguration into the Hall of Fame, what do you have to show for it? Barely fifteen seconds of adoration or notoriety. Just fifteen fucking seconds when you've had countless wet dreams of an eternity where your work is on everyone's lips, your face on every billboard, and every network is buzzing with your latest tweet. Forever and ever, the centre . . .

G: Of the fucking universe.

B: Yes! A lootah continua!

G: So play it! Show me *you* as the centre of the fucking universe! Go on, let's see you do it! Play it! Carry the world on your broad back! (*B stands, smiles but does not move.*) Go on, do something! Show you're worthy! Carry the world on your broad shoulders! (*B. picks up a pot plant from the kitchen unit and begins to dance with it as if he is carrying the world. He whirls round and round as G. encourages him.*) Yes, that's it! Now you've got the hang of it – keep going! Very good, Mister Superman! You can return to earth. You've done your stint up there in the clouds. What joy to breathe in the perfumes of power and ignore the stench of envy!

B: An envy-fumigant is a useful item for us, super-stars. It's not easy dealing with our rivals. Scenting the sweetness, they want more sugar in their coffee. While those who know they haven't a chance of scaling our heights keep applauding us for want of anything better to do, the ones coming up, the ones really sniffing success . . . why, they're a motherfucking bunch of . . .

G: Just as well you fell off those exalted heights long ago so there's nothing to lose.

B: (*Smiles.*) Yes, it has been a while, quite a while. A sudden coup. Forced retirement from the mafias that run this demented backwater. (*Brays. Slight pause.*) Damn . . . I'm feeling . . . a bit nauseous. (*Stops. Walks over to the toilet. Opens the door. Tries to vomit into the bowl. Then drops his pants, stands for a few moments.*)

G: (*Goes to check on him.*) Are you alright? (*Slight pause.*) Close the door. (*B ignores her.*) I said 'close the door'.

B: (*Mimicking her.*) Close the door. (*Sits.*)

G: I don't want the smell in my kitchen.

B: It's not 'your' kitchen.

G: Yes, it is. I happen to have purchased just about everything in this room that qualifies it as a *kitchen*.

B: Including the drama. (*Brays.*) Don't be so . . . crude about your financial prowess, my darling. In any case, how can an empty stomach give off a smell? Any sort of smell.

G: Gas –there's a buildup of gas in your guts. You know, sulphur, carbon monoxide . . .

B: Bio-fuel, dammit, I'm creating bio-fuel!

G: Then take a container to trap it.

B: Ok, pass me one.

G: One of your old vodka bottles?

B: Why not?

G: Coming up. *(Turns her back and searches for a bottle. Picks one up from under the table.)* And this one's still got a shot left.

B: Bring it! I'll drain the last precious drop before attaching the aperture of the vessel to my rectum. Get it here fast, Girlie, or I'll crawl out and get it myself. *(Slight pause.)* And add some orange juice!

G: With ice?

B: Yeah, why not.

G: Wait . . . you usually want tomato juice.

B: I said *orange*.

G: There's hardly any orange.

B: Quit stalling!

G: But we've got three cans of tomato.

B: Damn, can't a man change his habits? Pour 'em down the drain and stop this crap.

G: You're the one who's got to stop the crap. And close the fucking door.

B: I can't believe it! Why the sudden fuss? I've taken plenty of shits with the door open.

G: Indeed, you have, my precious. But God's the one who decides and she's decided no more foul odours wafting into the kitchen from this moment and this moment on.

B: Fuck that. I'm blocked.

G: Argh! The day we move to a bigger flat so you can get some action away from my sharp nose will be a mighty blessed day. But till then – vodka and orange juice with ice coming up! *(Walks over to Boykie and hands him a bottle.)*

B: Thanks, babe. I knew you'd have mercy. *(Takes a swig.)*

G: A poisoned chalice from your 'One and Only'. *(Mimes closing the door.)*

B: *(Stopping her before it's completely closed.)* Hey, there's no bloody vodka in here! I don't want juice! Where's the vodka?

G: First close the door.

B: No! First put the bloody vodka in . . .

G: I can't trust you.

B: Then I'll close the door.

G: Close it.

B: Vodka first.

G: No. *(Laughs.)*

B: You'll have to trust me.

G: No, I don't have to.

B: Then the door stays open.

G: No, no, no, Boyo! No more vodka. In fact, better the stench of your bowels than the stench of your alcoholic breath.

B: Lay off, Girlie!

G: You're hitting the bottle a little too much of late.

B: The search for meaning needs to be lubricated.

G: How would I know the truth of that? I'm just one of those worker bees who keep on buzzing without knowing or wondering why.

B: Ah, a moment of humility!

G: But there is one thing I do most certainly know: I can't stand the reek of alcohol coming out of your body every night.

B: Then bring me an empty container so I can at least continue with my ecologically sound recycling of gasses.

G: If I do, you promise to eat my little light something?

B: Promise.

G: So help you God.

B: Hey, leave the bitch out of this. *(Covers his face with his hands.)* At last! *(Closes the door.)* Only joking. Now bring me my vodka!

G: Don't be disgusting! You promise to eat when you're out?

B: What's the point of shitting and then eating? Or eating and then shitting, or shitting while you're eating . . .

G: There doesn't have to be a point. You have to live before you can die. So . . . you have to eat before you can shit. Point of fact, you spend half your life in that little room. And why? Because . . . once upon a time, you were a compulsive eater. And, most of that time, of trash.

B: Then you should be happy that I'm now cutting back on non-essentials.

G: Like what? Moaning and groaning about how lousy and useless you feel.

B: (*Opens the door.*) Like potatoes and rice and pasta and bread and . . .

G: Shut the door – you've no idea how offensive this is.

B: Ok, relax! (*Shuts the door.*) I'll eat, goddamit! Just make it simple, and not too much garlic.

G: But you like garlic.

B: I do like garlic.

G: Then what's your problem?

B: Light hand, Girlie. Apply with a light hand.

G: What have *hands* to do with garlic? It pours itself out of a container without my help.

B: (*Opens the door.*) Where's my bloody vodka?

G: Just wait with decorum for what's coming.

B: Does that include a dose of your *loving kindness*? (*Slight pause.*) As soon as I'm done here, I'm going.

G: Hey, we had an agreement.

B: What? For me to sample another one of your unmentionable . . . ?

G: Try *unnamable*.

B: Just don't take liberties with my recipes.

G: How could I? I'm the mother of precision.

B: And of derision.

G: No, no. I'm far too soft when it comes to sorting you out.

B: (*Rises from the toilet. Brays.*) Soft. *Soft* as the gentle rain touching the faces of the casualties of civil and uncivil war. (*Hitches up his pants.*) *Soft* as the flight of radioactive particles from tsunamied nuclear power stations. (*Brays. Pause.*) Have you added the garlic? (*Sits down at the table.*)

G: I decided on chili.

B: No, you're even more heavy-handed with chili! I'll have to drink so much water that sometime between three and five in the morning, pissing in our beautiful, lumpy bed will become an inevitability.

G: Thanks for the warning. I'll sleep on the sofa.

B: No, sleep here. (*Motions to the kitchen table.*)

G: But then the mattress comes with me. You can soften those broken bed springs with towels.

B: Not a chance. I'll take your forty-four fur coats.

G: Forty-three, my darling.

B: Dammit, Girlie, you know how sensitive my palate is.

G: No, I don't. I only know how sensitive your stomach is – not to mention your soul. In fact, I know only too well how sensitive every bloody part of you is except the right side of your brain. That's a dead zone where fruit bats fly.

B: Funny you should mention fruit bats. I was just reading about them. They're massive, really big flying rats. You find them all over India. In the late afternoon they come down in these gigantic flocks over lakes, darkening the whole bloody countryside.

G: Where did you get that from?

B: Some damn book . . . the autobiography of . . . some bloody actor. He went holidaying there with his boyfriend. They were on a pilgrimage, you know, seeking the *spiritual* in nature. (*Brays.*) And there, by that Indian lakeside, as the fruit bats came pouring in, they experienced nirvana: an invisible God saturating the sky with their velvety wings. And afterwards they would go out in the jungle on elephants, watch the predators do their thing, then stroll off and *wash* the damn things in a river.

G: Wash who?

B: Why, the elephants.

G: Come on! Serious? (*B. nods.*) And how much did they pay for this *supreme* ecological wank?

B: I imagine quite a packet. But if you've got money to burn, why not? Scrubbing an elephant must *definitely* be an experience. Especially cleaning their ears, then polishing their tusks. Then . . .

G: No! These guys must have concentrated on the *bulls* and had a pretty nice time soaping their . . . Hey, maybe you can write a porno script with that as the climax? "There by the

banks of the Ganges, only meters away from an ashram, two bronzed hulks slowly lather a young bull's monstrously large member."

B: (*Comes up behind her.*) And while one of them's soaping away, the elephant gets so excited he falls on the . . . bugger! (*Pushes her down onto the table and pulls up her dress.*)

G: (*Pushing him away.*) Hey, watch that word 'bugger'! Not allowed anymore.

B: The word or the activity?

G: Certainly not the word. And the activity has to be performed gently and with appropriate protective equipment.

B: Of course, *we* know all about that.

G: Well, you're not trying it on me again.

B: (*Slight pause. Smiles.*) Why not? I thought you enjoyed it.

G: No, I didn't. I was too self-conscious and it was painful.

B: But you told me you'd done it before and it was ok. With that guy, that American you went with to Vic Falls . . .

G: I didn't enjoy it then and I didn't enjoy it with you.

B: But you made all the right sounds.

G: The *right* sounds?

B: The haunting sounds of extreme pleasure.

G: Oh, really?

B: Don't pretend. Don't pretend! It was only during the very last *occasion* that you complained.

G: I was always doing you a . . . a *favor*.

B: Didn't I use enough vaseline?

G: No, you didn't.

B: Sorry, my darling. I'll make up for it next time.

G: There won't be a next time.

B: Was just a thought.

G: Is *that* what you call it?

B: This reminds me of a mate I had at school. He moved to London and met up with this Irish girl who liked water sports.

G: What?

B: Water sports. Ja. Fuck, hey, this girl was really into it. He didn't know how to take it. He was out of his depth. He'd never come across this type of stuff before.

G: What's the big deal? Breaststroke, backstroke, thighstroke . . .

B: Come on, Girlie – I'm talking about people pissing on each other and stuff like that . . . hardcore, crazy stuff.

G: *(Ignores him. Pauses.)* Stop this nonsense. Go and have a lie down. I'll finish supper in the meantime.

B: *(Holds out his hand.)* Alright . . . but don't wake me too soon. Give me enough time for a wild fantasy.

G: My dear boy, we've already noted your deficiency in that department.

B: *(Throws up his hands.)* So I'm over it, am I? A neutered stallion, a castrated gladiator . . .

G: Go and lie down.

B: Lie down with the toothless attack dogs . . .

G: Go and lie down before I boil the kettle and throw it over you.

B: *(Runs round the table singing.)* 'Boil, boil, boil . . . who the hell needs cooking oil?'

G: Get out of here!

B: *(Still running round the table.)* 'Boil, boil, boil . . . who the hell needs cooking oil?'

G: *(Starts following him round the table.)* 'Out, out, before I shout! Out, out, before I turn you inside out!' *(B. picks up the kitchen knife from the table, grabs her and holds it to her throat. They look nervously at each other without speaking then after a few seconds start laughing.)* Sweetie pie, lie down and close your eyes. Then feel your body, your whole maggot-ridden body, slowly decay further till you're a mass of worms. *(B. kisses her.)* A last kiss before the final rot.

B: I just hope what's in that pot is a little tastier, a little more exciting, than the usual . . .

G: Slop and vleis. And this time it's horse meat. *(Whinnies. BOYKIE brays in return.)* Go already. I need to carry on chopping.

B: Oh, you do that my single-minded beauty. Let me have a little shut-eye.

G: (*Pushes him towards an exit.*) 'Get thee hence, thy foul visitation.'

B: 'Leave off, thou pestilential hag.' (*Exits.*)

G: A man for all seasons and master of none. A man who oozes compassion but only for failed messiahs; a man who gives charity to the poor so long as the small change comes from my pocket; a man who uncovers the secrets of the universe by injecting himself with rat poison; a man who knows himself to be a colossus in waiting, in the making, the unfinished masterpiece his mother always dreamt he would be.

While she is finishing her 'speech', B. re-enters.

G: What *is* wrong with you today?

B: I just had the weirdest flashback.

G: I'll bet. And how long did it last? As long as it takes me to run round this table again?

B: Don't try and be funny. Remember that Ethiopian woman I was involved with, the one who was selling coffee machines.

G: Of course I do.

B: I just suddenly thought of her.

G: A waking dream of this *Sheba* you laid while exploring the upper reaches of the Nile.

B: You know, the time we spent together was very sweet and tender.

G: (*Half-smiling.*) In marked contrast to the hell you and I are living in.

B: My darling, let's face it. These days we go through the motions of respecting each other, of helping, supporting, providing. We're only *shadows* of emotion.

G: (*Sarcastically.*) Motions of blocked emotion . . . and of course, its' my fault. (*Slight pause.*) Do I really need to hear this?

B: Yes, you do. (*Pause.*) She had big breasts and a slightly thick waist but her bum was perfect, not too big, not too small, but well rounded, you know, just rounded enough so it sits in your hand perfectly while the other hand is moving up her back slowly massaging her so she starts to squirm with pleasure and then your lips are on her ear lobe and she begins to push against you and you feel yourself harden till you are so fucking hard with the pleasure you want to kiss her on the lips, and you fucking kiss her on the lips and she pushes against you with such sweetness, the fucking sweetness of holding her and kissing her as she moves up and down against your groin is over-fucking-whelming.

G: You deserve a rest after that epic recital. (*With utmost scorn.*) Pity the poetry stays locked up in the mind, trapped on the tongue.

B: Wait a minute! You've brought me to ecstasy too, my darling. (*Comes up behind her.*) I've been besotted with you. You know that. You know how good it was. Once all that mattered was to hold each other and slowly kiss and lick each other's eyelids and nuzzle each other's necks. (*Pause. Caresses her.*) You remember the times in that place, that flat on Klein St? We once stayed put in the flat for four days. All we did was . . . yes, all we did was . . . make love. We were blessed. (*Silence. B slowly exits.*)

G: (*Sings.*) 'Midnight on the long road, I've read your book to the end, I cannot accept the load, you lay upon your friends. But I will be true to you, like the sunshine and the dew, I'll be true. Midnight in the tree-flying park, I've read your palm and all its lines, I cannot explain the dark messages its contours define. But I will be true to you, like the rainbow's red and blue, I'll be true. Midnight . . .

B: (*Reappears. Sheepishly*) I can't sleep. (*Slight pause.*) Food ready?

G: Vot a question? Foodie-foodie . . .

B: God, I'm hungry now.

G: And vot for is my Boykie hungry?

B: For . . .

G: Foodie-foodie . . . Boykie hungry.

B: Boykie hungry for . . .

G: Peace? A piece of pie, a slice of action?

B: Funny you should say *peace*. (*Sits at the table.*)

G: (*Laughing.*) Knocked zis vey, knocked dat vey, oy vey, Boykie wants respite. (*Pause. In a serious tone.*) No money for rent, no money for food, no money for medicine, no money for movies, no money for books . . .

B: Hey, hey, can I eat now?

G: Now he wants it . . . snaps his fingers . . . Well, it's almost ready, almost but not quite. (*Slight pause.*) Speaking of money, *honey*, when you getting that payment?

B: What payment?

G: For that last job.

B: What you talking about?

G: That last job. For that old woman. When you getting paid? It's been months now . . .

B: Oh, *that* book. Ja, it has been a while.

G: *Much* more than a while. Give them a ring.

B: Yes, I should.

G: Give the gents a ring. Give them a little buzz in the ear. Bzzz, bzzzz bzzzz . . .

B: Shit, that was a funny project.

G: But it kept you on your toes. It's been a long time since you were on your toes.