

The Mercurian



A Theatrical Translation Review Volume 5, Number 1

Editor: Adam Versényi
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The Mercurian is named for Mercury who, if he had known it, was/is the patron god of theatrical translators, those intrepid souls possessed of eloquence, feats of skill, messengers not between the gods but between cultures, traders in images, nimble and dexterous linguistic thieves. Like the metal mercury, theatrical translators are capable of absorbing other metals, forming amalgams. As in ancient chemistry, the mercurian is one of the five elementary “principles” of which all material substances are compounded, otherwise known as “spirit”. The theatrical translator is sprightly, lively, potentially volatile, sometimes inconstant, witty, an ideal guide or conductor on the road.

The Mercurian publishes translations of plays and performance pieces from any language into English. *The Mercurian* also welcomes theoretical pieces about theatrical translation, rants, manifestos, and position papers pertaining to translation for the theatre, as well as production histories of theatrical translations. Submissions should be sent to: Adam Versényi at anversen@email.unc.edu or by snail mail:

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Volume 5, Number 1

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Editor's Note

The idea for this, our first guest-edited issue, began when Gillian Drake, Artistic Director of Zeitgeist DC, invited me to attend “Theater of the Voiceless: International Symposium and Festival of Documentary Theater” in June 2013. I spent two days in Washington, D.C., accommodation courtesy of the Austrian Embassy, attending a vibrant succession of panels on, and staged readings of, German language documentary theater in translation. That experience led to asking Gillian to put together this issue of theatrical translations spanning Zeitgeist DC’s work since 2011. The “Theater of the Voiceless” Symposium and Festival illustrated Zeitgeist DC’s approach to bringing theatre in translation alive in a number of different ways. Not only did the Symposium include U.S. artists like Ping Chong, Doug Wager, and Randy Gener, among others, in discussion with the European artists about documentary theatre, but artistic responses to *a small, small world* and *Worst Case* by D.C. companies Forum Theatre and Taffety Punk Theatre Company, creating another layer of response to the German language work presented in translation that, in turn, fostered more dynamic discussions. Gillian’s introduction below describes each of the translations included in this issue more fully, what readers will miss, however, when reading them on the page is the delightful production of Konradin Kunze’s *a small, small world*, translated by Sophia Stepf, in conjunction with D.C.’s The Studio Theatre, with its use of tiny props on a table to the side of the playing space that were projected on a screen through a hand-held video camera, the strange effect of characters referring to one another and themselves in third person in Kathrin Röggla’s *Worst Case*, translated by Katy Derbyshire, in the excerpt presented in partnership with The Shakespeare Theatre Company, and the physically battering and mind-numbing sensation of sitting through the staged reading of Milo Rau’s *Hate Radio*, translated by John German and Eva-Maria Bertschy, in a collaboration with The Laboratory for Global Performance and Politics at Georgetown University and Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater. Not having experienced either *Crazy Blood* or *Chirping Hill* in production myself I am in the same position. However, reading Jens Hilje and Nurkan Erpulat’s *Crazy Blood*, translated by my colleague here at UNC-Chapel Hill Priscilla Layne-Kopf, with its highly theatrical approach to Turkish immigration to Germany and its three different levels of playing, I can easily envision a production style in some ways reminiscent of Peter Brook’s staging of Peter Weiss’ *Marat/Sade*. Thomas Arzt’ *Chirping Hill*, translated by *The Mercurian* Advisory Board member Neil Blackadder, with its idiosyncratic layout on the page and its erotic examination of corporate corruption might inspire a similarly innovative use of stage space in production. I look forward to future productions of all five of the plays translated from German published in this issue, and thank Gillian Drake once more both for creating and sustaining Zeitgeist DC, and for her work as Guest Editor on this issue.

Back issues of *The Mercurian* can now be found on the website of the Department of Dramatic Art at the University of North Carolina, <http://drama.unc.edu/related-links/the-mercurian/> where we will maintain a permanent web presence. As the theatre is nothing without its audience, *The Mercurian* welcomes your comments, questions, complaints, and critiques. Deadline for submissions for consideration for publication in future issues of *The Mercurian* will be November 1, 2014.

--Adam Versényi

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“People - amateur critics in particular - have a habit of blaming the translator when they don’t get what they expect out of translated fiction (which is why I try never to read Amazon reviews of books I’ve translated). So I was concerned that theatre audiences might do the same with this play - but I hope the whole thing was just so incredibly strange on stage that they realized it was ‘supposed to be like that.’” Katy Derbyshire, translator, *Worst Case* by Kathrin Röggla

The annual Zeitgeist theater festival commissions new translations of Austrian, German and Swiss plays that might not otherwise ever be seen or heard in the US. The playwrights, most of whom likely have never been heard of here, then work with American theater artists to hear their own plays in another language, with another theater aesthetic and a new perception of their meaning and impact.

Zeitgeist DC: New plays in translation from Germany, Austria and Switzerland have been at the center of Zeitgeist DC since June 2011. The participating organizations include Shakespeare Theatre Company, the Studio Theatre, The Laboratory for Global Performance and Politics at Georgetown University and the Zeitgeist DC partners (the Goethe-Institut Washington, The Austrian Cultural Forum and the Embassy of Switzerland). They produce or stage innovative plays and performances for a week in the late spring. In the past two years, we have focused on particular theatrical genres and added a day long Symposium to our roster of performances.

Central to our mission is to bring playwrights from each country, or their translators, to Washington DC for a week of rehearsals to work with our directors and actors to collaborate on a performance – a reading or workshop performance. This has been successful on several fronts: exposure for the European playwrights and their translators, exciting opportunities for our local artists, and a blending of audiences between the embassies and the theaters in a cross-Atlantic conversation.

Zeitgeist Theater Festival Track Record:

June 2011: The first year we sought to find successfully produced plays from our Zeitgeist partner countries that dealt with socio-political issues that were facing our communities on both sides of the Atlantic. Switzerland’s most famous and prolific playwright, Lukas Barfuss sent us

Oil, translated by Neil Blackadder that explored the regional impact of natural resource exploitation by foreigners. The future of technology and medicine on the human condition was the underlying theme in *The Ugly One* by Marius von Mayenburg, an equally prominent German playwright. The effects of the shifting economic opportunities during a relentless recession on middle class families are at the heart of Ewald Palmetshofer's darkly funny and tragic *hamlet is dead. no gravity*. What made the first Zeitgeist event special was having Ewald Palmetshofer in residence for a week, rehearsing with Arena Stage's David Dower and nine local actors, and the following week having translator Neil Blackadder for a week of rehearsals with Ford's Theater Resident Director Mark Ramont and his talented cast of local actors working on *Oil*.

June 2012: Mid-career playwrights and their translators were our new focus, and we brought over all four playwrights for one week each. We also commissioned two translations for our second year: Neil Blackadder worked with Austria's Thomas Arzt on a dark bucolic romp about corporate corruption, *Chirping Hill*. Karin Rosnizeck was commissioned to translate *Cold Country*, by Swiss playwright Reto Finger, a twisted fairytale play about child sexual abuse by a village priest. What was perhaps most important to the playwrights themselves is that we expanded our reach to New York and added Playwrights Horizons, New York Theatre Workshop and Soho Rep as theater partners as well as our Washington DC theaters. The Goethe Institut-DC brought UNC (Chapel Hill) translator, Priscilla Layne-Kopf to Washington to meet the dynamic duo of Jens Hilje and Nurkan Erpulat (*Crazy Blood*) and to turn a translation which had been used originally for English subtitles into a strong, performance ready script.

June 2013: When the Zeitgeist DC group teamed up with Derek Goldman from the Laboratory for Global Performance and Politics at Georgetown University, our mission shifted a little by focusing on a theater genre, namely Documentary Theater.

The Studio Theatre teamed up with the Goethe-Institut to bring over playwrights Konradin Kunze and Sophia Stepf to restage their fascinating biographical play *a small small world*. The German playwrights, along with the help of Abhishek Majumdar, wrote the documentary piece in English, German, and Bengali, essentially translating the writing as they went. It was

performed originally in Germany, Bangladesh, and India, and it includes stop-motion animation, video projections and devised dialogue.

The Austrian Cultural Forum for the third year in a row commissioned a new translation, this time by Brit Katy Derbyshire, who set about the task of translating a dense, stylistically challenging text- *Worst Case*, by Kathrin Röggla, one of Austria's most celebrated playwrights. Shakespeare Theater Company's Jenny Lord worked with Katy to decipher the 'third person direct address' style of this semi-documentary piece.

Swiss theater artist Milo Rau's *Hate Radio* had the biggest impact on our audience and the symposium. It is a verbatim transcript of an actual radio broadcast from a Rwandan station during their civil war in the 1990's. John German had prepared the translation for subtitles, but the Embassy of Switzerland brought Eva Baretschy, one of the original researchers and dramaturgs, to help us adapt the translation/adaptation into a script for an American cast to prepare a performance from.

THE PLAYS:

Here we have a sampling of the scripts we have presented to audiences through our Zeitgeist International Festival and Symposium. We chose these scripts for a variety of reasons but chief among them was their potential to speak to an American audience while addressing issues that are 'trans-Atlantic' in nature or substance. The writing is rich, nuanced, and full of craft, strong characters, and perform-ability. Each script offers an opportunity for bold directing. The plays take on difficult issues and make equally bold choices on how to theatrically depict their stories: Terrorism's effect on a community with Röggla's journalistic didacticism; state-sponsored genocide with Rau's raw in-your-face hyper-naturalism; the effect of immigration on urban youth made visceral with Hillje/Erpulat's hip-hop filmic approach to realism; failed immigration presented in an ironic mashup of stop-motion animation, primary source material, and devised narrative scenes gives Kunze/Stepf's biography its theatrical punch; and Arzt's bucolic farce is an ironic approach to show how out of synch the human condition is when corporate culture is juxtaposed with nature.

***Crazy Blood* by Jens Hilje and Nurkan Erpulat; translated by Priscilla Layne-Kopf**

Nurkan Erpulat and Jens Hilje's renowned play *Verrücktes Blut* (2010) is a loose adaptation of French director Jean-Paul Lilienfeld's film *La journée de la joupe* (2008). Both productions focus on a secondary school teacher who takes her class of disobedient immigrant students hostage and attempts to teach them about tolerance by forcing them to read Enlightenment-era literature. Comically reducing virulent immigrant stereotypes to absurdity, this award-winning play shows young second or third generation German-Turks in a drama class with their fully-assimilated teacher trying to come to terms with Schiller's *The Robbers*. The play is a fascinating study of authoritarianism, racism, religion and tolerance.

Info Authors: Jens Hilje grew up in Milan, Munich and Landshut. After studying applied cultural studies in Perugia, Hildesheim and Berlin he started acting, directing and playwriting for the independent scene in Hildesheim, while focusing on theater projects with children and young adults. In 1996 he moved to Berlin and became the co-director of the Baracke des Deutschen Theaters, followed by a decade of being the chief scenario editor at the Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz. Throughout his career he worked closely with renowned artists like Barbara Frey, Christina Paulhofer, Árpád Schilling, Grzegorz Jarzyna, Tom Kühnel, Sebastian Nühling, Rafael Sanchez and Falk Richter. Jens Hilje came in second for the election of the "director of the year" award in 2011.

Nurkan Erpulat was born in Ankara in 1974. After completing his degree in acting studies in Izmir, he moved to Berlin. There he learned German and began to study theatrical pedagogy and directing at one of Germany's most renowned theatre academies, the Ernst Busch Academy of Dramatic Arts. Among his numerous works are plays like "Fake", "Jenseits – Bist du schwul oder bist du Türke?", "Schattenstimmen" and "Man braucht keinen Reiseführer für ein Dorf, das man sieht". Erpulat recently directed an adaptation of Kafka's novel "The Castle" at Deutsches Theater Berlin. Many of his works have been invited as guest performances to national and

international festivals. Since the 2011/2012 season, he is a resident director at the Düsseldorfer Schauspielhaus.

Priscilla Layne-Kopf, translator, is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She completed her BA in Comparative Literature at the University of Chicago and her MA and PhD in German at the University of California at Berkeley. In her interdisciplinary approach to German studies she investigates 20th and 21st century German culture, primarily through the analytic lenses of race and gender. She has presented papers at the German Studies Association, the Society for Cinema and Media Studies and the Black German Cultural Society. She has also published essays on such topics as German hip hop, Rainer Werner Fassbinder's film *Whity*, Feridun Zaimoğlu's *Koppstoff* and translation. In 2008, together with two colleagues, she won the Susan Sontag Prize for Translation for their translation of Zaimoğlu's *Koppstoff*. She is currently working on her book project, tentatively entitled *Black Masks, German Rebels: Music, Mimicry and Black Masculinity in Postwar German Culture*.

Crazy Blood

Written by Nurkan Erpulat and Jens Hillje
Translated by Priscilla Layne

Prologue
Transition
Song: If I were a Bird
Act One
Scene One: Bad German
Scene Two: Boys and Girls
Song: Autumn Song
Scene Three: Violence and Regret, Hate Monologue
Scene Four: Emancipation
Song: Goodbye, My Dear Homeland
Act Two
Scene One: Mariam Grabs the Gun
Song: Vows
Scene Two:
Scene Three: Sonia is Turkish/Exit
Scene Four: Hasan Grabs the Gun/End

Song: Lullaby

PROLOGUE

Note About Style:

Three styles or levels of acting: The actors are themselves, actors preparing to take on their characters, aware of the audience, real time. Second, the actors take on their characters for this play, like when they put on the costume elements of their character and they take on the physical, vocal etc, qualities. The third level is when these Kanake characters “embody” the characters in the several Schiller plays they read from in their drama class.

Quiet vs Silence: Where the term “Quiet” appears it is generally describing a “break”. Silence is just silence of all on stage at that moment.

Note about the “Songs”: These are very typical German Youth and Folk songs from the Romantic period in the 19th century. They were instrumental for building a national identity. Students learn these songs in school. It is possible to switch out songs for indigenous songs of the country where the play will be produced. Or, these German songs could be sung in English. But the style is one of the first level of acting. Just before a song begins, the actors reconfigure, become a company of actors looking out at the audience. They sing with sincerity.

PROLOGUE

The actors walk onto the stage, they talk amongst themselves and look at the audience.

Quiet

The actress playing Mariam puts on her headscarf.

Actors start to change from personal clothing to character costume. Everyone puts on their jackets and baseball caps, puts their phones away.

They become Kanaks (or the street term of Turk or Turkish immigrant; also “sand nigger” may be used) and take their place on stage.

In the following tableaux, one by one, each actor commences the action described. Each actor finds their own gesture and completes a series of movements.

“Stillness” indicates the following process. First, a return to being individual actors with a sense of centeredness. Second, becoming aware of the silence in this open space. Third, connecting to the audience. This “Stillness” is first seen in these Tableaux but is also used between scene breaks or before “Songs” at the end of some of the scenes.

Tableau # 1: Stillness

Tableau # 2: Hacking and spitting

Tableau # 3: Stillness

Tableau # 4: Crotch grabbing

Tableau # 5: Street insults

Tableau # 6: Preening

Tableau # 7: Sex Talk

Tableau # 8: Stillness

Tableau # 9: Crotch grabbing

Tableau # 10: Stillness

Tableau # 11: Spitting

Tableau # 12: Bitchy phone conversations

Tableau # 13: Stillness

Tableau # 14: Sex Talk

Tableau # 15: Crotch grabbing

Tableau # 16: Street insults

Tableau # 17: *In the final tableau, the actors become physical and start to create the space using the gestures of the tableaux as their physical starting point. The characters interact with each other and bully each other and greeting each other in very street-wise ways, creating the context of a high school classroom.*

After a while, Hakim and Ferit isolate Latifa and taunt her, while the others are still grouped together.

Sonia comes in with a pile of books.

SONIA: Good Morning! (*repeats this several times, but remains at side of classroom.*)

The aggressive interaction immediately turns into exaggerated ghetto greetings with high 5's, hugs, kisses, etc.

FERIT: (*he runs from Hakim and Latifa to the front*) Ape Ass!

(*Bastian pushes Latifa to the front*)

HAKIM: Nice ass.

LATIFA: Hey!

HAKIM: Did I ever tell you I like big butts?

FERIT: What's wrong with your butt? Did you get Botox?

HAKIM: I've never seen such a round ass.

LATIFA: Yes you have. Your own.

FERIT: Do you want an ass massage?

HAKIM: I just want to touch it once.

LATIFA: Go away!

FERIT: We respect women.

HAKIM: A little bit.

LATIFA: Why don't you touch his ass?

HAKIM: No way. His is boring. It's small. *(they force her into a corner)*

FERIT: Yeah, cool.

HAKIM: Yeah, such a round ass, that's what we like.

LATIFA: So go look at your mom's ass. *(wants to leave)*

FERIT: Hey man – I touched her butt.

(Bastian joins them and goes between them)

LATIFA: Hey!

BASTIAN: Hey, what are you doing asshole?

FERIT: What's the problem?

BASTIAN: You retarded or something?

FERIT: Just relax, man.

BASTIAN: You two against a girl?

HAKIM: So!

BASTIAN: Why don't you touch each other's butts? You too dude.

HAKIM: Yo dude, watch it!

Latifa turns away and wants to leave. Bastian touches her butt, too.

BASTIAN: *(raises his arms and gives someone a high five)*: Ape ass!

Sonia intervenes getting between the boys and Latifa.

SONIA: Stop, that's sexual harassment.

BASTIAN: Your face is sexual harassment. *(Hakim and Ferit laugh approvingly)*

SONIA: *(Ineffectually)* Sit down and leave her alone.

LATIFA: We can handle it ourselves, Miss.

SONIA: I...

LATIFA: *(interrupts her)* Don't get involved, OK? A little respect!

SONIA: Exactly, let's talk about respect. It's 8:20 and we still haven't been able to start the theater workshop.

HAKIM: That's a lie. It's 8:19. *(Bastian and Ferit laugh approvingly)*

SONIA: We've decided to dedicate this year's theater day to Friedrich Schiller. Today we're going to focus on his dramas from the Sturm and Drang epoch and read and act out a few scenes. The most important play of this period is "The Robbers."

(Bastian and Hakim notice Hasan with glasses, a baseball cap and a backpack in the back left corner sitting on a chair. Hasan sports a huge black eye. They go towards him. Bastian goes behind Hasan, with backpack, and makes him stand up. Hakim leads Hasan by the arm to the middle of the room. Musa and Ferit join in. Latifa and Mariam stay away.)

SONIA *(turns to the audience.)* **At the end of the 18th century, a young generation of German authors turned against authority and tradition.**

The following dialogue happens simultaneously. It is a counterpunctual type scene. Sonia is off to the side, when the class doesn't listen, she turns to the audience and lectures to them. Only her lines in BOLD need be heard or understood over the din. The students' conversation starts low and builds in loudness, intensity and activity as the boys bully Hasan to the point where they partially disrobe him.

SONIA: “The Robbers” was Friedrich Schiller’s first, great dramatic work and is still relevant today. The play centers around one family’s self destruction. In the Moor family, a scheming letter from Franz, the second born, causes a rift between his father and brother Karl. This falling out with his father leads Karl to become the leader of a band of robbers. Franz tells his father that Karl is dead and the troubled father faints and Frank locks him in the tower. With that, Frank becomes the ruler and tries to make Amalia, his brother’s fiancé, into his wife. But she resists. Franz tells her that Karl is dead. While Karl fights for justice, the other robbers commit gruesome crimes. Amalia finally learns that Karl is still alive and he returns to his home in disguise in order to see her. Karl frees his father and learns about his brother’s plans. Franz commits suicide. Karl’s oath binds him to the robbers as their captain. He and Amalia can only be together in the afterlife. Karl kills Amalia and turns himself in to the authorities.

The reoccurring theme is the conflict between the unruly youth who strives for freedom and the chains of the existing world order; a society that positions him as a rebel and a criminal.

BASTIAN: Well, there’s Hasan again.

HAKIM: Hasan

MUSA: Hassaaaaaaaaaaaaan

HAKIM: Hasanovitch

MARIAM: Hasanette

LATIFA: Slave

FERIT: Victim

HAKIM: Shake hands...Good Morning

FERIT: What’s up? Everything alright?

MUSA: What’s wrong man?

HAKIM: Man Hasan, don’t be like that.

Coming in like that, looking like a Playboy...

FERIT: Hah! A Playboy – Haassaaaaaaaaan

– How many girls have you fucked, huh?

Or maybe guys?

MARIAM (*overlapping*) Hey...did you do the homework?

LATIFA: Open your bag.

MARIAM: Did you do the homework?

Come on man, hand it over.

FERIT: Don’t be so selfish man.

HAKIM: Give it here.

Hakim gives the bag to Mariam. Both girls sit down in their chairs and search the bag.

HASAN: My bag!

BASTIAN (*mocking*): My bag!

FERIT: Indian giver.

BASTIAN: Lend me something.

HAKIM: Boohoo

MUSA: You want the other one to match?

BASTIAN: Is that a new T-Shirt? Women's department, huh?

FERIT: Preeetty.

The guys take Hasan's T-shirt off and dance around, gesturing to his black eye.

SONIA: You were supposed to read the play for today. Let's start with the second scene. So, who wants to read the part of Karl Moor?

Sonia crosses to Hasan and wants to see the black eye. The boys dance. The girls start to play keep away with his phone.

Sonia talks to Hasan. At the same time, Latifa takes Mariam's phone from her and they argue.

communication are not outdated. Even family conflicts are still the order of the day ...	<p>MARIAM: Nope.</p> <p>BASTIAN: What do you mean “nope.” You gotta have something.</p> <p>MARIAM: Hello?! I have a student bus pass.</p> <p>BASTIAN: <i>(to Ferit)</i> You owe me 10 Euros.</p> <p>FERIT: Since when?</p> <p>BASTIAN: Since two seconds ago.</p> <p>FERIT: I don’t have any money.</p> <p>BASTIAN: Oh really?</p> <p>FERIT: Walla.</p> <p>BASTIAN: Let’s see!</p> <p><i>Bastian searches his pockets, finds 20 Euro.</i></p> <p>FERIT: Hey, give that back.</p> <p>BASTIAN: Forget it man.</p> <p>FERIT: Gimme back my money.</p>
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SONIA: Stop!

Ferit pushes Bastian. Bastian pushes Ferit.

SONIA: STOPPPP!

FERIT: I’ll fuck you up!

BASTIAN: You’re dead man.

SONIA: STOOOOOOOOOPPP!!!

FERIT: Amina korum lan, ver parami!

[Translated meaning: I'll fuck your pussy, give me my money]

MUSA: *(No one stops till Musa tells them to)* Heeey! Stop!

They stop.

MUSA: *(gets up)* Give his money back.

SONIA: Yes, please give his money back.

BASTIAN: What?

MUSA: Right now, Ian!

SONIA: Now!

BASTIAN: But...

Bastian looks at Musa and returns the money to Ferit. They sit down.

MUSA: Everything OK, Miss Kelich?

Sonia nods.

MUSA: *(taking command):* OK, give me the money!

Ferit reluctantly gives the money to Musa. Musa makes Ferit and Hakim get out of their seats.

Musa and Bastian take their seats. Musa gives Bastian the money and he puts it away conspicuously. Sonia only watches.

SONIA: That's enough. Separate your chairs. Mariam, turn off your phone immediately. Hakim, Ferit, sit down at your assigned seats. *(To Musa and Bastian:)* And you two get up right now.

FERIT: It's OK, relax. We chose these seats ourselves.

MUSA: *(controlling the action):* Hey, no problem guys. Come sit right here. Everything's cool. If the teacher says you should sit here, then sit.

HAKIM: We're happy sitting here Miss Kelich. We don't want anything else.

MUSA: *(stands up)* You see Miss Kelich, we're nice. You guys can prove it. There's a lot of witnesses here. *(quietly to Mariam:)* What are you looking at? Am I a movie or something?

SONIA: *(trying to gain some authority):* Stop, Musa knock it off. Do you think I'm stupid? OK, now take off your hats and jackets. Come on...hurry up. It's already 8:35.

MUSA: *(interrupts her)* What are you going to take off? Man, swear to God. Her parents must be terrorists, 'cause she's the bomb. *(the others laugh approvingly.)*

SONIA: So, you were supposed to memorize the beginning of Scene Two from Act One of "The Robbers." Mariam, please come to the stage.

The boys make flirtatious calls.

MARIAM: No way Miss Kelich. I'm not crazy. I'm not getting up in front of these jackals.

SONIA: Mariam!

MARIAM: No, really no chance. I'm not going to do it.

SONIA: Mariam, I'm waiting on you. Or didn't you memorize the text?

MARIAM: Sure I did. But I'm not getting up there.

SONIA: Then recite it from your seat.

MARIAM: Whatever: "Pah! An age of eunuchs, good for nothing but discussing the actions of past days..."

HAKIM: Hey, get your feet off my chair! (*pushes Bastian's feet from his chair; he puts them back up*)

SONIA: Hakim, if you have something to say, then get on the stage.

HAKIM: But Miss Kelich, he keeps putting his feet on my chair. He thinks I'm his floor mat. Take them off, you bastard.

Bastian gets up, Hakim gets up, pushes him, Musa gets up, Sonia separates them.

SONIA: (*to Hakim*) Get on the stage! The rest of you sit back down now! Hasan, there's enough time left to listen. Please get on the stage. (*gives him a text book*)

BASTIAN: Go on you piece of shit.

FERIT: Fucking nerd! (*throws paper on the stage*)

After a little hesitation Hasan goes up front with his chair.

SONIA: The characters stand in this scene. (*takes the chair, puts it back. Mariam scoots over to Latifa*)

LATIFA: Hey Hasan, did you put on makeup before school?

Laughter; Sonia tries to get them quiet.

SONIA: Pssst! (*to Hasan*) "Oh, if only Arminius's spirit..."

HASAN: "Oh, if only Arminius's spirit still glowed in the ashes! – Give me an army of men like me to command, and I'll turn Germany into a republic that will make Rome and Sparta look like monasteries."

HAKIM: "Bravo! Bravissimo! Look, Moor, I'll tell you something I've been thinking about for a long time, what if we all became Jews, and started talking about the Kingdom again?"

HASAN: “Ha! I see, I see! You want to...”

SONIA: Hasan, that’s good but...

MARIAM: (*talking in the background with Latifa*) ...they were that small.

SONIA: ...a little louder. Hasan, take your time. Take your time and speak a little louder.

HASAN: “You want to put foreskins out of fashion...”

FERIT: You fags (*throws something onto the stage*)

SONIA: Can you be quiet now?

HASAN: “...because the barber already has yours?”

HAKIM: (*In the back, Musa and Bastian begin to struggle silently over the bag*) “You clown! It is true. I do happen, strangely enough, to be circumcised already. But look, isn’t it a brave and smart plan? We’ll send out a manifesto to all the corners of the world and call for everyone who won’t eat pork to come to Palestine. (*Musa brings the bag to the front*) I will have authentic documents to prove that Herod the Tetrarch was my great-great-grandfather, and so on. Man, what joy there will be, when they can build Jerusalem anew.”

BASTIAN: (*at the same time as Hakim*) Are you crazy?

MUSA: (*at the same time as Hakim*) Hey, I’m the boss!

SONIA: (*to Hakim*) You’re doing well, just speak more clearly.

FERIT: Hey Hasan, where did you leave your cowboy hat? (*throws paper at Hasan*)

SONIA: (*to the others*) Keep quiet!

HAKIM: “Then clear the Turks out of Asia while the time is right, cut down the cedars of Lebanon, build ships – ”

SONIA: Keep going Hasan.

HASAN: “Now, friend! No more trouble of that kind.”

BASTIAN: (*interrupts Hasan’s sentence*) Are you a greedy Jewish pig or something? I swear on the Koran, I’ll give it back. (*wants to take the bag*)

MUSA: What do you know about the Koran? Potato head.

SONIA: What’s so important in this bag, huh?

Musa and Bastian jump up, tense. Sonia has taken the bag.

MUSA: (*approaches Sonia*) You’re crazy, bitch. Give it back right now.

SONIA: Aha, now you’re so informal. (*tries to look in the bag*)

MUSA: (*approaches Sonia; she moves back*) Give me the bag, man!

SONIA: That's it. I'm fed up. You're going to the principal.

MUSA: I've been fed up for a long time.

The other students move towards the right side of the stage.

SONIA: That's it. (*Sonia moves to exit. Bastian blocks her way*)

BASTIAN: You wanna die or something?

MUSA: You've got no right Miss Kelich. Do I take your things away?

SONIA: Musa, you're smart enough. You know you can't compare those two things. Now get out.

MUSA: (*pushes against Sonia threateningly*) Listen here Miss Kelich: you're going to give me that bag back or I'll scalp you. So just relax and stop all of this nonsense about the principal.. And I swear, none of the bastards in this class will bother you again. Then you'll be under my protection Miss Kelich.

SONIA: You all stay where you are and keep quiet. No one's going anywhere. (*She tries to run off*)

BASTIAN: Where are you going?

Bastian tries to stop Sonia. He grabs the bag and a gun falls out of the bag, onto the floor. Quiet.

SONIA: What on earth is that? You two get out now. That stays on the floor, understand?

BASTIAN: Have you lost your mind or something?

(*Musa reaches for the gun, Sonia is faster*)

BASTIAN: (*simultaneously*) Careful, it's the real thing!

MUSA: It's not ours, Miss Kelich. I borrowed it. The guys will kill us if we don't bring it back. Nothing's happened. (*loudly to the others*) No one saw anything! (*to Sonia*) Do what I say and I swear nothing will happen to you.

SONIA: (*points the gun at Musa*) Get out! Right...right now you're going to the principal. (*Ferit wants to leave, but Bastian stops him*)

BASTIAN: No one's leaving until we've got that back.

MUSA: Come on sweetie, give it back.

SONIA: Get back!

MUSA: Do you know what you're getting yourself into?

SONIA: Get back. Stay over there.

MUSA: I'll just give you an example. You come home to 22 Belfort Street, the apartment on the 4th floor on the right. Do you understand what will be waiting for you? Two giant dicks. Two giant Turkish dicks that will give it to you real good, you whore.

MARIAM: Cut this shit out, already.

MUSA: *(screams at Mariam)* Shut up. *(Musa goes to grab the gun)*

A SHOT IS FIRED

A moment of shock.

MUSA: Aaah!

Panic. Everyone starts screaming; speaking all at once.

FERIT: Shit!

LATIFA: Helppppp!

HASAN: Imdaaaat.

[Translated meaning: help]

LATIFA: Putain de merde. She killed him!

MUSA: This whore shot off my hand!

MARIAM: Helppppp!

HAKIM: Sharmuta wallah

[Translated meaning: you whore]

HASAN: What did you do?

MUSA: Man, that hurts....Oh shit!

Everyone grows quiet.

BASTIAN: *(bent down by Musa)* It's alright. It just grazed the skin.

MARIAM: We need an ambulance. *(whips out her phone)*

SONIA: What are you doing?

MIRIAM: I'm calling an ambulance.

SONIA: Put away that phone Mariam! Latifa, stop crying.

HAKIM: He's bleeding.

BASTIAN: Give us back the gun and we'll all forget what just happened. I swear.

SONIA: *(to Bastian)* Stay where you are. Stay away. I'll shoot.

MUSA: Now you're really in deep shit. Teacher shoots her student. You're fucking psycho...

MARIAM: Stop, Musa!

SONIA: *(approaches him)* Who's the psychopath, huh? Who brought the gun to my classroom?

MUSA: *(quietly)* You're pathetic.

SONIA: Shut up you dumb ape. Right this instant, you're gonna stop sabotaging our theater day. You're so dumb. You make me so sick...

Latifa, Ferit and Hakim want to sneak out. Sonia blocks their path.

SONIA: No no no no.

She locks the door.

Panic, simultaneous screams.

HAKIM: She's crazy.

LATIFA: *(loudly)* Let us out!

SONIA: Be quiet. Everyone's staying here. The lesson isn't over yet!

LATIFA: I want to get out of here.

FERIT: *(to Sonia)*: Are you stupid?

HASAN: You all be quiet already.

HAKIM: The stupid cow has gone nuts.

LATIFA: Helppppp!

SONIA: Be quiet!

MARIAM: Helppppp!

A SHOT IS FIRED.

Silence

SONIA: Lay down. Lay...lay down on the floor; just like on television. Everyone on the floor.

They all lay down; Bastian is the last.

BASTIAN: *(while laying down)* The cops will be here soon, then...

SONIA: This room is completely soundproof. Do you understand? Soundproof! No one can hear you. They can't even hear the weapon. So you better be quiet now.

MUSA: You'll go to jail for this, slut.

SONIA: Don't call me that! I'm not a slut, you hear? (*nervously paces between the students lying on the floor, threatening them occasionally*)

Now I want to know who always writes those primitive slurs on the chalkboard, huh... huh...
huh? So whoever wears a skirt is a slut, huh? Who wrote that? Are you all in on this, you apes?
And who slit the tires of my car, huh? Who?

MARIAM: What are you going to do?

HAKIM: Man, what do you want from us?

MUSA: You're really getting yourself into a lot of trouble, slut –

HASAN: Stop already!

BASTIAN: Shut up you piece of shit!

HAKIM: What's this whore doing with us?

MARIAM: What are you going to do?

SHOT

SONIA: I said quiet! I'm giving you all a single task and that's the following: shut your mouths!

No back talk, not a word.

Silence.

SONIA: It's 8:45. I think we can continue with our lesson now. Before we get back to "The Robbers," let's talk about Schiller and his idea of aesthetic education.

The sound of a piano.

SONIA: A good topic.

Actors sing a song:

In the Washington DC reading, the actors sang "You Are My Sunshine"; NYC: "This Land is my Land"

"You are my sunshine, my only sunshine.

You make me happy, when skies are gray.

You never know dear, how much I love you.

Please don't take my sunshine away."

Original German:

If I were a bird

If I were a bird and had two wings, I would fly to you

As that cannot be, I have to stay here.

Even though I am far from you, in my sleep I am with you and speak to you.

When I wake up, I am alone.

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

A SHOT IS FIRED

Everyone lies down quickly.

SONIA: Friedrich Schiller wrote “On the Aesthetic Education of Man” after the horrors of the French Revolution. He asked himself, how can a man be taught to handle his freedom responsibly – Ferit, what do you think? (*Ferit stands up*)

FERIT: (*short pause*) Hey, dunno ‘nothin –

SONIA: I! I! I don’t know! And how does one get to an ego that deserves this name? Huh? Schiller said through art, play and self-creation in play! Working on oneself leads to inner freedom. And then one is also capable of being free in public. Doesn’t that interest you Ferit?

FERIT: Oh yes, Miss Kelik.

SONIA: KeliCH. Repeat after me Ferit: Friedrich Schiller.

FERIT: Fredrik-

SONIA: Fr-EEE-dri-CH

FERIT: : Fr-EEE-dri-CH

SONIA: Friedrich-SCH-iller

FERIT: Friedrich Schiller

SONIA: Aesthetic Education

FERIT: Aes...the...tic Education

SONIA: “We will never go wrong, if we seek man’s ideal beauty in the same place where he satisfies his play-impulse. If the Greeks were amused by the bloodless fighting of strength...speed...agility, and the noble contest of talent at the Olympic games, and if the Romans enjoyed the death-struggle of a conquered gladiator,” (*indicating Musa*) we’ve got that already, “we can know, from this single characteristic, why we must seek the ideal shape of a Venus, a Juno, and an Apollo, not in Rome, but in Greece. Now intellect speaks” – (*to Hasan*) Intellect.

HASAN: (*stands up*) Innallec.

SONIA: Intellect.

HASAN: Innallec

SONIA: Intellect. Who’s supposed to believe that you’re not apes when you can’t even pronounce this word correctly: Intellect.

HASAN: Intellect.

SONIA: “Now intellect speaks; beauty should not only be life or shape, but living shape, that is, beauty. At the same time, it dictates to man the law that man should only *play* with beauty, and should play only *with beauty*. To sum up everything briefly, man only plays, when, in the full meaning of the word, he *is* a man, and *he is only entirely a man when he plays*.” Let’s repeat this sentence together. He is only entirely a man when he plays.

EVERYONE: He is only entirely a man when he plays.

SONIA: Again.

EVERYONE: He is only entirely a man when he plays.

SONIA: This sentence, which perhaps at first appears a paradox, will have a great and deep meaning. It will maintain, I assure you, the whole foundation of aesthetic art, and the still difficult art of life.”... He is only entirely a man when he plays. (*thinks for a moment.*) – Ferit, stand up. Stand up! (*Ferit stands*) – The drama “The Robbers” is the story of a family that completely falls apart. Karl sits around at the pub and drinks instead of studying and doing his

work. He has debts, but he just keeps partying. His friends want to convince him to form a band of robbers. But Karl wants to return home to his father and his bride Amalia. He hopes that his father will let him come home. Then a letter arrives that says he's lost his inheritance and has been disowned...yes, because he was disrespectful and brought shame to his family, Karl loses control. He doesn't know that his brother Franz tampered with the letter. – Ferit, You're Karl Moor. Hasan, you're Schweizer. Hello, are you still with us? (*to Ferit*) So, first let's work on your pronunciation. I'll read the stage directions and we'll begin with page 34. Karl enters gesturing wildly and walks back and forth in his room.

FERIT: Men, men! False breed of hipp-uh-crids and crocodile (*croc-uh-dile*)!

SONIA: HYPOCRITES

FERIT: hipp-uh-crids

SONIA: (*screams*) Hypocrites

FERIT: (*screams*) Hypooooocrites

SONIA: Not with your back to the audience. Hypocrites.

FERIT: Hypocrites.

SONIA: Good.

FERIT: Hypocrites.

SONIA: Hypocrites.

FERIT: Breed of hypocrites – and uh – crocodiles

SONIA: Keep going.

FERIT: Their eyes water, but their hearts are of iron! But swords in their breasts!...Lions and leopards feed their young, and he, he – but when familiar kinship...

SONIA: Familial kinship.

FERIT: When familial kinship turns traitor, when a father's love becomes a raging fuuu...

SONIA: Fury

FERIT: Fury?

SONIA: Yeah, Schiller wants to say that Karl is actually nice and only becomes evil because his father refuses to give him recognition.

FERIT: Oh fury. Becomes raging fury: be as a greedy tiger, perfec? Lamb....

SONIA: Perfect lamb

FERIT: Perfec lamb

SONIA: Perfect lamb. Just like intellect.

FERIT: Perfec lamb.

SONIA: Perfect lamb. Just like intellect. Perfect.

FERIT: Perfect.

SONIA: It's like intellect.

FERIT: Intellect.

SONIA: A perfect lamb.

FERIT: Perfect pussy lamb! (*Sonia aims the gun at him*) OK –“ and let every thread stiffen to hatred and destruction!”

SONIA: Hatred and destruction!

FERIT: Have you lost yo' mind?

SONIA: YoUR mind. Repeat after me. Have you lost your mind?

FERIT: Have – you – lost – your – mind?

SONIA: See, it's easy, you cunt. You can speak properly. You perfect pussy!

FERIT: (*embarrassed*)

SONIA: Don't quit! Come on Hasan, keep going.

HASAN:” Listen, Mo'.”

SONIA: Not “Listen, Mo'.” “Listen, Moor.”

HASAN: “Listen, Moor. What do you think? A robber's life is better than bread and water in the darkest prison after all, isn't it?”

FERIT: “Is this...is this a father's love? Is this love for love? I wish I were a bear, and could raise the bears...the bears of the north against this race of murderers...no mercy and no ahh...”

SONIA: No mercy!

FERIT: “Nnnoo mercy... no mercy and no compassion!”

SONIA: No compassion!

FERIT: Yeah, yeah...no mercy and no compassion. No mercy and no compassion, OK?

SONIA: Right.

FERIT: (*louder*) No mercy and no compassion!

SONIA: Yes! Yes!

HASAN: “Come with us into the forests of Bohemia! We are going to start a band of robbers, and you –“

SONIA: Get away! Get away from me!

FERIT: “Get away! Get away from me! Are you not a man!”

SONIA: Wait, wait...I didn’t hear the beginning. Do it again. Come with us into the forests of Bohemia! ...that is a conspiracy –

HASAN:” Come with us into the forests of Bohemia! We are going to start a band of robbers, and you – “

FERIT: “Get away! Get away from me!... Get away! Get away from me! Are you not a man? Are you not bored of woman?” Bored?

SONIA: What did you just say? What did you just say?

FERIT: Bored. (*Quiet*) Born.

SONIA: (*very softly*) Are you not born of a woman?

FERIT:”Are you not born of a woman? Out of my sight, you creature with a man’s face”

SONIA: YOU creature with a MAN’s face!

FERIT: “You creature with a man’s face! – I loved him so unspicable!”

SONIA: Unspeakably.

FERIT:” I – loved – him – so – unspeakably! No son has loved so”

SONIA: Foaming. Foaming and stomping on the ground.

FERIT: What’s foaming?

SONIA: Foaming. Foaming at the mouth. Foaming. (*salivates and snorts*) Do you understand? Foaming. He’s so angry, that his spit is foaming.

FERIT: Foaming. (*starts breathing heavily, goes slowly over to Hasan.*)

SONIA: (*delighted*) Yes!

HASAN: “You are to be our captain! You must be our captain!”

SONIA: (*screams*) You are to be our captain!

HASAN: (*screams*) “You are to be our captain! You must be our captain!”

SONIA: Look at him: Who gave you that idea?

FERIT: “Who gave you that idea? Listen, friend.”

SONIA: He grabs Schweizer angrily - Yes, grab him.

FERIT: (*grabs Hasan's T-shirt*) "A thought fit for gods – robbers and murderers! – As sure my soul breathes, I am your captain!"

SONIA: Here you go: Everyone with a loud scream. Long live our captain! (*Quiet*)

SHOT

EVERYONE: "Long live our captain!"

FERIT: "My spirit thirsts for deeds, my lungs for freedom. – murderers, robbers" (*Embodying the role, Ferit throws Hasan to the ground*) – "I have no father now, I have no love now."

SONIA: Yes, murderers, robbers, that's what you all are now – fatherless and loveless – that's YOU! And now you can finally express it.

FERIT: "Come. Come! – (*to Musa, embodying the role*) I am your captain! – (*turning himself around*) Gather round me every one, and swear loyalty and obedience till death! Swear to me with all your power! And with all my power I promise to be your loyal and steady captain until death! Whoever shows cowardice or hesitation or retreat, this arm shall strike him down on the spot; may the same fate meet me from any and every one of you, if I offend against my oath!"

SONIA: (*standing on a chair, speaking to the gun or about the gun*) It worked. Yes. It worked. Because Karl's father disowned him, he had to become a robber – just like you all! Reconcile with your fathers! There are other ways! Because what does a father stand for?

Phone rings.

Quiet.

SCENE TWO

Phone keeps ringing.

SONIA: Who is that? Whose phone is that? (*Quiet*)

SHOT

Sonia: WHOOOO IS IT?

MUSA: (*aggressive*) Mine, for God's sake.

SONIA: Didn't I tell you all to turn off your phones? Huh? Man, man, man... You're not listening to me. I want to help you. I want to teach you something. But that requires concentration.

FERIT: Help with a gun?

SONIA: There's no other way to do it. Latifa, stand up.

LATIFA: I didn't do anything.

SONIA: Get up Latifa. Take his phone and put it on the chair.

Latifa searches Musa, takes his phone.

MUSA: What is she doing?

SONIA: Shut up. Latifa, search all of his pockets for phones, for everything. Mariam, help her!

BASTIAN: I'm not letting these sluts touch me. Hey, I'll smack you.

MUSA: You've gone completely nuts.

HAKIM: Don't touch me you whore!

SONIA: What did he say, Latifa? Where do you get the idea that Latifa is a whore? Do you guys think it's OK that Hakim just called Latifa a whore?

FERIT: That's his opinion.

SONIA: Hasan, what's a whore?

HASAN: A swear word.

SONIA: *(to the girls)* Keep going, girls!

HAKIM: That's disrespectful.

SONIA: Ahhh – respect, yes. I understand, respect. All during my youth I never heard about anything else. This respect is a fraud.

What's a whore Bastian? Explain to me, what a whore is.

BASTIAN: A girl that flirts with me. That's what a whore is to me.

SONIA: You all use these words and don't even know what a whore is. Mariam, what's a whore?

MARIAM: A whore is a woman who sleeps with men for money.

SONIA: Again.

MARIAM: A whore is a woman who sleeps with men for money.

SONIA: Understood?

FERIT: Yes.

SONIA: Understood?

FERIT: Yes.

HAKIM: And wears skirts like you.

SONIA: Aha! Doesn't your mother wear skirts? What does your mother wear?

HAKIM: Normal pants.

SONIA: Search him.

HAKIM: Don't touch me!

SONIA: Normal pants, huh?

Sonia gives the girls the sign to search him.

HAKIM: Yes.

SONIA: You're lying! – Hakim. Have you ever called your mother a whore?

The boys turn toward her in disgust.

HAKIM: My mother is none of your business, you fucking ho! Fuck your mother, man...qiss ummik, qiss uchtik ya sharmuta, wahid qur'an, I swear, your life is unholy (*spits*)

[Translated: Fuck you, fuck your mother]

SONIA: Do you know what I feel like doing? Let's pull down Hakim's pants and make him into a male whore. (*More angry*) Come on Latifa, pull down his pants. Pull down his pants.

LATIFA: (*tries to make eye contact with the other students*) Do I have to?

HAKIM: Don't touch me.

SONIA: Pull down his pants. Mariam, help Latifa. Come on, quickly. Pull down his pants.

MARIAM: But we don't want to touch him.

HAKIM: That's respect.

LATIFA: No, you're disgusting, you asshole.

SONIA: Disgust. Latifa, what do you find disgusting about Hakim?

LATIFA: Him.

SONIA: Do you know what I find disgusting about him? I think it's disgusting, that he's constantly yanking at his little dick. Disgusting. Stand up. Stand up.

HAKIM: Me?

SONIA: No, your mother. Stand up, come on. Take off your pants. Come on, take them off...Small man, big mouth, small man, big mouth.

HAKIM: I'm not doing it.

SONIA: Come on Latifa, pull down his pants.

HAKIM: I don't want her to.

SONIA: Come on, pants down. *(to Mariam)* You can do it.

MARIAM: Nooope.

SONIA: No? We're making Hakim into a whore.

LATIFA: I don't want to see that.

SONIA: But I want to see it. Pants down. I'll count to five. 1, 2, 3 – *(pushes Latifa to the front)*

Pants down. Pants down. Pants down. HEY. Pants down.

Latifa turns her head away while she pulls down his pants. Hakim's underwear is completely tattered and soiled. Everyone is embarrassed.

Silence.

SONIA: Well, how do you feel?

HAKIM: Not good.

SONIA: Are you ashamed?

HAKIM: Yes.

SONIA: Good. – Now we have your concentration. We'll continue. Now we'll begin with the lesson, OK Hasan? Hasan, are you still with us?

HASAN: Yes.

SONIA: I'll count to five. And at the count of five, everyone but Hakim and Latifa sit down on your chairs. 1,2,3,4,5 *(they all sit except Hakim and Latifa. Sonia gives them the text.)*

Love and Intrigue. You're Ferdinand and you're Luise.

You go to Luise in order to hold her accountable. You want to find out, if she's a slut or not.

Understood? He thinks she's a slut. He thinks that all women are sluts. *(to Latifa)* And you've got a huge problem: you love this guy, but you promised your father that you would never tell him the truth. Alright?

HAKIM: *(throws the text on the ground, interrupts her)* I don't feel like it. Just because you have a gun, you think you can do whatever you want with us.

SONIA: Take the text. You can't just abandon Ferdinand.

HAKIM: Ferdinand can suck my dick.

SONIA: (*aims at him*) Pick up the text. I'm not in the mood for joking around today. Not in the least. (*Hakim picks up the text*)

Ferdinand goes to Luise with a letter in his hand and wants to hear from her, whether or not the letter is truthful, understood, Hakim?

I'm just here to help you. Luise, do you have any questions, Latifa? (*softly*) I'm here to help you and I want you to understand that. (*smiles*)

SHOT

SONIA: So, let's begin.

HAKIM: "Good evening. Speak, miserable girl! Did you write this letter?"

BASTIAN: She's sick!

SONIA: Shut up. This is the farewell scene.

LATIFA: "O this letter, my father – "

HAKIM: "Poisonous chatter, did you write this letter?"

LATIFA: "I did."

SONIA: (*interrupts her*) She's lying. She didn't write it. She's lying for her father.

HAKIM: "Luise! – No! By my soul, you lie! – I asked too violently – didn't I Luise? – You confessed only because I asked so violently?"

LATIFA: "I confessed the truth."

SONIA: Beg her.

HAKIM: What?

SONIA: You should beg her.

HAKIM: What do you mean?

SONIA: You discovered this letter. Your great love appears to love someone else. Beg her. You don't believe it. Beg her.

HAKIM: "Luise! – No! By my soul, you lie! – I asked too violently – didn't I Luise? – You confessed only because I asked so violently?"

SONIA: Yes. Yes – continue.

LATIFA: (*shaking*): "I – confessed – the – truth ..."(*stops mid-sentence*) – This has gotta stop. Please let us go.

SONIA: Stop always doubting yourself. Continue –

HAKIM: Can I pull up my pants?

SONIA: NO.

HAKIM: I wanna get dressed damn it.

SONIA: I WANT to get dressed.

HAKIM: I want to get dressed.

SONIA: I want to get dressed, Bastian, what's missing in this sentence?

MUSA: Your pussy.

BASTIAN: You only have a big mouth when you have a gun.

SONIA: What did you say?

HAKIM: Fuck you, you ho.

SONIA: Whore. RE. You whore. You whore. Fuck you, you whore! (*aims at him*)

HAKIM: (*very loudly*) Fuck you, you whore! (*puts his hands in front of his face*)

SONIA: 1,2,3,4,5 bang and you're dead. Understand now? Do you understand now? Mariam, please repeat loudly what a whore is.

MARIAM: A whore is a woman who sleeps with men for money.

SONIA: Louder.

MARIAM: A whore is a woman who sleeps with men for money.

SONIA: Did you understand Hakim? 1,2,3,4

HAKIM: ... (*holds his hands in front of his eyes*)

SONIA: Hakim, I'll give you a chance. (*softly*) OK. I'll give you one last chance. You can be Ferdinand.

HAKIM: (*picks up the text*) "Do you know what you were to me, Luise? You didn't know, that you meant everything to me! Everything! Oh, it is so terrible! –"

LATIFA:" You have my confession. I stand damned by my own lips. Now go!"

HAKIM: "Very well! My last request, Luise – the final one! My brain burns with fever. – I need a drink to cool it– Will you make me a glass of lemonade?"

LATIFA: "Drink! The drink will cool you."

HAKIM: (*drops the text to his side and embodies the role*) "Yes, that it will – she's a good-hearted harlot; but then, so are they all!"

SONIA: What does harlot mean?

MARIAM: Slut!

SONIA: Yes, slut!

LATIFA: (*drops the book to her side*) Why is he calling me a slut?

SONIA: Because he thinks you cheated on him. But Luise, you didn't do it!

FERIT: Because he loves her. Because of love. (*Musa hits him*)

SONIA: Continue!

LATIFA: "That to your Luise, Ferdinand?"

SONIA: What?

LATIFA: "That to your Luise, Ferdinand?"

SONIA: We can't continue like this. Latifa, try harder.

HAKIM: Can I pull up my pants?

SONIA: No.

HAKIM: Please. (*Looks at Sonia imploringly*)

SONIA: No. Come on. Repeat that part again. (*Gets a water bottle and gives it to Latifa*) You're doing wonderfully.

HAKIM: (*softly*) "Very well! My last request, Luise – the final one! My brain burns with fever. – I need a drink to cool it– Will you make me a glass of lemonade?" (*drops the text to his side*)

LATIFA: (*embodies the role*) "Drink! The drink will cool you".

Latifa walks to Hakim and looks at him. He looks at her. She looks down at the floor and hands the bottle to him while looking away.

HAKIM: "Yes, that it will – she's a good-hearted harlot; but then, so are they all!" (*takes the bottle*)

LATIFA: (*takes her hand away quickly*) "That to your Luise, Ferdinand?"

SONIA: He put poison in the bottle.

HAKIM: (*drinks ,water runs over his face and shirt*) "The lemonade is dull like your soul – (*he hands her the bottle*) Try it. (*screams*) Try it!"

LATIFA: (*takes the bottle, drinks*) "The lemonade is good."

HAKIM: "Cheers!"

SONIA: He poisons her and even says, bon appetit!

HAKIM: "Luise! Did you love the Chamberlain? You will never leave this room again."

LATIFA: “Ask what you want. I will not answer.”

SONIA: I will not answer.

HAKIM: “Take care of your undying soul, Luise! Before this light burns out – you will – stand before God!”

SONIA: She’s dying! (*Latifa collapses*) No, no keep standing!

LATIFA: “What is this? – I feel sick. (*lets the bottle fall, looks at the bottle*) Poison! Poison! Oh Lord God!”

HAKIM: “I fear so. Your lemonade was seasoned in hell. You drank a toast to your death. There is no hope. Now you must die now (*pauses, smiles*) – Yet be calm. We will make the journey together.”

SONIA: Oh God! He is killing himself, too.

FERIT: Honour killing!

LATIFA: “You too Ferdinand? Poison, Ferdinand? (*smiles*) From you? (*frightened*) Oh, merciful God, forgive his sin –“

HAKIM:” Look to *your* sins.”

SONIA: She’s dying an innocent woman.

HAKIM: (*looks at Sonia*) She’s dying an innocent woman?

LATIFA:” Now I can no longer keep silent – death – death cancels all vows – Ferdinand! – I die innocent, Ferdinand. I do not lie – The only lie in my whole life – was that letter to the Chamberlain. That letter – my hand wrote what my heart damned – it was dictated by your father ...Ferdinand – he forced me – forgive me –“

SONIA: (*following Latifa, like a soft echo*) Death – death cancels all vows – Ferdinand! – I die innocent, Ferdinand. I do not lie – The only lie in my whole life – was that letter to the Chamberlain. That letter – my hand wrote what my heart damned – it was dictated by your father. (*hunches up*)

SONIA: Forgive her!

HAKIM: “Blessed be God, Luise!”

SONIA: Come closer to each other please. You too, Latifa!

HAKIM: I can’t.

SONIA: Come closer. Closer!

LATIFA: “Woe is me! It is your father –“

SONIA: Closer.

HAKIM: I can’t get any closer.

SONIA: I know that you can’t. But what you don’t know is that I want you to – understood?

HAKIM: “A murderer! And a murdering father!”

SONIA: A murderer! And a murdering father!

HAKIM: ”A murderer! And a murdering father!”

LATIFA: “Jesus died forgiving his murderers – God forgive you both.” (*Latifa collapses*)

SONIA: (*softly*) No, keep standing. Keep standing.

HAKIM: “Stay! Stay! Oh, heavenly angel! Luise! – Luise! – I’m coming - -“

SONIA: Yes, now hold each other. You’re dying, hold each other.

They come a little closer. [Tension. – They stop acting. The following sentences occur quickly.]

HAKIM: I’m not touching her.

SONIA: Yes! Hug! What are you doing?

LATIFA: I’ll just die here.

SONIA: Slowly! But you love him, Luise!

LATIFA: But I don’t want him to touch me.

SONIA: But you love him Luise!

LATIFA: That’s just acting.

SONIA: Of course it’s acting. It’s more than acting.

LATIFA: But I’m not touching him. I can die slowly, but he’s not touching me.

SONIA: But you love Ferdinand.

LATIFA: He called me a harlot and a slut.

SONIA: He said it, because he loves you.

FERIT: That’s what I said!

LATIFA: But he’s killing me.

SONIA: So, the two of you come together. (*Pushes them together*)

BASTIAN: You can’t do that –

SONIA: It’s important for you to have this experience. Look at her. She’s dying an innocent woman. She’s not a slut. Hug. (*she pushes them together*)

LATIFA: (*cries*) please...please

SONIA: Repeat the last sentence.

HAKIM: “Stop! Stop! Angel of heaven! I’m coming!”

SONIA: Hug, hug – (*They hesitate*)

SHOT

Latifa and Hakim hug each other

Sonia: See, you can do it. Yes, yes – it’s working.

Silence.

SONIA: Hasan, are you still with us? – Do you all understand the situation your characters are in? What have we learned from this scene?

MUSA: We’ve learned that negative energy is not good for your life.

SONIA: Luise isn’t a whore.

MUSA: Didn’t I just say that?

SONIA: Luise isn’t a whore!

FERIT: She never was.

SONIA: She never was! And what else have we learned, Musa? Sometimes people are forced to do things, understand? And it’s not fair to judge people.

FERIT: Couldn’t she have died with honor if she had said, no I won’t write that?

SONIA: But she promised her father.

MARIAM: What is this bullshit...die with honor, why should she die?

FERIT: But with honor.

HAKIM: Can we...let go of each other now?

Actors sing a song:

[In the Washington DC production, the actors sang “Amazing Grace”]

“Amazing grace, how sweet the sound.

That saved a wretch like me.

I once was lost, but now I’m found.

Was blind, but now I see.

Original German Song:

Autumn Song

The leaves fall from the trees,
The delicate summer leaves,
Life with its dreams,
Falls apart in ashes and dust.

The birds sing in the forest;
Now the forest falls silent
Love has gone away,
No bird wants to sing.
Love will return again
In the next, lovely year,
And everything that faded away,
will sound again.

The winter is welcome,
Her dress is pure and new;
She took her jewelry,
And loyally preserves the seeds.

SCENE THREE

SONIA: What are Karl Moor's last words to the robbers when he turns himself in to the authorities?

EVERYONE: "Man can be helped."

SONIA: I didn't hear everyone. What are they?

EVERYONE: "Man can be helped."

SONIA: (*approaches Musa*) What are they?

MUSA: What do you want? I don't give a fuck about Schiller. I'm gonna be a soccer player, OK.

SONIA: What are Karl Moor's last words to the robbers?

MUSA: Fuck your mother, you whore.

SONIA: *(Pause)* What did you say?

MUSA: *(gets up, walks toward her)* You should fuck your mother.

Sonia headbutts him. Musa falls to the floor.

BASTIAN: *(stands up)* What'd you do that for?

SONIA: Zidane did it, Zidane did it, yes. Zidane headbutt, headbutt. What? Isn't that what soccer players do? Hey, if you insult my mother: headbutt. *(to Musa, aims at him)* What are Karl Moor's last words to the robbers?

MUSA: *(on the floor, holding his bloody nose)* Shit, what do you want from me? I didn't do anything to you. You're completely insane. Just shoot, I don't care. *(gets to his knees)*

SONIA: Hey. Hey, hey, just shoot man, *(turns to the others, threatening with the gun)* cool, cool, cool. What are Karl Moor's last words to the robbers? *(aims at Musa)* – one

MUSA: "Man can be helped." OK, everything's fine. Damn it, just leave me alone.

SONIA: Yes, you see. You can learn when you want to. Huh? – Man, there's still hope for you yet.

MUSA: *(Hand on his nose)* You've got no idea. The guys who gave me that gun, they're somebody, they get respect. That's the way it is.

SONIA: Exactly. And that's why I shouldn't get involved, right?! Now let me tell you something. That's multiculti-crap and nothing more! –

They circumcise women, that's a part of their culture. They murder their sisters, yes terrible, but that's a part of their culture. They cheat the state, rob German kids on the street, beat them up, it's their fault if they're fags. Yes, yes, this violence, that's just their way. Most of the time they kill each other anyway. Everything's OK.

MUSA: I never killed anyone.

SONIA: Then why did you bring this gun?

MUSA: I definitely didn't want to kill anyone.

SONIA: Violence is violence. And it never stops once it's started. There's no such thing as a little violence. When you've got a gun, you're gonna shoot. But violence will always affect you.

Whoever sows the wind, will harvest the whirlwind. (*thinks for a moment, picks up a text, holds it open to Musa*) Come on, read.

MUSA: No

SONIA: Take your book.

MUSA: I said no, slut.

SONIA: (*provocatively*) Pimp. But you can't even get that right.

MUSA: (*stands up, takes the text*) Payday. Soon it'll be payday. And if the money's not right, you'll have to blow me.

SONIA: Come on, read.

MUSA: (*takes the text*) "Robbers and murders! – As true as my soul lives, I am your leader!" – I've got the biggest balls –

SONIA: Yes, let it out.

MUSA: (*softly*) Slut.

SONIA: (*softly*) Pimp.

MUSA: "My spirit thirsts for deeds, my lungs for freedom – murderers, robbers! When I heard that word I crushed the law beneath my feet – men showed me no humanity, when I appealed to humanity; so let me forget sympathy and human feeling!"

SONIA: "Freedom! Robbers! Murderers!" Ok, now let's skip to the second act and see what has become of our respectful leader of the robbers. Ferit, you're Roller and Bastian, you're Schufterle. (*puts the book in his hand*)

BASTIAN: Man, I'm not a fag.

SONIA: Yes you are. You get on the stage, too. Everyone gets a turn. You don't even have to act gay, you already are. (*Mariam tries to suppress her giggles*) – Hey, I don't have anything against gays. So, come on, get up. Karl just rescued Roller from the gallows, Musa –

MUSA: Nooope. I duhn wanna (*sits down*)

SONIA: WANT

MUSA: Nope. I duhn wanna.

SONIA: WANT

MUSA: Wanna

FERIT: Want!

SONIA: You won't get much further in life like that Musa, don't you see.

MUSA: I don't want to get further.

BASTIAN: You won't get much further either.

SONIA: I'll get further, you just don't get that. That's the difference. That's how he keeps you all from progressing.

BASTIAN: With robbers? That's how you'll get by?

SONIA: You should all be sent to the military. You fuckers!

MUSA: Fuck the military! Fuck you! And fuck them!

SONIA: Yes, that's exactly how you all should be dealt with. One has to insult you. Right? Did your daddy torture you? Did he hit you? Musa, did he tell you that you're good for nothing, huh? *(to the others)* When you don't take yourself seriously, do you really believe that others will ever take you seriously?!

MUSA: *(gets up)* Fuck you.

SHOT.

MUSA: *(quickly)* "Freedom! Freedom! – The judge had already damned you – "

FERIT: *(embodies the role right from the start)* "That he had, and that's not all. I've come express from the gallows. I have the captain to thank for my freedom, air and life." *(Sonia gets excited)*

BASTIAN: *(reads with considerable difficulty)* "It...was....a...tale *(looks at the class desperately)* ...worth...telling – "

SONIA: *(interrupts him)* Good. Bastian start again. Your job is to tell your classmates a story; namely, you were at a party last night and you experienced something. And you tell them in a way, so that all these primates listen and you don't lose them, OK?

BASTIAN: OK.

MUSA: Now you're listening to this dumb cow!

SONIA: I'm trying to give him an idea. You were at a party and you had fun. Can you imagine that?

BASTIAN: *(looks for a signal from Musa)* No.

SONIA: Come on, try. Let's all try *(airs out her skirt)* to have fun. I want the story to sound believable. One, two –

BASTIAN: (*woodenly*) “It was tale – “

SONIA: Stop! I don’t believe you. It was fun –

BASTIAN: This is how we party, you know...

SONIA: That’s the way you party? No. OK, you just came from the party and say:” It was a tale –“

BASTIAN: (*tries to imitate her*) “It was a tale –“

SONIA: OK, again. And stop using that theater tone of voice. I’m really sick of that.

SHOT

The book flies through the air.

BASTIAN: (*cringes, straightens up again, embodying the role*) “It was a tale worth telling. The day before, we had heard from our spies that the next morning at break of day – that would be today – Roller would have to die. Get up! Says the captain, what won’t we do for a friend. – We’ll save him, or if we can’t save him, then at least we’ll light him a funeral pyre such as no king ever had. (*throws his jacket on the floor*) We waited until the town had gone out to see the show. Now, says the captain, set alight, set alight!”

SONIA: Did you notice, how attentively everyone listened to you when you took yourself seriously? – and now you Ferit. You play the simple one, the honest one. (*stands behind him, puts her hand on his shoulder*)

FERIT: “Morbleu! – there lay the town like Sodom and Gomorrah – “...Gomorrah?”

SONIA: That’s a city in the bible.

FERIT: But I’m not a Christian.

SONIA: Did I say that you were a Christian. You’re not a Christian. But you can still learn about it. Come to the middle, be confident.

FERIT: (*slowly comes to the front*) “There lay the town like Sodom and Gomorrah, the whole horizon was fire and smoke and brimstone – they untied me, my company stared back frightened like Lot’s wife.”

BASTIAN: (*puts his arm around Ferit*) “If the town makes a holiday out of seeing my comrade done away with like a baited pig, why the devil should we have any problems with setting off the town for the sake of our comrade?”

FERIT: “Tell us, what booty did you get?” – booty?

MUSA: Man, booty, like with pirates –

BASTIAN: “Bügel and I raided a candle maker’s, and have brought enough gear for fifty of us.”

FERIT: *(to Bastian)* “Schufterle, did you hear how many dead there were?”

BASTIAN: “Eighty-three, they say. The magazine alone blew sixty to pieces.”

MUSA: *(reads from the page)* “Roller, your life is dearly bought.”

SONIA: *(to Musa)* Karl didn’t want so many to die. He only wanted to rescue Roller. But it gets even worse.

BASTIAN: “Pah! What do you mean? Now if it had been men; but it was only babes in arms still dirtying their diapers, wrinkled grandmothers chasing the flies from them, shriveled old stay-at-homes who couldn’t find their way to the door – patients whining for the doctor”

MUSA: *(reads)* “Oh, the poor, miserable creatures! Children, you say, the old and the sick?” –

BASTIAN: “Yes, let the devil take them! I happened to be going past a row of cottages there, and heard a howling and peeped in, and when I took a good look, what was it? A baby, lying there under the table, and the table just about to catch fire – Poor little bastard! I said, you’re freezing! And threw it into the flames” –

SONIA: Now if it had been men; but it was only women and children and babies!

MUSA: *(goes towards Bastian, embodies the role)* “Did you, Schufterle? And may those flames burn in your breast until the day eternity grows great! – Away, monster! Never let me see you in my group again!” – *(Bastian wants to keep him at a distance, Musa pushes his hand away)* I’m gonna throw up, don’t touch me!

BASTIAN: Why’re you so aggressive, man?

MUSA: “What, are you mumbling? Are you hesitating?” – Damned dog!

Musa hits Bastian on the head with the text.

BASTIAN: Damn it, why did you hit me?

Musa beats on Bastian: punches to the stomach, Bastian falls to the ground. He wants to stand back up, but Musa kicks him in the stomach.

SONIA: That’s enough Musa! Let him up. Karl himself is guilty of the death of innocent women and children.

BASTIAN: *(on the ground)* Man, you guys are crazy

MUSA: (*softly, intensely*) “Away with him, I say, fool. You all follow me when I order you. Who can hesitate when I command – there are others among you who deserve my anger.”

SONIA: Regret it!

MUSA: I...I...

BASTIAN: (*jumps up, bleeding*) Man, she’s just trying to get us to fight each other. Don’t you get it? With her fucking theater...

MUSA: (*stands up, goes toward Bastian*) You don’t understand anything, you idiots. What do you do all day?

BASTIAN: You’re the same. Smoke all day. What’s with this bullshit?

MUSA: You wanted to join the gang.

SONIA: What are you talking about?

BASTIAN: I didn’t say you had to bring a gun to school.

MUSA: You idiot, if you hadn’t taken the gun out –

BASTIAN: Man –

MUSA: Shut up. Now she’s got the gun and we’re stuck here.

BASTIAN: Man, it’s not my fault. I just wanted to help you. That’s all.

SONIA: What are you talking about?

MUSA: Idiot. You wanted to make me look bad. (*runs towards him, choking him*) You can’t get away with that.

BASTIAN: I wasn’t trying to.

Musa chokes him, they skirmish.

MARIAM: Miss Kelich!

SHOT

Musa and Bastian separate. Silence.

LATIFA: What are you gonna do now?

SONIA: Good question!

MARIAM: Why are you trying to use violence to teach us that –

SONIA: Because there’s no other way for you to learn, you losers! You’re a waste of money!

You lack self control, lack willpower. What you need is discipline, like in the old days. All day long you pretend to be machos and you're even proud of it, too. (*Bastian goes to his chair and sits down.*)

You fuck around like rabbits and then you import some virgin from your village! That's tradition to you! And you girls, you cover your hair so that you don't go to hell. You protect the diamond between your legs and let yourself be screwed in the ass so that your future husband doesn't fly into a rage on your wedding night and so that your brother doesn't shoot you in the head!

And all of that in the name of religion! Yes, for Islam! In back-alley mosques some hodjas praise Osama bin Laden and don't get sent to jail, that's freedom of speech! But," I fuck your mother!"... That's not freedom of speech! But, you think it is! What do you think the prophet did with his nine-year old bride on their wedding night? You think they played Playstation? But you can look down on the pork eaters: to you, the others, the Catholic priests, those are pedophiles. Now I'm gonna tell you something. They've got an advantage over you! They don't complain constantly that the others are guilty. They criticize themselves. That's belief with reason! I don't share your opinion, but I would sacrifice my life to ensure that you have the freedom to express your opinion! That's what Enlightenment means. Get it? If you don't, go back home!

SCENE FOUR

SONIA: Do you know what's wrong here? The boys aren't the problem. No. The problem is that the girls let it happen.

HAKIM: Exactly, and that's good.

SONIA: You misunderstood me, you idiot. But that's normal. Islam is 500 years younger than Christianity. You are all living in Europe's Middle Ages.

FERIT: Hey, what did you say?

SONIA: You haven't had Enlightenment! The men oppress you. You have to fight back, you understand?

MARIAM: I'm not oppressed.

SONIA: Oh yeah? (*Indicating Mariam's headscarf*) Where did you get that?

FERIT: She's devout.

SONIA: Are you a Muslim, Latifa?

LATIFA: Yes.

SONIA: Devout?

LATIFA: Yes.

SONIA: So you can be devout without a headscarf.

MARIAM: But I want to wear a headscarf.

SONIA: Wrong. You were taught to want it, damn it.

FERIT: It protects her from men's gazes.

MARIAM: For example.

SONIA: You see, that's exactly what I mean. Fight back. You have to fight back. –

Hasan! Hasan, get up. Get up! You're gonna help Mariam. We're going to continue acting out "The Robbers." Friedrich Schiller. It's got everything. Don't you get it? You're lucky. You're lucky to live here. Maybe it's hard to develop in your homeland. But you're here, in a democracy. Use this chance. Then at some point you can go back to your homeland and help your fellow countrymen.

HASAN: I'm Kurdish. We don't have a homeland.

SONIA: Oh man! Again with the nationalism. You and these whining pussies are driving me crazy. You're going to be Franz. Did someone in your homeland rip off your balls? Where's your masculinity? Your proud Anatolian masculinity? Oh yeah, you're a tormented Kurd. Oh well, you'll have to make the best of it. We want to be brave now. If not now, then when? Take your destiny in your hands, Hasan. You're Franz now.

HASAN: Franz?

SONIA: Franz. You no more Hasan. And Franz has pretty big balls. Franz isn't afraid. Franz has a lot of self-confidence. Mariam, the way I just described Franz, do you think he'd look like that? No he wouldn't. We'll have to work on that, Hasan. Let's start with you holding your head up high. Head up!! Very good, always look straight ahead, never look at the ground; that's the first rule. Second rule, don't forget to breathe. Good, Mariam, could Franz look like that?

MARIAM: ...

SONIA: Yes, I think so, too. So, Franz feels good, because he's taken over his father's position. He's the king of the city, Hasan. And now, forget your sad Kurdish fate. Throw it away. I can't

hear all of this trauma anymore. Now you're Franz. And that's good, because Mariam is going to play Amalia. *(to Mariam)* Come, stand up. Mariam wants to learn how to rebel. And you're going to help her, OK? You've come to conquer Amalia's heart. You just got the position of king. But the position of queen is still free and without pussy, he's got nothing, OK? – You're looking scared again. What was the first rule?

HASAN: Eye level.

SONIA: Eye level! You have to look each other in the eyes when you speak. Let's get to Amalia *(knocks over the chair behind Mariam)* He's Karl's brother –

MARIAM: *(nods)*

SONIA: - and you love Karl and he was betrayed by his own brother, Franz. And now he's come because he wants you to be his wife. *(Mariam nods)* And he's so sure of himself, yeah. To him it's a sure thing, but not for you, OK? *(Mariam nods)* As of now, Hasan you're Franz, OK? Enter Franz.

HASAN: "Oh Amalia, let me not see these black, proud looks. You make me sad –"

SONIA: You're making me sad, too, Hasan! Not with such shaky knees. How is Mariam supposed to fight you, if you're not an asshole. How is she supposed to learn? It's too easy to rebel against you, you little mouse. You have to be an asshole. Do it for her, so she can develop.

HASAN:" Oh Amalia, let me not see these black, proud looks! You make me sad. I have come to tell you –"

SONIA: I have come to tell you. I, the great Franz, have come to tell you –

HASAN:" I have come to tell you –"

MARIAM:" I suppose I must hear that Franz von Moor is now king."

SONIA: Aha, Amalia knows the deal.

HASAN: "Yes, I am your lord. But Amalia, I would like to be that in every respect. –"

SONIA: *(points the gun at him)* Grab your balls! Grab your balls! Do you feel them? Huh, do you feel them?

HASAN: Yes.

SONIA: Yes! Then show me that you feel them. I don't feel your balls. You can be a man with such a little slut.

HASAN: “You remember what you have been to our family, Moor treated you as his daughter, his love for you lives on even after his death – can you ever forget that?”

MARIAM: “Never.”

HASAN: (*looks at Mariam*) “My father’s love for you must be repaid to his sons, and Karl is dead – are you surprised? Are you happy?”

SONIA: Please Hasan. Prove to me that you aren’t a lost cause. Grab your balls again. Grab them!

HASAN: “Franz walks all over the hopes of the noblest young ladies in the land, Franz comes and offers to a poor orphan his heart and his hand and with it all his gold and all his castles and forests.”

SONIA: Hmm, someone is trying to buy you.

MARIAM: “You murdered my love, and Amalia should call you husband!”

HASAN: (*embodies the role*) “Not so fast, your most gracious highness! – Franz speaks, and if he hears no answer, he will – command.”

SONIA: Yes, now I can feel your balls!

MARIAM: “Command? You, snake, command?”

SONIA: Command?! He can’t command anyone! Curse him, snake, provoke him, like the snake that he is.

MARIAM:” Command? You, snake, command? Command me? – and if I throw your command back in your face with anger?”

HASAN: (*throws the text away*) “You will not do that. Beware! Now you have taught me the art of tormenting you – the sight of me shall erase this undying fancy of Karl from your head. By your hair I will drag you into the chapel, –“

SONIA: Yes, it’s working!! Yes!! Grab them again! Yes! Grab them! Keep going.

HASAN: “By your hair I will drag you into the chapel with my sword in my hand, force the oath of matrimony out of your soul, take your virgin bed by storm, and conquer your proud innocence with my greater pride.”

MARIAM: “Take this first!” (*pushes him away*)

SONIA: (*pushes her from behind towards Hasan*) He wants to drag you into the chapel. Force you into marriage, pull your hair, with his sword in his hand. Force the oath out of your soul. Get

on top of you! – What kind of Muslim are you? Didn't you hear what he said? And he said it so well. Hit him! Slap him!

MARIAM: "Take this first." (*embodies the role, slaps him*)

SONIA: He wants to pull your hair. He wants your virginity.

MARIAM: "Take this first."

SONIA: Hit him! Yes, again. Defend yourself. Take revenge.

MARIAM: "Take this first." And this! And this!

SONIA: Yes, Hasan, the text. Franz!

HASAN: (*forced into the corner*) "If not my wife – my mistress –"

SONIA: Miiisstresss!

HASAN: "You shall be my mistress. Come – come with me to my room – I am burning with desire."

SONIA: He wants to force you into his bedroom!

MARIAM: Yeah.

SONIA: He's burning with lust. He wants to fuck you and call you his mistress.

MARIAM: Yeah. (*kicks him in the crotch hard*)

SONIA: Mariam let it all out. LEEETTT IIITTTT OOOOUUUTT! Go on!

MARIAM: (*She continues beating Hasan*): "Do you see, villain, what I can do with you?"

SONIA: Keep going!

MARIAM: "I'm a woman, but I'm a powerful woman!"

SONIA: Yes, I'm a woman and I'm not ashamed of it, show your tits!

MARIAM: "I'm a woman!"

SONIA: Do you see, how pathetic he is?

MARIAM: Dumbass

SONIA: Dumbass

MARIAM: "Get away right now!"

SONIA: Come on Hasan, the text.

HASAN: What are we doing?

MARIAM: I can't understand you.

SONIA: We can't understand you, louder!

HASAN: ...

SONIA: That's it. Oooohh. Do you see, you finished him. How good...yes, yes

MARIAM: "Ah! How good, how good – now I can breathe – I felt I was as strong as a fiery animal,-"

SONIA: I do too, yesss!

MARIAM: "as violent as the tigress chasing the triumphant robber of her cubs – a beggar, did he say? (*laughs*) Why then, the world is turned upside-down, beggars are kings, and kings are beggars! (*throws over chairs*) – Into the dust with you, useless jewels!" (*rips the jewelry from her neck*)

SONIA: Exactly, get rid of it!

MARIAM: "Be damned..."

SONIA: Yes!

MARIAM: "Be damned, you great and rich, to wear your gold and silver and your valuable stones, to stuff yourselves at feasts and banquets, to stretch your limbs on the soft couch of ease! You see that I am worthy of you, Karl –"

SONIA: Yes, free yourself from everything.

MARIAM: "Be damned..." chairs, fuckers, dumbasses, Kurd fuckers, you can all kiss my ass ...

SONIA: Yes, throw the text away. Now the headscarf.

MARIAM: No.

SONIA: Yes! Throw away everything.

MARIAM: Nooo. I'm not going to.

SONIA: Mariam, you're almost there. You're about to free yourself. Throw away the headscarf. Get in touch with your inner Amalia.

MARIAM: ...

SONIA: We've come so far, what's wrong?

MARIAM: I'm not taking off my headscarf.

SONIA: Why not?

MARIAM: Why don't you like my headscarf?

SONIA: It's oppressing you.

MARIAM: No.

SONIA: Yes.

MARIAM: No.

SONIA: I just want you to be able to develop freely, as a human being!

MARIAM: I have developed freely.

SONIA: No you haven't.

MARIAM: Yes I have.

SONIA: You're a piece of shit!

MARIAM: I don't understand what you want from me.

SONIA: (*aims the gun at her*) I want you to conquer your fear. I no longer want to see fear in your eyes. I don't want people to stare at you because of your headscarf.

MARIAM: So they stare. Let them stare.

SONIA: I'm counting to five.

Mariam shakes her head. Sonia aims the gun at Hasan.

SONIA: I'll kill him. Who needs him anyway. If you don't take off your headscarf. 1,2,3 –

MARIAM: I'll do it. (*starts taking it off. Tension. To Hasan:*) Look away, you dumbass.

SONIA: Stop it. Once again, you're doing something for a man. You should do it for yourself.
Damn it.

SONG

Actors sing a song:

[In the Washington DC production, the actors sang "America, the Beautiful"]

"Oh beautiful, for spacious skies.

For amber waves of grain,

For purple mountain majesties,

Above the fruited plain.

America, America,

God shed his grace on thee,

And crown thy good with brotherhood,

From sea to shining sea."

Original German Song:

Goodbye, my dear Homeland

Goodbye, my dear homeland. Dear homeland, goodbye!
I'm now off to a distant beach, dear homeland, goodbye!
And so I sing with a happy spirit,
Just as one sings, when he goes hiking. Dear homeland, goodbye!
And so I sing with a happy spirit,
Just as one sings, when he goes hiking. Dear homeland, goodbye!

Accompany me, lovely river. Dear homeland, goodbye!
Are you sad, that I must wander? Dear homeland, goodbye!
Standing near a mossy stone in a wooded valley,
I greet you for the last time. Dear homeland, goodbye!
Standing near a mossy stone in a wooded valley,
I greet you for the last time. Dear homeland, goodbye!
Dear homeland, goodbye!

ACT TWO

SCENE ONE

Everyone is sitting on chairs. Sonia stands next to Ferit.

SONIA: Your parents left their homeland so that later on you could have a better life than they had. You've got to make it, do you hear me? So that the sacrifices of your parents still have meaning. Try to imagine what that would be like; overnight you leave your homeland and go to a foreign country where everything is new, where you can't speak the language... - and all that trouble so you can have a better life. So that you can be happy with your lives. You have to take what I'm saying seriously. In this society, if you're a Muslim, an Arab, a Turk, a Kurd – But that's no reason for you to say, 'I'm a victim,' it's not my fault. You can't place the responsibility for your life on the shoulders of others. Just because you're condemned, it doesn't

mean you can't also become the executioner. Your only chance is to work hard at school. Otherwise it was all for nothing. Don't do it for me. Do it for your parents. You can do it, when you want to, Ferit. Prove it to them. You can do it. You all have so much energy to defend yourselves. Use it. Huh? Latifa. Musa, you were such a great captain of the robbers –

MUSA: Miss Kelich, I feel dizzy. *(falls out of his chair)*

HAKIM: Hey, Musa. Hey.

SONIA: Musa, Musa can you hear me?

HASAN: You killed Musa.

SONIA: Can you hear me?

BASTIAN: Hey, man, now you're the criminal here.

MARIAM: *(goes towards the front, takes her phone)* I'm calling an ambulance.

SONIA: Can you hear me, Musa? Can you hear me? *(kneels down in front of Musa)*

Musa grabs Sonia by the arms, throws her over. At the last minute, she lets go of the gun which then flies forward. Musa chokes Sonia. Everyone runs.

HAKIM: Musa, stop.

Everyone builds a semi-circle around Sonia and Musa.

Mariam has the gun. She aims at Musa.

MARIAM: Stop. Stop, you idiot. Stop Musa!

SHOT

Musa lets go of Sonia. Everyone retreats.

MARIAM: Stop!

HASAN: Mariam!?

HAKIM: What are you doing? What are you doing?

MARIAM: Shut up.

FERIT: What is this bullshit?

BASTIAN: Are you retarded or something?

MUSA: Give me the gun.

MARIAM: Stay where you are.

MUSA: Give me the gun.

SHOT

FERIT: Mariam, don't screw around.

MARIAM: Shut up!

LATIFA: What do you want?

MARIAM: You to shut up already.

FERIT: What are you doing? Are you one of us or not, you traitor-slut?

MARIAM: Who's the slut here? Am I a slut? I'm a slut? (*aims at him; looks at Sonia*) Pants down.

FERIT: Have you lost your miind?

MARIAM: Pants down or I'll shoot.

(*Ferit briefly looks at the others. Pulls down his pants*)

MARIAM: What's a slut?

FERIT: You're an ugly slut.

MARIAM: Wrong. You ape. Latifa – what's a slut. Tell me what a slut is.

LATIFA: (*wants to go to the door*) Come on, stop. Let us leave.

MARIAM: Wrong. Wrong. So, a slut is a woman who...well? Well?

LATIFA: ...sleeps with men for money.

HASAN: (*hides behind a chair*) Let us go Mariam.

MUSA: I kill you, you cunt.

MARIAM: I'll...I with LL. I'll, repeat.

MUSA: I'LL

MARIAM: (*to Musa, and he repeats after her*): Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.

Repeat. (*to Hakim, and he repeats after her*) You. You too: Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers. ...(*to Bastian*) Spell cunt.

SONIA: Cunt. C – u – n – t

MARIAM: He can do it by himself Miss Kelich. What's a cunt? Tell me.

BASTIAN: No idea.

MARIAM: Where did you come from?

BASTIAN: Berlin.

MARIAM: No, where did you crawl out of? Out of your mother's cunt. Are you not born of a woman? You are all cunt-born. Say it. I'm cunt-born.

BASTIAN: I'm cunt-born.

MARIAM: Hasan, are you still with us? Get up.

HASAN: (*comes out from behind his chair*) Me, again?

MARIAM: Man, you wimp! Go over to Bastian and hit him.

Hasan hits Bastian. Hasan is delighted.

MUSA: Oh Miss Kelich, I can bring the gun to school everyday if you want.

MARIAM: You shut up. (*brings him to the middle*) You definitely need to keep quiet. From now on, you're gonna stop calling me a slut. You're gonna stop speaking badly. You're gonna stop bringing guns to school. You're gonna stop disrespecting women. And now you're gonna hug Miss Kelich.

Musa, help her up. Now take her in your arms and say, I'm sorry. I'll shoot.

MUSA: I'm sorry.

MARIAM: Now you tell him that you accept his apology.

SONIA: I accept your apology.

MARIAM: No, no, no. (*pushes Sonia's butt*) I want to see some emotion.

Not with your back, to the audience.

Latifa, grab Hakim's fat ass. Hakim – you kiss Bastian.

MUSA: Ok that's enough playing around. Give me the gun and we'll all leave the room.

MARIAM: Don't you dare come closer.

SHOT

MARIAM: Musa, get on the floor. Hasan, tie him up. Hey, I'm talking to you. (*Hasan shakes his head*) Shit. Well, you can't manage that? He's the big gangster who's been annoying us all year.

And you Hakim? Bi-t-hâfu minhû akfâr mâ bi-t-hâfutullâh!

[Translated meaning: You're more afraid of him than God.]

HAKIM: What are you saying?

MARIAM: You know what I said. You're more afraid of him than God.

MUSA: Hey, Imam. Do you only know swear words in Arabic? How do you pray then?

HAKIM: (*grabs Musa*) Say your prayers. Pray!

MUSA: What?

HAKIM: Pray. You know you're gonna die soon. Pray, because I'm gonna kill you. You son of a whore. *(kicks him)*

MUSA: Let me go.

MARIAM: *(pulls him back)* Let him go, Hakim. There's no point. No point at all. Tie his hands together.

HAKIM: How? I don't have anything to tie them with.

MARIAM: Here. Tie them up with this scarf.

Mariam slowly takes off her scarf and throws it on the floor. All are in shock for a second. They tremble. Mariam begins to feel the new freedom take over her body. Sh has an outburst.

MARIAM: *(primal scream)* AAAAAAAahhhhhhh.

LATIFA: Mariam, what's wrong? What's wrong then?

MARIAM: Cool, cool, cool. I'm cool.

Mariam touches her hair as if it was the first time. She looks at her hair and is frightened by it. Hakim quickly takes the scarf off the floor. Mariam gives the gun to Hakim. She dances around as if she was partying at a Woodstock revival.

HAKIM: Is everything OK?

FERIT: Mariam, what are you now?

Everyone starts to experience this moment of enlightenment and liberation. Mariam dances with Latifa. Hakim has an outburst. He pulls down his pants. Another short outburst. Hakim gives the gun to Ferit. Hakim ties Musa's hands together. Latifa dances. At the same time, Mariam discovers Musa's phone.

MUSA: What are you doing with my phone?

MARIAM: Shut up, you fucker.

MUSA: Whore.

MARIAM: Hasan. *(to the others)* Quiet! Hasan!

HASAN: Eh, just stay away from me.

MARIAM: Has this been going on long? *(goes to Hasan)*

HASAN: Has what been going on long? I don't understand what you mean.

HAKIM: What's wrong? *(goes to Hasan and Mariam, Ferit follows him)*

MARIAM: Has this been going on long?

LATIFA: What's up with Hasan? *(goes over to them)*

MARIAM: You're in this video.

HASAN: Leave me alone.

Hasan sits down on his chair. Mariam shows the others the video. (It is a video of Hasan naked and abused)

HAKIM: How could you do something like that? *(loudly)* How could you do something like that?

LATIFA: *(yells at Musa)* You'll pay dearly for this, you asshole!

MARIAM: *(goes to Sonia)* Look at this, Miss Kelich!

FERIT: *(yells at Musa, grabs him by the shirt)* What are you guys doing with him? Why is he naked? How could you do that to a classmate, huh? *(spits)*

MUSA: I didn't do nuthin'. I just filmed it. That's not a crime.

MARIAM: *(has the gun again; threatens Musa)* You filmed this and you still say you didn't do anything? There's a word for that in the law: accessory. *(kicks him in the butt)*

MUSA: He's a faggot anyway. Why didn't he fight back if it hurt him? *(Ferit kicks him in the stomach)*

LATIFA: *(very loudly to Hasan)* Why didn't you fight back? *(shakes him)*

MARIAM: What are we gonna do with you? *(threatens him with the weapon like in a Tarantino movie. But she can't pull the trigger. Mariam goes over to Sonia and hands her the gun.)*

LATIFA: Mariam?

BASTIAN: Are you crazy? Don't do it, she's totally nuts.

MARIAM: *(holding the gun out to Sonia)* Here. Shit. Take it already.

SONIA: I don't want it anymore.

MARIAM: Miss Kelich, please take care of this so things turn out well.

BASTIAN: Man, we could have all left.

FERIT: Keep still you fucking son of a bitch.

SONIA: Well, I have a stomachache. And I'm slowly running out of ideas. I think you're doing a good job Mariam. Keep going. You look fantastic.

MARIAM: Do something, Miss Kelich! *(points to Musa:)*

Those are the losers, the welfare kids, lazy, criminal machos. Those are the ones who go to back-alley mosques, the oppressors, the ones who do belly flops at the swimming pool. Those are the ones who cheat the state, hate their sisters, commit honor killings, the pedophiles, racists, ‘anti-Semitists’. Those are the ones who ruin the class average, the ones who refuse to integrate, they’re the ghetto gangsters. You saw what he did to Hasan. Do something!

SONIA: I don’t know what I should do. I honestly don’t know what I should do.

MARIAM: Shit. Me neither. (*lays the gun on the floor*) But you’re the intellectual here. We busted our asses for you and you’re abandoning us.

LATIFA: (*takes a step towards her*) Please Miss Kelich.

FERIT: We need you.

Hakim touches Sonia’s arm.

SONIA: You’re right. You’re right after all. Considering the situation we’ve come rather far. (*Places her hand on Hakim’s hand, looks at him*). I’m proud of all of you. OK. (*takes the gun like in a Tarantino movie*) You’ll vote.

HAKIM: What?

SONIA: Yes, we’re going to take a democratic vote. You decide. What should we do with Musa? It’s very simple; there are two options. A, let him go. B, execute him.

Unrest.

SONIA: So, I’ll shoot him. We’ll keep it to ourselves and then we can all go home...(*Musa tries to crawl away*) OK? You vote.

SONG

Sonia rips pages out of a textbook and uses them for ballots for the vote over Musa’s fate.

In the Washington DC reading, the actors sang “Battle Hymn of the Republic”

“Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord,
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored,
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of his terrible swift sword,
His truth is marching on.
Glory, glory hallelujah
Glory, glory hallelujah
Glory, glory hallelujah

His truth is marching on!

Original German Song:

Vows

I have surrendered with heart and with hand
to you, country full of love and life, my German fatherland
to you, country full of love and life, my German fatherland

I want to abide by and believe in God, pious and free
I want to remain firm and loyal to you, fatherland, eternally
I want to remain firm and loyal to you, fatherland, eternally

Let strength attain me, in my heart and my hand
To live and die for my holy fatherland
To live and die for my holy fatherland

SCENE TWO –

The chairs form a circle. Musa stands in front of his chair in the middle. Sonia stands to the right of him.

MUSA: I'm sorry. I'm really sorry. I don't know why I did something like that. I don't know what got into me. I...I want to apologize to all of you. That's it. *(sits down again)*

SONIA: So, evaluation.

Free him, hmm. Free him. Free him. Wait? Free him, free him, free him. You all want to set him free? Are you crazy? HUH?

HAKIM: Violence is no solution, Miss Kelich.

FERIT: He's only human. Every one makes mistakes.

SONIA: Shut it.

FERIT: I know that deep down he's a good person.

LATIFA: (*stands up*) I think that Musa is actually a real asshole. But if we kill him that doesn't help him either. I think, he should reflect about everything, whatever...

SONIA: Have you all lost your minds – how could you let such an idiot go freely? He's completely violent from head to toe.

BASTIAN: I think that every perpetrator was a victim at some point. And in a world where 20 countries are at war...

SONIA: Aah!

HAKIM: We can't try to change someone with violence. Man is only entirely a man when he plays.

SONIA: You too Hasan? You...you disappoint me! Man, you all are really dumber than I thought. I would shoot him.

MARIAM: I don't share your opinion, but I would sacrifice my life to ensure that you have the freedom to express your opinion. The Age of Enlightenment, the French Revolution and your lesson have showed me, that I have the freedom to –

SONIA: Shut it. The French Revolution...Now don't start bringing up the French Revolution. – what happened to Marie Antoinette?

MUSA: I swear, I'll never do it again.

MARIAM: (*walks towards Musa, lays her hand on his shoulder*) Musa feels remorseful. That's why we want to give him a chance to be better. You were right. I'm grateful for what you did with us today.

SONIA: All of a sudden, huh?

MARIAM: Musa has changed, Miss Kelich. – So (*pulls Latifa to her. Everyone stands next to each other behind Musa. Bastian pulls Hasan to him. They smile like angels*) We've changed. You –

SCENE THREE

SONIA: Shut up! Sit down and stop pretending like you've suddenly learned something. You have no idea about democracy. (*Hasan sits down*) You, you...You cunts...machos...retards...ass kissers –

Sizi, zavalli Aptallar!

[Translated meaning: You fools!]

Delikanli olun. Azicik delikanli olun!-Söylediginiz sözün arkasında kalın bari...

[Translated meaning: Be with crazy blood. Behave yourselves like men of honor! Stick by your word...]

BASTIAN: What?

SONIA: Ne bakıyorsunuz öyle salak salak? He? Daha önce Türkçe konuşan birini görmediniz mi?

[Translated meaning: What are you looking at? Haven't you seen people speak Turkish before?]

FERIT: Sen Türksün?

[Translated meaning: You're Turkish?]

SONIA: Delikanli! Bu mu senin delikanliligin?!

[Translated meaning: Crazy blood! This is your crazy blood?!]

MARIAM: Are you Turkish or something?

MUSA: Why didn't you tell us that?

SONIA: Because that's nobody's business! This is a German school. We speak German here, alright?

LATIFA: But your name is Kelich.

SONIA: I married a German, you dumb ass.

FERIT: You're Turkish!

SONIA: It doesn't matter anyway if I'm a Turk or not. I'm gonna shoot him anyway.

HAKIM: Fuck, if you had told us earlier...

SONIA: What then?

HAKIM: I don't know, but...

SONIA: What then? Who cares. It doesn't matter. What was I about to do?? What am I doing here? What are we acting? For whom? I feel...(looks at the audience) I feel like I'm being watched. I'm...what am I? I'm sorry...what are we doing? I'm really sorry. We won't find the guilty party here anyway. Musa, kusura bakma, (unties his bonds) canini yaktım galiba.

[Translated meaning: Musa, excuse me, I think I hurt you]

Cocuklar, kusura bakmayın.

[Translated meaning: Kids, excuse me]

MUSA: Canım ne önemi var?

[Translated meaning: It doesn't matter.]

FERİT: Bazen geliverir öyle bosver...

[Translated meaning: Sometimes these things happen.]

SONIA: Hey, I'm not in the mood anymore. *(She stops acting and addresses the others as an actor)* Always these Kanake-self-hate-stories. I've had it up to here with that. What's the point of it? *(watching the audience)* Bak iste bunlara oynuyoruz...

[Translated meaning: We're playing to them.]

Cok birsey anladilar sanki...Let's stop!

[Translated meaning: As if they understood anything]

These shoes are really uncomfortable. My wig is slowly coming apart. Besides, I'm hungry. *(The actors break character, except the actor playing Hasan, and return to being actors out of the play)*

FERİT/ACTOR: Let's go get some kebab.

BASTIAN/ACTOR: Kebab's good for your health.

FERİT/ACTOR: Yeah man, besides I'm sweating. I stink, *(as of now all the lines are directed at the audience)* hep aynem bok bu teater.

[Translated meaning: It's always the same shit with theaters]

HAKIM/ACTOR: Halas, harra

[Translated meaning: Stop]

MARIAM/ACTOR: Always with this headscarf-act, sexual liberation, I'm sick of playing your cumin-Turk. I'm gonna be in a Tarantino film...

LATİFA/ACTOR: I don't want to keep being hit, I want a decent role where I can hit someone else for a change.

HAKIM/ACTOR: Kacini oynadigim Kanacke rolü, pants down, pants down, sikildim, bitsin artik...

[Translated meaning: This is the umpteenth time I've played a Kanake....I'm bored of this, enough already...]

MUSA/ACTOR: Benim de...Hep adam vur, döv, öldür...Normal bir rol oynayamadım...

[Translated meaning: You're right...we always have to hit someone, kill someone...I've never played a normal part]

Everyone talks at the same time.

SCENE FOUR

HASAN: (*has the gun*) No one's leaving.

SHOT

(The actors break character, except the actor playing Hasan, and return to being actors out of the play)

BASTIAN/ACTOR: What's wrong with you now?

MARIAM/ACTOR: Why'd you do that?

MUSA/ACTOR: It's over, calm down...

HASAN: Shut up, Musa...

MUSA/ACTOR: I'm not Musa anymore..

HASAN: Yes you are. You...are! You're Musa.

MUSA/ACTOR: Oh man, come...

SONIA/ACTOR: Hey, [name of actor playing Hasan, repeated twice] put that away, it's over now...

FERIT/ACTOR: Man, it's done. We can go get some kebab now...

HASAN: Everybody on the ground. Lay down.

BASTIAN/ACTOR: You can't be serious.

LATIFA/ACTOR: Put the gun away, man...

HASAN: I won't give the gun back. Won't give it back. If we leave, what then? What happens then? Changes nothing. So I want the rest of my life to be here.

HAKIM/ACTOR: Please...

HASAN: Shut up. We'll keep acting. Robbers.

SHOT

HASAN: And I'll play Franz. I'm Franz and I'll stay Franz...

"I have every right to be angry at nature. Why did nature give me this ugliness? These Hottentot's eyes?"

What do you see in me? An actor or a Kanake? Still?

“Very well, then! I will crush everything that stands in the way of my becoming master.”

Who denied what to whom? Who’s guilty?

What do you want from me? The only thing that works in this school is the stage.

The theatrical stage! We act. But what’s going to happen to me when this is over?

Become an established secondary-school teacher like you Miss Kelich? A real model Kanake?

Or commit an honor killing on a TV show. Hmm, sorry, we’ve reached our capacity for model Kanakes, the role of the Kanake inspector on the detective show has already been filled.

How many model Kanakes will our country tolerate anyway?

“Whoever can float, will float. And whoever’s too fat will sink!”

As long as we act, everything’s OK. This is the only place where that works. And it’s soundproof.

Soundproof! Can anyone hear us?

“And master I must be, to force my way to goals that I shall never gain through kindness.”

(stretches his hand out with the gun)

SONIA/ACTOR: *(stands up, faces the audience)* The lesson is over.

SHOT. *(Hasan shoots into the audience)*

Actors sing a song:

[In the Washington DC reading, the actors sang “Rockabye Baby” (other song considered: Brahms’ lullaby); in NYC: Brahms’ Lullaby]

Everyone slowly comes forward. Everyone stands in a row at the edge of the stage. They smile charmingly.

“Rockabye baby in the treetop,
when the wind blows the cradle will rock.
When the bow breaks the cradle will fall.
And down will come baby cradle and all.”

Original German Song:

Lullaby

Sleep my little child sleep soon

Close your little eyes shut Baby birds sleep in the forest Sleep, now you should sleep too Sleep, now you should sleep too

***CHIRPING HILL* by Thomas Arzt, translated by Neil Blackadder**

The ‘Chirping Hill’ is a rural corporate retreat where once every summer the employees have a special party - a chance to get back to nature, let their hair down, and work out their business relationships in a less than corporate way. Primal urges versus professional behavior past and present are worked out in this mandatory company picnic. What starts out as a silly farce turns deadly as nature and primeval spirits take part in the retreat and a chorus of crickets comments on the action.

Thomas Arzt (b. 1983) grew up in a small village in Upper Austria. He came to Vienna to study theater and began to write poems and short dramas, influenced by Austrian dialect and the tradition of folk-comedy. *Chirping Hill* (*Grillenparz*) premiered in 2011 at the Vienna Schauspielhaus, won several prizes for Young Play Writers and an invitation to Young Writers Programs in Hamburg, Heidelberg and Berlin. His second play *Alpenvorland*, a tragicomedy about living between countryside and city, has also been translated by Neil Blackadder, as *Alpine Blues*, workshopped and presented at hotINK at the Lark in New York in June 2014.

Neil Blackadder translates drama and prose from German and French, specializing in contemporary theatre. His translation of Lukas Bärfuss’ *The Sexual Neuroses of Our Parents* was staged first in London then New York, and published by Nick Hern Books; Neil was subsequently awarded a PEN Translation Fund Grant and a Howard Fellowship to translate three more plays by Bärfuss. In January 2014, his translation of Ewald Palmetshofer’s *hamlet is dead. no gravity* premiered at Red Tape Theatre in Chicago. His translation of Thomas Arzt’s first play *Chirping Hill* was presented in staged readings in New York, Washington, DC, and Los Angeles in 2012. Neil serves on the Advisory Board of *The Mercurian*. He teaches at Knox College, and is the author of *Performing Opposition: Modern Theater and the Scandalized Audience*.

Thomas Arzt

CHIRPING HILL

[GRILLENPARZ]

translated into American English

by

Neil Blackadder

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Translation prepared for directors of Zeitgeist staged readings in Washington, DC, and New York, June 2012. Also presented in staged reading at Goethe-Institut Los Angeles, December 2012.

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FRAU HIRSCH, human resources executive

STIERINGER, employees' representative

BAMBI, mid-level employee

WILLY, mid-level employee

FLORA, worker

FISCHER, hunter

THE CRICKETS, chorus

PLACE: a hill on the outskirts of town. Above, the hilltop with a hunting stand and a panoramic view of the area. Below, the woods with a place where people can swim in the creek. In between, the field, where flowers bloom and animals romp about.

TIME: the present. A hot day in late summer, a mild evening, a humid night and a dry morning. In between, memories of the previous year.

Part One. Edelweiss.

1.

[Hilltop]

THE CRICKETS *Chirping in chorus.*
Sometimes tutti.
Sometimes solo.
Even sometimes in duet.
Or in canon.
In other words, chirping as crickets do.

Morning yodel.

Mstandingontopo'thehill.
Mgazin'updownallaround.
Canseeallthewaytotheborder.
FurtherthanthatIdon'tlook.

Igo'roundamongthefolk.
Peerintotheirlittlehouses.
Sneakapeekundertheirbeds.
Butlookawaywhensomethingstinks.

Ilookuptothelordinheav'n
Iwavetohimgreatlordinheav'n!
LookhowwellI'mkeepingwatch
Overourfairmotherland!

NoonekeepswatchlikeIdo
Solordinheav'nprayforme!
ForgivemeifwhenI'veoverdoneit
Idosometimesforgettowatch!

[Hilltop]

FISCHER *A hunter.*
On the hilltop.
With a gun.
Climbs onto his stand.
Watches and waits.

[Woods]

STIERINGER *An employees' representative.
On the edge of the woods, with a pair of
binoculars.
Peers up toward the hilltop.*

[Field]

WILLY *A mid-level employee.
Listens to the field with microphone and
headphones.*

BAMBI *A mid-level employee.
Wanders around in the bushes with a suitcase
and a camera.*

[Hilltop]

FISCHER *Carries on watching and waiting.*

[Woods]

STIERINGER *Carries on peering.*

[Hilltop]

FLORA *A worker.
Scampers up to the hilltop.
Picks flowers for a bouquet.*

[Field]

WILLY *Flinches.*

BAMBI *Peeps through the branches.*

[Hilltop]

FLORA *Has the bouquet.
Runs into the woods.
And down to the creek.*

[Woods]

STIERINGER *Gazes after her.*

HIRSCH *A human resources executive.
Jogs up from the town.
With the morning paper.
Stieringer!*

STIERINGER *Frau Hirsch!*

HIRSCH What you up to?

STIERINGER I'm looking.

HIRSCH What you looking at?

STIERINGER At the landscape.

HIRSCH Ah.

STIERINGER - -

HIRSCH You have to come over here. The view's much
nicer from here. You look out over the whole
town.

STIERINGER It's nicer here. In the woods is where fetching
Flora goes running.

HIRSCH Fetching Flora?

STIERINGER Shipping, E wing. Afternoon shift. The
supervisors know their people. Wanna look?

HIRSCH Jerk.

STIERINGER Now she's going down to the creek. Maybe
she'll go swimming?

HIRSCH You pig.

STIERINGER - -

HIRSCH - -

STIERINGER *Brings a sausage out of his pants.
Starts munching it.*

HIRSCH *Stretches her thigh muscles.
Hums as she does so.
Quietly.*

[Field]

BAMBI Chirping Hill? Am I going the right way?

WILLY Psst.

BAMBI - -

WILLY - -

BAMBI - -

WILLY - -

BAMBI *Whispering.*
I'm looking for Chirping Hill.

WILLY *Points up to the hilltop.*

BAMBI *Looks at the hill.*
- - That's it?
Takes a photo.

WILLY Yes. That's it. And the recording's fucked.

BAMBI I'm sorry. But there was nothing to hear anyway.

WILLY Because you're not listening.

BAMBI *Listens.*

WILLY - -

BAMBI - -

WILLY - -

[Woods]

STIERINGER So how long have you been working out?

HIRSCH A few weeks. It's good for me. I'm already breathing much more freely. You should try it yourself.

STIERINGER I have no trouble breathing.

HIRSCH But your back. You did go for treatment twice last year.

STIERINGER True enough.

HIRSCH I've got it in black and white. Management knows its people. You should plan ahead. Prevention. At some point you won't be financially feasible any more.

STIERINGER Whether I'm financially feasible is nobody's business but mine.

HIRSCH Still, Stieringer. Still - -

STIERINGER *Munches.*

HIRSCH *Stretches.*

[Field]

BAMBI - -

WILLY - -

BAMBI - -

WILLY - -

BAMBI - -

WILLY - -

BAMBI *Laughs.*
There's nothing there.

WILLY There's lots there. Atmosphere. I'll play it for
you.
Puts the headphones on her.

BAMBI You mean that hissing?

WILLY And it's always there. Always. I come up here
nearly every week, and it always sounds like
that.

BAMBI Not what I'd call fun.

WILLY It calms me. - - When it's really quiet in a
place, you often imagine things. Melodies, or
even voices. So I point the microphone, and
that makes me feel sure there's nothing there
except this atmosphere. Just pure air. - - Get
it? The head thinks it's hearing something, but
the technology says nope, nothing there. Just
particles. Nitrogen. Oxygen. And all that
stuff. None of it dangerous.

BAMBI You're funny. Just turn the radio on, then it's
not quiet any more.

WILLY But maybe the voices are still there. Just
covered up. By the noise. You can only be
sure about something if you check it out
yourself.

BAMBI - - Would you mind taking a picture? Me and
the mountain.
Gives him the camera.
Poses.

WILLY

Focuses.

[Woods]

HIRSCH So what do you think about foreigners?

STIERINGER Is that a trick question?

HIRSCH It's a key question.

STIERINGER Foreigners aren't something I think about.

HIRSCH I find them problematic and necessary. Good for business if they invest. The regional market is saturated. But way too many of them are parasites. The question is who you can trust, you understand. I'm only talking from a business point of view. Personally I have no problem with foreigners. I don't know a single one.

STIERINGER What's your point, Hirsch?

HIRSCH The Rostock contract. The lead investors are coming to the party today. Last round of negotiations. Now it's all about the new markets. And the boss is going to sign. That means we'll soon have to deal with a whole range of new customers. Globally. A really big deal. And an opportunity for the company. But who can we really trust? It's all very unstable. *Holds the paper out toward him.*

STIERINGER I know the figures. As long as the domestic market is working/

HIRSCH /Read it and keep your mouth shut.

STIERINGER *Chews away at a new sausage.
And reads.*

[Field]

BAMBI Liselotte Kupferkandl, at work they call me Bambi.

WILLY Nice to meet you. Willy. - - So you also work/

BAMBI /Yes./

WILLY /For us.

BAMBI Yes! Marketing and PR. In the branch office.

WILLY The branch office.

BAMBI And you?

WILLY Accounting. In head office.

BAMBI Nice. And here you are lying around in a field recording the hissing and crackling of nature?

WILLY During breaks. The company's not far from here.

BAMBI I know. I was there once. Last year. Though I only saw it at night. So today I took an earlier flight, because I wanted to see it like this, the hill I mean, in the day-time, you know. Just to make sure it didn't maybe seem different. - - Sometimes they just lose something. Places.

WILLY *Takes one last photo.*

BAMBI *Looks at the photos.*
Now it's really small. Doesn't look important at all. And somehow pathetic. A chubby lump in the landscape.

[Woods]

STIERINGER Is this them?

HIRSCH The new investors.

STIERINGER They look a bit ordinary. Expressionless.

HIRSCH The photo has that effect.

STIERINGER I don't like them. They only know the shop floor from outside.

HIRSCH So closed-minded.

STIERINGER How come we need them?

HIRSCH It's all about the security of the company.

STIERINGER Growth, profit, that's what it's all about.

HIRSCH The company needs to change.

STIERINGER And you need a new office, right?

HIRSCH Who gets promoted through the Rostock contract, that's for the boss to decide. What I care about are the people who work for us. I'm worried, Stieringer. We need new, stable relationships.

STIERINGER Relationships.

HIRSCH Relationships are necessary. Business always has to be personal. You can't do without trust. Of course that gets problematic, the more foreign the markets /

STIERINGER /So how come? As long as the domestic market/

HIRSCH /It's essential. It's company policy, Stieringer, period.

STIERINGER Policy.

HIRSCH SHUT UP! - - Policy has nothing to do with us. Our responsibility is just the overall conditions. The party.

STIERINGER The party.

[Field]

BAMBI I can't wait for all the new faces tonight. You're coming too, right?

WILLY Sure. When you're invited by the boss, who's not going to come?

BAMBI Exactly.

WILLY There's a lot of people coming.

BAMBI I know. I was here last year.

WILLY Ah. Last year. I thought right away you looked /

BAMBI /Yes?/

WILLY /Yes./

BAMBI /Me too. Somehow. Although. With so many people.

WILLY Right. - - But it is kind of like a family. The company.

[Woods]

HIRSCH Exactly.

STIERINGER Alright then.

HIRSCH Good. - - I think that covers everything.

STIERINGER Good.

[Field]

BAMBI So good. - - Well, Willy, from accounting.

WILLY Bambi. - - From the branch office.

BAMBI So I'm going to. Take my stuff to the hotel and all that. Freshen up. For the big party.

WILLY You do that.

BAMBI Now that I've seen the chubby lump.

WILLY Yes.

BAMBI Yes. - - Oh, one more question.

[Woods]

STIERINGER What?

HIRSCH See to it that the field gets mowed one more time.

[Field]

BAMBI Wasn't there also a creek here?

[Woods]

HIRSCH We do need some nature, but we don't need it to be wild.

[Field]

WILLY A creek? - - Yes. - - Down in that little valley.

[Woods]

HIRSCH That annoys the employees and scares the customers. They'll all be wearing nice shoes.

[Field]

WILLY But I wouldn't go down there if I were you.

BAMBI Why not?

WILLY Wrong shoes.

BAMBI *Totters down to the creek.*

[Woods]

STIERINGER It's not going to be so easy this year, the mowing.

HIRSCH I'm not here to joke around, Stieringer/

STIERINGER /That farmer got shot.

HIRSCH What's that supposed to mean?

STIERINGER Ask that guy up there.
Gives her the binoculars.

HIRSCH *Looks up toward the hilltop.*

STIERINGER Been sitting there since dawn, watching.

HIRSCH Why's he sitting there?

STIERINGER He has his reasons. That's what hunters do, sit around in nature. I imagine he's going to hunt.

HIRSCH We should have been notified. This is our hill tonight.

STIERINGER It would be better to do without the hill this time.

HIRSCH Hunters hunt wild animals. Not people.

STIERINGER The farmer.

HIRSCH An accident. What do I know. He doesn't look like an assassin to me.

STIERINGER There would've been enough room on the company site/

HIRSCH /Out of the question, Stieringer. Our investors are expecting nature. Nature, understand? A bottle of schnapps in a rustic field with archaic fire and perverse songs, they don't have that where they come from, they like it and that's how you do business. There's a lot of money at stake tonight. And I'm not going to let one solitary hunter spoil the party. - - You hold the fort, Stieringer. I'm going to call a few contacts. Someone's bound to tell me what the deal is with that guy. What's up with that. A hunter. On Chirping Hill.

2.

[Hilltop]

FISCHER *Crouches on the stand.*

[Woods]

STIERINGER *Watches the hilltop.*

[Field]

WILLY *Listens.*

[Hilltop]

FLORA *Runs up to the hilltop.
Picks flowers for a bouquet.
Sees the hunter.
Pauses.*

FISCHER *Stands up.
Reaches for the gun.
Looks down.
Pauses.*

[Field]

THE CRICKETS Rum ta taaa rum ta taaa.
Rum ta taaa rum ta taaa.
Rum ta taaa rum ta taaa.
Rum ta taaa rum ta taaa.

Rum ta taaa rum ta taaa.

Rum ta taaa rum ta taaa.
Rum ta taaa rum ta taaa.
Rum ta taaa rum ta taaa.

[Hilltop]

FLORA *Puts on an animal mask.*

FISCHER *Also wearing a mask.*
 Climbs down.
 Invites her to dance.

FLORA *Dances.*

[Field]

THE CRICKETS Rum ta ta taaa.
 Rum ta ta taaa.
 Rum ta ta taaa.
 Ta ta taaa.
 Ta ta taaa.

Rum ta ta taaa.
Rum ta ta taaa.
Tara ta ta.
Rata ta ta.
Ta taaa.

Rum ta ta taaa.
Rum ta ta taaa.
Rum ta ta taaa.
Ta ta taaa.
Ta ta taaa.

Rum ta ta taaa.
Rum ta ta taaa.

Ratata ratata tat.

[Hilltop]

FLORA *Takes the mask off.*

FISCHER *Without a mask.*

FLORA - -

FISCHER - -

FLORA - -

FISCHER *Climbs back onto the stand.*

FLORA *Scampers back into the woods.*

3.

[Hilltop]

FISCHER When you're out stalking, you learn to ration yourself. Not only food. It starts with sleep. How much sleep do you need to function? Out here, it's more dangerous if you sleep too much than too little. You have to be on your guard, especially on your own. - - And breathing. How many breaths do you need to take in an hour. You can train yourself. Most people breathe too shallowly and too often. That just wastes energy. - - Or contact. I question whether human beings are made to live in groups. All that social contact is just a distraction. People attach too much importance to communication, especially verbal communication. I've got into the habit of not talking any more. There are more direct ways of conveying your needs. Most problems in this world are linguistic brutalities. In a certain sense, language has destroyed more people than any other medium. It's a huge pile of shit, language. - - It's going to be a hot night. Summer should've been over ages ago. The hot nights are the worst. Make you function differently. And the animals too. - - You have to understand the language the animals speak. When we're children, we're much closer to them. In general it's a shame we've evolved away from them. Basically, childhood is a unique condition, after which it's all downhill. I mean, what do I really have to show for my independence if I still need my feet to stand up straight. What do I do with my self-determination if it's actually my belly and all this other stuff that compels me to exist. And just the idea of self-confidence. Who tells me I'm the person I believe I am, if not those who aren't the one I allegedly am, that is, other people. Ergo, to hell with autonomy.

If you ask me, we human beings are vagabonds
driven by the search for a way back to the
womb we escaped from. And the one I came
out of must have been an regular monstrosity,
because otherwise why would my existence
strike me as so hideous.
Shoots into the woods.

4.

[Woods]

FLORA

At the creek with the flowers.

Memory isn't a thing you could take hold of.
It's not fixed somewhere, there isn't a little box
you can open up where you've got it all
collected. What makes you who you are. What
you are. Memory is more like lightning,
maybe. A flash. Then, when you weren't ready
for it at all, when everything's decaying under a
thick layer of dust and earth, almost like flesh, a
body, that you've taken off yourself, there it is,
lying there, memory, and all at once it shoots
out. Just for a moment. And you don't have
time to make anything out. It's not even clear
what the hell that was. But you feel it. Like
when something hurts. And you start to relive
what was already gone. Looking for the places
you'd lost. That you'd never found your way
back to. With a different feeling from the first
time, sure. With different thoughts. But the
body's the same one. It was there once before.
Without you knowing it, the body finds its
bearings right away. Does things that you used
to always like doing in that place. And there
you are again, you run up to the top, you lie
down, and maybe you pick some flowers. No
place you'd rather be right now, that's what you
think. A thought you maybe had once before.
And you rediscover it. Your old home. - -
Then you look at the flowers. And right then
you realize you've often picked that flower in
that field. And without your knowing why, you
put them down, in the ditch, where the sun
doesn't reach and where in the dark a creek has
its source. All the flowers from your life are
lying there. And they remind you.

5.

[Woods]

STIERINGER *At the edge of the woods.*
 Into a cell phone.
Hirsch. He fired. -- The hunter. -- Yes. He
shot right into the woods. -- No, no one
injured from what I can see, just a warning shot,
maybe. -- I certainly don't think we can
assume he's harm- -- The farmer -- yes, you
know, the farmer, he shot him from up on the
hilltop. -- Yes. -- Yes. -- Yes. -- Yes. --
Yes. -- Yes. -- Yes. -- Yes, I -- Yes. --
Of course. I'll hold my position. -- Yes. --
Yes. -- Yes, yes, sure, but Hirsch -- Hirsch!
-- Yes. No panic, right. -- No, the party --
everything's ready. The boss doesn't need to --
-- he doesn't need to worry. -- The boss --
Hirsch! -- Hirsch? -- Can you still hear me?

[Hilltop]

FISCHER *Climbs down from the stand.*
 Disappears into the woods.

[Field]

WILLY *Shouting over from the field.*
Stieringer! Did you hear that? He shot a rabbit
in the woods!

[Woods]

STIERINGER A rabbit? -- Just an accident. Just a stupid
 accident, Willy!

[Field]

WILLY Right over there! It was limping!

[Woods]

STIERINGER A rabbit with a limp.

[Field]

WILLY The guy up there, is he from the rifle club?

[Woods]

STIERINGER No need to shout like that.

[Field]

WILLY Is there a whole hunt going on?

[Woods]

STIERINGER Don't be silly. He's just enjoying the view.

[Field]

WILLY Now he's gone.

[Woods]

STIERINGER He can't be. I'm keeping my eye on him.
Looking through the binoculars.
You're right.

[Field]

WILLY The supervisors must have screwed up/

STIERINGER /Shut up, Willy. He's not important anyway,
the hunter. Do you have the list?

WILLY Sure.
Unfolds the list.
Staff. Guests. Schedule. It's all arranged.

STIERINGER Banquet table?

WILLY A whole tree trunk. A sturdy poplar. The
forest ranger took it down this morning.
Recruited eight guys to transport it. They're on
call. Real characters. And the surface, it's
really rough. Not a table, if you ask me, more
like something for a blowout. A big old
blowout, that's what it's going to be. A
symposium. It's a Greek thing.

STIERINGER I know what that is, Willy. We'll be better off
setting up the table further down this time.

WILLY Not up here by the fire?

STIERINGER We're going to move the fire further down too.

WILLY Then the list is wrong.

STIERINGER So correct it.

WILLY *Corrects.*

STIERINGER The butcher?

WILLY Already at the grill. A good man. He didn't just rub spices into the pig, no, he used this monstrosity of a syringe to push them inside the beast.

STIERINGER Willy.

WILLY I was there. I swear.

STIERINGER You're supposed to be making corrections. Beer?

WILLY Five hundred litres.

STIERINGER Draft?

WILLY Of course. Seven big fat barrels. Oak. This time no one's going to go thirsty. Drink until we can't stand, right, Stieringer?

STIERINGER Willy.

WILLY You're my man, Stieringer. No one can knock back more than you. I've put my money on you.

STIERINGER Jackass. There'll be no competition tonight.

WILLY Just having a little fun.

STIERINGER *Bites into a new sausage.*
How's the road up here?

WILLY It's all marked. Nice and clear in red and white. Right to the parking-lots. And the path up to the field where the party is, that's lit up with torches. Romantic.

STIERINGER At least it's safer. We're responsible for that. We need to know just what's going on at least until the sun goes down. Hey, what do you think about foreigners, Willy?

WILLY About what?

STIERINGER The guests will include some people from overseas. We have to make them especially welcome.

WILLY What kind of foreigners?

STIERINGER Investors from overseas.

WILLY If you ask me, that sucks/

STIERINGER /But I'm not asking you. I just want you to keep an eye out. If anything should happen, it'll be up to us, get it?

WILLY So I'm supposed to play the watchdog?

STIERINGER It's about the larger context, Willy. Etiquette. The purely official level. The boss cares about this, it's going to be important tonight. If one of our own people gets lost in the woods, obviously you can't do anything about that. - - It is also supposed to be fun, tonight.

WILLY - - Sure.

STIERINGER Well then.

WILLY But. - -

STIERINGER What?

WILLY We are going to be drinking, right?

STIERINGER - - Of course we'll be drinking.

WILLY Till we fall over.

STIERINGER Till we fall over, Willy. But in a controlled way.

WILLY In a controlled way till we fall over, Stieringer. That's how I like you to be. It's going to be a blowout.

STIERINGER A symposium.

WILLY Right. A big fat symposium.

STIERINGER And now get yourself back to the office. And get the list handed out.

WILLY I'll take care of it.

STIERINGER Oh, and Willy.

WILLY Yes?

STIERINGER Did anyone else - -

WILLY What?

STIERINGER Bet. - - On me.

WILLY Half the office. You've got lots of support,
Stieringer.

STIERINGER Half of them. - - And the other half?

WILLY They put their money on Hirsch.

STIERINGER Ha. - - I'll drink her under the table tonight. -
- What is it? Off you go.

WILLY *Pointing to the hilltop.*
He's back.

STIERINGER *Looking through the binoculars.*
So he is. With the rabbit with the limp.

[Hilltop]

FISCHER *Carries a dead rabbit with a limp up to the
hilltop.*

6.

[Woods]

FLORA - -

[Hilltop]

FISCHER - -

[Field]

BAMBI *Hobbling.*

HIRSCH *Supporting her.*

BAMBI Was that gunshots?

HIRSCH A summer storm. Passing by.

BAMBI I was so frightened I almost fell in the freezing
cold creek.

HIRSCH What were you up to anyway, scrambling
around down there, in that suit, now your

outfit's all messed up, and your hairdo too,
wait, I'll help you.

BAMBI I think I must have gone off the path/

HIRSCH /The path's clearly marked. In red and white.

BAMBI Liselotte Kupferkandl, but you can call me
Bambi, since we're colleagues.

HIRSCH Hannelore Hirsch, HR. Why don't you lie
down for a bit, Bambi. You're just a little
upset.

BAMBI It's lucky you were there.

HIRSCH I was trying to get a signal. The reception's
terrible up here. You're from our branch office,
right? I've seen your name on the list. But
your plane isn't due in for another hour/

BAMBI /I took an earlier flight/

HIRSCH /An earlier flight/

BAMBI /My schedule got changed/

HIRSCH /Well you could have called, don't you think?
And we would have picked you up. Brought
you to the hotel. And not dragged you straight
off into the jungle complete with your chic suit.

BAMBI I just wanted to get a bit of fresh air/

HIRSCH /The air's fresh in the evening too.

BAMBI And to take photos. Of the countryside.
Shows her the photo.

HIRSCH We've got a company photographer. You can
order copies whenever you want.

BAMBI It's a nice view.

HIRSCH Nice? A stroke of luck! A whole world unto
itself. Self-sufficient. Between the city and the
country. The area's green lung. Like the beach
for indoor people, almost. Chirping Hill makes
the company somehow, how shall I put it,
imperial. You've seen the facade of the old
building, right?

BAMBI Only from the brochures/

HIRSCH /Rococo. That along with the panoramic view from up here, it's always very restorative for our customers. And in our country that's good for business. There's still something sustainable around here, if you know what I mean.

BAMBI I spend all my time in glass buildings.

HIRSCH Right. The branch office. That is a very different style.

BAMBI We call it Rostock-style. Transparent and in touch with the pulse of the times. The local is the new central, if you know what I mean.

HIRSCH - -

BAMBI - -

HIRSCH - - Your ankle's swelling. You should get back to town right away.

BAMBI Are there any taxis around here?

HIRSCH *Calls.*
Stieringer!

7.

[Hilltop]

FISCHER Nature shouts. Rumbles. Screeches. Clatters. There's a wild spectacle taking place in nature. Why would I need anything more than the orgiastic symphony out here. - - So don't bother thinking nature's asleep. Or that it's thinking about something romantic. No transfigured grove, no path to wander along, or tranquil park. You'll have to fasten your swamp shoes and put your crampons on, because this is a wild place and not everyone will survive out here. That's just the way it goes. - - And if you look really closely and listen really carefully and dig right into it, then you start to feel horror, and fear, then later you lose consciousness and at some point you yourself have become nature. But you rolled

around in it, and that makes you stronger.
Because now you understand that your law
doesn't operate here and that in the end
everything always decays and turns into what
you're standing on, that's to say, a pile of
corpses. Ergo we can deduce that the cry of
nature must originate in the larvae and worms
still not fully decomposed. Because it has to
take its time, decay.

[Woods]

WILLY *On the way down.*

FLORA *On the way up.*

WILLY What were you up to down by the creek?

FLORA - -

WILLY Every time I see you, you have flowers.

FLORA - -

WILLY I can never get my mind around it. They just
wilt, so what's the point in picking them?

FLORA - -

WILLY I've read what you wrote, Flora. Your poems,
or whatever they're supposed to be. - - You
should give up on that.

FLORA - -

WILLY I reserved a room. It's time to just get out of
here. Away. Maybe even start over from
scratch.

FLORA - -

WILLY Today's a holiday, Flora. We'll dress up
nicely, do some good drinking, it'll be fun.

FLORA Sometimes it seems to me like we're living in
an impossibility. I can't come up with anything
more definite to say. No sentence can express
what was done. No word reflects what was felt.
So what's the point in talking?

WILLY Do you understand me? - -

FLORA This muteness of mine isn't a given. And it's not about keeping silent, because that's where you'll find fear. Anyone who keeps quiet is hiding something. Just the opposite is what I want. To tear myself open. If all I am is what I say, and if I can only be where I decide to be, and if the only things we can think are what we can name, then it's nothing, this existence without language. But I want to know, what is it otherwise, what we have here? Because no one here has the right to say anything any more. And hasn't for the longest time. We're just all telling ourselves lies.

WILLY I miss you. - - Sometimes I imagine you're standing behind me again, whispering something in my ear.

[Field]

FLORA *Puts the mask on.*
 Whispers into his ear.
 I'll be waiting for you. Down by the creek.

WILLY *Wearing mask.*
 I'm still drinking.

FLORA I'll be naked. Spinning around in the moonlight. With my hair loose.

WILLY I'm drinking.

FLORA Come on.

WILLY I said I'm coming.

FLORA Now. I'm in the mood right now.

WILLY Not me.

FLORA Do you want to dance?

WILLY You're dancing like a whore.

FLORA But that was just a game.

WILLY Watch out that nothing else happens.

FLORA What's going to happen? Party-popper.

WILLY Fuck it! I'm drinking.

FLORA

- - I'll be by the creek.
Takes the mask off.

[Woods]

WILLY

Without his mask.
Tonight, Flora. Tonight everything is like it was before. At least for a moment.

FLORA

Willy always just says you shouldn't think too much about things. One time, he trod on a robin, he tells me then. It was sitting under his shoe, keeping really quiet, and he was sitting on a bench.

WILLY

I have to go into the office.
Kisses her on the forehead.

FLORA

It didn't make a sound. He didn't notice. Then he stood up and beneath him the little head had split in two. It wasn't a big mess, just a feeble bundle of feathers. - - He killed it. In passing.

WILLY

Hey, what do you think about foreigners, Flora?

FLORA

There are some deaths you can't do anything about, Willy says, some of them are just stupid accidents.

WILLY

Stieringer says we have to be vigilant.

FLORA

- -

WILLY

- -

FLORA

- -

WILLY

Leaves.

FLORA

- -

8.

[Woods]

STIERINGER

Supporting.

BAMBI

Hobbling.

STIERINGER Almost didn't recognize you at first.

BAMBI Me either, Stieringer.

STIERINGER It was a bit darker the last time.

BAMBI And we were wearing masks.

STIERINGER - -

BAMBI - -

STIERINGER - -

BAMBI - -

STIERINGER - -

BAMBI - - I was by the creek. At our spot.

STIERINGER By the creek?

BAMBI It sort of gives me the creeps.

STIERINGER Was it so terrible?

BAMBI It was a high.

STIERINGER Yes!/
/But - -

STIERINGER Yes?

BAMBI - -

STIERINGER - -

BAMBI - - Look. On the photos everything looks totally peaceful. As if nothing had ever happened. But you can look at them closely, blow them up until they're out of focus. Then everything dissolves. In angles. And doesn't form a whole. No peaceful picture any more. -
- You don't understand me.

STIERINGER - - I think your ankle doesn't look good. You should clean off the wound.

[Hilltop]

FISCHER

Pure nature. - - Goddamn mental
masturbation, unspoiled nature. Life comes
into being in a single violent act of sullyng.
Just as the juice we swim out of at the
beginning doesn't really contain a natural
purity, just as in our later stages we don't really
romp around in cleaner regions, our nature still
stinks to high heaven of shit. And we
instinctively do our best to stay alive in the
circulation of filth and shit, using all the bodily
tubes and openings available to us. That's the
way animals do it, why shouldn't it also be the
way humans do? And it's beautiful! - - You
just have to accept and interpret the signs of
sullyng in the right way. Saliva is the most
reliable messenger of my thirst, when the skin
flakes, it's time to have a wash, and my sweat
tells me today will be another hot day. And an
even hotter night. That's what late summer
nights are like.

Fires.

Climbs down from the stand.

[Woods]

HIRSCH

On the phone.

Yes? - - Yes. - - No, now he's bagged a
partridge. - - A partridge. No idea, it must
have been clucking too loudly for him. - -
How do I know whether partridges cluck. I just
eat them. - - Stieringer. - - Stieringer, he's
just a little green man freeing nature of the
animals that have become useless. - - Yes, I
know, the farmer. The farmer is pretending, if
you ask me. Yes. - - Simulation. - - Not all
pains are genuine. And otherwise there's
nothing new. No one knows anything. - - No.
A totally unknown green man. Must not be
from around here. - - You idiot, it's been a
while since that happened, the ranger's been
informed, he'll clear things up, we don't need to
worry about it any more. - - Stieringer?

[Hilltop]

FLORA

Runs under the stand.

Looks up.

[Woods]

HIRSCH Flora?

[Field]

FLORA *Puts mask on.*
Frau Hirsch.

HIRSCH *Wearing mask.*
All on your own? Where you off to?

FLORA I'm going for a swim in the creek.

HIRSCH - - I like you, little one. Come nearer.

FLORA - -

HIRSCH Shipping, E wing. Afternoon shift. I always see
you from my office, in the evening. That's
when one starts missing those times. Back
when you also had to take a shower to wash the
dirt out of your hair.
Touches her hair.

FLORA My Willy. He'll be here any minute.

HIRSCH Your Willy.

FLORA Yes.

HIRSCH He better get here soon. Be a shame if anything
happened to such a fetching Flora.

FLORA - -

HIRSCH Let's have a look at you.
Unbuttons her blouse.

FLORA - -

HIRSCH - -

FLORA *Pulls back.*
Takes off her mask.

HIRSCH *Without mask.*
- - It was a long winter. I did have misgivings,
but - - the treatment did you good.

FLORA - -

HIRSCH We'll be awarding Employees of the Year
tonight. It's a nice thing, to be recognized that
way. Believed in. - - And a plaque.

FLORA - -

HIRSCH I nominated you, Flora. You've earned it.

FLORA Memory is like a shot from a gun. A bang.
Flies out of the barrel, heading straight for the
target, which was always there, but had hidden
itself somewhere, and it breaks up, the bullet,
before it could be grasped, into a thousand
small fragments, and it leaves wounds on
everything it touches. Scars. - -

HIRSCH *Hums.*
And leaves.

FLORA And you're standing there once again,
surrounded by familiar faces, among all the
others you maybe once saw, and spoke to, at
best loved, but mostly avoided, and they ask
you how things are going, what you're up to,
how you are and stuff. Fine, yes, it's all going
fine. Everything's great. Always, because in
any case no one understands you, and none of
them want to know that's not really how things
are, that things are never fine, never can be fine,
but you stand there and look at yourself, over
your shoulder, as you're saying it, oh yes sir.

[Hilltop]

FISCHER *Comes back.*
Carries a dead partridge up to the hilltop.

[Field]

THE CRICKETS Stanzas.

Rum ta ta rum ta ta.
Rum ta ta tat.

Dingdong, theclockstrikestwelve.
Downwesit, nice andclose.
Roundthetable downwesit.
Here'sthesoup inthedish.
There'stheroast onthespit.
Andlotsofschnapps, let'sknockitback.
Andlotsofschnapps, let'sknockitback.
Andlotsofschnapps, let'sknockitback.
Bottomsupanddownthehatch.

Rum ta ta rum ta ta.

Rum ta ta tat.

Dingdong, theclockstrikesfour.
Downwesit, niceandclose.
Outcomethecards, timetoplay.
Aceshigh, notmyday.
Spadesaretrumps, Iwinhurray.
Andlotsofschnapps, let'sknockitback.
Andlotsofschnapps, let'sknockitback.
Andlotsofschnapps, let'sknockitback.
Bottomsupanddownthehatch.

Rum ta ta rum ta ta.
Rum ta ta tat.

Dingdong, theclockstrikeseight.
Downwesit, niceandclose.
Oftomass, timeforsinging.
Downonourknees, timeforpraying.
Priest'ssermon, timeforsleeping.
Andholywine, let'sknockitback.
Andholywine, let'sknockitback.
Andholywine, let'sknockitback.
Bottomsupanddownthehatch.

Rum ta ta rum ta ta.
Rum ta ta tat.

Dingdong, theclockstrikestwelve.
Downwesit, niceandclose.
Insultsfly, timeforswearing.
Fistsfly, timeforfighting.
Lipsarebust, timeforbleeding.
Andlotsofschnapps, let'sknockitback.
Andlotsofschnapps, let'sknockitback.
Andlotsofschnapps, let'sknockitback.
That'senoughnowlet'sheadhome.

Andlotsofschnapps, let'sknockitback.
Andlotsofschnapps, let'sknockitback.
Andlotsofschnapps, let'sknockitback.
Butfirstitsdownthehatch.

Rum ta ta tat.

Part Two. Alpine rose.

1.

[Field]

THE CRICKETS *The party.
Very little talking going on.
Drinking.
And eating.
People are making a mess of themselves.
And they're making a mess of nature.*

[Hilltop]

FISCHER *With his gun, watching.*

[Field]

STIERINGER - -

HIRSCH - -

WILLY - -

BAMBI *With bandaged leg.*

FLORA - -

[Hilltop]

FISCHER - -

[Field]

STIERINGER - -

HIRSCH - -

WILLY Why's he watching?

BAMBI - -

FLORA - -

HIRSCH Coincidence.

STIERINGER That's right. He'll take off soon.

WILLY - -

BAMBI - -

FLORA - -

WILLY Cheers.

STIERINGER Bottoms up.

HIRSCH - -

BAMBI - -

FLORA - -

WILLY - -

STIERINGER - -

HIRSCH I've been thinking. I'll have a talk.

STIERINGER What?

HIRSCH With him.

BAMBI He has a gun.

WILLY He shoots.

STIERINGER I thought the ranger.

HIRSCH He got shot at too.

BAMBI Great.

HIRSCH All just coincidence.

FLORA - -

[Hilltop]

FISCHER - -

[Field]

STIERINGER Talking won't get us anywhere. He's a part of nature.

WILLY That's exactly right. Nature has its own laws.

HIRSCH But you can.

STIERINGER We agreed. Not a word.

BAMBI	Prost.
FLORA	- -
BAMBI	- -
HIRSCH	- -
WILLY	- -
STIERINGER	The boss/
HIRSCH	/Is with the investors by the fire.
STIERINGER	What're they talking about?
HIRSCH	They're laughing.
FLORA	- -
BAMBI	- -
WILLY	Cheers.
STIERINGER	Let's drink.
FLORA	- -
HIRSCH	A toast. To Flora, Employee of the Year.
BAMBI	Ha.
STIERINGER	To fetching Flora.
WILLY	Yes, to you.
FLORA	<i>Moves away.</i>
BAMBI	Isn't she going to say something?
WILLY	She hasn't said anything for ages. She just writes everything down, only no one really understands it.
BAMBI	Is she mute?
FLORA	- -
BAMBI	You have to be so selfish to do that, to stop talking.
FLORA	- -

BAMBI And in general, is anyone here saying anything?
Come on, this is a party! Small-talk. About the
political situation. Or economics. Or the
weather.

HIRSCH Vacation. I went to Switzerland.

STIERINGER Nice.

HIRSCH Mountains.

STIERINGER Snow?

HIRSCH Nothing but.

STIERINGER That's good.

HIRSCH Cold.

STIERINGER But romantic.

HIRSCH With the boss.

STIERINGER Of course.

HIRSCH And you?

STIERINGER Heligoland.

HIRSCH Hm. - - The sea.

STIERINGER Too cold.

HIRSCH Sand.

STIERINGER Too much of it.

HIRSCH Did you all fly/

STIERINGER /I was on my own. Drove. I never fly.

HIRSCH That's a bit limiting.

STIERINGER My car and I have the same limits.

HIRSCH - -

STIERINGER There was this little boy sitting on the beach
playing a kazoo. You get away, you want to
escape, leave everything behind. And then a
tune played on a kazoo reminds you. Of home.

BAMBI That's no fun.

	HIRSCH	- -
	FLORA	- -
[Hilltop]		
FISCHER	- -	
	[Field]	
	FLORA	- -
	BAMBI	- -
	WILLY	- -
	HIRSCH	- -
	STIERINGER	- -
	FLORA	- -
	BAMBI	And now?
	STIERINGER	- -
	HIRSCH	- -
	STIERINGER	Everything's been said.
	WILLY	Fine.
	HIRSCH	Fine.
	BAMBI	I guess there's nothing more to say.
	FLORA	- -
	STIERINGER	- -
	HIRSCH	Exactly.
	WILLY	Alright then. So no one says anything.
	BAMBI	Sure.
	STIERINGER	- -
	HIRSCH	- -
	WILLY	- -
	BAMBI	What now?

STIERINGER Nothing. We keep quiet.

WILLY - -

BAMBI - -

FLORA - -

STIERINGER - -

HIRSCH - -

WILLY - -

BAMBI - -

FLORA - -

STIERINGER - -

HIRSCH - -

WILLY - -

BAMBI - -

FLORA - -

STIERINGER - -

HIRSCH - -

WILLY - -

BAMBI - -

FLORA - -

STIERINGER - -

HIRSCH - -

[Hilltop]

FISCHER - -

[Field]

BAMBI *Laughs.*

WILLY *Laughs along.*

STIERINGER *Laughs along.*

HIRSCH *Laughs along.*

FLORA - -

THE CRICKETS *Laugh for a long time.*
 Without humor.
 Out of anxiety.
 Perhaps with pain.
 Definitely out of uncertainty.
 And also scorn.
 Until it stops.

BAMBI It's because of the silence. If everything's
 quiet. And no one says anything. I can't stand
 that.

WILLY - -

STIERINGER I always have to eat something.

HIRSCH You ass.

WILLY - -

BAMBI - -

FLORA - -

HIRSCH I'm humming. Really quietly. That helps.

BAMBI What?

HIRSCH Anything.

STIERINGER - -

FLORA - -

WILLY I record them. With the microphone.

BAMBI Yes, yes. We know.

WILLY I capture the silence.

HIRSCH I prefer to chase it away. Music!

[Hilltop]

THE CRICKETS Swaysong.

Rum ta taaa rum ta taaa.
Rum ta taaa rum ta taaa.

Driiinky'wayintoparadise.
Eeeatlikeyou'reinheav'n.
Looovelikegods, don'tholdback.
Forgetthewholedamnwoorld!

Ooovertheoceansoffwego.
Fareweelltothetreeofsins.
Tailofthesnaakewelaughatyou.
Withacrownofthornsonourheead!

Driiinkyourwaybackintothewomb.
Swiiimhomewhenceyoucame.
DriiinkevenifonCalvary.
Fortomorrowit'sallforgooht!

Rum ta taaa rum ta taaa.
Rum ta taaa taaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa.

2.

[Hilltop]

FISCHER

I'm really hot. I can feel how what's deepest inside me is forcing its way out through my skin. It's only when you really sweat like this that you know what you're made of, the swine you are. The reason we so rarely let our hair down around each other is a socialized limitation mechanism. Because I mean who says I wouldn't be capable of speaking a different language from the one that was infiltrated into me along with my mother's milk? And who determines the social body that's livable for me, which could be entirely different from my paternal territory? Or my skin, for that matter. Why should my organism be limited by its flaps of skin, when my imagination can go so far beyond them that I could just as well be a woman. Or even an animal. I mean, just like a little bird, I hatch and make my escape from the home nest.

And then I contort my way like a worm through
the earth that surrounds me, in search of the
pigsty I can wallow in for the rest of my life.
Ergo, my existence is the result of an arbitrary
setting of boundaries. But the question is who
sets them, those boundaries - - It's especially on
nights like this that I wonder. When my
sweat's coming out of me all over. Then I say
to hell with the limitation mechanism, it's time
to go skinny-dipping.
He leaves the stand.

[Woods]

FLORA	<i>By the creek.</i> The party's in full swing. It's humid. I can feel the way it makes my hair stand up in its hot wake, everything's steaming, everything's foggy. I can hear the water hitting the bank, not a powerful current yet, just a gentle whisper. Get my feet into the wetness. Then my belly too, all parts, so moist. It smells of fresh earth. And his gown, scattered in the reeds. - - He's swimming in the creek. He dives underwater. Comes back up. Back under. And up again. Along with the waves. Like a fish. - - A fetching fish.
FISCHER	- -
FLORA	- -
FISCHER	- -
FLORA	You don't talk much, do you?
FISCHER	- -
FLORA	Who are you?
FISCHER	Acheta domesticus. - - That's the cricket we can hear chirping. House crickets. The name had slipped my mind, but just now. Because I hadn't thought about it. Acheta domesticus. The species isn't rare, but it's unusual out here. Not the natural habitat of the house cricket, not its normal home. Perhaps because of the hot summer we're having. They need it to be over 85 to reproduce. It's really strange that they've nested in the hill.

Normally they seek the warmth of people. In flesh or in garbage. Where there's something decomposing, that's where they feel most at home. House crickets. - - Did you hear that? That's something you have to hear! - -

FLORA Flora's my name. My nameless hunter. I'd always dreamed of someone like you. A man who came right out of nature. Who knows his way around in the wild. - - Where are you from anyway? And why are you here?

FISCHER Where are you from anyway? And why are you here? - - I like that, that you don't talk about it much. Because it is overvalued, communication. Especially verbal communication. - - But I might well have some questions. For someone like you.

FLORA Is it fun sitting around in nature? What's it like, living in the woods, stalking things, hunting wild animals?

FISCHER How come you brought me something to drink? Aren't you afraid of me? What do you want from me?

FLORA What do you hunt? Are you doing it for someone? Or are you just on your own? In life.

FISCHER Do you have someone?

FLORA There's nowhere I'd rather be right now.

FISCHER Fischer's my name. - - Now I'm supposed to introduce myself. And tell you about my existence. There'd be a lot to say. But it only hurts.

FLORA *Kisses him.*

FISCHER *Kisses her.*

FLORA - -

FISCHER - -

FLORA As if we already knew each other. As if this had all happened once before. You're a stranger yet somehow so familiar.

FISCHER	Wasn't always a hunter. Didn't originally come from nature. Forced into nature. Till all I am is nature.
FLORA	I almost understand you. Your words are almost mine. But at the same time so horribly far away.
FISCHER	I know your skin. Your scent. You smell alive. And so horribly far away.
FLORA	Nightmares repeat themselves. And you're standing there again, by the fire, covered in sweat, because you've been dancing, round in circles, because you've been drinking, and you jump in, right in the middle, and everything's spinning, spinning round you, and now you like it, and now you hold your breath. You're dancing, now, and you remember.

3.

[Field]

THE CRICKETS	<i>One year earlier.</i> <i>By the fire.</i> <i>Dancing in a circle.</i> <i>Wearing animal masks.</i>
STIERINGER	Let's see you dance, ladies!
WILLY	Dance! Flora! Dance!
STIERINGER	Fetching Flora! Dance for me.
BAMBI	I'm dancing.
STIERINGER	It's Flora we want! Flora! Flora!
BAMBI	You've got me.
WILLY	Here we go.
FLORA	<i>Pushes Bambi aside.</i> <i>Spins around in the middle.</i>
STIERINGER	Come to the fire. All of you, come here.
HIRSCH	Come on.

FISCHER *Steps in, joins them by the fire.
Not yet as the hunter,
Still as one of them.*

STIERINGER Let's drink to this get-together.

FISCHER Cheers.

HIRSCH You're from the branch office. Hannelore
Hirsch. HR. Welcome to Chirping Hill.

STIERINGER Everyone dance!

[Hilltop]

THE CRICKETS Twilight round dance.

Come on lasses, come on lads.
Take each other by the hand.
Give her a kiss, give him a lick.
Goat it from front and back.
Lasses braid your lovely locks.
Lads it's time to get in their frocks.
Sharpen your blade, harden your tool.
Get yourself off!

Throw yourself into it, let yourself go.
Swing your partner and do side.
Fling yourselves at the pretty maidens.
Make the guys into your slaves.
Drag her off into the bushes.
Find the fair ones and pin them down.
Fuck him senseless, out of her mind.
Stick it to them!

[Field]

FLORA *In the middle.*

WILLY *Dances up to her.*

FLORA *Shoves him away.*

STIERINGER *Bellows.*

WILLY *Stumbles into Bambi.*

BAMBI *Stops Willy.*

FLORA *Dances up to Hirsch.*

HIRSCH *Watches.*

STIERINGER *Jostles Willy.*

WILLY *Steps aside.*

FLORA *Dances up to Fischer.*

FISCHER *Takes hold of her.*

FLORA *Dances around him.*

[Hilltop]

THE CRICKETS Turn incircles, round and round.
 Twirl yourself out, twirl yourself in.
 Lift her up, on your back.
 Lift him up, on your lap.
 Lift up your pints, lift up your shots.
 Join the folk and drink along.
 Drink your way under the table.
 Go off your head!

 Throw up over here, throw up over there.
 Make yourself sick and throw it all up.
 Piss in the bushes, let it all out.
 Whack 'em in the face, give 'em a slap.
 Whack 'em on the neck and hit 'em on the skull.
 Choke them all of them down they go.
 Shit them out like sauerkraut.
 Did you beat them up?

[Field]

WILLY You're dancing like a whore.

FLORA But that was just a game.

WILLY Watch out that nothing else happens.

FLORA What's going to happen? Party-pooper.

WILLY Fuck it. I'm drinking.

FLORA - - I'll be waiting by the creek.

[Hilltop]

STIERINGER Frau Hirsch.

HIRSCH Herr Stieringer.

STIERINGER The night's spinning. It hasn't been as light as
 this for ages.

HIRSCH You're drinking too much.

STIERINGER I'm going to drink the whole barrel dry. No
one can stop me. Tonight I'm not on duty.

HIRSCH There could be an emergency.

STIERINGER We're beyond the law now.

HIRSCH There's not a moment when we're free. You
ass.

STIERINGER Hee-haw!

HIRSCH Stop that.

STIERINGER You have to join in. You're not you and I'm
not me. Hee-haw! Tonight we don't give a shit
about being human. We're going to let our
pants down and put on animal-skins.

HIRSCH Don't.

STIERINGER Let yourself go, Hirsch. You're way too much
of a woman, way too much. And I'm too much
a man. It would be simpler. And lovely.
We've got the whole of the forest and the
darkness and the earth.

HIRSCH Get your big fat head away from me.

[Woods]

FLORA *In the creek.*
But I can see you. You've been watching me
ever since I got in.

FISCHER I just wanted a bit of fresh air/

FLORA /Me too. After the dancing.

FISCHER You dance like an angel.

FLORA *Climbs out of the water.*

FISCHER Don't you have a towel?

FLORA It's a muggy night. Skin dries off quickly.

FISCHER - -

FLORA Can you give me a hand? Something got caught. In my hair. A tangle of tree-roots. It's often swimming about on the surface.

[Field]

BAMBI Who's there?

WILLY A pig. A wild boar.
Grunts.
I'm looking for Flora.

BAMBI What if I was Flora?

WILLY You aren't.

BAMBI I can be anything tonight.

WILLY Flora's waiting.

BAMBI I'm Flora. I'm waiting.

WILLY What do you want? Why are you coming on to me?

BAMBI Just a whim. Suddenly felt like going astray.

[Woods]

FISCHER You know your way around here?

FLORA This is where I'm from. Down there by the edge of the woods. Don't know any other place. You aren't really a child of nature, are you?

FISCHER Not really.

FLORA You from town?

FISCHER Don't know any other place.

[Hilltop]

STIERINGER *At her chest.*

HIRSCH *At his pants.*

STIERINGER I've been wanting to hold your hand for the longest time.

HIRSCH Now you seem taller.

[Field]

WILLY You're drunk.

BAMBI So are you! We're all drunk. It's a party!
What sort of party would it be if I couldn't get
good and drunk? You stupid wild boar! Come
here.
Pulls his pants down.

[Woods]

FISCHER I'd like to see your face.

FLORA It's part of the game.
Kisses him.
Laughs.
Darts away.

FISCHER Stay there.

FLORA Hunt me.

[Hilltop]

STIERINGER - - You remember, right? When we said we'd
be more informal with each other. But still use
last names. That would be familiar, we said./

HIRSCH /Familiar but still reserved.

STIERINGER We said.

HIRSCH And we needed to do it.

STIERINGER - - I'm Walter.

HIRSCH No, Stieringer.

STIERINGER Now we need to do this. - - Hannelore.

HIRSCH *Moving away from him.*
I don't like playing games.

[Field]

BAMBI *Kisses him.*

WILLY Don't.

BAMBI *Bites him.*

WILLY Ow. You little minx.

BAMBI You want me? Then catch me. Leave your pants there, we don't need them. But keep your mask on.

WILLY *Stumbles after her.*
Witch. I'll get you.

[Field]

FLORA *Playing the catch-me game.*
I love you.

FISCHER We don't know each other. You can't love me.

FLORA What's going on tonight is all a dream. We can love each other as much as we want.

FISCHER What are you talking about?

FLORA Tomorrow we'll wake up and we'll have forgotten everything.

FISCHER I don't want to forget you.

FLORA I'm only a mask.

FISCHER What's your name?

[Woods]

WILLY I don't feel well.

BAMBI Leave the mask on.

WILLY I have to throw up.

BAMBI Put your finger down your throat.

[Field]

STIERINGER *After her.*
Hannelore.

HIRSCH I'm damn serious, Stieringer. I can't play games. I'm way too caught up in myself for that. I can't just get out of there so easily.

STIERINGER How long have we know each other?

HIRSCH Far too long.

STIERINGER Sixteen years. Sixteen. Always right next door to each other, but that was it.

HIRSCH Your office is one floor down.

[Woods]

 BAMBI Done?

 WILLY Sorry.

 BAMBI Sorry? You'll get back into good spirits.

 WILLY There's some more coming.

[Hilltop]

FISCHER Show me your face.

FLORA You're messing it all up.

FISCHER What am I messing up?

FLORA My dream.

[Field]

STIERINGER I'm here for you.

HIRSCH I don't need you. Only the company.

STIERINGER - - GUESS I'M NOT ENOUGH OF A BOSS FOR YOU.

HIRSCH - -

STIERINGER - -

HIRSCH *Puts her hand in his pants.*
Grabs him.

STIERINGER Hirsch!

HIRSCH You're right. Not enough of a boss.
Lets go.
LIMP NOODLE!
Trudges off.

STIERINGER YOU POWER-CRAZED BITCH!
Chases her.

[Hilltop]

WILLY *Staggering around.*
Flora?

[Field]

FISCHER *Out of breath.*
I can't see you any more.

[Woods]

FLORA Frau Hirsch.

HIRSCH That's when one starts missing those times.
Back when you also had to take a shower to
wash the dirt out of your hair.
Touches her hair.

FLORA My Willy is/

HIRSCH /Your Willy isn't here.
Kisses Flora.

FLORA - -

HIRSCH *Pulls back.*
And now off you go, Flora. Out of my sight,
Flora, before I forget myself altogether.

FLORA *Runs off.*

[Hilltop]

WILLY Flora!

[Woods]

FLORA *Screams in the woods.*

STIERINGER *Takes hold of one of her legs.*
Got you.

[Field]

BAMBI *On the ground.*
So rough?

FISCHER *On top of her.*
Is it you?

BAMBI I'm Flora.

[Woods]

FLORA *Resisting.*
 Let go of me!

STIERINGER You're a different person.
 Holds her tight.

FLORA Ow.
 Spits in his mask.

STIERINGER What is it? Stubborn beast aren't you.
 Pushes her up against a tree trunk.

FLORA You're hurting me.

STIERINGER It's all just a game.

[Field]

FISCHER It's so dark.

BAMBI It's just right.

FISCHER You're not her.

BAMBI I'm everything.

FISCHER You're not her.
 Leaves her lying there.

[Woods]

FLORA Stop!

STIERINGER Shut your face.

FLORA - -

STIERINGER Bitch. Power-crazed bitch.

FLORA - -

[Woods]

WILLY Flora!

FISCHER Flora's lying over there in the bushes.

WILLY What have you done with her?

FISCHER	Nothing. She threw herself at me.
WILLY	What did you do?
FISCHER	I don't know her.
WILLY	<i>Punches him on the chin.</i>
FISCHER	<i>Pushes him to the ground.</i>
WILLY	<i>Falls over backwards.</i>
FISCHER	<i>Spits blood.</i>
WILLY	<i>Struggles to his feet and thumps him in the small of the back.</i>
FISCHER	<i>Turns around.</i>
WILLY	<i>In the stomach.</i>
FISCHER	<i>On the nose.</i>
WILLY	<i>Forehead against forehead.</i>
FISCHER	<i>Stumbles. Down the slope.</i>
WILLY	<i>Bites his lip.</i>
FISCHER	<i>Falls down.</i> <i>By the stone.</i> <i>By the bank of the creek.</i>
[Woods]	
STIERINGER	<i>Fastens his pants.</i>
[Woods]	
WILLY	<i>Wipes away the dirt.</i>
[Woods]	
HIRSCH	<i>Smokes in the undergrowth.</i>
[Woods]	
BAMBI	<i>Also watches.</i>
[Woods]	
FLORA	<i>Washes herself.</i> <i>In the creek.</i>

FISCHER	<i>Groans.</i> <i>Takes her hand.</i>
FLORA	- -
FISCHER	- -
FLORA	<i>Pushes his head under the water.</i>
THE CRICKETS	Mating call.
	Cmeretome.
	My skin is burning in your hand. My sweat boils on your tongue. All up and down I'm trembling with lust. You're driving me out of my mind. You'll be the death of me.
	Cmeretome.
	You tease me with your hot lip game. Your fingers have meaty mercy. You eat me up with skin and hair. You're a devil the way you hurt me. You'll be the death of me.
	Cmeretome.
	Now I'm lying down here cast aside. You've loved me through and through. I'm lying here all pale and dying. No lovelier death than by your love! Than by your love!
	No lovelier death than by your love! Than by your love!

4.

[Hilltop]

FISCHER	<i>Climbs back onto the stand.</i>
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[Woods]

FLORA	Nightmares repeat themselves. Back from the offices, from the shop floors. From the beds of the spa hotels and from the gala evenings.
-------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

All standing there again in their nice shoes on the hill on the edge of town, on nature's border, and they're laughing, but not out of pleasure. Out of a kind of fear, perhaps pain. And contempt.

[Field]

BAMBI *Laughs.*

HIRSCH *Joins in.*

STIERINGER *Joins in.*

WILLY *Joins in.*

HIRSCH A toast. To Flora, Employee of the Year.

STIERINGER To fetching Flora.

WILLY Yes, to you.

BAMBI Isn't she going to say something?

FLORA - - It's a powerful thing. Home. - -

HIRSCH Listen up!

WILLY - -

STIERINGER - -

BAMBI - -

FLORA If you lie down in it, in the earth, and dig your fingers in and your ears, then you hear them. As if someone's singing, almost sad. Only quietly, but then in those places where your fingertips scratch through clay and the network of roots and touch the rock, then it breaks open. Then it bleeds, and the green turns red, and it's like a rage, from the inside out, a scream, a whole choir, something never heard and at the same time familiar, because you know for certain, it's right there that you're sure. - - That's what it was always like, even when I was a child. Then I burst into tears, and the red washed it away, freed my fingers from the earth, until everything was once again the way it just is. - - I christened it world-weariness. Something you only feel where you're at home. - -

STIERINGER Bravo. Nice speech.

BAMBI A bit heavy on the pathos.

FLORA But I haven't felt it in a long time. I've mislaid it, world-weariness. Or maybe it's the home I've lost. - - It was when we were dancing. We're going round, near the fire. I feel someone stroking my breasts, and at that moment I like it, I dance nearer, smell his neck, unbutton my blouse, just a bit.

HIRSCH Something's happening, Stieringer. Something's coming up here.

STIERINGER Nothing's coming up. More beer, Willy.

BAMBI *Takes photos.*
With flash.

HIRSCH It's making me uneasy. - - Sometimes, Stieringer, I see people.

STIERINGER That's, I think, totally normal. Me too, I see people/

HIRSCH /They follow me.

FLORA My hand waves past the grimacing faces staring at me. They just gawk after me.

[Hilltop]

FISCHER *Reaches for his gun.*

[Field]

STIERINGER No one there.

BAMBI *Flashes.*

WILLY Bambi.

FLORA I keep dancing. On to the next one. He's got spit running from the corner of his mouth.

WILLY Flora! That's enough!

[Hilltop]

FISCHER *Aims.*

[Field]

FLORA I run my fingers through his sweaty hair, but he's too dumb to take advantage of getting lucky, to take me away, while all around us everyone's yelling, a stampede, he just goes along with it.

WILLY Shut up, Flora.

FLORA As if I'd just climbed out of the fire. As if I was the one setting the night on fire, the field below us, the woods, everything as if it's in flames.

WILLY *Wants to hold her mouth shut.*

BAMBI *Flashes.*

[Hilltop]

FISCHER *Fires. Once.*

[Field]

WILLY - -

HIRSCH - -

BAMBI - -

STIERINGER - - A cork. Just a cork flying out of a bottle. A silly cork. - - Let's carry on. - - On with the party.

HIRSCH He's crazy.

STIERINGER Etiquette, Hirsch. The party.

FLORA The air is burning in my throat. My flesh is cooking. Now it's possible. Anything.

HIRSCH Like a god he is, sitting up there.

BAMBI Dance with me.

WILLY My arm's been shot at.

BAMBI I'll tend to your wounds.

FLORA Now from somewhere I hear a dirty laugh,
people are shouting raucously, someone lifts up
a hand and smacks. Makes a grab for my
stocking.

WILLY Tell her to shut the fuck up!

[Hilltop]

FISCHER *Aims.*

[Field]

HIRSCH We should/

STIERINGER /Keep calm. Flora/

FLORA /I stumble, fall into someone's hands, right into
someone's hands.

STIERINGER That'll do, Flora.

BAMBI *Flashes.*
Come with me to the creek.

WILLY Stieringer?

BAMBI So much could happen.

WILLY Nothing's going to happen. I can't now.

FLORA Someone presses his pelvis against me and
grabs me.

STIERINGER Flora.

BAMBI I don't need any love from you! Just hurt me.

WILLY Stieringer, is that true?

[Hilltop]

FISCHER *Fires again.*

[Field]

BAMBI I want to feel it. What he felt.

[Hilltop]

FISCHER Wasn't always a hunter. Didn't originally come
from nature. Forced into nature. Till all I am is
nature.

[Field]

BAMBI Beat me!

WILLY Stop it! Stieringer.

FLORA No one knows who's there.

BAMBI We were all there.

FLORA No one knows who rips my skirt open, who
 takes hold of my head.

BAMBI We've been through all this once before.
 Flashes.

WILLY Stieringer, is this true?

BAMBI Beat me!

[Hilltop]

FISCHER *Aims.*

[Field]

FLORA As I suddenly curl my lips and the laughing
 turns into a horror and then I start screaming,
 and who covers up my mouth, no one knows.

BAMBI Down to the creek!

WILLY Will you shut the fuck up!

BAMBI *Flashes.*

[Hilltop]

FISCHER *Fires a third time.*

[Field]

WILLY *Drags Bambi into the woods.*

[Hilltop]

FISCHER *Climbs down from the stand.*

[Field]

- i. FLORA - - Hunter? - - A minute passes. - - Home
 is a powerful thing, you can't do anything against it, it's
 stronger than you are, but it carries you. If there's somewhere

you belong, then it still carries you, your home, like a child in the cradle, you lie there safe and sound.

No place I'd rather be.

All that goes through my mind, in that minute. No place I'd rather be, but not now. Now it's as if it could swallow me whole. As if I didn't belong here any more and needed to get away. Forced out. - - Already the hill is opening up and making us all disappear.

HIRSCH Stieringer?

STIERINGER *Impassive.*

HIRSCH We have to stay on our guard. - - Where's the boss got to? - - Stieringer. The investors.

STIERINGER - -

HIRSCH The contract. - -

FLORA Now I'm standing down by the creek and for the first time it's as if I'm looking at myself from outside. - - I've lost my mask. But I'm lying in it, his blood, half mingled with the creek. His look is hollow. - - Now I watch myself as I push him under the water - - his skull.

5.

[Field]

WILLY *Returns from the woods.*
With blood on his hands.
Flora.
Flings his arms around her neck.

FLORA Willy. - - You're bleeding.

HIRSCH Stieringer. Willy's got blood on his hands.

WILLY The hunter. He - -

HIRSCH Do something, Stieringer.

WILLY I - -

FLORA Willy?

STIERINGER You pig, you've got yourself covered. Go and clean yourself up.

WILLY A robin. Just a dumb accident.

HIRSCH Can someone help me/

FLORA /Willy?

WILLY That's not how I wanted - -

HIRSCH Has anyone seen the investors?

STIERINGER What kind of blood is that, Willy?

HIRSCH Did something happen? My shoe's got to be here somewhere.

STIERINGER What the hell have you gone and done?

WILLY It's how she wanted it.

HIRSCH Who?

WILLY She asked me to.

STIERINGER You bastard, what did you do?

WILLY Nothing you wouldn't have done yourself. You'd have done the exact same thing. Stieringer. Hirsch. Flora.

FLORA - -

STIERINGER - -

HIRSCH - -

WILLY Flora, she was always talking about Flora, but we never wanted to talk about it ever again. Shit, Flora. What does she know about Flora. -
- I did it for you guys. For us.

HIRSCH You son of a bitch. You killed Bambi.

STIERINGER - -

HIRSCH - -

FLORA - -

WILLY She's still down there. By the creek. I think she's still alive. Kind of.

STIERINGER - -

HIRSCH You idiot. Why didn't you do it properly.

FLORA - -

HIRSCH You can't just leave her there! - - If someone finds her, it doesn't bear thinking about. The company all over the morning papers. The whole department worrying for its life. The boss in court. The investors jumping ship. And Rostock? There's a lot of money at stake here. This is all about new markets. I'm not going to let one little Bambi stop me/

STIERINGER /I'll take care of it.

HIRSCH - -

WILLY - -

FLORA - -

[Woods]

THE CRICKETS Lullaby.

Sleeps sweetly lovely angel.
How blissfully you do look.
With your nightie torn open.
And your braid pulled off.
With your stocking torn up.
And your panties pulled down.
And your pride torn away.
How blissfully you do look.

[Field]

STIERINGER I'll take care of it.

[Woods]

THE CRICKETS Sleeps sweetly lovely angel.
Up you climb to heaven.
With your leg bust open.
And your head banged in.
And your heart torn away.
And your butt screwed up.
And your tongue pulled out.
Up you climb to heaven.

Sleeps sweetly lovely angel.
In the bosom of four lord.

Withnakedbreasts.
Andnakedgroin.
Andnakedbutt.
Andnakedeverywhere.
Nakedliketheanimals.
Inthebosomoffourlord.

Sleepsweetlylovelyangel.
Anddon'tcry - - keepquiet.
Hushnow - - butdoprayer.
Thenallwillbewellagain.
Lovelyangelsweetlysleep.

[Field]

HIRSCH - - Good.

STIERINGER - - For the company.

HIRSCH - - For the company. - - Walter.

STIERINGER Hannelore?

HIRSCH *Gently gives him a kiss.*

STIERINGER *Rushes off.*

FLORA - -

WILLY - -

HIRSCH Don't just stand around like an idiot. Fetch a shovel.

WILLY *Runs off.*

FLORA - -

HIRSCH - -

FLORA - -

HIRSCH It's only when something happens, something really bad, that you're reminded who you are, where you belong.

FLORA - -

HIRSCH - -

FLORA *Goes off.
And doesn't reappear.*

[Hilltop]

FISCHER *Carries a dead deer up to the hilltop.
And disappears.*

Part Three. Forget-me-not.

1.

[Hilltop]

THE CRICKETS Morning yodel.

Mstandingontopo'thehill.
Mgazin'updownallaround.
Canseeallthewaytotheborder.
FurtherthanthatIdon'tlook.

Igo'roundamongthefolk.
Peerintotheirlittlehouses.
Sneakapeekundertheirbeds.
Butlookawaywhensomethingstinks.

Ilookuptothelordinheav'n
Iwavetohimgreatlordinheav'n!
LookhowwellI'mkeepingwatch
Overourfairmotherland!

NoonekeepswatchlikeIdo
Solordinheav'nprayforme!
ForgivemeifwhenI'veoverdoneit
Idosometimesforgettowatch!

[Woods]

BAMBI

*With a camera.
Lying down below by the creek.*

[Field]

WILLY

*With microphone and headphones.
Records.*

[Hilltop]

STIERINGER *With binoculars.
Looks out over the countryside.*

HIRSCH *Jogs up the hill.
Carrying the morning newspaper.
Stieringer.*

STIERINGER Hirsch.

HIRSCH - -

STIERINGER - -

HIRSCH *Kisses him.*
Today's paper.

STIERINGER No report about what happened. I know.

HIRSCH But there's a photo. The boss. With the
investors.

STIERINGER That doesn't mean anything.

HIRSCH The Rostock contract is signed.

STIERINGER Great. I'm happy for them. They should get in
touch about moving to the new office.

HIRSCH A glass bunker, that's what the new central
office will be. With a view over the Baltic.

STIERINGER Good to have got rid of him.

HIRSCH And the investors.

STIERINGER I had a vision this morning, Hannelore.

HIRSCH You have visions, Walter?

STIERINGER Where I see our little company. In ten years'
time.

HIRSCH A forecast. Let's hear.

STIERINGER Exactly here. Where it is right now.

HIRSCH You stubborn so-and-so.

STIERINGER Maybe with new windows.

HIRSCH But the old ones are pretty. Rococo.

STIERINGER There are drafts in the winter.

HIRSCH You have to be able to handle a bit of a draft.
You'll just have to buy me a new coat. A nice
thick one.

STIERINGER A whole animal-skin.
Kisses her.

[Woods]

BAMBI - -

[Field]

WILLY - - She was right. - - Nothing there. - - Not
even particles. - - The atmosphere is empty.

[Hilltop]

STIERINGER Willy. - - Any beer left?

[Field]

WILLY It's all been drunk. Every last barrel.

[Woods]

BAMBI - -

[Hilltop]

STIERINGER A great night. - - In the old cellars belonging
to the company. The boss' reserve fund. About
a hundred litres. - - Go and fetch them, Willy.
We've got something else to celebrate.

HIRSCH The new boss.

STIERINGER To her!

[Field]

WILLY - - I think I'm going to take off.

[Hilltop]

STIERINGER Willy.

[Field]

WILLY I've booked a room.

[Hilltop]

STIERINGER Willy! The party's carrying on! - - Willy, more
beer!

HIRSCH - - The hunter.

[Field]

WILLY - -

[Woods]

BAMBI - -

[Hilltop]

HIRSCH - - Still sitting there watching.

STIERINGER Let him sit there.

HIRSCH But he's sitting right there.

[Field]

WILLY - -

[Woods]

BAMBI - -

[Hilltop]

STIERINGER I can't even see him any more.

[Field]

THE CRICKETS *Tutti.*

Home ditty.

Once upon a time there flowed a little creek full of almond milk
And down from the trees fell sweet honey drop by drop.
Like a little child off I hopped into the gingerbread field
And in I jumped right into the cotton candy woods.

Way up high on top of the hill there sat a hunter
What a noise he made sitting up there with his banging gun.
Aiming at the animals the bad bad animals with his banging gun.
Wanted to shoot them away shoot them right out
of the cotton candy woods.

That wild hunter on top of the hill he once was mine.
If I was still his what he'd give me would be marzipan kisses
Up there in the dark he'd cover me up with sweet soft dough
And he'd love me he would love me right
in the cotton candy woods.

Once upon a time there flowed a little creek full of almond milk
And down from the trees fell sweet honey drop by drop.
If I could remember the way back there back to my home
I'd go back there right the way back to the cotton candy woods.

Rum ta taaa rum ta taaa.
Rum ta taaa tat.

***Hate Radio* – by Milo Rau (Switzerland), Jens Dietrich, Eva-Maria Bertschy (Germany) and the International Institute for Political Murder, translated by John German** uses verbatim transcript to focus the world's attention on the horrific events happening in Rwanda in the mid 1990s. The "script" assembles original material from the Rwandan radio station RTL (a pop radio station used by the government as a propaganda instrument during the genocide), texts from extremist publications, and witness statements to create a complex mosaic that deliberately "provokes and sparks a catharsis" in the audience. Together with Jens Dietrich and Eva-Maria Bertschy, Rau spent two years researching *Hate Radio*. They conducted about 50 interviews with contemporary witnesses in Rwanda alone – most of them taking over five or six hours. In 2007, Rau founded the International Institute of Political Murder (IIPM), a body intended to undertake academically founded work that deepens and reflects theoretically on the interchange of ideas about reenactment between theatre, visual art, film and research.

Milo Rau:

Milo Rau, the founder and leader of the IIPM, was born in Bern in 1977, grew up in St. Gallen and currently lives between Zurich and Berlin. He is currently completing his doctorate on a study called "Aesthetic of Reenactments". Aside from his work in theater and film, he also works as a journalist, author, lecturer, essayist and organizer of large demonstrations. Milo Rau has authored nine theater plays that have been performed at places including the Hebbel am Ufer (HAU) in Berlin, the Sophiensaele in Berlin, the Staatsschauspiel in Dresden and at the Maxim Gorki Theater.

HATE RADIO – by Milo Rau

For rights contact the playwright's agent, Marc Schaeffers at: <ms@schaeffersphilippen.de>

Characters (in order of appearance):

Prologue and Epilogue:

- **Investigator** (of the ICTR, International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, which sentenced Georges Ruggiu to 12 years)
- **Georges Ruggiu** (host of the RTLM)
- **ValérieBemeriki** (host of the RTLM)
- **Journalist** (w)
- **Exile** (same actor as Investigator)
- **Survivor** (m)
- **Survivor** (f)

Radio STUDIO:

- **DJ Joseph** (DJ of the RTLM)
- **KantanoHabimana** (host of the RTLM)
- **ValérieBemeriki** (host of the RTLM)
- **Georges Ruggiu** (host of the RTLM)
- **Security guard**
- **Three listeners (calling in): man, child, woman**

PROLOGUE

1

BOARDS

On 6 April 1994, when the plane of the Rwandan President was shot down by two rockets, the start signal was given for one of the bloodiest genocides in history. In just under 100 days, one million members of the Tutsi minority and thousands of moderate Hutus were murdered.

One of the most important instruments used in the genocide was a radio station: Radio-TélévisionLibre des Mille Collines (RTLM). Similar to an advertising campaign, the popular broadcaster accompanied and propagandized the genocide.

Three hosts significantly shaped programming at RTLM: the Rwandans, KantanoHabimana and ValérieBemeriki,

and the Belgian, Georges Ruggiu, known as "the white Hutu".

On 23 October 2000 the "International Criminal Tribunal of Rwanda" in Arusha, Tanzania opened proceedings against RTLM. It was the first and, to-date, only trial of its kind.

2

Investigator and Ruggiu stand facing audience. Ruggiu holds his hands. Investigator holds his cards. Ruggiu stands on the left, Investigator on the right.

INVESTIGATOR

Mr. Ruggiu, can you explain to us why you chose to plead guilty?

RUGGIU

It became clear to me that during the events of 1994 in Rwanda people lost their lives and that there is a direct connection between their deaths and what I said on 'Radio des Mille Collines'.

INVESTIGATOR

I don't understand how you needed over two years to become aware of this.

RUGGIU

I'm trying to tell you the truth now.

INVESTIGATOR

So you lied to the investigators on 24 and 25 July 1997. And you also lied in the book you wrote in exile in Kenya, *Dans la tourmente Rwandaise*.

RUGGIU

Whenever I may not have told the truth it was to protect those people from RTLM I assumed were still alive.

INVESTIGATOR

Mr. Ruggiu, let's be clear here: Did you lie to the investigators, 'Yes' or 'No'?

RUGGIU

Yes, I lied.

INVESTIGATOR

And why should we believe you're telling us the truth today?

Both fade.

3

BEMERIKI

In 1994, I was a journalist with RTLM. I worked in the studio and on the street; there was, after all, no Internet back then. The studio had a very simple setup: There were three microphones and three chairs. There was a picture of the President hanging on the wall along with a large clock. Behind a large window was the technician who took care of the music. Yes, I think that's everything.

INVESTIGATOR

Ms. Bemeriki, you say that a picture of President Habyarimana hung on the wall? Why?

BEMERIKI

Wherever you go in Africa, there's always a picture of the President on the wall. But we naturally supported the President anyway. After all, he did invoke his social achievements of the social revolution of 1959.

INVESTIGATOR

Was RTLM an extremist radio station?

BEMERIKI

Let me explain. In 1959 the Tutsi monarchy came to an end and democracy started. And when the king is run out, you want to simultaneously run out his supporters too, right? His supporters were the Tutsis. And as the FPR had been trying to force the return of Tutsi refugees since its attack in 1990, we had to fight them. There was no way we could let the Tutsis back into power.

4

Investigator stands on the left, Ruggiu on the right. Same gestures as in Scene 2.

INVESTIGATOR

Are your parents from Italy?

RUGGIU

My father is Italian.

INVESTIGATOR

Did your father emigrate from Italy to search for work?

RUGGIU

Yes, I think so.

INVESTIGATOR

What was his profession?

RUGGIU

He worked in the mines in Belgium.

INVESTIGATOR

Did this circumstance perhaps instill a desire for social retribution in you?

RUGGIU

It's not in my nature to seek retribution for something. I think I have enough other problems at the moment.

INVESTIGATOR

Let me put it another way: Can it be suggested that you immigrated to Africa to escape your situation in Belgium and the problems associated with there?

RUGGIU

My situation in Belgium was indeed worse than in Rwanda.

INVESTIGATOR

Let's discuss your meeting with Monsieur Habyarimana, the President of the Republic of Rwanda. Where did you first meet the President of the Republic of Rwanda?

RUGGIU

I met the President of the Republic on the street in Kanombe near where I was living then, just past Kigali. I saluted him just so as to salute, and the President's car stopped beside me.

INVESTIGATOR

Can you remember when exactly this was?

RUGGIU

It was towards the end of 1993 during my last trip to Rwanda.

INVESTIGATOR

What did you and Mr. Habyarimana talk about when you were sitting in his car?

RUGGIU

The President of the Republic suggested that I take up a position at RTLM.

INVESTIGATOR

What was your answer?

RUGGIU

Since the Red Cross had rejected my application, I said 'Yes'.

Both fade.

5

BEMERIKI

I value Ruggiu highly. He started working at RTLM shortly before I did, without sitting any exams – that was December 1993. He met the President and his family on his arrival in Rwanda. And when the Arusha Peace Accord was signed, Ruggiu supported the President and the then government. Ruggiu was very intelligent, I admired him a lot. He always did everything to bring the truth to light.

INVESTIGATOR

The truth?

BEMERIKI

Yes, the truth. His shows always told us clearly and precisely what was actually happening. Many died as the RPF became more powerful. The family of KantanoHabimana, one of the other RTLM journalists, was massacred. And as you probably know, our studio was shelled a number of times. It is only by the grace of God that I am standing here before you today and talking with you.

INVESTIGATOR

Are you religious?

BEMERIKI

Yes, I was raised Catholic. But I believe that our

country needs peace first and foremost. We need to face each other with love. Love is the only thing that can bring us together. When you kill someone, you turn against God. Because every person is a part of God. If you finally understand this while still on Earth, God will forgive you after you die.

6

Woman stands facing audience. Hands behind her back. She speaks French, German Voice over her voice.

JOURNALIST

In Autumn 1993, the Arusha Accord was signed. The peace process was initiated and a ceasefire between the FPR and the Rwandan Army was put in place. As such, I did not travel to Rwanda to write about genocide. I went to write about peace. I had also been commissioned by the WWF to report on the gorillas as the FPR controlled the north of Rwanda where the National Park is.

I arrived in Kigali on 2 April 1994, four days before the genocide began. Right on my arrival I heard an RTLM broadcast. The station could only be heard in Rwanda on short-wave. Many people had told me about it, but when I finally heard it for myself... It was incredible for me. My mother is Rwandan, and you must know, a radio station in Rwanda is the voice of authority. On RTLM though, they played the latest Congolese music, and even today, anything that's popular comes from Kinshasa. So RTLM played the best music and had the best DJs. There had not been anything like this in Rwanda before. It was a kind of interactive radio: People could call in, the hosts were live on air and responded without any preparation. Everyone listened with their mouths wide open; what they heard was unfathomable.

She fades.

7

Man stands facing audience.

EXILE (MAN)

We did of course feel that something was stirring up. The Arusha Peace Accord demanded that the offices of government be split up between Hutus and Tutsis and

that the rebel and government armies merge. For the people in power, for the party of the President, this was a disaster. So they started focusing the spotlight on the race question and opinions became more and more radical.

Nonetheless, no one could predict what would happen. The perpetrators were as old as me. I knew them, I drank beer with them. They were the same people I went to school with, that I went to university with. Some were very good friends of mine. One of them, Edouard was his name, had a bar called 'UNO'. Edouard turned out to be one of the genocide's worst murderers.

Back then we even invited extreme Hutu ideologists to my university theatre group. It was like a kind of performance: We let them give a speech on the stage and had a discussion with them afterwards. Of course, what they said did make us fearful, of course. But, in the end, it was just politics, they were words. It wasn't real.

Woman appears. Gestures with her hands when talking. Man stands still.

JOURNALIST (WOMAN)

At RTLM, everything went to the beat, it was all rhythm: pah-pah-pah-pah. They made us laugh; they used four-letter words like 'slut' and 'shit'. You should know that Rwandans are very prudish. Rwanda is a Catholic country, which is why they shocked people even more. It was as if you went to church and heard cursing. As if the priest had just started to insult everyone. Bemmeriki, Kantano and this Italian, Ruggiu: The people for whose death they were responsible, they even made them laugh.

When I arrived I was very surprised. The peace accords had been agreed, the UNO and UNAMIR were on the ground, the Belgian UN soldiers were stationed. How could they tolerate such things? It was so completely obvious: The hosts were saying that the FPR wanted to retake Rwanda, that the Tutsis would reinstall the feudal system. "Ah, these arrogant Tutsis, they should be...!" Followed by this meaningful silence. Over the next months, they became clearer and clearer: "We have to wipe them out! We have to finish them."

However, they also produced very serious shows about the history of Rwanda. And they played traditional songs. Not ones that fit the model of quick love songs: "You love me, I love you." No, these were deep songs about Rwandan history. "Remember that Hutu leader who was castrated by a Tutsi King!" They told stories of heroes I remembered from my youth, but the strange thing was that they made them into Hutus, even though, according to legend, they didn't have any ethnicity. It was breathtaking. It was crazy. You could sense that something, how can I say, something monstrous was brewing up.

*Woman stands still with hands behind her back.
Man starts talking, his hands touch in the
front.*

EXILE

When the genocide began in Kigali, I was in Butare in south Rwanda, near Burundi. In this region, the slaughtering started later on, around 19 April. The people of Butare knew of massacres of the Tutsis since independence. For this reason, no one could say at this time if this was genocide or just another massacre.

In the end, a friend and I decided to leave the country. I remember, while on the run, hearing an address in the radio by Karamira, Froduald Karamira, one of the Hutu ideologists. He was completely beside himself, laughing and saying: "Yes, there have been a few deaths in Kigali. So what?" At the same time, almost my entire family in Kigali died.

You know, I was never properly threatened, I never came across any road blocks or bodies. No, I didn't see anything, which is why I always refused to give a witness statement. When I was in Butare, my family called me three times from Kigali. During the third call, my little brother told me that the Interahamwe, the youth organization of the President's party, were roaming the streets killing everyone they got hold of. I didn't understand what that was supposed to mean: "killing everyone". It sounds strange, but it was completely unreal to me. The speech of Karamira on RTLM was the first concrete experience for me. This cynicism, this joy in his voice while calling for the death of these people, that was what roused the first feeling in me: it was hate.

Both fade. Black. Voices from off.

8

Man appears on the right. Hands folded in the front.

SURVIVOR 1

The sound of the President's plane exploding could be heard all over the city. Then everything was quiet. I was still too young to understand what it had meant. But my father said to me: "Something terrible has happened."

9

BEMERIKI

The RTLM building was located directly opposite the office of the President. I looked out the window of the studio, but didn't notice anything unusual. So I rang the presidential guard and the man at the other end of the line said: "Wait, Madame, wait!" He put the receiver down on the table and I heard him call out from afar: "It can't be! The airplane of the President!" He whistled through his teeth, like someone very much astonished. When he returned, he told me that the President's plane had been shot down and the President and all his people were dead.

One hour later, we broadcasted the following message on the radio: "Rwandans! As you all know, our President had traveled to Dar es Salaam for a very important meeting and was to return this afternoon. However, before his plane was able to land at the airport in Kanombe, it was shot down by enemies."

That was all we sent out. Afterwards I suggested we play a piece by Bruckner.

10

SURVIVOR 1

On the night of 6 April, the Interahamwe began erecting barricades. They started searching well-known people from the area: doctors, politicians and intellectuals. But just a few days later they were

killing anyone who couldn't prove that they were Hutu. The Interahamwe took joy in giving their victims as torturous and slow a death as possible. They raped women in front of their husbands and killed children in front of their mothers.

The women usually didn't kill, but they did denounce future victims. They called it: *Pointing the finger at them*. RTLM called for their listeners to phone in and report where those they called 'Inyenzi' or 'cockroaches' were hiding. When a name was mentioned on the radio, the Interahamwe immediately sprang into action and killed them.

We barricaded ourselves into our house when we heard Bemeriki say on 10 April on RTLM: "In the Gitega quarter, in the red house not far from the cinema, cockroaches are hiding. Take care of them!" We didn't know what to do, because the red house was our family's house.

11

RUGGIU

In the days after the death of the President our programming changed. We worked day and night. Each host had their own escort and we lived in the 'Les Diplomates' hotel. We hung a white board on the wall of the studio and called it 'The List of Events'. The names of the dead and those who were in danger were written on it. The first ones on the list were moderate Hutus, which meant that the forces of democracy were now fighting together against the pressure of the RPF. At this time, we started to broadcast shows which were.... they were radical shows. Yes. I explained to RTLM's listeners how we were now at total war. We said it loud and clear: If the RPF in Kigali come to power, the descendants of the Tutsis who were driven away in 1959 will govern us. They will destroy the Hutu and make slaves of the survivors.

12

SURVIVOR 1

After being denounced, our father ordered us to pack our suitcases. We fled to a school because we knew it was being guarded by UN soldiers. We spent the night there, huddled close together. We had nothing to eat or drink. Many children died that night.

The next morning we could only watch as the UNO soldiers pulled out. When they had packed up all their material and wanted to leave, a group of children lay themselves down in front of their vehicles. The soldiers shot into the air and when they got wind of it, the Interahamwe were already on their way. They knew exactly that the ones they left behind were left for dead.

There were some very brave men among the refugees. They said: "We won't die any more without putting up a fight first!", and offered resistance. But since they were only armed with stones, they didn't last very long against the militias. Around midday, the Interahamwe forced their way into the school and began chopping up people. Those who were slaughtered died without saying a word. All we heard was the babble of voices of the attackers. We sat there among their screams as if paralyzed. We were already dead before they struck us down.

A girl from the neighborhood asked a Hutu if he could kill her without having to make her suffer. He said 'Yes' and dragged her by her arms outside. But one of our neighbors, his name was Juvenál, cried at him that she was pregnant. He cut her belly open with a machete. He took his time and opened it nice and carefully, as if opening a bag. Another girl, she was very pretty, went up to one of the Interahamwe and said: "Why don't you take me as your woman instead of killing me?" The Interahamwe took her into a corner and cut her breasts off. When they came back, they held the two breasts aloft in the air and asked: "Any other snakes here perhaps looking for a husband?"

(looks down)

I tried to hide myself between the corpses when a boy hit me with his mace. I fell down onto the chopped up bodies and played dead. Later on, I felt how they threw me somewhere and how other bodies piled on top of me. When I heard the Interahamwe boss whistle for them to move on, I was completely covered by them.

In the night I got up and tried to get out by clambering over the corpses. Human flesh was everywhere. Single limbs lay there, shattered, as if pounded by a machine. It was difficult to escape from this mass grave, you had to stand upright. I was covered in blood, my entire face smeared with it. I could even taste it on my tongue. I was invisible in

the night.

I never saw my family again. I got moving to get what remains I could of my family before the murderers came back. The money we had taken with us for our escape, I left behind. That's how I survived.

A young woman appears on the left, holding her hands in the front. Man stands still.

SURVIVOR 2

I come from a village near Butare, that's a province in the south. We were a large family: four boys and six girls. Now there are four of us: two brothers, one sister and me. I don't remember very much as I was still quite young during the genocide, but my big sister told me a lot.

I remember going into the fields with my mother to gather the harvest. Someone shouted at us: "We have to run! It's started." I didn't know what he was talking about. But my mother told me: "Don't be afraid! We'll come back soon."

Grenades were landing before we reached the end of our street. One of my sisters was killed immediately, another one was injured. We saw a ditch and hid ourselves in it. Me, my mother and my two sisters.

A few minutes later a man came by. It was our neighbor. He saw my mother and said to her: "I will kill your children." My mother answered: "Do whatever you want! It is your right. Do what you like! But kill me first!"

The man said: "It's not worth it. You'll die of grief anyway."

Man looks down for a few seconds.

He cut off the legs of two of my younger sisters. Yes, he actually cut off their legs! My mother pleaded with our neighbor again that he kill her when a girl appeared behind him and said: "Wait! You'll make her clothes dirty."

I still see her today. She's wearing shorts and the clothes of her victims are wrapped around her waist. She tells my mother: "Get undressed!" And when Mamma doesn't do as she's told quickly enough, the girl

throws her down on her back and rips off all her clothes. She takes everything off, even her underwear. That's how I see her in front of me today: completely naked.

At this time, another man comes over. He's carrying a cudgel on him and drives it into my mother's back with all his force. And then they leave.

My mother wasn't yet completely dead. I can't remember what she was talking about, but I imagine she said that we should take care of our youngest siblings. My sisters, who were bleeding heavily, had started crying: "Mamma, Mamma, we're thirsty." But since we were still too young ourselves, we couldn't do anything. Yes, that's how it was.

Later, our neighbor came back. He saw us and said: "Come with me, I'll take care of you." He brought us to a place where there were toilets and ordered us to climb into one. But there were already lots of people in there. Then he started to laugh and said: "Uh oh, it's occupied." So he brought us to a grave where all the corpses were being thrown and pushed us into it. It was also a kind of toilet, a latrine. The smell got into our mouths, our ears, everywhere... He threw a few stones in after us and pushed a thick slab of concrete over the hole. My sister tried to climb back out, but it was sealed tight. Inside it was complete darkness.

I don't know how long we were trapped in there. But when the FPR came and told us the massacres were over and that we had survived, we couldn't believe them. The soldiers lifted up the concrete slab, but my big sister told them we wouldn't come out, we were staying there. So they came back again with a boy, someone we knew, a Tutsi, who started shouting: "It's the truth! Come out, you won't be killed!" So we climbed out of the hole. We looked at each other, it was midday, and we looked at each other, for the first time in a long, long time.

I don't know why we survived. I don't understand it. I don't talk a lot about it, especially not in public because I can't really remember. Only when I see my big sister, then we talk a lot about our mother. She tells me what she was like. That's the way we remember everything.

Recently, at a party, we both went to the toilet together. My sister said to me: "We're dead now!" I laughed and said: "No, no." She then pointed at the door and said: ""But look, they've even closed the doors!" Because 'to close the doors' means that you're dead.

Both fade. Black.

MIDDLE PART: IN THE RTLM.

Kantano, Valérie and Georges sit at the round table in the studio. DJ Joseph is in the booth and is DJ'ing: playing the music and talking to the audience. A security guard is in the room always. There is a whiteboard with post-its on it on the right and a tea-cart with drinks and snacks. On the table there are blocks and pencils which they use.

DJ JOSEPH

(laughing)

You're listening to Radio-Télévision Libre des Milles Collines. We're broadcasting from Kigali, it's 9 O'clock in our studios. Yes indeed, you're listening to Radio RTLM, Radio Sympa, the voice of the people, the radio that speaks the truth, the whole truth and even divulges a few secrets here and there. To all our listeners: Courage!

KANTANO HABIMANA

from the main room, around a table, with microphones and headsets)

Courage! Thank you, Joseph. And since our beer supply is starting to run low, the people in Gisenyi should brew us up some new beer. Brew us beer so we can have some fun! Because it won't be long until we win this war. This war which the FPR rebels and the Tutsi cockroaches inflicted upon us, and win it in spectacular fashion. Our friends at the road blocks, the people all over the country and the soldiers of the Rwandan Army on the front line, all have victory in their sights now!

Valérie stands up from the table and gets herself a drink. DJ nods and confirms what Kantano is saying. Georges stands up and walks to the whiteboard on the right and reorganizes the post-its.

It is now 9 O'clock in Kigali. I'd like to say hello to all those living up in Gikondo: Courage! Don't believe anyone saying that there are more and more rebels are arriving in Kigali. No! There are no new rebels coming. They're the same ones, completely exhausted and starving, running to their death. These suicides!

Valérie walks to the shelf on the left and takes files.

Yes, Radio RTLM speaks to you! The Interahamwe loves this station and this station supports the Interahamwe and all youth organisations of our Hutu Power parties. Because this station belongs to all Rwandans and all foreigners who have purchased shares in RTLM, in short, this station belongs to everyone.

Valérie comes back to her seat and sits down.

DJ JOSEPH

That was KantanoHabimana on the mic. It's 9 O'clock here in Kigali and rain is falling. But Radio RTLM is your station, we chat, we play good music and broadcast interesting news!

Georges comes back to the table. During Valérie's speech he collects papers from the table. Then he sits down

VALÉRIE BEMERIKI

Thanks, Joseph. Dear listeners of Radio RTLM, this evening you are being accompanied by KantanoHabimana, Georges Ruggiu and ValérieBemeriki. At the mixing desk, Joseph Rudatsikira. We talk about everything and broadcast the very latest news to you. But before we start into the programme, I'd like to hand the mic over to my colleague, Georges Ruggiu, for news from the front. He will summarise today's events, here in Kigali, and talk about the situation in our country. And so we begin the evening with a clear idea, because people are starting to ask serious questions, indeed, they are beginning to question themselves... Georges!

Jingle.

GEORGES RUGGIU

Thanks, Valérie! Good evening, everyone, our dear listeners. So let's talk about the latest news from the war with some commentary from us...

In Butare the FPR are trying to attack the city from the Mbazitownship. However, they were pushed back by the civilian population who offered resistance.

Nyanza was the scene of heavy fighting yesterday. In the ranks of the cockroach rebels, seven were killed and it was possible to confiscate a lot of military material, including a mortar with ammunition.

In Rulindo there were 31 deaths among the cockroaches, lots of weaponry was confiscated, including a Kalashnikov and a heavy machine-gun with ammunition.

As Radio Rwanda already reported, the cockroaches suffered a heavy defeat yesterday in Kivuruga, a heavy defeat.

Kantano pours in a drink.

The cockroaches shot a grenade into a civilian area close to Gitarama... Pity that Bernard Kouchner wasn't in the area to see the places they shell that have no connection with military campaigns whatsoever.

KANTANO

Yes, the cockroaches shot a grenade into Gitarama and only managed to hit three dogs. But the dogs were able to escape the grenades and howled with laughter...

VALÉRIE

Let me add for our listeners that Bernard Kouchner is one of the founders of *Médecins sans Frontières*.

GEORGES

Thanks for your report, Valérie.

Valérie drinks her tea.

Let's get to the situation in Kigali. Important battles were waged yesterday in Kigali. On the hill of *Mont Kigali* our troops were able to repel the

enemy with the help of the civilian population.

In Gizozi, Kinamba and Kacyiru our police was able to fend off attacks. Around Kigali there are a lot of attacks being carried out now and the FPR is continuing to plunder the homes of the civilian population. These attacks do not have any military targets, or so it seems at least...

So much for yesterday's and this morning's fighting. The good news, yes, good news, is that we managed to kill 51 people at the front only yesterday.

(uses gestures that encourage his statements)

We are in good shape! We are about to win this war! *Radio France Internationale* maintains the opposite, however... Yesterday *Radio France Internationale* announced that Rwandan forces in Kigali were surrounded by the FPR. To quote: "The capital is surrounded and all transport routes are blocked."

We expressly disagree with this message. The transport routes are not completely blocked. Today... Today we met someone who came to Kigali from Gisenyi. Yes, he made it to Kigali... So if all the transport routes were blocked, he wouldn't have made it here. We would like to welcome him even if we're not allowed mention his name.

KANTANO

The transport routes are open. People are getting through.

GEORGES

It's true, but you have to be very cautious... If *Radio France Internationale* doesn't check their information, how can they maintain that Kigali is no longer accessible via official transport routes? It's "wrong, wrong and more wrong", as General Dallaire would say. But this time, it's not General Dallaire saying this, we are saying it!

VALÉRIE

If you would let me, Georges... Because this is exactly the point. Dear listeners, if you're listening to foreign broadcasters, like *Radio France Internationale* or *Radio Muhabura*, the radio of the rebels of Kagame, then you'll hear them saying that

the FPR has already taken Kigali. But when you go to the various quarters, I was in Kaciru and in other sectors this morning, then you can see how the people are still going to the market and taking care of their everyday activities. So what you're hearing in the foreign radio stations is nothing but provocation. Everything you hear on *Radio France Internationale* or on *Radio Muhabura* is just rumour because the rebels will never take Kigali. From where are they supposed to be able to take Kigali? Tell me, Kantano, from which sector are they supposed to take Kigali? What sectors are even under their control? All of this is only happening in their dreams because it is much too difficult to seize Kigali. It is impossible, plain and simple. So everything these radio stations are broadcasting every day is nothing but lies. Where are they even? What do they control? Nothing. Absolutely nothing.

They interrupt each other. Georges takes off his headphones and stands up when Kantano starts speaking and lightens a cigarette.

KANTANO

Yes, you're addressing an important point here: Disinformation. Nothing these stations are broadcasting, the American ones too, has any basis whatsoever. They say that all the transport routes are blocked, but we here in Kigali know people who arrived here this morning after coming from Gitarama and Ruhengeri. Indeed, hundreds of people. Nonetheless, the rebels are continuing to spread lies and we shouldn't complain too much because this is exactly what the Tutsi bandits want with their tactics of lies.

Georges indicates silently that he is not confirming and sits down.

This morning, a journalist at *Radio Muhabura* reported that he just came from Gashora and didn't run into anyone there. Not a bird twittering, only corpses everywhere. He was told the Interahamwe carried out these atrocities. But who told him that? Can corpses speak all of a sudden?

Nevertheless, we send our greetings to you so-called "journalists" of *Radio Muhabura*. We're closely following the laughable rumours you're spreading... You say, for example, that we smoke grass and that we are

trying to get the population of Kigali to do so as well. But of course! Now's the perfect time to smoke! We're smoking like... we're smoking like... Simon Bikindi...

DJ JOSEPH

To you our dear listeners, Simon Bikindi! Simon Bikindi is *power*!

KANTANO

"I hate all Hutus". Yes, and I hate everyone who doesn't smoke! The Nazis didn't smoke either, Hitler and his cursed band of Aryans who felt superior to all, like the Tutsis. And what happened to Hitler, Georges?

GEORGES

(gestures with his arms)
Hitler? He was dealt with.

KANTANO

Thanks, Georges. Hmm... I would request that all those people from Ruhengeri, Butare and Gisenyi who come to Kigali to supply us with grass. Bring us large quantities of grass so we can provide better resistance.

DJ JOSEPH

Yes, we want to smoke while we wait for the rebels and will only stop once we have annihilated them.

KANTANO

Then we'll have to set up detox clinics...

VALÉRIE

Listeners, let's all hear the song "I hate all Hutus" together. You all probably know it very well. The misfortune that is spreading out over all of Rwanda indeed has its origins in truth... We could name TwagiramunguFaustin...

KANTANO

Also known as Rukukoma

VALÉRIE

Or Kanyarengwe

KANTANO

Or Pasteur Bizimungu. And, most of all, this dirty

slut who gets into bed with every Tutsi, Agathe.

VALÉRIE

Yes, all those Hutus who sold their souls to the Tutsis, all of the FPR's accomplices. They are the only reason why our country is going down the drain, they alone have brought this unspeakable disaster upon on. Ah, the arrogance of these rebels! RTLM has already proven countless times that the RPF only remains standing thanks to the money of foreign shareholders. And if we're being honest, it's only been able to stay around for so long because of President Habyarimana... It's best if they bring him back to life! He did protect them so well after all! But they didn't even realise it and killed him. Misfortune be upon them, as it says in the Bible: "Death and sorrow be upon them!"

Kantano takes off his headphones during the song, stand up and walks around the table to Valérie.

Song:

*I hate all Hutus. I hate all Hutus who deny their identity.
Our fortune is that they are few.
Our fortune is that they are few.
All the better that I hate them.*

They talk inaudible. After the song Kantano returns to his chair. They put on their headphones.

VALÉRIE

Listeners, do you understand everything he says? Yes? Do you understand everything? If you had listened to this song earlier, we would have spared ourselves many problems. But fortunately, you decided to listen to us. And once you thought about it long and hard and asked your conscience, that's when you really understood it all. Thankfully, everything developed very quickly and the Tutsis and their accomplices quickly found themselves back in the sewer ditches.

Georges positions his mic.

KANTANO

But some of them are still here! They have murdered our children, killed our president and have even killed our babies in Kigali, in Butare, in Byumba, in Kibungo, everywhere. Doesn't lose track of them, keep an eye on them, hunt them down! Regardless of whether you are a woman, an old man or a child... Think about the people who look at you with a smile on their faces, with this evil, little smile. Their brutality has long surpassed what the human mind is capable of imagining, we don't know what to refer to them as any more. They are like hyenas among hyenas and their hideousness surpasses even that of the rhinoceros.

Yes, watch them and drive them out! And when Kagame and his accomplices call, no-one will be there to lift up the receiver... When he calls one of his accomplices... whee... no-one will be on the other end of the line. Not a soul! It is now 9:15 in Kigali. Ah, there is someone calling us. Before I leave you with Valerie Bemmeriki and national news, and news of the war, I would like to welcome one of our listeners:

Good afternoon. What do you call yourself?

LISTENER

(calling in)

Jean-Pierre Kajuga.

KANTANO

Jean-Pierre Kajuga. You are from where, Jean-Pierre?

LISTENER

From the village of Murambi, in the Byumba prefecture.

KANTANO

Hum, yes

(he laughs)

Jean-Pierre, what is it you have to tell us?

LISTENER

Thank you, Kantano. I am originally from the village of Murambi, as you just said.

I am calling you, so you can transmit a message to the people of Murambi in particular, but also to the entire population of Byumba and to all Rwandans. Byumba has currently become a military stronghold of Museveni. This message is intended to wake up the

population, especially that of Byumba, so it can find a way of self-defence and a way to free us without delay from the Inkotanyi. The time of waiting is over. I thank you.

KANTANO

Thank you, Jean-Pierre. Me too, I too would like to say to all the people that it is time to defend yourselves, every one, by using all means at his disposal, to defend his property, his wives and his children against the Inkotanyi. Be vigilantes and rake the trails to see if any Inkotanyi has passed by there, then follow their footsteps and try to find their hiding place ... Yes, thank you, Jean-Pierre, for these good ideas that you bring to the attention of the Rwandans.

LISTENER

Good, thank you, Kantano. We love your radio. I think you will be among the first to receive a medal because your radio helps a lot of people. Continue fighting. I thank you very much.

Thank you, Jean-Pierre.

VALÉRIE

Courage, Jean-Pierre!

Valérie writes on a paper.

KANTANO

This is what the people of Rwanda are telling us! And I too would like to say something to you, my foreign friends – because the Tutsis from Uganda are also foreigners and don't understand *Kinyarwanda*: Keep doing what you're doing! Continue criticising us please, stay hostile to us and say our names, although I don't know if you want to praise us or make death threats. All the better if you speak about us, all the better! As they say so beautifully: When you fart, it should at least really stink, you should never fart without making lots of noise.

GEORGES

That's right, Kantano. Ours is a dangerous situation, which is why the Rwandans need to know the whole truth of the events... Let me continue reporting the news.

Let's talk about the weapons embargo which the United Nations has imposed on Rwanda and on which we already reported on yesterday. This embargo doesn't prevent us from offering resistance, even if it naturally has consequences. Because what effect can a weapons embargo have that only applies to one warring party? We denounce this embargo because this embargo brings about an imbalance. It only allows the FPR to continue slaughtering the innocent civilian population as it weakens the government troops protecting them. We would like to remind you that France voted against this embargo. We would like to express our thanks to our friends in France! Those who support the embargo should also bear responsibility for it. However, so that we can benefit from this help, our French friends demand that no more bodies line the streets and that the killing stops while others look on smiling.

Song: Vive la France. Kantano sings along.

KANTANO

The French are coming, to defeat with us the Tutsi rebels. Girls, get out of your panties and get your hottest mini-skirt on!

GEORGES

Washington, on the other hand, won't stop talking nonsense. Bill Clinton once again assured the Secretary General of the United Nations, Boutros BoutrosGhali, of his support to increase the quota of United Nations troops in Rwanda to 5500, as the Security Council recently resolved. The UN also decided to strengthen their commitment in Rwanda and provide the mission with 550 armoured troop carriers.

Why is the USA providing the UN mission with troop carriers? Why does the USA want to control this mission? The USA supports the FPR, just like Uganda does. They want to control the mission of the United Nations.

KANTANO

Why doesn't Mr. Clinton just go ahead and ask Yoweri Museveni if he would like to be the President of the USA?

VALÉRIE

Yes, exactly.

GEORGES

So we ask ourselves: Is Mr. Clinton aware of the reality of Rwanda? I doubt it. It's always very questionable if Mr. Clinton is able to decide what happens or should happen in Rwanda when you consider how the UNO failed so miserably in Somalia. What's happening here is just another colonialist violation, hidden behind the word "genocide". All whites, the servants of the cockroaches, keep using this word. However, this term can't be used when people on both sides are being killed, which is unfortunately the case in Rwanda. And as soon as we win, no-one will use this term again... No, Mr. Clinton, this is not how you make peace. Our Defence Minister, Augustin Bizimana, announced to CNN journalists in detail that Rwanda is actually in war with Uganda and that Uganda's President Museveni is working together with the Belgians. This is what we learned this morning in the news. Mr. Clinton is better off returning to Arkansas, yes, Arkansas. Because it's obvious that he understands the situation in America a lot better than he does the situation in Africa.

VALÉRIE

He should go back to where he came from.

GEORGES

But let's start talking about our best friend, General Dallaire. He has obviously since forgotten completely why he came to Rwanda. Of course, he's assured us a thousand times that he's under the command of the United Nations. Nobody doubts that. But do the whites stop being white just because they put on blue helmets? Just because they're in the UNAMIR it doesn't mean that their white ideas are suddenly out of their heads, these archaic ideas which will never bring us peace.

*Georges takes off his headphones and stands up.
He gets water and pours it in his glass.*

KANTANO

And why is that? Listen closely! Are we somehow related to them? Once you start relying on the white man, you'll be eating dust! If you depend on their help and believe all their lies... They should feel free to leave! We can resolve our problems on our own! Go, Mr. Dallaire! And don't forget your Tutsi women either! Don't forget your Tutsi soldiers and the internationally sought terrorist, Paul Kagame! No

Rwandans need you here!

Georges goes back to his chair and puts on his headphones.

VALÉRIE

The problems of a country can only be resolved by its citizens and in a democracy it's the majority that decides. The majority in Rwanda is Hutu.

KANTANO

Rwanda is its people, not its hills. Kagame says he has taken 50% of the country. And he's right of course, but only if you include the national park, the animals, the snakes and the toads – and General Dallaire!

GEORGES

Yes, General Dallaire is in reality a Tutsi rebel, a Tutsi rebel in disguise. We don't need American troops; we need a ceasefire, a proper one. The RPF needs to retreat once and for all, it needs to disband and disappear from off this Earth. Because the rage of the people will unite with the rage of God and together they shall unleash upon them the punishment they deserve for their deadly sins. Paul Kagame says he has already taken Kigali! It's better if he just crawls off to Hell, where he's already heading for.

Dear listeners, it is now 9:25 in Kigali. We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all of our armed forces for their services as well as all of our people at the road blocks and all of the people who are caring for them, all the doctors and nurses...

VALÉRIE

Not to mention the wives who have to put up with the displeasure of their husbands as they work all day to secure their country...

Georges lightens his cigarette.

GEORGES

And we congratulate our government. Here's to having General Dallaire disappear from our sight as quickly as possible and having the FPR rot in hell!

KANTANO

If you'll allow, Georges, I fear that even the Devil is no longer prepared to accept the Tutsi rebels down there with him.

VALÉRIE

They raped your wives, they raped your children. And now, with the help of the Americans and the Belgians, they're planning to wipe us out once and for all. Because they destroy everything they can't seize control of. Like the woman in the Bible who says that the child should be torn in two if it cannot be given to her. Yes, the cockroaches raped God and they would even rape the Devil if he would let them.

There are things that dare not be said. There are unspeakable things. It has been reported to us that the cockroaches took pregnant women and bludgeoned them before opening their stomachs and ripping out the foetus. The foetus was then laid on the ground and killed after its belly was also opened. And all of this before the eyes of other mothers so that they understood that they too have forfeited their lives and that the same would happen to them. And you know, so many mothers carrying their children on their back were thrown into Lac Muhazi that its surface was covered entirely with their bodies. And not just Lac Muhazi, but all the rivers and all the seas are full with bodies, all the way to Lake Victoria, all the way up the Nile. And it has been reported to us that the Mediterranean is so full of bodies that ships cannot get past any more.

So you see how the atrocities of the cockroaches are irreversible. The atrocities of the cockroaches can only be undone by their complete annihilation, by killing them all, by their absolute destruction.

Valérie takes off her headphones and looks down, fingertips touching. Silence. Kantano drinks. Georges smokes. Kantano stands up and walks to the DJ booth looking inside. Georges takes cards from the table.

GEORGES

And as we do every evening, we would like to get our brains working. With this in mind, we had a rummage through our library and found a passage from *The Prince* by Machiavelli for you. And even though he wrote his book on the political rules of leadership in 1514, 480 years ago, we would like to say to you

that good ideas never die. The passage should get your minds working and we look forward to your comments. Dialogue and an exchange of views are important to us. And if you prefer to send your comments in writing, go ahead! We'll read them and tell our listeners if they're worthy of it. So I give you Machiavelli, who speaks to you through me:

Kantano sits down on the chair near the cabin.

"...a question arises: whether it be better to be loved than feared or feared than loved? It may be answered that one should wish to be both, but, because it is difficult to unite them in one person, is much safer to be feared than loved, when, of the two, either must be dispensed with."

Dear listeners, you shall hear us again in five minutes with our history quiz with ValérieBemeriki. But first we would like to listen to some music. Joseph no doubt has a hot track for us to put us in a better mood.

(looks to the DJ)

Song: Nirvana - Rape Me. Little Mary statue blinks.

DJ JOSEPH

The next song is from the USA and I would like to dedicate it to all the cockroaches in Uganda who don't speak French and to you especially, Bill Clinton. It's a brand new song with the title 'Rape Me'. This is for you, Bill! Just for you!

Georges indicates 'up'/'louder' to the DJ. Security guard stands up from his chair in the corner and gets some snacks from the tea-cart. Then he walks around and taps on Georges knee. DJ is on the phone. Georges and Valérie write on their blocks. They discuss inaudible.

That was 'Rape me', dear listeners. It is now 9:30 in the RTLM studio. Stay tuned, don't switch off because we'll be keeping you up-to-date with all of the latest developments in the political situation.

Georges and Valérie put on their headphones. Kantano sits on his chair holding his hands.

GEORGES

So it is. Be wary of those who try to hide the truth from you because today, the whole truth needs to be brought to light. Those who don't listen to us will regret it later. They'll think about the events which come to pass and say: "Turns out RTLM was right." Because we have access to all of the books here and we read them too. For example, I'm holding the transcript of a speech in my hand which I would like to read out to you over the course of our history quiz. But first, my colleague, Valérie, has some hot news for you all, which we received from a resident of Kigali.

Kantano gets up, walks to his previous chair and puts on his headphones, stands beside his chair.

VALÉRIE

I just learned that four Tutsi rebels managed to evade the militia's checkpoint. This news comes to us from a houseboy of Sinshoboye Bernard, he's still on the line.

Hello, my young friend. How old are you?

LISTENER

I'm 11 years old.

VALÉRIE

11... And would you like to tell the listeners your name?

LISTENER

My name is Nzizorera Honeste.

VALÉRIE

Honeste... did you see rebels in your area?

LISTENER

Yes, there were four of them, all in stone-washed jeans. They asked me: "Show us where they killed the people today." And they forced me to show them a shortcut so that they could get past the roadblocks.

VALÉRIE

Where did they go?

Kantano sits down.

LISTENER

Two of them went in the direction of Kimisagara, to

where the APACE school building is, the other two went to Nyakabanda.

KANTANO

They really are everywhere. In every hole, in the marshes, in the toilets, everywhere still has to deal with this filth. They have since started drinking from the latrines like stray dogs. What irony that people like these want to govern our country, become our officers, use our vehicles and sleep in our houses.

VALÉRIE

Listeners, as you just heard, the rebels can also use secret paths. The neighbours of this boy, who lives at Sishoboye Bernard's home, should find out from him where they parted company with him. Hunt them down!

KANTANO

Since today is the last time you'll be listening to RTLM, I want to tell the four of you this: There is only one Rwanda in the world. Rwanda is here, in Central Africa, where God put it. And so you must understand that we Rwandans will not let a few Ugandans chase us out of our own country. And even if you take the city of Kigali, it won't be of any use to you. You will only fall to your death because Kigali is a trap. And if you want to hide yourselves in the APACE school, the Rwandans are already waiting for you there with their machetes and bludgeons so as to make you suffer before you die. Because it's not nice putting your head into the mouth of a lion. All of you in the APACE school, you will all perish and none will survive to tell the tale.

VALÉRIE

Honeste, tell me, what's your favourite music?

LISTENER

I like Zouk.

KANTANO

Zouk! You're an early starter, Honeste!

VALÉRIE

Honeste, would you like to tell us anything else?

LISTENER

Yes, I would like to say hello to my mother, my

father and my little sister. They live in the Rundatowship in the Gitarama prefecture. I want them to know that I'm doing very well with Sinshoboye Bernard and that I think about them a lot. And I hope that this war will be over soon and that we will all see each other again fit and well.

VALÉRIE

So that was a young Rwandan there. Courage, Honeste!

DJ JOSEPH

Dear listeners, I would like to remind you that every evening after 9.30 you choose the music yourself. So call us and tell us your favourite songs from Ruanda, the Congo, France, America and even from Uganda, because RTLM plays music from all over the world... And here's some zouk for you, Honeste!

Song: Zouk

KANTANO

(over the music)

Thank you, Honeste! I would like to greet the young people who live beside the slaughter yard near Kimisagara. Be sure to take care of the cockroaches... Yesterday, I watched young people dancing to zouk. They even slaughtered a little piglet. I mean, really! What did you give me to smoke... It had a pretty horrible effect on me. I smoked three handfuls of it and it is much too strong, but it helped me not to lose courage. Keep a good eye on the gutters so that no cockroach escapes you. Smoke something and make sure the cockroach comes to a bad end... Ah, this really is off the back of a crocodile! Our dealers need to keep supplying us with large quantities of this so that we stay strong, so that we stay furious and so that we can fight for our country! Yes, my friends. That's exactly how it should be! But be careful not to smoke too much of it, otherwise...

(sings along)

So courage, stick with it and listen
to RTLM!

Georges walks to the other chair and starts writing. Kantano gets a drink. Security guard comes to the table and gets a drink. Georges returns to his seat, hands Kantano his block and

sits down.

It is 9:35 and I'll hand over the mic to Valérie for the history quiz.

VALÉRIE

Dear listeners, we have often told you the story of Rwanda's history. And in the last show I hosted a quiz for young people. Today, I want to test the older people, but not just them, because there are many children who talk with their parents, who read a lot...

*Kantano gets up and walks to the security guard's chair who stands by the whiteboard.
Georges writes.*

Nobody can argue that the young people don't know the history of our country. Everyone listening to me right now should get a pen and paper and, as with every time we play, the winner gets a reward. Because there are people who support this quiz. Last time, the Saint Fidèle Institute sent us a donation which we divided among the winners.

I hope you all have your pen and paper at hand now so I can ask you the first question.

Jingle/Melody

GEORGES

Name a past ruler or another well-known personality, alive or dead. Name the person who said the following sentence as well as the circumstances in which this person said it.

VALÉRIE

"No Hutu retreats." I repeat: "No Hutu retreats."

GEORGES

That was the first sentence: "No Hutu retreats." Who said it and what were the circumstances? This evening we have already talked about Hitler and the "Aryan race" who felt superior to everyone else. The parallels with the current situation are obvious. In 1940 Hitler was already well-armed, like the Tutsi rebels were in 1990, but the citizens of France resisted. The Resistance in France achieved incredible feats back then until the government of De Gaulle was able to return from exile in England.

These people are still celebrated in France today. And here too, in Rwanda, the names of the resistance fighters should be made known. The names of those who volunteered to fight against the FPR. Because they shall see their reward once this war is over... This teaches us the lesson of history. This is what the first sentence means.

Kantano smokes.

VALÉRIE

The second sentence is: "Everywhere I go, all I see is Parmehutu."

Dear listeners, it is very important that you understand the meaning of this sentence. I'll explain it to you so you know what Rwanda expects of you. Always keep in the back of your mind that the cockroaches, the enemy of our country, are cunning. You know this since the time the cockroaches started attacking us: At the start when they were only called Tutsis, they invaded Rwanda and ousted our Hutu kings, the sons of Sebahizi, and set up the feudal system. In 1959, however, the people rose up. Yes, the Hutu rose up and said: "No longer will the majority of the people be suppressed by small Tutsi groups, whose number doesn't even amount to 10%." The Tutsi king then went into exile, the republic was created and the Tutsis turned their backs on the country. But once they were in exile, they founded a rebel army. They perfected the art of killing and mounted attacks against us again and again, 1961, 63, 65, 68 – and most recently 1990 – because the Tutsis want to seize power for themselves. But the majority of the population refused, rose up and said: "Impossible!" And the Rwandan Army rose up as well and said: "Never!" And they fought off the cockroach rebels. The cockroaches, who are very devious, started looking for accomplices in Rwanda itself and started corrupting them. They even forced negotiations, upon which the Arusha Agreement was signed. But the Tutsi, or more accurately, the cockroach rebels, remained dissatisfied. As they didn't know how to come to power, they murdered our head of state, President Habyarimana, and in doing so, finally triggered the ethnic war. It was they who provoked the ethnic conflict (even if they like to say that the Europeans were responsible), it was they who could never forget that they were "a superior race", who could never accept that Rwanda belongs to

the Rwandans and not to a small clique of cockroaches. The Hutus from Rwanda should know now that it is time to come together, not to harm each other with the false pretences of a "multi-party system" or "human rights". Because your common enemy is the feudal lord with his whip and forced labour. That is what is meant by the sentence: "Everywhere I go, all I see is Parmehutu."

GEORGES

Thanks, Valérie. The third sentence goes: "All fun and enjoyment must take second place to work." Who said this and what were the circumstances?

KANTANO

(stands up)

This sentence is quite easy to understand really. It is well-known that during war times, people indulge themselves in small intrigues, they do stupid things while we are at total war, showing no mercy to our enemy. Let us take Aloys for example. Aloys is an *Interahamwe* from Kigali. I met him yesterday at the market. He looked well in his military uniform, well-dressed, with a rifle... So, in the middle of the marketplace, Aloys grabs a man named Yilirwahandi Eustache, a businessman. His ID card says that he is Hutu, but everyone knows his mother is a Tutsi. Aloys and some other *Interahamwe* dragged him to a corner and demanded that he sign an IOU of 150,000 Rwandan Francs. I tried to get a look at the document, but Aloys and his friends left with it quickly as the businessman groaned: "They'll kill me, Kantano, help me, I beg you. They forced me to sign an IOU and I'll have to borrow money from everywhere in order to pay them back." But I said to him: "How are you going to buy your way out? If you're a cockroach, then you're a cockroach and you need to be killed. You can't buy your way out."

Kantano sits down.

VALÉRIE

Yes, nobody can buy themselves free, it's impossible. No-one can buy their lives. If someone has got their hands on a fake document, if it's a Tutsi rebel or one of his accomplices, then he's not allowed buy himself out of it. He has to be killed, he just has to be killed, plain and simple. Because what is happening here in Rwanda has never been seen before. Nowhere in the world has a minority ever dared to

take up arms against the majority in order to eradicate them. Whoever breaks with this taboo, makes an early grave for themselves and their race.

KANTANO

(stands up)

So the Tutsis brought on the destruction of their brethren. In the Arusha Peace Agreement, they had achieved everything they went out to achieve, as Valérie showed. The Hutus said they were prepared to give up everything, even the achievements of the Revolution of '59. But all the Tutsis said was: "We want total control over the country." The world has never seen such a thing. A small minority, a small band of individuals wanting to seize power over a country and even accepting that they will be exterminated. Incredible that a race simply lets itself be destroyed because of their hunger for power. And that's why I say to you: The cockroaches don't want life to go on. I actually think that they want to extinguish all life in this country, the schools, the hospitals, everything. These people are nihilists, they only desire death, they accept death with their eyes wide open, they are death. Yes, they are a depraved race. These are people who need to be exterminated. There is no other way than destroying them and throwing them in the rivers. Let the fish govern them! That's what the sentence means: "All fun and enjoyment must take second place to work." Because it's a very simple matter: We're dealing with a race here, and Rwanda needs to be rid of them. So take a good long look at a person, look at how tall they are and their appearance, look at their pretty, fine noses – and then pound them to pieces.

VALÉRIE

You have a week to answer all the questions and I'll be keeping a reward in store for you here. Answers which don't arrive in time won't be included. So you have seven days to answer these three questions:

"No Hutu retreats."

"Everywhere I go, all I see is Parmehutu."

"All fun and enjoyment must take second place to work."

GEORGES

Send your answers in to Radio RTL. Write on the

envelope with your answers the words "Competition, Post box 2948, Kigali." So write on the envelope: "RTLTM, Competition, Post box 2948, Kigali." You have one week to answer and I'll look for a reward for the winner.

Courage, study the history of Rwanda and answer our questions. But I see we have a caller on the line.

KANTANO

Yes. Who am I talking to?

LISTENER

DidacienneNizeyimana.

KANTANO

Didacienne, what would you like to say to us?

LISTENER

I would like to thank you for the work you're doing for our country. Me and my whole family listen to you. I would like to say hello to Valérie in particular, because we women have to offer resistance too.

VALÉRIE

Thank you, Didacienne. The voices I hear behind you are those of your family, correct?

LISTENER

Yes, I am here with my husband and my brother. They say hello too.

KANTANO

Keep it up, Didacienne! Would you like to request a song?

LISTENER

A song, yes...

VOICES FROM THE BACKGROUND

I like to move-it-move-it, I like to move-it-move-it...

LISTENER

Yes, I would like to hear that song.

KANTANO

You really do know the score...

DJ JOSEPH

Real to Real, featuring the Mad Stuntmen!

They are listening to the song. Security guard stands leaning on wall, arms crossed. Georges taps his feet to the beat. They talk inaudible. Kantano gets up, looks over Valérie's shoulders. Georges gets a drink, then joins the others. Discussion, relaxed. Music stops. Back to chairs again.

KANTANO

Today, someone called me and asked: "Kantano, why are you so happy? What's wrong with you?"

DJ JOSEPH

Perhaps you smoked something before you arrived at the studio?

KANTANO

So I answered: "I drank tea, my friend! Unfortunately, there's no sugar left in this city!"

VALÉRIE

Yes, dear listeners, times are hard. If anyone should find sugar on the market in Kigali, it will be very, very expensive. You have to keep an eye on how much you spend so that your children always have enough... I wanted to say sweet potato there, but here in Kigali, sweet potato is more expensive than potato! A kilo of sweet potato is twice as expensive as a kilo of potatoes! It's a bad situation. And don't even mention the bananas! It's a lot worse with them. Today on the market, I asked how much a kilo of bananas costs and the man said: "40 or 50 Francs." You Tutsi rebels: Do you really think you can starve out 200,000 people just to seize control of a city? Do you believe this strategy of driving people to desperation will pay off? You'll see how we'll get you fired up. If you drive us to desperation, well we'll just have to turn the tables on you.

GEORGES

Yes, Valérie, I think you make a very important point there: the logic of this war. We would like to remind you of the results of René Degni-Ségui's investigation into the violation of human rights. We talked about it yesterday. René Degni-Ségui, a member of the United Nations, reports that the massacre had

been planned long in advance, also by RTLM, we were even talking about it yesterday. But he doesn't want to hear a word about the preparations made by the FPR. What a complete reversal of logic in this war!

VALÉRIE

Yes, this Ségui... Just imagine: This individual actually claims that the Rwandans, even before our President was killed, had started setting up road blocks. As if they had known that these cockroach rebels would shoot down his plane! As if everything had actually been organised, us using our traditional, out-dated weapons! This individual who hasn't even paid RTLM a visit, not for one day...

GEORGES

Who wasn't curious about visiting the journalists who, and I quote from his report: "are urging the people to fight", who even dares to utter the word "genocide". We would like to remind you, Mr. Degni-Ségui, that RTLM was founded three years after the start of the war, three years after the FPR attacks. So it's absurd to say that this station asks the people to go into battle. And by the way, if you had asked us, then we would have shown you our "genocide" studio. Even General Dallaire came looking for us and found us. Of course, things went a little overboard on occasion, the population was so enraged that they may have killed people who they thought were FPR collaborators and could have brought harm to the majority of the population... But is that not exactly what the resistance fighters in France did with Nazi collaborators? Did Robespierre not also call on the French to be cautious during the Great Revolution? A man under suspicion was always a condemned man.

KANTANO

We will fight them and we will defeat them. This much is true, no-one can question it. But if we're not quick, they will eradicate us first. It's not our fault that these rebels don't understand any Kinyarwanda or that they have bad counsel! They don't comprehend a thing and can't let go of their stubbornness... In Rwandan culture, when a family is being threatened or has to fight an enemy, it sits close to a precipice so that it can hide when things get heavy. Everyone understands this expression.

But which family is being threatened with destruction? It's that of the cockroaches. This band

recruits their people from a very small group...

(stands up)

I'm talking about the Tutsis. The Tutsis are no longer large in number. Some time ago, they perhaps made up 10% of our society. But this war has surely reduced them by 2%. 2% less, so we only have 8%. What now? They won't give up their suicide mission against as large a group as the Hutus. Is it not logical that they will be destroyed? All the Tutsis who used to ring in to us earlier, where have they gone? Well? Ah! They were certainly exterminated... So let's sing:

(sings)

Be happy, friends! The Tutsi are destroyed!

Be happy, friends! God is always just!

Georges joins Kantano.

God is indeed always just and they certainly will be destroyed soon. I saw bodies lying around in Nyamirambo. Between us: I don't know exactly what peoples they were. If you look at them, you ask yourself: "These people, what race are they at all?"

But let's look ahead instead. Let's fasten our seatbelts tighter and destroy them once and for all. So that our children, our grandchildren and our grandchildren's children won't have to hear their names any more.

Joseph, music!

DJ Joseph puts a religious music.

KANTANO

(takes off his jacket)

I would like to read-out an obituary for these cursed cockroach rebels. Even these dirty, little pigs benefit from the good work of RTLM!

Georges gets up and walks to the whiteboard and then walks back to the chair, drinks, gets up and gives Kantano paper. During Kantano's speech he lightens his cigarette and walks to the third man. Then sits down again. Then Valérie gets up to get a cigarette.

Yes, we will read out an obituary for these

cockroaches... It's for the rebels who died yesterday in Mbutabuturo under the command of Lieutenant Godefrey Mondey, who, by the way, doesn't have a Rwandan name. But even if he had one, it wouldn't matter because there is no doubt that he comes from Uganda. So his name is Godefrey Monday. He led a group of murderers who were roaming about Mbutabuturo. Among them was also Sergeant Alphonse Mugernana, Sergeant Ernile Murenzi, Soldier Dieudonne Ntwali, Soldier Innocent Munyentore, Soldier Jean Claude Nzararaba, Soldier Theogen Ruzinana, Soldier Jean Baptiste Mugabo, Soldier Emmanuel Sibornana, Soldier Emmanuel Puraha, Soldier Alfred Ndayarabaje, Soldier Mparnwa Bashayija, Corporal Mparnwa Bashayija, Soldier Clernent Ndanyuzwe, Soldier Paustin Rucarnihigo, Soldier Jean Baptiste Minani, Soldier Celestin Nkulikiyinka, Soldier Jean-Paul Rudahunga, Soldier Ernest Murenzi, Soldier Cyrille Bugingo, Soldier Paustin Rwandenzi, Soldier Faustin Mutabazi, Soldier Steve Sindayigaya, – bye bye Steve – Corporal Joseph Rutagungira, Corporal Emmanuel Tabaro, Corporal Louis Gahonzire, Corporal Condo Mazirnpaka, Corporal Etienne Muhire, Corporal Antony Nsengiyurnva, Corporal Leonard Kagarama, Corporal Cyprien Gahungu, Corporal Jean Darnascene Makuza, Corporal Orest Ruberwa, Corporal Jean de Dieu Bizirana, Corporal Etienne Kayigarnba and the 36th is Jean Baptiste Zirarora, the 37th is Janvier Munanira, the 38th is Corporal Canisius Gapfizi, the 39th is Emmanuel Ndikurnuzirna and the 40th is Theogene Gisagara...

Ha! The list goes on and on. Yesterday, hundreds of rebels died. I don't know exactly what you say for this in Uganda. In Rwanda you call it 'perishing like a dog'. So that was the list of those who perished like dogs.

*Song in the background. The talk relaxed.
Kantano puts on his jacket, sits down on the
security guard's chair. Jingle.*

GEORGES

Dear listeners, please let me switch from national news to international news.

In Angola, talks are of the summit that will reunite the heads of state of the region. The summit will apparently reunite the heads of state of the Grand Lac region to examine the Rwanda problem. The Rwanda

problem is similar to that of Angola, with the sole difference that the Angola problem has been around for 19 years.

In other news, Yasser Arafat was welcomed in Gaza yesterday, with distinguished ceremonial honours reserved for heads of state. He must preside over the swearing-in ceremonies for the members of Government in the city of Jericho. Yasser Arafat told the Palestinian people that they should not worry about his livelihood, since as he declared: "I will never accept the conditions pertaining to the credit grant the World Bank has imposed on me, conditions intended to control our economy." We have always said, "relief never comes in time". Yasser Arafat has said to the Palestinians: "Count on your own efforts, don't count on those who want to trick us."

In another note, bad news from North Carolina, one of the states making up the United States of America, where a DC 9 plane crashed, killing 18 people. In the last few days, we have talked to you about plane crashes that take human lives, well that one took as well.

In Yemen, as was the case for our country, the United Nations had made a decision requiring warring parties to accept a cease-fire, however, the decision has not been implemented, because fighting is continuing in this country. The representative of the International Red Cross has sounded alarm, because the water supply pump has been damaged by gunfire, and now the city inhabited by 450,000 people is without drinking water, the population is at risk of dying of thirst.

Remember that the heat in that country is not comparable to the one we know here, because it is a hot country, where the temperature reaches 40°, while here it is only a mere 25°.

Kantano goes back to his chair.

Speaking of the World Cup being held in the United States, yesterday Switzerland faced Spain, Spain winning that match with three goals to zero. Switzerland has therefore been eliminated. As I have told you, the tournament has reached the direct elimination phase. In the same group, Germany has beaten Belgium with a score of three goals to two.

KANTANO

And by the way, in this World Cup, taking place in the United States of America, I would like to add that a player has been murdered; a Colombian player of good reputation, who was killed in the city of Medellin by people who had blamed him for having, inadvertently, scored an own goal. What funny like behaviour from those fans, who shot him point blank. He fell down dead.

Valérie laughs.

GEORGES

I'll finish up with the bicycle race called "Tour de France". A victory was predicted for the Spanish Miguel Indurain, because of his reputation, we too, we envisaged it as well, and that he would be followed by the Swiss Tony Rominger, but this has not been the case. Yesterday in the first leg, with a distance of 7 kilometres and 200 meters, the Brit Chris Boardman won the round with an average speed of 56km or 152m per hour, putting on the yellow jersey reserved for the winner of that leg.

KANTANO

Voila, this is the end of the broadcast. You have been with KantanoHabimana, ValérieBemeriki and Georges Ruggiu. At the mixing desk: Joseph Rudatsikira. Before we finish, I would like to tell you about a discussion I had with a parent yesterday. He told me: "Tell me, Kantano, you say that we are in a time of war, that we are sad. So, what is it with your young people's music, this high tempo music, this music which makes people dance? I just got home and I heard this music on RTL. It shocked me."

I told him this: "In the Rwandan culture it is normal, and as it so happens, even if people are in mourning, saddened, weeping from sudden trouble, as we are now, somebody has to take the harp and play it. It is a matter of feeling, and it does not mean that during such a time, people are not allowed to laugh. Nevertheless, the RTL is also in mourning."

In short, we must look ahead, it can't be otherwise. Listen then, like every evening at the end of our broadcast, to the following bit, this song by Joe Dassin that our President so loved: "Le dernier slow!". That our armed forces are listening to so they can dance and tough it out at the front, and to stop

those suicidal tendencies.

Courage and 'til tomorrow!

Song. Relaxed atmosphere. Jalousie rolls down.

EPILOGUE

(scene 1 and 2 optional, not in video but in the Rau script)

1

RUGGIU

On 4 July 1994, RTLM was evacuated from Kigali. So I left Rwanda and went with all of those who were fleeing the FPR to the Congo. A year later, in 1995, I moved on to Kenya, where I settled down under the name Trevor McCusker.

INVESTIGATOR

How did you provide for yourself back then?

RUGGIU

I wrote a book called "Dans la tourmente Rwandaise". That's how I kept myself above water.

INVESTIGATOR

Let's talk about your book. I'm quoting from the third paragraph, page 20: "'Radio Vérité' was also 'Radio Courage' and 'Radio Résistance'. We tried everywhere to mobilize the population against our common enemy, the FPR." Did you write that?

RUGGIU

Yes.

INVESTIGATOR

Let's move on to page 110. In the last paragraph you write, and I quote: "I am proud that I was one of the few who didn't leave the Rwandans to face their grim destiny by themselves. I am aware that I am accused of staying there while all the Europeans and Americans pulled out. But I was of the opinion that the work had to be brought to an end, despite the difficult conditions." Mr. Ruggiu, can you confirm that you wrote these words?

RUGGIU

Yes.

INVESTIGATOR

Does referring to RTLM in this book as 'Radio Vérité' and 'Radio Courage' reflect the truth?

RUGGIU

It reflects my convictions at that time, yes. I wrote that to protect myself. But now I know that it was a lie.

INVESTIGATOR

Do you have anything else to say?

RUGGIU

I know that all I have left is the opportunity to give an account and bring the truth to light.

INVESTIGATOR

Mr. Ruggiu, is it not a habit of yours to see yourself as a martyr of the truth?

RUGGIU

No. All I would ask is that you excuse my behavior and forgive me.

2

BEMERIKI

When the Rwandan soldiers in the Congo captured me, I begged them to shoot me. I tried to force them to kill me. In the end, I refused to eat for a week. I was convinced that they were now going to cut one finger off after the other. And then my hand, then my arm. And then finally gouge out an eye or something like that.

INVESTIGATOR

But nothing like that happened?

BEMERIKI

No. But I lost a lot of things, lots of documents... You can see for yourself, I'm a prisoner and I don't know if I'll ever get out of here. All I can do is pray to God. Maybe he will help me.

INVESTIGATOR

So do you accept your sentence?

BEMERIKI

If I bear any responsibility for what happened, I ask

for forgiveness. If people were killed because of my broadcasts, I accept that. I know myself what I did, but I don't want to admit to anything that didn't happen the way it did. I didn't kill anyone, I was a journalist. All that counted for me was that my voice was heard. That's all. People should finally stop searching for excuses and say: "Valérie didn't ask the Rwandans for forgiveness!" I talked with the padres, I submitted my confession. I asked for forgiveness. So I should be forgiven.

3

BOARDS

(written on the screen)

After a civil trial in Kigali, Valérie Bemeriki is serving a life sentence. She has filed an appeal against her sentence.

After the capture of Kigali, Kantano Habimana went into hiding in the refugee camps of eastern Congo. There has been no trace of him since.

Georges Ruggiu was released from prison in September 2010. He converted to Islam and took the name Omar. He was last seen in summer 2011 in Pakistan.

Today, the former RTLM building is a jewelry and watch shop.

All 4 speakers/witnesses from the prologue appear facing audience.

4

JOURNALIST

I was evacuated fairly late, on 12 April together with the last of the journalists. I was already in Paris on 13 April. From the last week I spent in Kigali, I remember one thing in particular: A young boy who rang in to RTLM and asked: "I am eight years old. Am I old enough to kill a cockroach?"

And the host, I think it was Kantano, answered:

"Ah, how cute! You know what, everyone can do it!"

And I remember something else as well, it was in an evening show, shortly before they played *Le dernier Slow*. Bemeriki was at the mic and she said:

"These people had to be killed and you killed them. But the father should not have been shot, he should have been cut up into little pieces."

That's what I don't understand. Let's assume that the people are convinced that killing people is the right thing to do, or they were forced, then you can assume they would do it as efficiently as possible. 'To exterminate', after all, means that as many people as possible be eliminated in the shortest time possible.

Let's... let's take the rapes, for example. If you take into account how emphatically the sexual fantasies in relation to Tutsi women were propagated, it is understandable that so many of them were raped: The Tutsi woman who sleeps with the white man, all of these things... But how are you supposed to understand the fact that they took their time after raping a woman to crush down glass into shards so that they can be inserted into the woman's vagina? How can it happen that a woman be impaled with an iron rod, as was almost normal back then? How can two-year-olds, three-year-olds be raped to death?

EXILE

As I said before, I experienced the genocide from a distance, on TV and in phone calls. I was told who had been killed, who was no longer with us. That's how everything unraveled, far away. In a way that almost wasn't physical any more.

I finally returned to Rwanda in 1998. It was April, I can't remember the exact date, but I could look it up easily enough because it was the time Froduald Karamira was to be executed. Around this time was when people started living their lives again in Rwanda, but the fear still ran deep. Many Interahamwe lived in the refugee camps in the Congo and the old Rwandan army still attacked from time to time.

But I definitely wanted to be in Rwanda for the execution of Karamira. To me, it went completely without saying that the only way to deal with these people who called for murder was to kill them. People who were able to do something like that didn't deserve to be alive. Yes, it would have seemed indecent to me for them to be let live.

I remember that I was running a little late that day. In Nyamirambo, where the football stadium of Kigali

is, a huge crowd had gathered together. The cars were parked as far as the first mosque, worse than for a football game. Somehow I managed to make my way to the front row. I had to see everything.

But when I saw the accused standing there, there were six of them, I suddenly started feeling unwell. They had been bound to pillars. Yes, I almost had sympathy for them, even though that was the last feeling I wanted to feel for them. Masked policemen turned up. Karamira and the others wore suits with targets on them, here, above the heart. I thought it was all very ugly. And soon after, shots were fired, there was a powerful bang, it all went very fast. A policeman went from one to the next to finish them off. A maniac started screaming for joy. I just found it nauseating. It didn't mean anything to me, not even as some kind of revenge. That's when I realized that none of this could be made up for.

SURVIVOR

It's very rare that I go back to my township – once a year, for the commemoration service. Of course, we were called up for the Gacacas to give witness statements. Two years after the genocide, my sister met the man who threw us into the toilets. He returned from the Congo with his bundle, nice and relaxed. When he saw my sister, he offered her a Fanta and said:

"Let's not do anything stupid. Let's just forget the whole thing."

At the Gacaca trials he said:

"But they are still alive. They should come here and testify that I did not kill them."

He was a boy from our village, the son of the priest. He's dead now. He fell ill in prison.

SURVIVOR

It just drives me crazy when I try to find an answer to why they wanted to cut us up into bits. I will never understand the motives of our Hutu neighbors. I will never understand why we were to be exterminated.

No, I don't believe in an end to genocide. I don't think this is the last time we will experience these most heinous of atrocities. If there was one

genocide, then there will be many more.

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Characters (in order of appearance):

Prologue and Epilogue:

- **Investigator** (of the ICTR, International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, which sentenced Georges Ruggiu to 12 years)
- **Georges Ruggiu** (host of the RTLM)
- **ValérieBemeriki** (host of the RTLM)
- **Journalist (w)**
- **Exile (same actor as Investigator)**
- **Survivor (m)**
- **Survivor (f)**

Radio STUDIO:

- **DJ Joseph** (DJ of the RTLM)

- **KantanoHabimana** (host of the RTLM)
- **ValérieBemeriki** (host of the RTLM)
- **Georges Ruggiu** (host of the RTLM)
- **Security guard**
- **Three listeners (calling in): man, child, woman**

PROLOGUE

1

BOARDS

On 6 April 1994, when the plane of the Rwandan President was shot down by two rockets, the start signal was given for one of the bloodiest genocides in history. In just under 100 days, one million members of the Tutsi minority and thousands of moderate Hutus were murdered.

One of the most important instruments used in the genocide was a radio station: Radio-TélévisionLibre des Mille Collines (RTLM). Similar to an advertising campaign, the popular broadcaster accompanied and propagandized the genocide.

Three hosts significantly shaped programming at RTLM: the Rwandans, KantanoHabimana and ValérieBemeriki, and the Belgian, Georges Ruggiu, known as "the white Hutu".

On 23 October 2000 the "International Criminal Tribunal of Rwanda" in Arusha, Tanzania opened proceedings against RTLM. It was the first and, to-date, only trial of its kind.

2

Investigator and Ruggiu stand facing audience. Ruggiu holds his hands. Investigator holds his cards. Ruggiu stands on the left, Investigator on the right.

INVESTIGATOR

Mr. Ruggiu, can you explain to us why you chose to plead guilty?

RUGGIU

It became clear to me that during the events of 1994 in Rwanda people lost their lives and that there is a direct connection between their deaths and what I said on 'Radio des Mille Collines'.

INVESTIGATOR

I don't understand how you needed over two years to become aware of this.

RUGGIU

I'm trying to tell you the truth now.

INVESTIGATOR

So you lied to the investigators on 24 and 25 July 1997. And you also lied in the book you wrote in exile in Kenya, *Dans la tourmente Rwandaise*.

RUGGIU

Whenever I may not have told the truth it was to protect those people from RTLM I assumed were still alive.

INVESTIGATOR

Mr. Ruggiu, let's be clear here: Did you lie to the investigators, 'Yes' or 'No'?

RUGGIU

Yes, I lied.

INVESTIGATOR

And why should we believe you're telling us the truth today?

Both fade.

3

Investigator stands on the left, Ruggiu on the right. Same gestures as in Scene 2.

INVESTIGATOR

Are your parents from Italy?

RUGGIU

My father is Italian.

INVESTIGATOR

Did your father emigrate from Italy to search for work?

RUGGIU

Yes, I think so.

INVESTIGATOR

What was his profession?

RUGGIU

He worked in the mines in Belgium.

INVESTIGATOR

Did this circumstance perhaps instill a desire for social retribution in you?

RUGGIU

It's not in my nature to seek retribution for something. I think I have enough other problems at the moment.

INVESTIGATOR

Let me put it another way: Can it be suggested that you immigrated to Africa to escape your situation in Belgium and the problems associated with there?

RUGGIU

My situation in Belgium was indeed worse than in Rwanda.

INVESTIGATOR

Let's discuss your meeting with Monsieur Habyarimana, the President of the Republic of Rwanda. Where did you first meet the President of the Republic of Rwanda?

RUGGIU

I met the President of the Republic on the street in Kanombe near where I was living then, just past Kigali. I saluted him just so as to salute, and the President's car stopped beside me.

INVESTIGATOR

Can you remember when exactly this was?

RUGGIU

It was towards the end of 1993 during my last trip to Rwanda.

INVESTIGATOR

What did you and Mr. Habyarimana talk about when you were sitting in his car?

RUGGIU

The President of the Republic suggested that I take up a position at RTLM.

INVESTIGATOR

What was your answer?

RUGGIU

Since the Red Cross had rejected my application, I said 'Yes'.

Both fade.

4

Following scene (4) not in the video, but in the Rau script, optional scene.

BEMERIKI

I value Ruggiu highly. He started working at RTLM shortly before I did, without sitting any exams – that was December 1993. He met the President and his family on his arrival in Rwanda. And when the Arusha Peace Accord was signed, Ruggiu supported the President and the then government. Ruggiu was very intelligent, I admired him a lot. He always did everything to bring the truth to light.

INVESTIGATOR

The truth?

BEMERIKI

Yes, the truth. His shows always told us clearly and precisely what was actually happening. Many died as the RPF became more powerful. The family of KantanoHabimana, one of the other RTLM journalists, was massacred. And as you probably know, our studio was shelled a number of times. It is only by the grace of God that I am standing here before you today and talking with you.

INVESTIGATOR

Are you religious?

BEMERIKI

Yes, I was raised Catholic. But I believe that our country needs peace first and foremost. We need to face each other with love. Love is the only thing that can bring us together. When you kill someone, you turn against God. Because every person is a part

of God. If you finally understand this while still on Earth, God will forgive you after you die.

BEMERIKI

In 1994, I was a journalist with RTLM. I worked in the studio and on the street; there was, after all, no Internet back then. The studio had a very simple setup: There were three microphones and three chairs. There was a picture of the President hanging on the wall along with a large clock. Behind a large window was the technician who took care of the music. Yes, I think that's everything.

INVESTIGATOR

Ms. Bemeriki, you say that a picture of President Habyarimana hung on the wall? Why?

BEMERIKI

Wherever you go in Africa, there's always a picture of the President on the wall. But we naturally supported the President anyway. After all, he did invoke his social achievements of the social revolution of 1959.

INVESTIGATOR

Was RTLM an extremist radio station?

BEMERIKI

Let me explain. In 1959 the Tutsi monarchy came to an end and democracy started. And when the king is run out, you want to simultaneously run out his supporters too, right? His supporters were the Tutsis. And as the FPR had been trying to force the return of Tutsi refugees since its attack in 1990, we had to fight them. There was no way we could let the Tutsis back into power.

BEMERIKI

The RTLM building was located directly opposite the office of the President. I looked out the window of the studio, but didn't notice anything unusual. So I rang the presidential guard and the man at the other end of the line said: "Wait, Madame, wait!" He put the receiver down on the table and I heard him call out from afar: "It can't be! The airplane of the President!" He whistled through his teeth, like someone very much astonished. When he returned, he told me that the President's plane had been shot down and the President and all his people were dead.

One hour later, we broadcasted the following message on the radio: "Rwandans! As you all know, our President had traveled to Dar es Salaam for a very important meeting and was to return this afternoon. However, before his plane was able to land at the airport in Kanombe, it was shot down by enemies."

That was all we sent out. Afterwards I suggested we play a piece by Bruckner.

5

A single scene (5), relates back to the dialogue between investigator and Ruggiu, optional scene

RUGGIU

In the days after the death of the President our programming changed. We worked day and night. Each host had their own escort and we lived in the 'Les Diplomates' hotel. We hung a white board on the wall of the studio and called it 'The List of Events'. The names of the dead and those who were in danger were written on it. The first ones on the list were moderate Hutus, which meant that the forces of democracy were now fighting together against the pressure of the RPF. At this time, we started to broadcast shows which were.... they were radical shows. Yes. I explained to RTLM's listeners how we were now at total war. We said it loud and clear: If the RPF in Kigali come to power, the descendants of the Tutsis who were driven away in 1959 will govern us. They will destroy the Hutu and make slaves of the survivors.

6

Woman stands facing audience. Hands behind her back. She speaks French, German Voice over her voice.

JOURNALIST

In Autumn 1993, the Arusha Accord was signed. The peace process was initiated and a ceasefire between the FPR and the Rwandan Army was put in place. As such, I did not travel to Rwanda to write about genocide. I went to write about peace. I had also been commissioned by the WWF to report on the gorillas as the FPR controlled the north of Rwanda where the National Park is.

I arrived in Kigali on 2 April 1994, four days before the genocide began. Right on my arrival I heard an RTLM broadcast. The station could only be heard in Rwanda on short-wave. Many people had told me about it, but when I finally heard it for myself... It was incredible for me. My mother is Rwandan, and you must know, a radio station in Rwanda is the voice of authority. On RTLM though, they played the latest Congolese music, and even today, anything that's popular comes from Kinshasa. So RTLM played the best music and had the best DJs. There had not been anything like this in Rwanda before. It was a kind of interactive radio: People could call in, the hosts were live on air and responded without any preparation. Everyone listened with their mouths wide open; what they heard was unfathomable.

She fades.

7

Man stands facing audience.

EXILE (MAN)

We did of course feel that something was stirring up. The Arusha Peace Accord demanded that the offices of government be split up between Hutus and Tutsis and that the rebel and government armies merge. For the people in power, for the party of the President, this was a disaster. So they started focusing the spotlight on the race question and opinions became more and more radical.

Nonetheless, no one could predict what would happen. The perpetrators were as old as me. I knew them, I drank beer with them. They were the same people I went to school with, that I went to university with. Some were very good friends of mine. One of them, Edouard was his name, had a bar called 'UNO'. Edouard turned out to be one of the genocide's worst murderers.

Back then we even invited extreme Hutu ideologists to my university theatre group. It was like a kind of performance: We let them give a speech on the stage and had a discussion with them afterwards. Of course, what they said did make us fearful, of course. But, in the end, it was just politics, they were words. It wasn't real.

Woman appears. Gestures with her hands when talking. Man stands still.

JOURNALIST (WOMAN)

At RTLM, everything went to the beat, it was all rhythm: pah-pah-pah-pah. They made us laugh; they used four-letter words like 'slut' and 'shit'. You should know that Rwandans are very prudish. Rwanda is a Catholic country, which is why they shocked people even more. It was as if you went to church and heard cursing. As if the priest had just started to insult everyone. Bemeriki, Kantano and this Italian, Ruggiu: The people for whose death they were responsible, they even made them laugh.

When I arrived I was very surprised. The peace accords had been agreed, the UNO and UNAMIR were on the ground, the Belgian UN soldiers were stationed. How could they tolerate such things? It was so completely obvious: The hosts were saying that the FPR wanted to retake Rwanda, that the Tutsis would reinstall the feudal system. "Ah, these arrogant Tutsis, they should be....!" Followed by this meaningful silence. Over the next months, they became clearer and clearer: "We have to wipe them out! We have to finish them."

However, they also produced very serious shows about the history of Rwanda. And they played traditional songs. Not ones that fit the model of quick love songs: "You love me, I love you." No, these were deep songs about Rwandan history. "Remember that Hutu leader who was castrated by a Tutsi King!" They told stories of heroes I remembered from my youth, but the strange thing was that they made them into Hutus, even though, according to legend, they didn't have any ethnicity. It was breathtaking. It was crazy. You could sense that something, how can I say, something monstrous was brewing up.

Woman stands still with hands behind her back. Man starts talking, his hands touch in the front.

EXILE

When the genocide began in Kigali, I was in Butare in south Rwanda, near Burundi. In this region, the slaughtering started later on, around 19 April. The people of Butare knew of massacres of the Tutsis since independence. For this reason, no one could say

at this time if this was genocide or just another massacre.

In the end, a friend and I decided to leave the country. I remember, while on the run, hearing an address in the radio by Karamira, Froduald Karamira, one of the Hutu ideologists. He was completely beside himself, laughing and saying: "Yes, there have been a few deaths in Kigali. So what?" At the same time, almost my entire family in Kigali died.

You know, I was never properly threatened, I never came across any road blocks or bodies. No, I didn't see anything, which is why I always refused to give a witness statement. When I was in Butare, my family called me three times from Kigali. During the third call, my little brother told me that the Interahamwe, the youth organization of the President's party, were roaming the streets killing everyone they got hold of. I didn't understand what that was supposed to mean: "killing everyone". It sounds strange, but it was completely unreal to me. The speech of Karamira on RTLM was the first concrete experience for me. This cynicism, this joy in his voice while calling for the death of these people, that was what roused the first feeling in me: it was hate.

Both fade. Black. Voices from off.

8

Man appears on the right. Hands folded in the front.

SURVIVOR 1

The sound President's plane exploding could be heard all over the city. Then everything was quiet. I was still too young to understand what it had meant. But my father said to me: "Something terrible has happened."

On the night of 6 April, the Interahamwe began erecting barricades. They started searching well-known people from the area: doctors, politicians and intellectuals. But just a few days later they were killing anyone who couldn't prove that they were Hutu. The Interahamwe took joy in giving their victims as torturous and slow a death as possible. They raped women in front of their husbands and killed children in front of their mothers.

The women usually didn't kill, but they did denounce future victims. They called it: *Pointing the finger at them*. RTLM called for their listeners to phone in and report where those they called 'Inyenzi' or 'cockroaches' were hiding. When a name was mentioned on the radio, the Interahamwe immediately sprang into action and killed them.

We barricaded ourselves into our house when we heard Bemeriki say on 10 April on RTLM: "In the Gitega quarter, in the red house not far from the cinema, cockroaches are hiding. Take care of them!" We didn't know what to do, because the red house was our family's house.

After being denounced, our father ordered us to pack our suitcases. We fled to a school because we knew it was being guarded by UN soldiers. We spent the night there, huddled close together. We had nothing to eat or drink. Many children died that night.

The next morning we could only watch as the UNO soldiers pulled out. When they had packed up all their material and wanted to leave, a group of children lay themselves down in front of their vehicles. The soldiers shot into the air and when they got wind of it, the Interahamwe were already on their way. They knew exactly that the ones they left behind were left for dead.

There were some very brave men among the refugees. They said: "We won't die any more without putting up a fight first!", and offered resistance. But since they were only armed with stones, they didn't last very long against the militias. Around midday, the Interahamwe forced their way into the school and began chopping up people. Those who were slaughtered died without saying a word. All we heard was the babble of voices of the attackers. We sat there among their screams as if paralyzed. We were already dead before they struck us down.

A girl from the neighborhood asked a Hutu if he could kill her without having to make her suffer. He said 'Yes' and dragged her by her arms outside. But one of our neighbors, his name was Juvenál, cried at him that she was pregnant. He cut her belly open with a machete. He took his time and opened it nice and carefully, as if opening a bag. Another girl, she was very pretty, went up to one of the Interahamwe and

said: "Why don't you take me as your woman instead of killing me?" The Interahamwe took her into a corner and cut her breasts off. When they came back, they held the two breasts aloft in the air and asked: "Any other snakes here perhaps looking for a husband?"

(looks down)

I tried to hide myself between the corpses when a boy hit me with his mace. I fell down onto the chopped up bodies and played dead. Later on, I felt how they threw me somewhere and how other bodies piled on top of me. When I heard the Interahamwe boss whistle for them to move on, I was completely covered by them.

In the night I got up and tried to get out by clambering over the corpses. Human flesh was everywhere. Single limbs lay there, shattered, as if pounded by a machine. It was difficult to escape from this mass grave, you had to stand upright. I was covered in blood, my entire face smeared with it. I could even taste it on my tongue. I was invisible in the night.

I never saw my family again. I got moving to get what remains I could of my family before the murderers came back. The money we had taken with us for our escape, I left behind. That's how I survived.

A young woman appears on the left, holding her hands in the front. Man stands still.

SURVIVOR 2

I come from a village near Butare, that's a province in the south. We were a large family: four boys and six girls. Now there are four of us: two brothers, one sister and me. I don't remember very much as I was still quite young during the genocide, but my big sister told me a lot.

I remember going into the fields with my mother to gather the harvest. Someone shouted at us: "We have to run! It's started." I didn't know what he was talking about. But my mother told me: "Don't be afraid! We'll come back soon."

Grenades were landing before we reached the end of our street. One of my sisters was killed immediately, another one was injured. We saw a ditch and hid ourselves in it. Me, my mother and my two sisters.

A few minutes later a man came by. It was our neighbor. He saw my mother and said to her: "I will kill your children." My mother answered: "Do whatever you want! It is your right. Do what you like! But kill me first!"

The man said: "It's not worth it. You'll die of grief anyway."

Man looks down for a few seconds.

He cut off the legs of two of my younger sisters. Yes, he actually cut off their legs! My mother pleaded with our neighbor again that he kill her when a girl appeared behind him and said: "Wait! You'll make her clothes dirty."

I still see her today. She's wearing shorts and the clothes of her victims are wrapped around her waist. She tells my mother: "Get undressed!" And when Mamma doesn't do as she's told quickly enough, the girl throws her down on her back and rips off all her clothes. She takes everything off, even her underwear. That's how I see her in front of me today: completely naked.

At this time, another man comes over. He's carrying a cudgel on him and drives it into my mother's back with all his force. And then they leave.

My mother wasn't yet completely dead. I can't remember what she was talking about, but I imagine she said that we should take care of our youngest siblings. My sisters, who were bleeding heavily, had started crying: "Mamma, Mamma, we're thirsty." But since we were still too young ourselves, we couldn't do anything. Yes, that's how it was.

Later, our neighbor came back. He saw us and said: "Come with me, I'll take care of you." He brought us to a place where there were toilets and ordered us to climb into one. But there were already lots of people in there. Then he started to laugh and said: "Uh oh, it's occupied." So he brought us to a grave where all the corpses were being thrown and pushed us into it. It was also a kind of toilet, a latrine. The smell got into our mouths, our ears, everywhere... He threw a few stones in after us and pushed a thick slab of concrete over the hole. My sister tried to climb back out, but it was sealed tight. Inside it was complete

darkness.

I don't know how long we were trapped in there. But when the FPR came and told us the massacres were over and that we had survived, we couldn't believe them. The soldiers lifted up the concrete slab, but my big sister told them we wouldn't come out, we were staying there. So they came back again with a boy, someone we knew, a Tutsi, who started shouting: "It's the truth! Come out, you won't be killed!" So we climbed out of the hole. We looked at each other, it was midday, and we looked at each other, for the first time in a long, long time.

I don't know why we survived. I don't understand it. I don't talk a lot about it, especially not in public because I can't really remember. Only when I see my big sister, then we talk a lot about our mother. She tells me what she was like. That's the way we remember everything.

Recently, at a party, we both went to the toilet together. My sister said to me: "We're dead now!" I laughed and said: "No, no." She then pointed at the door and said: "'But look, they've even closed the doors!" Because 'to close the doors' means that you're dead.

Both fade. Black.

MIDDLE PART: IN THE RTLM.

Kantano, Valérie and Georges sit at the round table in the studio. DJ Joseph is in the booth and is DJ'ing: playing the music and talking to the audience. A security guard is in the room always. There is a whiteboard with post-its on it on the right and a tea-cart with drinks and snacks. On the table there are blocks and pencils which they use.

DJ JOSEPH

(laughing)

You're listening to Radio-Télévision Libre des Mille Collines. We're broadcasting from Kigali, it's 9 O'clock in our studios. Yes indeed, you're listening

to Radio RTLM, Radio Sympa, the voice of the people, the radio that speaks the truth, the whole truth and even divulges a few secrets here and there. To all our listeners: Courage!

KANTANO HABIMANA

from the main room, around a table, with microphones and headsets)

Courage! Thank you, Joseph. And since our beer supply is starting to run low, the people in Gisenyi should brew us up some new beer. Brew us beer so we can have some fun! Because it won't be long until we win this war. This war which the FPR rebels and the Tutsi cockroaches inflicted upon us, and win it in spectacular fashion. Our friends at the road blocks, the people all over the country and the soldiers of the Rwandan Army on the front line, all have victory in their sights now!

Valérie stands up from the table and gets herself a drink. DJ nods and confirms what Kantano is saying. Georges stands up and walks to the whiteboard on the right and reorganizes the post-its.

It is now 9 O'clock in Kigali. I'd like to say hello to all those living up in Gikondo: Courage! Don't believe anyone saying that there are more and more rebels arriving in Kigali. No! There are no new rebels coming. They're the same ones, completely exhausted and starving, running to their death. These suicides!

Valérie walks to the shelf on the left and takes files.

Yes, Radio RTLM speaks to you! The Interahamwe loves this station and this station supports the Interahamwe and all youth organisations of our Hutu Power parties. Because this station belongs to all Rwandans and all foreigners who have purchased shares in RTLM, in short, this station belongs to everyone.

Valérie comes back to her seat and sits down.

DJ JOSEPH

That was KantanoHabimana on the mic. It's 9 O'clock here in Kigali and rain is falling. But Radio RTLM is

your station, we chat, we play good music and broadcast interesting news!

Georges comes back to the table. During Valérie's speech he collects papers from the table. Then he sits down

VALÉRIE BEMERIKI

Thanks, Joseph. Dear listeners of Radio RTLM, this evening you are being accompanied by KantanoHabimana, Georges Ruggiu and ValérieBemeriki. At the mixing desk, Joseph Rudatsikira. We talk about everything and broadcast the very latest news to you. But before we start into the programme, I'd like to hand the mic over to my colleague, Georges Ruggiu, for news from the front. He will summarise today's events, here in Kigali, and talk about the situation in our country. And so we begin the evening with a clear idea, because people are starting to ask serious questions, indeed, they are beginning to question themselves... Georges!

Jingle.

GEORGES RUGGIU

Thanks, Valérie! Good evening, everyone, our dear listeners. So let's talk about the latest news from the war with some commentary from us...

In Butare the FPR are trying to attack the city from the Mbazitownship. However, they were pushed back by the civilian population who offered resistance.

Nyanza was the scene of heavy fighting yesterday. In the ranks of the cockroach rebels, seven were killed and it was possible to confiscate a lot of military material, including a mortar with ammunition.

In Rulindo there were 31 deaths among the cockroaches, lots of weaponry was confiscated, including a Kalashnikov and a heavy machine-gun with ammunition.

As Radio Rwanda already reported, the cockroaches suffered a heavy defeat yesterday in Kivuruga, a heavy defeat.

Kantano pours in a drink.

The cockroaches shot a grenade into a civilian area

close to Gitarama... Pity that Bernard Kouchner wasn't in the area to see the places they shell that have no connection with military campaigns whatsoever.

KANTANO

Yes, the cockroaches shot a grenade into Gitarama and only managed to hit three dogs. But the dogs were able to escape the grenades and howled with laughter...

VALÉRIE

Let me add for our listeners that Bernard Kouchner is one of the founders of *Médecins sans Frontières*.

GEORGES

Thanks for your report, Valérie.

Valérie drinks her tea.

Let's get to the situation in Kigali. Important battles were waged yesterday in Kigali. On the hill of *Mont Kigali* our troops were able to repel the enemy with the help of the civilian population.

In Gizozi, Kinamba and Kacyiru our police was able to fend off attacks. Around Kigali there are a lot of attacks being carried out now and the FPR is continuing to plunder the homes of the civilian population. These attacks do not have any military targets, or so it seems at least...

So much for yesterday's and this morning's fighting. The good news, yes, good news, is that we managed to kill 51 people at the front only yesterday.

(uses gestures that encourage his statements)

We are in good shape! We are about to win this war! *Radio France Internationale* maintains the opposite, however... Yesterday *Radio France Internationale* announced that Rwandan forces in Kigali were surrounded by the FPR. To quote: "The capital is surrounded and all transport routes are blocked."

We expressly disagree with this message. The transport routes are not completely blocked. Today... Today we met someone who came to Kigali from Gisenyi. Yes, he made it to Kigali... So if all the transport routes were blocked, he wouldn't have made it here.

We would like to welcome him even if we're not allowed mention his name.

KANTANO

The transport routes are open. People are getting through.

GEORGES

It's true, but you have to be very cautious... If *Radio France Internationale* doesn't check their information, how can they maintain that Kigali is no longer accessible via official transport routes? It's "wrong, wrong and more wrong", as General Dallaire would say. But this time, it's not General Dallaire saying this, we are saying it!

VALÉRIE

If you would let me, Georges... Because this is exactly the point. Dear listeners, if you're listening to foreign broadcasters, like *Radio France Internationale* or *Radio Muhabura*, the radio of the rebels of Kagame, then you'll hear them saying that the FPR has already taken Kigali. But when you go to the various quarters, I was in Kaciru and in other sectors this morning, then you can see how the people are still going to the market and taking care of their everyday activities. So what you're hearing in the foreign radio stations is nothing but provocation. Everything you hear on *Radio France Internationale* or on *Radio Muhabura* is just rumour because the rebels will never take Kigali. From where are they supposed to be able to take Kigali? Tell me, Kantano, from which sector are they supposed to take Kigali? What sectors are even under their control? All of this is only happening in their dreams because it is much too difficult to seize Kigali. It is impossible, plain and simple. So everything these radio stations are broadcasting every day is nothing but lies. Where are they even? What do they control? Nothing. Absolutely nothing.

They interrupt each other. Georges takes off his headphones and stands up when Kantano starts speaking and lightens a cigarette.

KANTANO

Yes, you're addressing an important point here: Disinformation. Nothing these stations are broadcasting, the American ones too, has any basis whatsoever. They say that all the transport routes

are blocked, but we here in Kigali know people who arrived here this morning after coming from Gitarama and Ruhengeri. Indeed, hundreds of people. Nonetheless, the rebels are continuing to spread lies and we shouldn't complain too much because this is exactly what the Tutsi bandits want with their tactics of lies.

Georges indicates silently that he is not confirming and sits down.

This morning, a journalist at *Radio Muhabura* reported that he just came from Gashora and didn't run into anyone there. Not a bird twittering, only corpses everywhere. He was told the Interahamwe carried out these atrocities. But who told him that? Can corpses speak all of a sudden?

Nevertheless, we send our greetings to you so-called "journalists" of *Radio Muhabura*. We're closely following the laughable rumours you're spreading... You say, for example, that we smoke grass and that we are trying to get the population of Kigali to do so as well. But of course! Now's the perfect time to smoke! We're smoking like... we're smoking like... Simon Bikindi...

DJ JOSEPH

To you our dear listeners, Simon Bikindi! Simon Bikindi is *power*!

KANTANO

"I hate all Hutus". Yes, and I hate everyone who doesn't smoke! The Nazis didn't smoke either, Hitler and his cursed band of Aryans who felt superior to all, like the Tutsis. And what happened to Hitler, Georges?

GEORGES

(gestures with his arms)
Hitler? He was dealt with.

KANTANO

Thanks, Georges. Hmm... I would request that all those people from Ruhengeri, Butare and Gisenyi who come to Kigali to supply us with grass. Bring us large quantities of grass so we can provide better resistance.

DJ JOSEPH

Yes, we want to smoke while we wait for the rebels
and will only stop once we have annihilated them.

KANTANO

Then we'll have to set up detox clinics...

VALÉRIE

Listeners, let's all hear the song "I hate all Hutus"
together. You all probably know it very well. The
misfortune that is spreading out over all of Rwanda
indeed has its origins in truth... We could name
TwagiramunguFaustin...

KANTANO

Also known as Rukukoma

VALÉRIE

Or Kanyarengwe

KANTANO

Or Pasteur Bizimungu. And, most of all, this dirty
slut who gets into bed with every Tutsi, Agathe.

VALÉRIE

Yes, all those Hutus who sold their souls to the
Tutsis, all of the FPR's accomplices. They are the
only reason why our country is going down the drain,
they alone have brought this unspeakable disaster
upon on. Ah, the arrogance of these rebels! RTLM has
already proven countless times that the RPF only
remains standing thanks to the money of foreign
shareholders. And if we're being honest, it's only
been able to stay around for so long because of
President Habyarimana... It's best if they bring him
back to life! He did protect them so well after all!
But they didn't even realise it and killed him.
Misfortune be upon them, as it says in the Bible:
"Death and sorrow be upon them!"

*Kantano takes off his headphones during the
song, stand up and walks around the table to
Valérie.*

Song:

*I hate all Hutus. I hate all Hutus who deny their identity.
Our fortune is that they are few.
Our fortune is that they are few.
All the better that I hate them.*

They talk inaudible. After the song Kantano returns to his chair. They put on their headphones.

VALÉRIE

Listeners, do you understand everything he says? Yes? Do you understand everything? If you had listened to this song earlier, we would have spared ourselves many problems. But fortunately, you decided to listen to us. And once you thought about it long and hard and asked your conscience, that's when you really understood it all. Thankfully, everything developed very quickly and the Tutsis and their accomplices quickly found themselves back in the sewer ditches.

Georges positions his mic.

KANTANO

But some of them are still here! They have murdered our children, killed our president and have even killed our babies in Kigali, in Butare, in Byumba, in Kibungo, everywhere. Doesn't lose track of them, keep an eye on them, hunt them down! Regardless of whether you are a woman, an old man or a child... Think about the people who look at you with a smile on their faces, with this evil, little smile. Their brutality has long surpassed what the human mind is capable of imagining, we don't know what to refer to them as any more. They are like hyenas among hyenas and their hideousness surpasses even that of the rhinoceros.

Yes, watch them and drive them out! And when Kagame and his accomplices call, no-one will be there to lift up the receiver... When he calls one of his accomplices... whee... no-one will be on the other end of the line. Not a soul! It is now 9:15 in Kigali. Ah, there is someone calling us. Before I leave you with Valerie Bemeriki and national news, and news of the war, I would like to welcome one of our listeners:

Good afternoon. What do you call yourself?

LISTENER

(calling in)

Jean-Pierre Kajuga.

KANTANO

Jean-Pierre Kajuga. You are from where, Jean-Pierre?

LISTENER

From the village of Murambi, in the Byumba prefecture.

KANTANO

Hum, yes

(he laughs)

Jean-Pierre, what is it you have to tell us?

LISTENER

Thank you, Kantano. I am originally from the village of Murambi, as you just said.

I am calling you, so you can transmit a message to the people of Murambi in particular, but also to the entire population of Byumba and to all Rwandans. Byumba has currently become a military stronghold of Museveni. This message is intended to wake up the population, especially that of Byumba, so it can find a way of self-defence and a way to free us without delay from the Inkotanyi. The time of waiting is over. I thank you.

KANTANO

Thank you, Jean-Pierre. Me too, I too would like to say to all the people that it is time to defend yourselves, every one, by using all means at his disposal, to defend his property, his wives and his children against the Inkotanyi. Be vigilantes and rake the trails to see if any Inkotanyi has passed by there, then follow their footsteps and try to find their hiding place ... Yes, thank you, Jean-Pierre, for these good ideas that you bring to the attention of the Rwandans.

LISTENER

Good, thank you, Kantano. We love your radio. I think you will be among the first to receive a medal because your radio helps a lot of people. Continue fighting. I thank you very much.

Thank you, Jean-Pierre.

VALÉRIE

Courage, Jean-Pierre!

Valérie writes on a paper.

KANTANO

This is what the people of Rwanda are telling us! And I too would like to say something to you, my foreign friends – because the Tutsis from Uganda are also foreigners and don't understand *Kinyarwanda*: Keep doing what you're doing! Continue criticising us please, stay hostile to us and say our names, although I don't know if you want to praise us or make death threats. All the better if you speak about us, all the better! As they say so beautifully: When you fart, it should at least really stink, you should never fart without making lots of noise.

GEORGES

That's right, Kantano. Ours is a dangerous situation, which is why the Rwandans need to know the whole truth of the events... Let me continue reporting the news.

Let's talk about the weapons embargo which the United Nations has imposed on Rwanda and on which we already reported on yesterday. This embargo doesn't prevent us from offering resistance, even if it naturally has consequences. Because what effect can a weapons embargo have that only applies to one warring party? We denounce this embargo because this embargo brings about an imbalance. It only allows the FPR to continue slaughtering the innocent civilian population as it weakens the government troops protecting them. We would like to remind you that France voted against this embargo. We would like to express our thanks to our friends in France! Those who support the embargo should also bear responsibility for it. However, so that we can benefit from this help, our French friends demand that no more bodies line the streets and that the killing stops while others look on smiling.

Song: Vive la France. Kantano sings along.

KANTANO

The French are coming, to defeat with us the Tutsi rebels. Girls, get out of your panties and get your hottest mini-skirt on!

GEORGES

Washington, on the other hand, won't stop talking nonsense. Bill Clinton once again assured the Secretary General of the United Nations, Boutros BoutrosGhali, of his support to increase the quota of United Nations troops in Rwanda to 5500, as the

Security Council recently resolved. The UN also decided to strengthen their commitment in Rwanda and provide the mission with 550 armoured troop carriers.

Why is the USA providing the UN mission with troop carriers? Why does the USA want to control this mission? The USA supports the FPR, just like Uganda does. They want to control the mission of the United Nations.

KANTANO

Why doesn't Mr. Clinton just go ahead and ask Yoweri Museveni if he would like to be the President of the USA?

VALÉRIE

Yes, exactly.

GEORGES

So we ask ourselves: Is Mr. Clinton aware of the reality of Rwanda? I doubt it. It's always very questionable if Mr. Clinton is able to decide what happens or should happen in Rwanda when you consider how the UNO failed so miserably in Somalia. What's happening here is just another colonialist violation, hidden behind the word "genocide". All whites, the servants of the cockroaches, keep using this word. However, this term can't be used when people on both sides are being killed, which is unfortunately the case in Rwanda. And as soon as we win, no-one will use this term again... No, Mr. Clinton, this is not how you make peace. Our Defence Minister, Augustin Bizimana, announced to CNN journalists in detail that Rwanda is actually in war with Uganda and that Uganda's President Museveni is working together with the Belgians. This is what we learned this morning in the news. Mr. Clinton is better off returning to Arkansas, yes, Arkansas. Because it's obvious that he understands the situation in America a lot better than he does the situation in Africa.

VALÉRIE

He should go back to where he came from.

GEORGES

But let's start talking about our best friend, General Dallaire. He has obviously since forgotten completely why he came to Rwanda. Of course, he's assured us a thousand times that he's under the command of the United Nations. Nobody doubts that.

But do the whites stop being white just because they put on blue helmets? Just because they're in the UNAMIR it doesn't mean that their white ideas are suddenly out of their heads, these archaic ideas which will never bring us peace.

*Georges takes off his headphones and stands up.
He gets water and pours it in his glass.*

KANTANO

And why is that? Listen closely! Are we somehow related to them? Once you start relying on the white man, you'll be eating dust! If you depend on their help and believe all their lies... They should feel free to leave! We can resolve our problems on our own! Go, Mr. Dallaire! And don't forget your Tutsi women either! Don't forget your Tutsi soldiers and the internationally sought terrorist, Paul Kagame! No Rwandans need you here!

Georges goes back to his chair and puts on his headphones.

VALÉRIE

The problems of a country can only be resolved by its citizens and in a democracy it's the majority that decides. The majority in Rwanda is Hutu.

KANTANO

Rwanda is its people, not its hills. Kagame says he has taken 50% of the country. And he's right of course, but only if you include the national park, the animals, the snakes and the toads – and General Dallaire!

GEORGES

Yes, General Dallaire is in reality a Tutsi rebel, a Tutsi rebel in disguise. We don't need American troops; we need a ceasefire, a proper one. The RPF needs to retreat once and for all, it needs to disband and disappear from off this Earth. Because the rage of the people will unite with the rage of God and together they shall unleash upon them the punishment they deserve for their deadly sins. Paul Kagame says he has already taken Kigali! It's better if he just crawls off to Hell, where he's already heading for.

Dear listeners, it is now 9:25 in Kigali. We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all of

our armed forces for their services as well as all of our people at the road blocks and all of the people who are caring for them, all the doctors and nurses...

VALÉRIE

Not to mention the wives who have to put up with the displeasure of their husbands as they work all day to secure their country...

Georges lightens his cigarette.

GEORGES

And we congratulate our government. Here's to having General Dallaire disappear from our sight as quickly as possible and having the FPR rot in hell!

KANTANO

If you'll allow, Georges, I fear that even the Devil is no longer prepared to accept the Tutsi rebels down there with him.

VALÉRIE

They raped your wives, they raped your children. And now, with the help of the Americans and the Belgians, they're planning to wipe us out once and for all. Because they destroy everything they can't seize control of. Like the woman in the Bible who says that the child should be torn in two if it cannot be given to her. Yes, the cockroaches raped God and they would even rape the Devil if he would let them.

There are things that dare not be said. There are unspeakable things. It has been reported to us that the cockroaches took pregnant women and bludgeoned them before opening their stomachs and ripping out the foetus. The foetus was then laid on the ground and killed after its belly was also opened. And all of this before the eyes of other mothers so that they understood that they too have forfeited their lives and that the same would happen to them. And you know, so many mothers carrying their children on their back were thrown into Lac Muhazi that its surface was covered entirely with their bodies. And not just Lac Muhazi, but all the rivers and all the seas are full with bodies, all the way to Lake Victoria, all the way up the Nile. And it has been reported to us that the Mediterranean is so full of bodies that ships cannot get past any more.

So you see how the atrocities of the cockroaches are irreversible. The atrocities of the cockroaches can only be undone by their complete annihilation, by killing them all, by their absolute destruction.

Valérie takes off her headphones and looks down, fingertips touching. Silence. Kantano drinks. Georges smokes. Kantano stands up and walks to the DJ booth looking inside. Georges takes cards from the table.

GEORGES

And as we do every evening, we would like to get our brains working. With this in mind, we had a rummage through our library and found a passage from *The Prince* by Machiavelli for you. And even though he wrote his book on the political rules of leadership in 1514, 480 years ago, we would like to say to you that good ideas never die. The passage should get your minds working and we look forward to your comments. Dialogue and an exchange of views are important to us. And if you prefer to send your comments in writing, go ahead! We'll read them and tell our listeners if they're worthy of it. So I give you Machiavelli, who speaks to you through me:

Kantano sits down on the chair near the cabin.

"...a question arises: whether it be better to be loved than feared or feared than loved? It may be answered that one should wish to be both, but, because it is difficult to unite them in one person, is much safer to be feared than loved, when, of the two, either must be dispensed with."

Dear listeners, you shall hear us again in five minutes with our history quiz with ValérieBemeriki. But first we would like to listen to some music. Joseph no doubt has a hot track for us to put us in a better mood.

(looks to the DJ)

Song: Nirvana - Rape Me. Little Mary statue blinks.

DJ JOSEPH

The next song is from the USA and I would like to dedicate it to all the cockroaches in Uganda who don't speak French and to you especially, Bill Clinton. It's a brand new song with the title 'Rape

Me'. This is for you, Bill! Just for you!

*Georges indicates 'up'/'louder' to the DJ.
Security guard stands up from his chair in the
corner and gets some snacks from the tea-cart.
Then he walks around and taps on Georges knee.
DJ is on the phone. Georges and Valérie write on
their blocks. They discuss inaudible.*

That was 'Rape me', dear listeners. It is now 9:30 in the RTLM studio. Stay tuned, don't switch off because we'll be keeping you up-to-date with all of the latest developments in the political situation.

*Georges and Valérie put on their headphones.
Kantano sits on his chair holding his hands.*

GEORGES

So it is. Be wary of those who try to hide the truth from you because today, the whole truth needs to be brought to light. Those who don't listen to us will regret it later. They'll think about the events which come to pass and say: "Turns out RTLM was right." Because we have access to all of the books here and we read them too. For example, I'm holding the transcript of a speech in my hand which I would like to read out to you over the course of our history quiz. But first, my colleague, Valérie, has some hot news for you all, which we received from a resident of Kigali.

*Kantano gets up, walks to his previous chair and
puts on his headphones, stands beside his chair.*

VALÉRIE

I just learned that four Tutsi rebels managed to evade the militia's checkpoint. This news comes to us from a houseboy of Sinshoboye Bernard, he's still on the line.

Hello, my young friend. How old are you?

LISTENER

I'm 11 years old.

VALÉRIE

11... And would you like to tell the listeners your name?

LISTENER

My name is NzizoreraHoneste.

VALÉRIE

Honeste... did you see rebels in your area?

LISTENER

Yes, there were four of them, all in stone-washed jeans. They asked me: "Show us where they killed the people today." And they forced me to show them a shortcut so that they could get past the roadblocks.

VALÉRIE

Where did they go?

Kantano sits down.

LISTENER

Two of them went in the direction of Kimisagara, to where the APACE school building is, the other two went to Nyakabanda.

KANTANO

They really are everywhere. In every hole, in the marshes, in the toilets, everywhere still has to deal with this filth. They have since started drinking from the latrines like stray dogs. What irony that people like these want to govern our country, become our officers, use our vehicles and sleep in our houses.

VALÉRIE

Listeners, as you just heard, the rebels can also use secret paths. The neighbours of this boy, who lives at Sishoboye Bernard's home, should find out from him where they parted company with him. Hunt them down!

KANTANO

Since today is the last time you'll be listening to RTL, I want to tell the four of you this: There is only one Rwanda in the world. Rwanda is here, in Central Africa, where God put it. And so you must understand that we Rwandans will not let a few Ugandans chase us out of our own country. And even if you take the city of Kigali, it won't be of any use to you. You will only fall to your death because Kigali is a trap. And if you want to hide yourselves in the APACE school, the Rwandans are already waiting for you there with their machetes and bludgeons so as to make you suffer before you die. Because it's not

nice putting your head into the mouth of a lion. All of you in the APACE school, you will all perish and none will survive to tell the tale.

VALÉRIE

Honeste, tell me, what's your favourite music?

LISTENER

I like Zouk.

KANTANO

Zouk! You're an early starter, Honeste!

VALÉRIE

Honeste, would you like to tell us anything else?

LISTENER

Yes, I would like to say hello to my mother, my father and my little sister. They live in the Rundatownship in the Gitarama prefecture. I want them to know that I'm doing very well with Sinshoboye Bernard and that I think about them a lot. And I hope that this war will be over soon and that we will all see each other again fit and well.

VALÉRIE

So that was a young Rwandan there. Courage, Honeste!

DJ JOSEPH

Dear listeners, I would like to remind you that every evening after 9.30 you choose the music yourself. So call us and tell us your favourite songs from Ruanda, the Congo, France, America and even from Uganda, because RTLM plays music from all over the world... And here's some zouk for you, Honeste!

Song: Zouk

KANTANO

(over the music)

Thank you, Honeste! I would like to greet the young people who live beside the slaughter yard near Kimisagara. Be sure to take care of the cockroaches... Yesterday, I watched young people dancing to zouk. They even slaughtered a little piglet. I mean, really! What did you give me to smoke... It had a pretty horrible effect on me. I smoked three handfuls of it and it is much too strong, but it helped me not to lose courage. Keep a

good eye on the gutters so that no cockroach escapes you. Smoke something and make sure the cockroach comes to a bad end... Ah, this really is off the back of a crocodile! Our dealers need to keep supplying us with large quantities of this so that we stay strong, so that we stay furious and so that we can fight for our country! Yes, my friends. That's exactly how it should be! But be careful not to smoke too much of it, otherwise...

(sings along)
So courage, stick with it and listen
to RTL!M!

Georges walks to the other chair and starts writing. Kantano gets a drink. Security guard comes to the table and gets a drink. Georges returns to his seat, hands Kantano his block and sits down.

It is 9:35 and I'll hand over the mic to Valérie for the history quiz.

VALÉRIE

Dear listeners, we have often told you the story of Rwanda's history. And in the last show I hosted a quiz for young people. Today, I want to test the older people, but not just them, because there are many children who talk with their parents, who read a lot...

Kantano gets up and walks to the security guard's chair who stands by the whiteboard. Georges writes.

Nobody can argue that the young people don't know the history of our country. Everyone listening to me right now should get a pen and paper and, as with every time we play, the winner gets a reward. Because there are people who support this quiz. Last time, the Saint Fidèle Institute sent us a donation which we divided among the winners.

I hope you all have your pen and paper at hand now so I can ask you the first question.

Jingle/Melody

GEORGES

Name a past ruler or another well-known personality, alive or dead. Name the person who said the following sentence as well as the circumstances in which this person said it.

VALÉRIE

"No Hutu retreats." I repeat: "No Hutu retreats."

GEORGES

That was the first sentence: "No Hutu retreats." Who said it and what were the circumstances? This evening we have already talked about Hitler and the "Aryan race" who felt superior to everyone else. The parallels with the current situation are obvious. In 1940 Hitler was already well-armed, like the Tutsi rebels were in 1990, but the citizens of France resisted. The Resistance in France achieved incredible feats back then until the government of De Gaulle was able to return from exile in England. These people are still celebrated in France today. And here too, in Rwanda, the names of the resistance fighters should be made known. The names of those who volunteered to fight against the FPR. Because they shall see their reward once this war is over... This teaches us the lesson of history. This is what the first sentence means.

Kantano smokes.

VALÉRIE

The second sentence is: "Everywhere I go, all I see is Parmehutu."

Dear listeners, it is very important that you understand the meaning of this sentence. I'll explain it to you so you know what Rwanda expects of you. Always keep in the back of your mind that the cockroaches, the enemy of our country, are cunning. You know this since the time the cockroaches started attacking us: At the start when they were only called Tutsis, they invaded Rwanda and ousted our Hutu kings, the sons of Sebahizi, and set up the feudal system. In 1959, however, the people rose up. Yes, the Hutu rose up and said: "No longer will the majority of the people be suppressed by small Tutsi groups, whose number doesn't even amount to 10%." The Tutsi king then went into exile, the republic was created and the Tutsis turned their backs on the country. But once they were in exile, they founded a rebel army. They perfected the art of killing and

mounted attacks against us again and again, 1961, 63, 65, 68 – and most recently 1990 – because the Tutsis want to seize power for themselves. But the majority of the population refused, rose up and said: "Impossible!" And the Rwandan Army rose up as well and said: "Never!" And they fought off the cockroach rebels. The cockroaches, who are very devious, started looking for accomplices in Rwanda itself and started corrupting them. They even forced negotiations, upon which the Arusha Agreement was signed. But the Tutsi, or more accurately, the cockroach rebels, remained dissatisfied. As they didn't know how to come to power, they murdered our head of state, President Habyarimana, and in doing so, finally triggered the ethnic war. It was they who provoked the ethnic conflict (even if they like to say that the Europeans were responsible), it was they who could never forget that they were "a superior race", who could never accept that Rwanda belongs to the Rwandans and not to a small clique of cockroaches. The Hutus from Rwanda should know now that it is time to come together, not to harm each other with the false pretences of a "multi-party system" or "human rights". Because your common enemy is the feudal lord with his whip and forced labour. That is what is meant by the sentence: "Everywhere I go, all I see is Parmehutu."

GEORGES

Thanks, Valérie. The third sentence goes: "All fun and enjoyment must take second place to work." Who said this and what were the circumstances?

KANTANO

(stands up)

This sentence is quite easy to understand really. It is well-known that during war times, people indulge themselves in small intrigues, they do stupid things while we are at total war, showing no mercy to our enemy. Let us take Aloys for example. Aloys is an *Interahamwe* from Kigali. I met him yesterday at the market. He looked well in his military uniform, well-dressed, with a rifle... So, in the middle of the marketplace, Aloys grabs a man named Yilirwahandi Eustache, a businessman. His ID card says that he is Hutu, but everyone knows his mother is a Tutsi. Aloys and some other *Interahamwe* dragged him to a corner and demanded that he sign an IOU of 150,000 Rwandan Francs. I tried to get a look at the document, but Aloys and his friends left with it quickly as the

businessman groaned: "They'll kill me, Kantano, help me, I beg you. They forced me to sign an IOU and I'll have to borrow money from everywhere in order to pay them back." But I said to him: "How are you going to buy your way out? If you're a cockroach, then you're a cockroach and you need to be killed. You can't buy your way out."

Kantano sits down.

VALÉRIE

Yes, nobody can buy themselves free, it's impossible. No-one can buy their lives. If someone has got their hands on a fake document, if it's a Tutsi rebel or one of his accomplices, then he's not allowed buy himself out of it. He has to be killed, he just has to be killed, plain and simple. Because what is happening here in Rwanda has never been seen before. Nowhere in the world has a minority ever dared to take up arms against the majority in order to eradicate them. Whoever breaks with this taboo, makes an early grave for themselves and their race.

KANTANO

(stands up)

So the Tutsis brought on the destruction of their brethren. In the Arusha Peace Agreement, they had achieved everything they went out to achieve, as Valérie showed. The Hutus said they were prepared to give up everything, even the achievements of the Revolution of '59. But all the Tutsis said was: "We want total control over the country." The world has never seen such a thing. A small minority, a small band of individuals wanting to seize power over a country and even accepting that they will be exterminated. Incredible that a race simply lets itself be destroyed because of their hunger for power. And that's why I say to you: The cockroaches don't want life to go on. I actually think that they want to extinguish all life in this country, the schools, the hospitals, everything. These people are nihilists, they only desire death, they accept death with their eyes wide open, they are death. Yes, they are a depraved race. These are people who need to be exterminated. There is no other way than destroying them and throwing them in the rivers. Let the fish govern them! That's what the sentence means: "All fun and enjoyment must take second place to work." Because it's a very simple matter: We're dealing with a race here, and Rwanda needs to be rid of them. So

take a good long look at a person, look at how tall they are and their appearance, look at their pretty, fine noses – and then pound them to pieces.

VALÉRIE

You have a week to answer all the questions and I'll be keeping a reward in store for you here. Answers which don't arrive in time won't be included. So you have seven days to answers these three questions:

"No Hutu retreats."

"Everywhere I go, all I see is Parmehutu."

"All fun and enjoyment must take second place to work."

GEORGES

Send you answers in to Radio RTLM. Write on the envelope with your answers the words "Competition, Post box 2948, Kigali." So write on the envelope: "RTLM, Competition, Post box 2948, Kigali." You have one week to answer and I'll look for a reward for the winner.

Courage, study the history of Rwanda and answer our questions. But I see we have a caller on the line.

KANTANO

Yes. Who am I talking to?

LISTENER

DidacienneNizeyimana.

KANTANO

Didacienne, what would you like to say to us?

LISTENER

I would like to thank you for the work you're doing for our country. Me and my whole family listen to you. I would like to say hello to Valérie in particular, because we women have to offer resistance too.

VALÉRIE

Thank you, Didacienne. The voices I hear behind you are those of your family, correct?

LISTENER

Yes, I am here with my husband and my brother. They

say hello too.

KANTANO

Keep it up, Didacienne! Would you like to request a song?

LISTENER

A song, yes...

VOICES FROM THE BACKGROUND

I like to move-it-move-it, I like to move-it-move-it...

LISTENER

Yes, I would like to hear that song.

KANTANO

You really do know the score...

DJ JOSEPH

Real to Real, featuring the Mad Stuntmen!

They are listening to the song. Security guard stands leaning on wall, arms crossed. Georges taps his feet to the beat. They talk inaudible. Kantano gets up, looks over Valérie's shoulders. Georges gets a drink, then joins the others. Discussion, relaxed. Music stops. Back to chairs again.

KANTANO

Today, someone called me and asked: "Kantano, why are you so happy? What's wrong with you?"

DJ JOSEPH

Perhaps you smoked something before you arrived at the studio?

KANTANO

So I answered: "I drank tea, my friend! Unfortunately, there's no sugar left in this city!"

VALÉRIE

Yes, dear listeners, times are hard. If anyone should find sugar on the market in Kigali, it will be very, very expensive. You have to keep an eye on how much you spend so that your children always have enough... I wanted to say sweet potato there, but here in Kigali, sweet potato is more expensive than potato! A kilo of

sweet potato is twice as expensive as a kilo of potatoes! It's a bad situation. And don't even mention the bananas! It's a lot worse with them. Today on the market, I asked how much a kilo of bananas costs and the man said: "40 or 50 Francs." You Tutsi rebels: Do you really think you can starve out 200,000 people just to seize control of a city? Do you believe this strategy of driving people to desperation will pay off? You'll see how we'll get you fired up. If you drive us to desperation, well we'll just have to turn the tables on you.

GEORGES

Yes, Valérie, I think you make a very important point there: the logic of this war. We would like to remind you of the results of René Degni-Ségui's investigation into the violation of human rights. We talked about it yesterday. René Degni-Ségui, a member of the United Nations, reports that the massacre had been planned long in advance, also by RTLM, we were even talking about it yesterday. But he doesn't want to hear a word about the preparations made by the FPR. What a complete reversal of logic in this war!

VALÉRIE

Yes, this Ségui... Just imagine: This individual actually claims that the Rwandans, even before our President was killed, had started setting up road blocks. As if they had known that these cockroach rebels would shoot down his plane! As if everything had actually been organised, us using our traditional, out-dated weapons! This individual who hasn't even paid RTLM a visit, not for one day...

GEORGES

Who wasn't curious about visiting the journalists who, and I quote from his report: "are urging the people to fight", who even dares to utter the word "genocide". We would like to remind you, Mr. Degni-Ségui, that RTLM was founded three years after the start of the war, three years after the FPR attacks. So it's absurd to say that this station asks the people to go into battle. And by the way, if you had asked us, then we would have shown you our "genocide" studio. Even General Dallaire came looking for us and found us. Of course, things went a little overboard on occasion, the population was so enraged that they may have killed people who they thought were FPR collaborators and could have brought harm to the majority of the population... But is that not exactly

what the resistance fighters in France did with Nazi collaborators? Did Robespierre not also call on the French to be cautious during the Great Revolution? A man under suspicion was always a condemned man.

KANTANO

We will fight them and we will defeat them. This much is true, no-one can question it. But if we're not quick, they will eradicate us first. It's not our fault that these rebels don't understand any Kinyarwanda or that they have bad counsel! They don't comprehend a thing and can't let go of their stubbornness... In Rwandan culture, when a family is being threatened or has to fight an enemy, it sits close to a precipice so that it can hide when things get heavy. Everyone understands this expression.

But which family is being threatened with destruction? It's that of the cockroaches. This band recruits their people from a very small group...

(stands up)

I'm talking about the Tutsis. The Tutsis are no longer large in number. Some time ago, they perhaps made up 10% of our society. But this war has surely reduced them by 2%. 2% less, so we only have 8%. What now? They won't give up their suicide mission against as large a group as the Hutus. Is it not logical that they will be destroyed? All the Tutsis who used to ring in to us earlier, where have they gone? Well? Ah! They were certainly exterminated... So let's sing:

(sings)

Be happy, friends! The Tutsi are destroyed!

Be happy, friends! God is always just!

Georges joins Kantano.

God is indeed always just and they certainly will be destroyed soon. I saw bodies lying around in Nyamirambo. Between us: I don't know exactly what peoples they were. If you look at them, you ask yourself: "These people, what race are they at all?"

But let's look ahead instead. Let's fasten our seatbelts tighter and destroy them once and for all. So that our children, our grandchildren and our grandchildren's children won't have to hear their names any more.

Joseph, music!

DJ Joseph puts a religious music.

KANTANO

(takes off his jacket)

I would like to read-out an obituary for these cursed cockroach rebels. Even these dirty, little pigs benefit from the good work of RTLM!

Georges gets up and walks to the whiteboard and then walks back to the chair, drinks, gets up and gives Kantano paper. During Kantano's speech he lightens his cigarette and walks to the third man. Then sits down again. Then Valérie gets up to get a cigarette.

Yes, we will read out an obituary for these cockroaches... It's for the rebels who died yesterday in Mbutabuturo under the command of Lieutenant Godefrey Mondey, who, by the way, doesn't have a Rwandan name. But even if he had one, it wouldn't matter because there is no doubt that he comes from Uganda. So his name is Godefrey Monday. He led a group of murderers who were roaming about Mbutabuturo. Among them was also Sergeant Alphonse Mugernana, Sergeant Ernile Murenzi, Soldier Dieudonne Ntwali, Soldier Innocent Munyentore, Soldier Jean Claude Nzaramba, Soldier Theogen Ruzinana, Soldier Jean Baptiste Mugabo, Soldier Emmanuel Sibornana, Soldier Emmanuel Puraha, Soldier Alfred Ndayarnbaje, Soldier Mparnwa Bashayija, Corporal Mparnwa Bashayija, Soldier Clernent Ndanyuzwe, Soldier Paustin Rucarnihigo, Soldier Jean Baptiste Minani, Soldier Celestin Nkulikiyinka, Soldier Jean-Paul Rudahunga, Soldier Emest Murenzi, Soldier Cyrille Bugingo, Soldier Paustin Rwandenzi, Soldier Faustin Mutabazi, Soldier Steve Sindayigaya, – bye bye Steve – Corporal Joseph Rutagungira, Corporal Emmanuel Tabaro, Corporal Louis Gahonzire, Corporal Condo Mazirnpaka, Corporal Etienne Muhire, Corporal Antony Nsengiyurnva, Corporal Leonard Kagarama, Corporal Cyprien Gahungu, Corporal Jean Darnascene Makuza, Corporal Orest Ruberwa, Corporal Jean de Dieu Bizirana, Corporal Etienne Kayigarnba and the 36th is Jean Baptiste Zirarora, the 37th is Janvier Munanira, the 38th is Corporal Canisius Gapfizi, the 39th is Emmanuel Ndikurnuzirna and the 40th is Theogene Gisagara...

Ha! The list is goes on and on. Yesterday, hundreds of rebels died. I don't know exactly what you say for this in Uganda. In Rwanda you call it 'perishing like a dog'. So that was the list of those who perished like dogs.

*Song in the background. The talk relaxed.
Kantano puts on his jacket, sits down on the
security guard's chair. Jingle.*

GEORGES

Dear listeners, please let me switch from national news to international news.

In Angola, talks are of the summit that will reunite the heads of state of the region. The summit will apparently reunite the heads of state of the Grand Lac region to examine the Rwanda problem. The Rwanda problem is similar to that of Angola, with the sole difference that the Angola problem has been around for 19 years.

In other news, Yasser Arafat was welcomed in Gaza yesterday, with distinguished ceremonial honours reserved for heads of state. He must preside over the swearing-in ceremonies for the members of Government in the city of Jericho. Yasser Arafat told the Palestinian people that they should not worry about his livelihood, since as he declared: "I will never accept the conditions pertaining to the credit grant the World Bank has imposed on me, conditions intended to control our economy." We have always said, "relief never comes in time". Yasser Arafat has said to the Palestinians: "Count on your own efforts, don't count on those who want to trick us."

In another note, bad news from North Carolina, one of the states making up the United States of America, where a DC 9 plane crashed, killing 18 people. In the last few days, we have talked to you about plane crashes that take human lives, well that one took as well.

In Yemen, as was the case for our country, the United Nations had made a decision requiring warring parties to accept a cease-fire, however, the decision has not been implemented, because fighting is continuing in this country. The representative of the International Red Cross has sounded alarm, because the water supply

pump has been damaged by gunfire, and now the city inhabited by 450,000 people is without drinking water, the population is at risk of dying of thirst.

Remember that the heat in that country is not comparable to the one we know here, because it is a hot country, where the temperature reaches 40°, while here it is only a mere 25°.

Kantano goes back to his chair.

Speaking of the World Cup being held in the United States, yesterday Switzerland faced Spain, Spain winning that match with three goals to zero. Switzerland has therefore been eliminated. As I have told you, the tournament has reached the direct elimination phase. In the same group, Germany has beaten Belgium with a score of three goals to two.

KANTANO

And by the way, in this World Cup, taking place in the United States of America, I would like to add that a player has been murdered; a Colombian player of good reputation, who was killed in the city of Medellin by people who had blamed him for having, inadvertently, scored an own goal. What funny like behaviour from those fans, who shot him point blank. He fell down dead.

Valérie laughs.

GEORGES

I'll finish up with the bicycle race called "Tour de France". A victory was predicted for the Spanish Miguel Indurain, because of his reputation, we too, we envisaged it as well, and that he would be followed by the Swiss Tony Rominger, but this has not been the case. Yesterday in the first leg, with a distance of 7 kilometres and 200 meters, the Brit Chris Boardman won the round with an average speed of 56km or 152m per hour, putting on the yellow jersey reserved for the winner of that leg.

KANTANO

Voila, this is the end of the broadcast. You have been with KantanoHabimana, ValérieBemeriki and Georges Ruggiu. At the mixing desk: Joseph Rudatsikira. Before we finish, I would like to tell you about a discussion I had with a parent yesterday. He told me: "Tell me, Kantano, you say that we are in

a time of war, that we are sad. So, what is it with your young people's music, this high tempo music, this music which makes people dance? I just got home and I heard this music on RTLM. It shocked me."

I told him this: "In the Rwandan culture it is normal, and as it so happens, even if people are in mourning, saddened, weeping from sudden trouble, as we are now, somebody has to take the harp and play it. It is a matter of feeling, and it does not mean that during such a time, people are not allowed to laugh. Nevertheless, the RTLM is also in mourning."

In short, we must look ahead, it can't be otherwise. Listen then, like every evening at the end of our broadcast, to the following bit, this song by Joe Dassin that our President so loved: "Le dernier slow!". That our armed forces are listening to so they can dance and tough it out at the front, and to stop those suicidal tendencies.

Courage and 'til tomorrow!

Song. Relaxed atmosphere. Jalousie rolls down.

EPILOGUE

1

RUGGIU

On 4 July 1994, RTLM was evacuated from Kigali. So I left Rwanda and went with all of those who were fleeing the FPR to the Congo. A year later, in 1995, I moved on to Kenya, where I settled down under the name Trevor McCusker.

INVESTIGATOR

How did you provide for yourself back then?

RUGGIU

I wrote a book called "Dans la tourmente Rwandaise". That's how I kept myself above water.

INVESTIGATOR

Let's talk about your book. I'm quoting from the third paragraph, page 20: "'Radio Vérité' was also 'Radio Courage' and 'Radio Résistance'. We tried everywhere to mobilize the population against our common enemy, the FPR." Did you write that?

RUGGIU

Yes.

INVESTIGATOR

Let's move on to page 110. In the last paragraph you write, and I quote: "I am proud that I was one of the few who didn't leave the Rwandans to face their grim destiny by themselves. I am aware that I am accused of staying there while all the Europeans and Americans pulled out. But I was of the opinion that the work had to be brought to an end, despite the difficult conditions." Mr. Ruggiu, can you confirm that you wrote these words?

RUGGIU

Yes.

INVESTIGATOR

Does referring to RTLM in this book as 'Radio Vérité' and 'Radio Courage' reflect the truth?

RUGGIU

It reflects my convictions at that time, yes. I wrote that to protect myself. But now I know that it was a lie.

INVESTIGATOR

Do you have anything else to say?

RUGGIU

I know that all I have left is the opportunity to give an account and bring the truth to light.

INVESTIGATOR

Mr. Ruggiu, is it not a habit of yours to see yourself as a martyr of the truth?

RUGGIU

No. All I would ask is that you excuse my behavior and forgive me.

2

BEMERIKI

When the Rwandan soldiers in the Congo captured me, I begged them to shoot me. I tried to force them to kill me. In the end, I refused to eat for a week. I was convinced that they were now going to cut one finger off after the other. And then my hand, then my arm. And then finally gouge out an eye or something

like that.

INVESTIGATOR

But nothing like that happened?

BEMERIKI

No. But I lost a lot of things, lots of documents... You can see for yourself, I'm a prisoner and I don't know if I'll ever get out of here. All I can do is pray to God. Maybe he will help me.

INVESTIGATOR

So do you accept your sentence?

BEMERIKI

If I bear any responsibility for what happened, I ask for forgiveness. If people were killed because of my broadcasts, I accept that. I know myself what I did, but I don't want to admit to anything that didn't happen the way it did. I didn't kill anyone, I was a journalist. All that counted for me was that my voice was heard. That's all. People should finally stop searching for excuses and say: "Valérie didn't ask the Rwandans for forgiveness!" I talked with the padres, I submitted my confession. I asked for forgiveness. So I should be forgiven.

3

BOARDS

(written on the screen)

After a civil trial in Kigali, ValérieBemeriki is serving a life sentence. She has filed an appeal against her sentence.

After the capture of Kigali, KantanoHabimana went into hiding in the refugee camps of eastern Congo. There has been no trace of him since.

Georges Ruggiu was released from prison in September 2010. He converted to Islam and took the name Omar. He was last seen in summer 2011 in Pakistan.

Today, the former RTLM building is a jewelry and watch shop.

All 4 speakers/witnesses from the prologue appear facing audience.

JOURNALIST

I was evacuated fairly late, on 12 April together with the last of the journalists. I was already in Paris on 13 April. From the last week I spent in Kigali, I remember one thing in particular: A young boy who rang in to RTLM and asked: "I am eight years old. Am I old enough to kill a cockroach?"

And the host, I think it was Kantano, answered:

"Ah, how cute! You know what, everyone can do it!"

And I remember something else as well, it was in an evening show, shortly before they played *Le dernier Slow*. Bemmeriki was at the mic and she said:

"These people had to be killed and you killed them. But the father should not have been shot, he should have been cut up into little pieces."

That's what I don't understand. Let's assume that the people are convinced that killing people is the right thing to do, or they were forced, then you can assume they would do it as efficiently as possible. 'To exterminate', after all, means that as many people as possible be eliminated in the shortest time possible.

Let's... let's take the rapes, for example. If you take into account how emphatically the sexual fantasies in relation to Tutsi women were propagated, it is understandable that so many of them were raped: The Tutsi woman who sleeps with the white man, all of these things... But how are you supposed to understand the fact that they took their time after raping a woman to crush down glass into shards so that they can be inserted into the woman's vagina? How can it happen that a woman be impaled with an iron rod, as was almost normal back then? How can two-year-olds, three-year-olds be raped to death?

EXILE

As I said before, I experienced the genocide from a distance, on TV and in phone calls. I was told who had been killed, who was no longer with us. That's how everything unraveled, far away. In a way that almost wasn't physical any more.

I finally returned to Rwanda in 1998. It was April, I

can't remember the exact date, but I could look it up easily enough because it was the time Froduald Karamira was to be executed. Around this time was when people started living their lives again in Rwanda, but the fear still ran deep. Many Interahamwe lived in the refugee camps in the Congo and the old Rwandan army still attacked from time to time.

But I definitely wanted to be in Rwanda for the execution of Karamira. To me, it went completely without saying that the only way to deal with these people who called for murder was to kill them. People who were able to do something like that didn't deserve to be alive. Yes, it would have seemed indecent to me for them to be let live.

I remember that I was running a little late that day. In Nyamirambo, where the football stadium of Kigali is, a huge crowd had gathered together. The cars were parked as far as the first mosque, worse than for a football game. Somehow I managed to make my way to the front row. I had to see everything.

But when I saw the accused standing there, there were six of them, I suddenly started feeling unwell. They had been bound to pillars. Yes, I almost had sympathy for them, even though that was the last feeling I wanted to feel for them. Masked policemen turned up. Karamira and the others wore suits with targets on them, here, above the heart. I thought it was all very ugly. And soon after, shots were fired, there was a powerful bang, it all went very fast. A policeman went from one to the next to finish them off. A maniac started screaming for joy. I just found it nauseating. It didn't mean anything to me, not even as some kind of revenge. That's when I realized that none of this could be made up for.

SURVIVOR

It's very rare that I go back to my township — once a year, for the commemoration service. Of course, we were called up for the Gacacas to give witness statements. Two years after the genocide, my sister met the man who threw us into the toilets. He returned from the Congo with his bundle, nice and relaxed. When he saw my sister, he offered her a Fanta and said:

"Let's not do anything stupid. Let's just forget the whole thing."

At the Gacaca trials he said:

"But they are still alive. They should come here and testify that I did not kill them."

He was a boy from our village, the son of the priest. He's dead now. He fell ill in prison.

SURVIVOR

It just drives me crazy when I try to find an answer to why they wanted to cut us up into bits. I will never understand the motives of our Hutu neighbors. I will never understand why we were to be exterminated.

No, I don't believe in an end to genocide. I don't think this is the last time we will experience these most heinous of atrocities. If there was one genocide, then there will be many more.

***a small small world* –by Konradin Kunze and Sophia Stepf (Germany) and Abhishek Majumdar (India)** is a wonderful example of the narrative form of documentary theatre that takes one man's story to explore and spotlight the international political and cultural ethics and issues of immigration. Explains Sophie Steph about the inspiration for this devised piece on the life of Hamidur Rahman, "Fifty thousand people seek asylum every year in Germany but only a minority of them are granted it. As for the others, they are either sent back or live illegally. We have tried to bring our focus on one of the stories." Rahman left his home country Bangladesh for Malaysia, then applied for asylum in Germany; he was rejected and attempted to immigrate to Canada and seek asylum there by crossing through Greenland on foot. He collapsed on the way, was rescued by a helicopter, and sent back to Germany where he committed suicide. The play has been a joint project among Germany, Bangalore and India and has been performed in all three countries.

Konradin Kunze was born in Freiburg in 1977 and began his career as a child actor at the Freiburg Theater under the direction of Friedrich Schirmer. He went to school at the Waldorf School, The Academy of Music and Drama, and the HMT Hannover. From 2002 to 2005, he played in the children's and youth theater ensemble at the MoKS Bremer Theater under the direction of Klaus Schumacher. From 2005 to 2009, he was a member of the youth ensemble Schauspielhaus in Hamburg, where he played -- among others -- the title role in "Torless" by Robert Musil. For the Young Theatre, he directed "NippleJesus" by Nick Hornby and "Paradise Now" based on the film by Hany Abu-Assad of the same name.

Since 2009 he has worked as a freelance director, writer and actor. His screenplay for the animated film "The Last Word" from the novel by Christoph Ransmayr won the German Screenplay Award in 2011 and his first play, "Foreign Anguish" was invited to the 2011

Heidelberg and Berlin pieces markets and premiered in 2012 at the Theatre in Wiesbaden.

Stephanie Stepf: Sophia Stepf (Playwright) was born in Kassel, Germany in 1976. She has been artistic co-director of the Flinntheatre since 1999. She devises and writes plays, and has conceived and produced theatre projects for the Goethe-Institut in India and other partners. She writes for magazines including *Theater heute*.

BANGLADESH
Pictures/Introduction

Abhishek shows Konradin's picture to the audience.

ABHISHEK (Maboud, until noted)

Hi, I am Konradin. This is a picture of me in 2008. Yes different hairstyle I know. I was working as an actor in a theatre in Hamburg then, the Schauspielhaus Hamburg.

KONRADIN (as Konradin, until noted)

Uhm. Maboud?

ABHISHEK

Konradin?

KONRADIN

What are you doing?

ABHISHEK

I am telling the story.

KONRADIN

But... this is my story.

ABHISHEK

Is it?

Konradin takes his picture.

KONRADIN

Yes. Uh, Hi, I am Konradin. This is actually a picture

of me in 2008. I was working/

ABHISHEK (Jonathan, until noted)
Uh, Konradin?

KONRADIN
Jonathan?

ABHISHEK
Who are you talking about?

KONRADIN
What do you mean? I'm talking about me.

ABHISHEK
Yes. But who are you?

KONRADIN
Who I...? Just me.

Abhishek takes Konradin's picture.

ABHISHEK
Konradin.

KONRADIN
Yes, me, Konradin.

ABHISHEK
That's confusing.

KONRADIN
Why is it confusing?

ABHISHEK
Because I am you now.

KONRADIN
You mean, you play me?

ABHISHEK
Correct.

KONRADIN
Yeah, but that is confusing. See, you (*pointing to Jonathan*) can play Hamidur, since unfortunately, he can't play himself. And you (*pointing to Maboud*) can

play Abishek and all of the other brown guys in the story. But I am here, so I can play me. No, I can just be me and tell my story.

Konradin takes his picture.

ABHISHEK

But this is a play?

KONRADIN

A documentary play, yes.

Abishek puts his arm around Konradin.

ABHISHEK

In plays, people are supposed to act, right? When you, Konradin, just tell your, Konradin's, story, there is no acting at all! You can go sit over there and do all of those tech things.

KONRADIN *(Jonathan, until Noted)*

Sorry about that. So, I am Konradin but just call me Jonathan. This is a picture of me in 2008. I was working as an actor in a theatre in Hamburg then, the Schauspielhaus Hamburg. A photographer took pictures of all the actors.

ABHISHEK

(Maboud, until noted, as photographer, goes to center left)

Yeah. Very nice. Please, Konradin, look to the right side, one, two, three. Yes, now look down to the ground, two three. Thank you.

Konradin poses for an imaginary camera.

KONRADIN

The same photographer took some pictures of Hamidur Rahman for a news magazine, called the Süddeutsche Magazin.

(as photographer)

Yeah, very nice, Hamidur, one two, look a bit more to the side, please. One two/

ABHISHEK

(as Hamidur, looks at photos and papers hanging on a line, right center, not facing K.)

But maybe it is too dangerous, if someone sees my face in a newspaper? Someone from the Ausländerbehörde.

KONRADIN

(as photographer)
Three. Thank you.

Konradin shows Hamidur's picture and his own
This is Hamidur's picture. We both lived in Hamburg then. Maybe we crossed the same road at the same time. Maybe he was sitting at the Elbstrand, the beach at the river Elbe, when I passed by. But we didn't know of each other. I read of his journey much later.

ABHISHEK

(comes with the report)
Psychologisches Gutachten zur Vorlage...
(to Konradin)
What does it mean?

KONRADIN

Psychological report about Hamidur Rahman to be presented at court.
Konradin takes the report and reads, Abhishek translates.

KONRADIN	ABISHEK
<i>(Starts and voice is trailing)</i>	<i>(louder than Konradin)</i>
<p>Explorationsinhalte. Angaben von Herrn Rahman. Herr Rahman wurde in Gazipur in Bangladesh geboren. Er ist das jüngste Kind seiner Eltern. Er hat einen 10 Jahre älteren Bruder und eine 2 Jahre ältere Schwester. In der Familie wird</p>	<p>Details provided by Mr. Rahman. Mr. Rahman was born in Gazipur in Bangladesh. He is the youngest child of his parents. He has a brother ten years older and a sister, two years older. His parents did not want more than two children because of the high birth rates</p>

<p>erzählt, dass er ein ungewolltes Kind war. Seine Eltern wollten ursprünglich nur zwei Kinder haben wegen der hohen Geburtenrate in Bangladesh. Die Schwangerschaft meiner Mutter war ein Unfall genau wie mein ganzes Leben."</p>	<p>in Bangladesh. "My mother's pregnancy was an accident, just like the rest of my life", says Hamidur Rahman about himself. About his childhood he says that he was curious and rebellious. He wanted to try everything in life, which would generally result in hard punishments.</p>

KONRADIN
Maboud?

ABHISHEK
Jonathan?

KONRADIN
Shouldn't we start now?

ABHISHEK
Start what?

KONRADIN
The story!

ABHISHEK
Haven't we started already?

KONRADIN
Not officially.

ABHISHEK
Both turn around and walk up the stage.
Ah, right!
(to the audience)

Ladies and gentlemen. Would you please stand up for the national anthem of Bangladesh!

Both put their right hand on their heart. Konradin runs to the projector and plays the National Anthem of Bangladesh. Projection: the flag is hoisted.

ABHISHEK/KONRADIN

Google earth!

Projection: Globe is turned to Bangladesh.

Horizon/Engineer by birth

Abhishek makes the Shati gesture: he looks as if he's cold.

KONRADIN

(as young Hamidur, still at projector)

Aapa, aapa, akhasher opare ki ache?

Abhishek looks puzzled at Konradin.

KONRADIN

Aapa, bollo na, akhasher opare ki dekha jai? Sister, what does it look like beyond the horizon?

ABHISHEK

(as young Shati)

Ami jani na. I don't know.

KONRADIN

(comes to Abhishek facing audience)

Aapa, chollo opare jai. Let's go there.

ABHISHEK

Keno? Why?

KONRADIN

Ami jante chai opare ki ache? I want to know what is beyond.

ABHISHEK

Opare ki bhabhe jabe? But how will you get there?

KONRADIN

Amra akashta ekta boro kainchi die katbo. We will cut The horizon with big scissors.

ABHISHEK

Akash ta jodi khub shokto hoye? What will you do when the horizon is too hard?

KONRADIN

Amra ekta hathuri niye jabo. We take a hammer too.
Chollo na giye dekha jaag.

ABHISHEK

(as older Shati to the audience)
So we started to walk in the morning. And we spent the whole day walking and walking and walking. By evening we had reached another village.
(to Konradin as young Shati)
Shobuj! Shobuj! ondhokar hoye jache. chol badi jai.

KONRADIN

(as Hamidur)
No aapa, we can't go home now. It's already to dark.
Let's sleep in the field.

ABHISHEK

But abba will beat us.

KONRADIN

He will beat us anyway.

ABHISHEK

(as older Shati to the audience)
Surprisingly one of our teachers came by on a bicycle.
He said: What are you doing here? You should be back home. We said

KONRADIN/ABHISHEK

No, no, nothing.

ABHISHEK

Konradin goes to projector.

(as Shati)

He made us sit on his bicycle and took us home. Sorry, I did not introduce myself. I am Shati, and I am going to tell you about my brother Shobuj.

KONRADIN

(comes towards Abhishek)
Shati. Why do you call him Shobuj?

ABHISHEK

(as Shati)

It is his daak nam. Pet name.

KONRADIN

Shobuj.

ABHISHEK

(as Shati)

So, Shobuj liked fun, joking. He was making some parody from famous songs. Cinema songs. Hindi movie songs. He liked a girl here and she was too short, short more than me so when the girl refused him, then he was so shocked and he made a parody. like

(sings the song)

Ek truck geche opor diye, tumi hoye gecho doo phoot chaar.

KONRADIN

(watching Abhishek)

A truck has gone over you, that's why you've become so short.

ABHISHEK

When Shobuj was six years old, he built a telephone. From his room to my mothers room. As I am not good in technology, I can't explain it properly. But it really worked.

ABHISHEK

*Konradin aims the camera onto the set: Gazipur.
Gazipur atmo.*

Another time, when it was rainy season, we had a pond there, there was water.

Konradin shows the place in the set.

KONRADIN

There it is.

ABHISHEK

(as Shati)

And I heard some sound like buthebuthebut. And I was looking, what is this sound, what is this sound? And he called me:

KONRADIN

(as Hamidur)

Aapa! Asho! See? This is my steamer.

ABHISHEK

(as Shati)

And a small steamboat was going in there by itself, and smoke was coming up. He made it by himself.

ABHISHEK/KONRADIN

He was an engineer, by birth he was an engineer!

ABHISHEK

He didn't need to learn, he could teach actually. A thing he had never seen before, he could explain it.

KONRADIN

Konradin comes down center stage next to Abhishek. Both make the Hanna gesture: One hand holding the face.

(as Hanna)

Ja, ja. Das stimmt. Richtig. Wir haben einen Ausflug an den Hamburger Hafen gemacht.

ABHISHEK

We went on a trip to the harbour of Hamburg.

<p>KONRADIN <i>(as Hanna)</i> Und bei Cargo und sonst was alles geguckt und da gibt es ja in der Hafencity, da gabs so ein Aussichtsturm wo er sacht: Das kann ich alles bauen Er ist ja Stahlbau- wir würden wahrscheinlich sagen Facharbeiter, dort galt er ja</p>	<p>ABHISHEK <i>(translates, louder than Konradin)</i> And looked at cargo and what not. At the Hafencity there is this look out where he said "I can build all this". He is a steel worker - we would probably say skilled worker, but over there he was considered an engineer. And that is the tragic thing,</p>
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als Ingenieur. Und das ist ja auch das Tragische, der würde hier gebraucht, mit Kusshand könnte der hier nen Job haben, ne? Aber auch das... hat ja alles nichts genützt.	he would be needed here, he could get a job instantly, you know? But even that... didn't help at all.
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ABHISHEK

Jonathan? Who are we playing, right now?

KONRADIN

Hanna Mitzlaff from Hamburg.

ABHISHEK

Thank you, Hanna. But we'll come to you much later.

(points to the projection)

We are still in Bangladesh.

KONRADIN

Right, right. Sorry. So back to school in Gazipur.

School/The chair

*Konradin and Abhishek play Dilawar synchronous
with their hands folded.*

ABHISHEK/KONRADIN

(as Dilawar)

He was a brilliant student. He was a person of high
thought. My name is Dilawar Hussein. When I was a
student of class seven or eight Shobuj was my senior
person, two years senior person. But we were very
close.

ABHISHEK Erokom ghotanar modhe jemon, eita ekrokhom hanshokor hothe pare, jemon "Copy kora". Schoole porikhar holle	KONRADIN I remember one incident, like, it's a kind of humorous like, "Copy kora". In School, in an
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<p>copy korata. Shundor ekta ghorī cheelo, Shobujer. Boro ekta ghorī chilo, etar moddhe, chabir moddhe ghuraya ghuraya maane likhe niya, etae modhe lekhe thakto, aar chaabi ta ghuraito. dekhe dekhē likhto. Sir e ra to bhabto je haathe tho ghorī, aache ghorī aache, aar dekhē dekhe likhteche, likhteche.</p>	<p>examination hall, copying. He had a beautiful watch, Shobuj. A big watch. In that, inside the key, he would wind up written answers. Then he would turn the key and would see it and write. Teachers would think, it's an ordinary watch, but he would keep writing from the watch.</p>
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Abhishek puts a chair in center stage.

ABHISHEK

Jonathan?

KONRADIN

Maboud?

ABHISHEK

Would you sit down please?

KONRADIN

Why should I?

ABHISHEK

Come on, just sit down for a second. Do you always have
to stand when you act?

KONRADIN

Of course not.

ABHISHEK

Boshu, boshu.

KONRADIN

Okay, boshchi, boshchi.

Konradin sits.

ABHISHEK

Some tea? Coffee?

KONRADIN

Äh... no, thank you.

ABHISHEK

(walks around Konradin)

Do you feel comfortable?

KONRADIN

Yes. But shouldn't we/

ABHISHEK

(as Shati, Shati gesture)

And then a new bangla teacher came to Hatimara High school, where Shobuj and I were studying. I was in class 10 and he was in class 8. This guy was so dirty, in the classroom he was giving love letters to the girls, not just one girl, one after another and he was abusing the girls, the girls were afraid. Then Shobuj asked the headmaster:

KONRADIN

(as Hamidur)

Sir, please change this teacher, he is not good for our school.

ABHISHEK

The headmaster said:

(as Headmaster)

I am not able to change this, it is not in my power only, you have to tell it to the school committee. Sit down. Sit!

(as Shati)

Then Shobuj got a love letter that the teacher had written to a girl and he showed it to the school committee. But they supported the teacher. They just said:

(as the committee person)

What is it to you? Why do you have a headache? Just let it be.

KONRADIN

(as Hamidur)

No, my sister is also at this school, it is also my prestige.

ABHISHEK

(as Shati)

Shobuj had found out that the teacher had gotten zero marks in the selection process, so he went to the district commissioner.

KONRADIN

(as Hamidur)

He did a very dirty thing and he got zero marks, how can he be a teacher at our school?

ABHISHEK

(as Shati)

It is not easy to meet with a district commissioner. But even the district commissioner did not listen to him.

KONRADIN

Maboud? Do I still have to sit?

ABHISHEK

Abishek presses Konradin's shoulders, then walks away to get a rope.

Yes, yes. Your acting is so brilliant when you are sitting. Could you hold this for a second?

ABHISHEK

Abhishek gives Konradin one end of a rope and starts to tie him to the chair.

Then he and Dilawar founded a student committee in school, against this teacher. But Shobuj was a very

young, he was only 12 years old. Then this teacher became his big enemy.

KONRADIN

What are you doing, man?

ABHISHEK

Nothing, nothing. Just relax.

(as Shati)

And then Shobuj was set up.

KONRADIN

Set up?

ABHISHEK

(as Shati, stands facing audience)

In the evening a boy was running to our house and shouted "Please come, please come up, Shobuj has been attacked, he is tied up to a chair in the house of the teacher." We went. Everybody, my aunts, my mother, we all went to the house and saw that he was tied up like this and a pistol was put here and the teacher was complaining to everybody that this guy has come to kill me with this arm, and then they called the police. Police came, Shobuj was telling again and again:

KONRADIN

(as Hamidur)

It's not mine, it's not mine, they tied me up and they gave me this!

Abishek walks around Konradin.

ABHISHEK

(as Shati)

But the police did not hear because they were corrupted, the teacher had given them money.

KONRADIN

Okay, got it. Can you release me now, Maboud?

ABHISHEK

(as Shati)

We tried but we could not save him, they took him to jail. He was in jail for four days. Day 1.

KONRADIN

Maboud?

Abhishek watches Konradin fighting with the chair and hunkers down in front of the projector.

ABHISHEK

Day 2.

(as Helal. Helal gesture: walking around with hands in his pockets)

My name is Helal. Mr. Shobuj and I are childhood friends. Whatever Mr. Shobuj did, he did for the country. BNP, do you know what BNP is?

KONRADIN

(still fighting with the chair)

Yes, Bangladesh Nationalist Party. I got it. Maboud.

ABHISHEK

Day 3.

(as Helal)

So Mr. Shobuj was an Awami League person. Opposition party. Sheikh Mujabi Rahman, the father of the nation.

You know what happens if BNP is in power and an Awami League boy gets into trouble?

KONRADIN

(falls with the chair)

Ahh, shit.

ABHISHEK

(as Helal)

The police was corrupted and this teacher was BNP person. So Mr. Shobuj was put in jail. He was only 15 years old.

Abhishek frees Konradin.

Day 4.

Konradin clears the Gazipur set, pissed off.

ABHISHEK

(as Shati)

My older uncle was able to get him out on bail. But it was impossible for him to stay at home. Every day we were getting letters that

KONRADIN

(with tree from the set in his hand)

We will kill you!

ABHISHEK

Boys were coming from the teacher

KONRADIN

(as boy)

If you stay here, we will kill you.

ABHISHEK

(as Shati)

And the police came each and every day.

KONRADIN

*(as Policeman, with house from the set
in his hand)*

Give us money otherwise we will again arrest him.

ABHISHEK

(as Shati)

It was a very tough situation. Then my father and my uncle decide to send him abroad, as it is not possible to keep him in Bangladesh. It is not very easy for Bangladeshi person to go abroad. Somehow my uncle managed him to go to Malaysia.

MALAYSIA

Blank space/Back and forth

ABHISHEK

Ladies and Gentlemen, would you please stand up for the national anthem of Malaysia!

*Audience stands up. Konradin plays the anthem.
Projection: Malaysian flag. Abhishek hoists
Malaysian flag, takes turns in the process of
hoisting with Konradin.*

ABHISHEK/KONRADIN

Google earth!

*Konradin turns the globe. Abhishek looks
expectantly at the screen. Konradin turns the
Camcorder to an empty set. Abishek puts away the
chair. Both face screen.*

ABHISHEK

Jonathan?

KONRADIN

Maboud?

ABHISHEK

What is this?

KONRADIN

It's blank.

ABHISHEK

Where is Malaysia?

KONRADIN

In South-East Asia.

ABHISHEK

This is not Malaysia. Malaysia is full of tropical plants and people and cars and great deals for electronic appliances.

KONRADIN

Maybe, but I have no picture of Malaysia. I nor Konradin have ever been there.

ABHISHEK

Go and google it! There are a million pictures of Malaysia on the net!

KONRADIN

I don't have an inner picture of Malaysia. I have searched inside, but there is just a blank space.

ABHISHEK

(comes to Konradin and talks to him)

If we keep going with your inner picture, soon there will be a blank space over there.

Abhishek points to the audience. Konradin takes the Shati-flag, shows it to Abhishek and sticks it into the landscape.

ABHISHEK

(as Shati, facing audience)

Shobuj went there as a labourer. He got a work permit and a labour visa and then he was working there, many different type of labourship. He was writing to us: What is happening? Look at what I wanted to do and what is now happening. I wanted to be an engineer and now I am working under an engineer.

KONRADIN

(as Tina. Tina gesture: smoking)

Mein Name is Tina Übel, ich bin Journalistin und Autorin.

ABHISHEK

(as Tina)

My name is Tina Übel, I am journalist and writer.

(as himself)

Übel - sexy.

<p>KONRADIN</p> <p>Ich habe einen Artikel über Hamidur Rahman fürs Magazin der Süddeutschen Zeitung geschrieben, ich zitiere: Mehrfach sah sich Rahman bereits gezwungen zu flüchten, 1994, 2001 und 2003 reist er teils legal, teils illegal nach Malaysia ein aus Angst, in Bangladesh verhaftet, eingesperrt und umgebracht zu werden. Er berichtet von Einschüchterungen, Drohungen, manipulierten Anklagen und untergeschobenen Beweisen.</p>	<p>ABHISHEK</p> <p>I have written a feature article on Hamidur Rahman for a major German daily newspaper, I quote: Several times Rahman finds himself forced to flee the country. 1994, 2001 and 2003 he travels to Malaysia, legally and illegally. He fears that if he stays in Bangladesh he will be arrested, imprisoned or even killed. He reports of threats, manipulated accusations and false proofs of evidence.</p>
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In love with Yasmin/Faris

Konradin runs to the other side of Abishek.

Abishek watches K. interested with Hanna gesture.

KONRADIN

(as Shati, Shati gesture)

Then Shobuj falls in love with a Chinese girl. Yasmin.

She looks like a doll. I was telling him, at last you

met a girl, her nose is so short. I was just teasing

him. Then he was seeking permission from my mother to

marry her. My mother is very religious, Muslim

religious. And the girl was buddhist. So my mother was

feeling hesitation. I said maybe the girl will change her religion and then I said to Shobuj to tell Mum that the girl will change her religion. She might do it or not, but tell Mum. It was my trick. Then I told my mother again please respect their love. And my mother said yes. Then they came to Bangladesh for the marriage.

ABHISHEK

(as Hanna)

This crazy story, crazy, unbelievable.

Konradin walks to the set and puts Hanna flag in.

KONRADIN

(as Hanna)

Diese verrückte Geschichte.

ABHISHEK

This crazy story.

KONRADIN

Dass er dann wieder zu Hause heiraten wollte.

ABHISHEK

That he wanted to get married at home.

KONRADIN

Seine Frau konnte offiziell einreisen.

ABHISHEK

His wife could legally travel into Bangladesh.

KONRADIN

Und er musste illegal wieder einreisen in sein eigenes Heimatland.

ABHISHEK

While he had to travel illegally to his own home country.

Abishek jumps to the side in Tina position and comes a few steps down stage. Konradin watches him In Hanna position.

KONRADIN

(as Hanna)

I think that this marriage with Yasmin wasn't the great big love really, but also maybe a way out of a difficult situation. I don't know whether maybe she was pregnant and he wanted to legalize it?

KONRADIN

Abhishek shows Konradin the pacifier. Puts the pacifier in between the flags that stick in the surface.

(as Shati)

And after one year they get a boy. Faris.

Faris is born by Abhishek as a flag (pacifier), Konradin stands facing the screen with the baby. They sing Rock a bye baby. They both look at the flag (pacifier), turn around, Faris crawls under chair, stands up, they play angel fly. Look at each other. Abhishek leaves. ("image of family")

ABHISHEK

(as Shati)

Then Shobuj was telling my mother on the phone. Yasmin does not love me anymore, her love for me has gone onto my child. She is fighting with me. She is threatening me.

KONRADIN

Abishek puts Philip flag into the surface and gets a chair.

(as Philip. Philip gesture: crossed hands behind the head)

Ich glaube das nicht. I don't believe that. Hi, my name is Philip Haucke, I am a German filmmaker and I own the rights to this story.

Konradin sits down.

<p>KONRADIN <i>(as Philip)</i></p> <p>Hamidur berichtet, dass der Druck so groß wurde von ihrer Familie. Ne</p>	<p>ABHISHEK <i>(as Philip, louder than Konradin)</i></p> <p>Hamidur reports about increasing threats from the family. One</p>
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<p>Geschichte, die ich nich glaube, wie er von irgendwelchen Onkeln der Familie von ihr durch die Straßen getrieben wurde und sie ihn verprügeln wollten... Glaub ich nich. Ich weiß, dass er dort gut gelebt hat. Er sacht irgendwie, er hatte n Housing Complex mit Fitnessstudio. Er hatte n Auto und Motorrad und irgendwie... er hat mir da zwei, drei Fotos gezeigt, das sieht irgendwie n bisschen nach high life aus. Is mir n bisschen schleierhaft, warum er das dann so aufgegeben hat. Ich kann mir auch vorstellen, dass er sich da was verscherzt hat, wenn er wirklich Probleme in Bangladesh hat, und in Malaysia findet er die Familie seiner Frau vor, die sogar noch irgendwie Unterstützung bietet, dass er sich darauf hätte einlassen können, sollen, müssen. Hätte er derjenige sein müssen, der vom Islam zum Buddhismus konvertiert. Ja. Naja.</p>	<p>story that I don't believe is that he was chased through the streets by some uncles of Yasmins family who wanted to beat him up... Don't believe that. I know he had a good life there, he said he lived in a housing complex with a fitness studio. He had a car 'n a motorbike and somehow... I have seen two, three fotos, somehow looked a bit like "high life". I can't really understand why he gave that up. I think, he possibly made a mistake. See, when he really had problems in Bangladesh, and in Malaysia the family of his wife even supports them with money for a living, he could, should have said yes to it. And instead of her, he should have converted from islam to buddhism. Well, anyway.</p>
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ABHISHEK

(as Shati)

The situation became so rough that he had to leave Malaysia.

KONRADIN

Konradin stands up.

(as Tina)

He could never be safe from harassment. He wanted to live in a country with a lot of human rights.

ABHISHEK

(as Shati)

That's why he wanted to come to Germany.

KONRADIN

(as Hanna)

I still don't know how he came to Germany. Do you know? He told me, he came by train.

ABHISHEK

(Shati)

He went to Italy and then to Germany.
Konradin sits down.

KONRADIN

(Philip)

In my script Hamidur claims he reached Germany by boat on and landed in Rostock.

ABHISHEK

(as Shati)

What I can say is, he wanted to live in peace, and he told me that living well is possible in Germany only, I don't know why he said that, why he felt so deeply that he can only live peacefully in Germany

KONRADIN

(gets up from chair during his speech)

Hi, I am Jonathan and am bit confused right now. As an actor I am supposed to get into the skin of other people. But in the case of Hamidur I am lost. I mean Konradin, you went to his village in Gazipur, you stood

in his room, you stood at the pond where he built the small steamer, but you still don't know? Hamidur had three cases filed against him. I don't know if these cases were unjustified and if they only exist because the enemies in his village misused their power. I don't know if these cases were justified, because he was an Awami League worker and both parties, BNP and Awami League armed their student wings with knives, guns and bombs. Maybe these cases didn't exist at all and he invented them to get political asylum in Germany. Lots of people do that. I don't know. I just wonder how a German government official can understand what life is like growing up in a village in Gazipur, how he can decide on the case of Hamidur Rahman sitting behind his desk in Germany.

Konradin sits down again.

GERMANY 1
Über alles

Abhishek runs to the projector, stands and waits for the German anthem and the flag. Konradin gets up and joins him.

ABHISHEK

Konradin. Hoist the German flag.

KONRADIN (*as Konradin, until noted*)

No that is a bit weird, as a German to hoist the German flag.

ABHISHEK

Don't tell me you have a blank space inside you when you think of your own country's flag?

KONRADIN

Yes, actually you said it quite well. See, there were some dark chapters in our history and since then we have some problems with national symbols, we have a broken sense of national identity/

ABHISHEK

But we are always hoisting the flag for every country. If you don't do it, I will/

Abhishek wants to hoist the flag.

KONRADIN

Don't touch my German flag! Ok. I will hoist it. The democratic flag of Germany.

Konradin shows flag and tries to hoist it.

ABHISHEK

(goes to down center stage)

Ladies and gentleman, please stand up for the national anthem of/

KONRADIN

No, no. Please remain seated. Not the anthem.

ABHISHEK

(sings loudly)

Deutschland Deutschland über alles, über alles in der Welt.

KONRADIN

No, no! You are not supposed to sing this. The first stanza is not part of the national anthem.

ABHISHEK

What? The German national anthem is not the German national anthem?

KONRADIN

Only the third stanza. If you sing this in Germany, everyone thinks, you are a neonazi!

ABHISHEK

Yeah, but we're in America, everything is allowed. So watch me...

Abhishek continues singing. Abhishek plays around with stepping on and off stage to tease Konradin, continuing to sing in German and English. He ends up doing the Hitler Greeting

KONRADIN

Jonathan? Help?! (Jonathan: Dude, leave me out of this I'm Jewish, you work it out!) You will be put in jail if you do this in Germany!

Interrogation

Konradin goes to the projector, takes the mic and speaks into it. Abhishek in the audience, puts chair in front of the line right center stage.

KONRADIN (*Jonathan, until noted*)

Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, Branch Trier. Protocol of the hearing according to § 25 Asylum law on 22.12.2004 in Trier.

Present is the applicant, Mr. Hamidur Rahman, born 27.11.1976. The applicant is informed about the procedure and the importance of the hearing. He confirms that he has read and understood the paper Important notices for first applicants. He is again told about his duty to cooperate according to § 15 Asylum law. He is specifically asked to provide all information and documents about himself, the travel route and the reason for seeking asylum. It is explained to him, that he will have the opportunity to state all facts and events that lead to the fear of being persecuted and that are reasons against his deportation to his home country or other countries. It is explained to him that he has to tell the truth.

Abhishek has transformed into Hamidur again and sits on the chair. Konradin hands him the mic and aims camera at him. He zooms to his face.

KONRADIN

(*stands near camera watching Abhishek*)

Mr. Rahman, when were you in Malaysia exactly?

ABHISHEK

November 2001. I don't know exactly when, I went to Malaysia and came back to Bangladesh on 5th feb 2002. Then I went again to Malaysia, on 1st may 2003 and stayed there till 18th nov 2004 with some short trips to Thailand, Nepal, India and Singapur.

KONRADIN

How did you meet your wife?

ABHISHEK

I was persecuted unjustly. That is why I fled to Malaysia in 2001. I came through Thailand to Malaysia. There I met a Bengali who had an office, there I met my

wife.

KONRADIN

You decided to marry very quickly, how did this come about?

ABHISHEK

I was in the marriage age and I did not really want to get married so quickly, but the situation pushed me to.

KONRADIN

You just said at this point you had already been persecuted unjustly and had fled Bangladesh. Why then did you go back and get married there?

ABHISHEK

I had found out from Malaysia, that the charges had been dropped. That is why I thought it was better to get married at my family's place.

KONRADIN

In what way were the charges dropped?

ABHISHEK

I was found not guilty.

KONRADIN

Did your wife try to acquire the Bangladeshi nationality?

ABHISHEK

No.

KONRADIN

Which nationality does your child have?

ABHISHEK

The Malaysian nationality.

KONRADIN

Please tell me how and when you came to Germany. State how and when you have left your home country, state all the countries of transit and how you entered Europe and Germany.

ABHISHEK

We left Malaysia on 18th nov 2004. We took the plane to

Bangladesh. We took the bus to India. From there we flew to Russia. Then we went by road to Germany and reached Munich on 26th nov 2004.

Konradin walks towards Abhishek and faces him.

KONRADIN

What was your visa status in Malaysia?

ABHISHEK

The first time I was illegal, the second time I had a "social visit pass".

Konradin walks to the camera.

KONRADIN

Was your marriage legally approved in Malaysia?

ABHISHEK

In Malaysia you have to get an official certificate before marriage from these guardians of public morality. I did not try to get this certificate because it is only issued to rich foreigners and I was just a small man. So the marriage from Bangladesh was not legally acknowledged in Malaysia. My wife was also persecuted for marrying abroad without the certificate from her home country. The penalty would have been either six months of prison or a penalty of 2000 Ringgit, that is 400 Euros.

Konradin comes back to Abhishek and looks at him from the side

KONRADIN

For which reason did you leave Malaysia?

ABHISHEK

Life was hard for us in Malaysia. My wife's family did not agree to the marriage. Firstly because I was a foreigner and secondly because my wife had converted from Buddhism to Islam. My brother in law was a member of a gang and her father joined them too. They had decided to get rid of me. My wife's mother had overheard this and had warned us on the telephone. So we had to leave Malaysia. Also the charges against my wife because of the marriage were still up.

KONRADIN

Why should your brother in law and father in law kill you? What was the reason?

ABHISHEK

In Malaysia people have Xenophobia. They do not agree even among themselves. With me there was a double reason. I am a foreigner and a Muslim. This hate they projected onto me and that's why they wanted to kill me.

KONRADIN

In Bangladesh, why do these unjust charges against you exist?

ABHISHEK

Konradin zooms closer to Abhishek's eyes.

It is part of the political day to day in Bangladesh. I belong to the Awami League that was not in power anymore. The BNP is the opposing party, that is in power now. We organised a protest march. We met on a meadow before. The police came with bats and teargas and divided the masses. After that I heard that we were accused of having weapons and bombs. This accusation was not justified.

KONRADIN

What do you fear if you return to Bangladesh?

ABHISHEK

I would have many problems if I return. I would have to fear to be imprisoned and with these charges it could be a life long sentence. Even if the charges were dropped I would have to fear the hostilities of the BNP. The leader of my party was killed in the district, where I am politically active. I would have to fear similar dangers.

KONRADIN

(zooms away)

What do you fear if you return to Malaysia?

ABHISHEK

There is the problem with my wife's family, that is still existent. I fear lethal attacks by my wife's relatives and there are the charges against my wife

with the Malaysian guardians of public morality.

KONRADIN

Konradin takes mic. German National Anthem plays.

Thank you. The applicant states, that he had the possibility to express the reasons for his application for asylum and to declare all other hindrances that keep him from returning to his home country or any other country. He is being told about his duty to any changes in address to the Federal Office immediately.

Hope and loss/Furnishing

KONRADIN

Konradin plays the national anthem and hoists the German flag. Abhishek stands up and puts his hand on his heart.

Maboud?

ABHISHEK

Jonathan?

KONRADIN

Say "Drittstaatenregelung".

ABHISHEK

Drittstaatenregelung.

Both meet in center stage.

KONRADIN

Hamidur knew the Drittstaatenregelung. It is a European rule that you have to seek asylum in the country where you first enter Europe. So, if Hamidur had told them, he came via Italy, they would have sent him back there.

ABHISHEK

So, now he will be sent to Russia?

Abhishek sits down on the chair again.

KONRADIN

(goes to the projector)

No, it is not part of the European Union. Say
Ausländerbehörde.

ABHISHEK

Why?

KONRADIN

From now on you need to know these words.

ABHISHEK

Why?

KONRADIN

Because you are in Germany. Say it.

ABHISHEK

Ausländerbehörde.

KONRADIN

That's the immigration office.

ABHISHEK

Immigration office.

Both meet in center stage.

KONRADIN

Say Rheinland-Pfalz.

ABHISHEK

Rheinland Flaisch.

KONRADIN

Fleisch is also important, Fleisch means meat, but the
state where Hamidur has to go is Rheinland- Pfalz. Now,
how do you like Germany?

*Konradin plays German sounds and aims the camera
at the German flat. Both look at the screen.*

ABHISHEK

This is Germany?

KONRADIN

Well, let's imagine this is Hamidur's row house that he
rented near Idar-Oberstein. Say Idar-Oberstein.

ABHISHEK

Ida Obastain.

KONRADIN

If you seek asylum, first you stay for a couple of weeks in a camp or in a house with many other refugees.

Konradin goes to center stage

ABHISHEK

Like a paying guest.

KONRADIN

Yes, but you don't pay. And have to stay in this one place. Like a big prison.

ABHISHEK

So you are a non paying paying guest in a sort of big prison?

KONRADIN

(looks at the screen)

Yes, a bit like that. But this is the row house near Idar-Oberstein. How do you like it?

ABHISHEK

What is behind the window?

Konradin lifts the blind.

KONRADIN

Let's see.

ABHISHEK

What is this?

KONRADIN

I think it's a lamppost and the sky.

ABHISHEK

That's the German sky?

KONRADIN

Yes, the sky is mostly grey in Germany, you better get used to it. As an asylum seeker you get 580 Euros from the German government. That is 650 dollars.

ABHISHEK

You get paid? Are you insane?

KONRADIN

Yes, but that is purely considered survival minimum in Germany. Ok, let's furnish the flat. So what do you need for the flat?

ABHISHEK

A big plant.
(puts it in the flat)

KONRADIN

That is the plant?

ABHISHEK

Yes.

KONRADIN

40 Euros. 51 dollars and 97 cents.

ABHISHEK

What?

KONRADIN

Look at the size! Either you buy a smaller one or one of these plastic plants of the chinese shops, they are even cheaper, 4 Euro 99.

ABHISHEK

Ok, so Chinese plant, his wife is also Chinese so it's ok.

KONRADIN

You have to spend your government money on things, you really need, so what do you really need? Something to sit on.

ABHISHEK

Ok, so we buy a three seater sofa with a center table and a flower vase.

KONRADIN

3500 Euros. Six times your monthly income.

ABHISHEK

Cotton mattress?

KONRADIN

We don't have them in Germany.

ABHISHEK

A yoga mat?

Konradin goes to the projector.

KONRADIN

You can't sit with the whole family on a yoga mat. So we buy a used sofa from one of those shops run by a charity organization. Maybe with cat's piss on it, then it's even cheaper. Here, old stinky 1950s sofa with cat's piss. 90 Euro. 116 dollars and 94 cents.

(puts the sofa in)

Abhishek runs to the projector.

ABHISHEK

Ok, I want a carpet.

KONRADIN

That one? 500 Euro minimum. 649 dollars and 68 cents.

ABHISHEK

Ok, cheap and ugly one.

KONRADIN

Ok, 50 Euro, 64 dollars and 97 cents.

ABHISHEK

At least it's a carpet. You can sit on the sofa or carpet and read.

Both look at the screen.

KONRADIN

Books are not considered essential for survival. But Hamidur tries to learn German. So a language book, Bangla deutsch, 30 Euros. 38 dollars and 98 cents.

ABHISHEK

Faris will play with it and spoil it, so we need a table.

(puts in an table)

KONRADIN

It looks like a fancy designer table. 2000 Euro.

ABHISHEK

No, no. He was an experienced metal worker. He can do it himself.

KONRADIN

We need a bicycle.

ABHISHEK

Why? Where does he go?

KONRADIN

He searches for jobs, repairs old radios and sells them at the second hand shop, goes to the internet cafe. And he needs to go to the Sozialamt, welfare office and the Ausländerbehörde.

ABHISHEK

Konradin puts a radio in the flat. Abhishek sits down.

Is there no bus?

KONRADIN

From their place to Idar-Oberstein It is 10 Euro, 12 dollars and 99 cents. But they aren't frequent. He spends many hours on his bike every day.

Konradin takes scissors to represent a bike.

ABHISHEK

he takes Faris on his bike to the internet shop and shows him pictures of Bangladesh

KONRADIN

For that we need a children's seat for Faris.
(puts it on the bike)

Abhishek puts a picture on the flat's wall. Both look at the screen.

ABHISHEK

He draws a picture of Faris.

KONRADIN

Nice. Oh, we need something for Faris.

ABHISHEK

Diapers.

KONRADIN

Yes. But there's a problem. We are only supposed to spend 5,99 on personal-hygiene products for Faris every month, and diapers are much more expensive.

ABHISHEK

But we need them otherwise Faris spoils the cat's piss sofa.

KONRADIN

(puts diapers in the flat)

OK package of diapers, 10 Euro 99, now we have to save 5 Euros.

ABHISHEK

Ok, fine, remove the chinese plant.

KONRADIN

Something for Yasmin?

ABHISHEK

Is there a kitchen?

KONRADIN

Yes.

ABHISHEK

We buy a fridge. old, used one.

KONRADIN

Like this?

(puts fridge in the flat)

ABHISHEK

Yes.

KONRADIN

But there is a problem. It wastes a lot of electricity.

ABHISHEK

Isn't electricity free in Germany?

KONRADIN

No, it gets more expensive every day. And we are supposed to spend only 43 Euros on electricity per month. So we buy a new one. It is expensive, but it

only uses half the electricity, so in the long run a new one is cheaper.

ABHISHEK

Yeah, but we don't know how long we are going to stay.

KONRADIN

Right. Actually, here is a letter from the Ausländerbehörde.

Konradin holds a tiny letter in the flat.

ABHISHEK

Immigration office. What does it say?

KONRADIN

Read.

ABHISHEK

Asylangelegenheit, Sehr geehrter Herr Rahman. It's in German. I can't read that it, it just sounds like wrong English to me.

KONRADIN

It's an official document, of course it is in German.

ABHISHEK

Can you please read it to me?

Both look into the flat.

KONRADIN

It says, your application for asylum has been rejected as unsubstantiated.

ABHISHEK

Why?

KONRADIN

There are 50.000 asylum seekers every year in Germany. Less than one percent get asylum. You just belong to the other 99 percent.

ABHISHEK

So what do we do now?

KONRADIN

(talking to Abhishek)

According to the letter you have to leave the country but since you don't have a passport I think you won't be deported in the next few weeks.

Both look at the tiny letter.

ABHISHEK

So, what can I do now?

KONRADIN

Sit on the sofa. Wait.

KONRADIN

They both sit on the projected sofa.

Say "Duldungsstatus".

ABHISHEK

Why should I learn to speak German, when I can't stay?

KONRADIN

Say it. "Duldungsstatus".

ABHISHEK

Duldungsstatus.

KONRADIN

That is a status in between, when you are actually supposed to be deported, but due to circumstances like health or family issues your deportation is postponed. For example, when a family has members with different citizenship.

ABHISHEK

But that's the case.

KONRADIN

Correct.

ABHISHEK

So we can stay?

KONRADIN

Yes.

Abhishek turns to Konradin.

ABHISHEK

How long?

KONRADIN

You never know. Can be a month, a year, even longer.

ABHISHEK

Like the Pakistani family, they stayed for 12 years?

KONRADIN

Right, say "Arbeitserlaubnis".

ABHISHEK

Arbeitserlaubnis.

Abhishek goes to projector and adds things to the flat.

KONRADIN

Work permit. Hamidur is lucky. He gets a job in a steel company. Very lucky, most asylum seekers never get a work permit. He works for 7,50 Euros an hour. Steel cutting, welding, painting, overtime, he works very hard. He earns about 900 Euros a month. 1169 dollars and 42 cents.

ABHISHEK

1169 dollars and 42 cents? We're rich!

KONRADIN

Not for German standards. But now he can get a driver's licence and he manages to learn some German. something German.

Abhishek comes back to the projected sofa.

ABHISHEK

Der Mann auf der Ausländerbehörde.

KONRADIN

The man at the foreigner's office.

ABHISHEK

Der war so scheiße.

KONRADIN

He was so shitty.

ABHISHEK

Er kann englisch sprechen.

KONRADIN

He could speak English.

ABHISHEK

Konradin goes to chair and sits down.

Aber er wollte das nicht.

KONRADIN

But he didn't want to.

ABHISHEK

Er wollte deutsch sprechen.

KONRADIN

He wanted to speak German.

ABHISHEK

(comes to Konradin)

I am Hamidur Rahman, I came three weeks ago for
Arbeitserlaubnis.

KONRADIN *(as Konradin, until noted)*

(as man from the Foreigner's office, crossarmed.)

Herr Rahman.

ABHISHEK

I got better job with new steel company.

KONRADIN

Jaja, fürn neuen Job brauchen Sie ne neue
Arbeitserlaubnis.

ABHISHEK

I gave my application three weeks back you asked me to
come again.

KONRADIN

Jaja, kommen Sie mal nächste Woche wieder.

ABHISHEK

But I have to join on the first and I had to leave my
previous job.

KONRADIN

Jaja, kommen se mal nächste Woche ist alles in Bearbeitung.

ABHISHEK

Next week? But if I don't start on the first, they will Take someone else. I will lose both jobs.

KONRADIN

Jaja, ist in Bearbeitung, Ander Prossess, Ander Prossess.

ABHISHEK

I know what's under process, it's my deportation.

KONRADIN

Abhishek turns around and walks to the sofa.

(Jonathan, until noted) So what can you do?
(stands up and joins Abhishek)

ABHISHEK

Wait.

KONRADIN

Get depressed.

ABHISHEK

Have arguments.

KONRADIN

Write a letter to the chancellor Angela Merkel.

ABHISHEK

Did he really do that?

KONRADIN

Yes.

ABHISHEK

About their situation?

KONRADIN

Yes.

ABHISHEK

And did she answer?

KONRADIN

No.

ABHISHEK

So, what can you do?

KONRADIN

Wait.

ABHISHEK

See, that's why you need a carpet.

KONRADIN

But it stinks.

ABHISHEK

No, that's the sofa.

KONRADIN

Right. The Pakistani family, did they have children?

ABHISHEK

Yes.

KONRADIN

How old were they?

ABHISHEK

I don't know, school children.

KONRADIN

They went to a German school?

(goes to the projector)

ABHISHEK

Yes.

KONRADIN

And after twelve years, they had to go back to Pakistan, to a country which is completely foreign to them and they didn't know the language?

ABHISHEK

But Yasmin/

KONRADIN

(turns to Abhishek)

Do you want the same thing to happen to Faris?

ABHISHEK

Of course not. We will think of something.

KONRADIN

Of what?

ABHISHEK

I don't know.

KONRADIN

See?

Konradin starts removing the furniture.

ABHISHEK

Yasmin. We can't go back to Malaysia, we will have to go to court. You might have to go to prison. I will never get citizenship. It will be worse than here.

KONRADIN

Not if Faris and I go alone.

ABHISHEK

Faris needs a father.

KONRADIN

Faris needs a future. Can you provide that?
(silence)

ABHISHEK

That's why we have to get divorced.

Konradin comes to Abhishek. They go to image of family before and Konradin leaves with Faris and Abhishek says goodbye and walks to the screen and stands with his back to the audience.

Illegal/airports like train
stations

Konradin removes the German set (flat) and puts the globe into the empty space. Konradin looks at it.

ABHISHEK

From the 14th of march onwards, when they left I could not sleep, I suffered, I realized I had made a great

mistake, that I separate from my son.

KONRADIN

So, Faris and Yasmin go by plane to Kuala Lumpur.

Konradin turns the globe.

ABHISHEK

And Hamidur?

KONRADIN

Well, officially, he is on that plane, too. They made "freiwillige Ausreise".

ABHISHEK

(knows German now)

Freiwillige Ausreise. Leaving the country by free will.

KONRADIN

Correct. That's why the Ausländerbehörde sent only a social worker, no police. You check in your luggage, the social worker leaves, but you don't board the plane.

Abhishek points at the projected Germany.

ABHISHEK

So where am I?

KONRADIN

Nowhere. You are illegal now. You don't exist.

ABHISHEK

But I have to be somewhere.

KONRADIN

(turns the globe)

You cannot go to Malaysia, you cannot go back to Bangladesh and you can't stay in Germany. You can't show your passport, it has no visa, so you cannot take an international flight where would you go?

Abhishek pretends to turn the projected globe.

Stop: Canada.

ABHISHEK

(as Hamidur)

I was getting a newsletter. Canada immigration newsletter. If I can reach there, my chances are 95 %

that they will grant me asylum. I just need to reach there.

Konradin turns the globe according to his description.

KONRADIN

You want to go Canada, you have not told Yasmin how. You can't take an international flight, so you take a Train to Denmark. Still Europe, no passport control. You fly from Denmark to the Farö Islands. See the small dot there? That's Färö Island, belongs to the Kingdom of Denmark, no passport control.

ABHISHEK

(as Hamidur)

Airports like train stations.

KONRADIN

From there you fly to Iceland, which is in the European Union. No passport control. Then to Nuuk in Greenland.

ABHISHEK

But here it says Gothab.

KONRADIN

That's the Danish name. Greenland belongs to Denmark, so still European Union. Then you fly north. Now, uh Konradin, you have to remove the stand. (Konradin: oh right)

Konradin removes the stand - globe has a hole.

ABHISHEK

Oh, this is like your empty inner space!

KONRADIN

No no, this is where all the glaciers used to be and now they have melted and are flooding Bangladesh. Up there is Thule, the most northern airport, beyond that is only wilderness, snow, ice and polar bears.

ABHISHEK

That sounds like a great place. A real honeymoon place. Snow!

KONRADIN

Well. I have never been there. But Angela Merkel has been there only shortly afterwards.

ABHISHEK

Merkel? What did she do there?

KONRADIN

She watched the melting ice. And created a nice picture for the press. See this Island? This belongs to Canada. Between here and there is only 200 kilometres of frozen sea. The Smith sund. So, Ladies and Gentlemen, please stand up for the national anthem of Greenland!

(puts away the globe)

Both come to center stage.

ABHISHEK

Denmark!

KONRADIN

No, Greenland has it's own flag and anthem.

They take turns in turning on the anthem and hoisting the flag/ hand on heart.

GREENLAND

Thule/Inuit

Greenland national anthem, flag is hoisted.

ABHISHEK

That's it? It's short. It sounds more like a jingle.

KONRADIN

Imagine you have to stand like this any longer, you would turn into an ice sculpture. It's minus 20 degrees.

ABHISHEK

Do you have an inner picture of minus twenty degrees?

KONRADIN

Yes, its so cold that your spit freezes on it's way to the ground.

ABHISHEK

Cool.

Konradin puts the Greenland set on the table and points camera at it.

KONRADIN

Yes, very very cool. You can't be outside without wearing special clothing. High tech outdoor wear. No, I remember, Tina said, better reindeer or polar bear fur. Tina has been there.

Abhishek gets paper from the line with the props, right center.

ABHISHEK

Right. She has written this article in the Süddeutsche Zeitung Magazin.

(reads Tina's article)

Thule is at the edge of the world. 650 inhabitants. One flight per week, two ships a year. Bluish Icebergs protrude from the ice. 200 kilometers to the west of Thule lies the Canadian island of Ellesmere. In between lies the mostly frozen sea, a straight called the Smith sund. The wooden huts of Thule are painted in bright colours, to contrast the long and monotonous grey of the winter. Sledge-Dogs sleep in the snow. In the night they howl from a thousand throats. *(Both howl)* Beyond that is only ice. The ice is beautiful and cruel.

KONRADIN

(as he puts in the paper)

See, how beautiful our ice is.

ABHISHEK

But cruel also, put in some cruel ice.

Konradin does so.

ABHISHEK

The temperatures are minus 10, minus 20 degrees, the weather is unstable, storms just appear out of nowhere.

KONRADIN

Yeah, snowstorm.

Konradin puts salt on the set.

ABHISHEK

The sun does not set in the night, it only dips just behind the horizon for a couple of hours. Here is Hamidur meeting Avigiak Peterson, an Inuit with his sledge and his dogs.

They bark, Konradin transforms himself into an Inuk. Black scarf around head.

ABHISHEK

Sir. My name is Hamidur Rahman. You have beautiful dogs.

KONRADIN

Hungh.

ABHISHEK

Can you take me north to Siorapaluk?

Abhishek uses hand to indicate where it is.

KONRADIN

Hiurapaluk? Nono. Ice. Not possible. South. South.

ABHISHEK

No, north, north, Siorapaluk?

*Abhishek brings chair to represent a sleigh.
Abhishek sits, Konradin stands on the sleigh in movement. Following text improvised until next stage direction.*

KONRADIN

Hiurapaluk not possible.

ABHISHEK

Little bit north?

KONRADIN

Tour. Tour.

ABHISHEK

Tour north? Ok.

KONRADIN

300 kröner.

ABHISHEK

50 krona.

KONRADIN
300 kröner.

ABHISHEK
100.

KONRADIN
Small tour. Three hours. 150 krönar.

ABHISHEK
Two hour. 100 Krona. Ok. Chollo.

They ride for a while.

KONRADIN
Go back now.

ABHISHEK
What?

KONRADIN
One hour go. One back.

ABHISHEK
(stands up)
You can go back. I like to walk back to Thule. I am
tourist. I like adventure. You go.

KONRADIN
(shows him the way)
Hhum. Walk back? This way. Six hours. You have tent?

Ice/Rescue

*Abhishek goes to down stage and reads the article,
Konradin puts sweaters and a jacket on.*

ABHISHEK
18th april 2007, six in the evening, Hamidur starts to
walk. He knows what he would need: clothes that can
protect him from the cold. A tent, maybe a small rubber
boat. A sledge to pull his equipment over the ice. A
gun for hunting and for polar bears. A GPS for
navigation, better even a satellite phone. It was his

plan to buy all this in Denmark or Greenland.

KONRADIN

(as Hamidur)

I thought Denmark would be cheaper than Germany.

ABHISHEK

He is wearing a jumpsuit, under that a couple of sweaters. He has a compass, a tourist map of Greenland, a camping stove, a sleeping bag and every bit of food he could find on the way. But most of all he has nothing to lose.

Konradin gets all the items from both sides of the stage.

KONRADIN

(as Hamidur)

I am not an idiot, I know I can lose my life here.

Konradin walks to the screen with his equipment. During Abhishek's speech he acts what he reads out. Steps on the chair and tries to lighten the stove.

ABHISHEK

(reads near table)

What he doesn't know is that his route is impossible this year. The sea is not frozen because of the exceptionally warm winter. Even if he would be able to cross the smith sund, that looks so narrow on his map, the next settlement in Canada is hundreds of kilometers further south. He starts walking directly to the west but soon realizes that the ice is too brittle. He keeps breaking into the ice up to his knees, up to his hips. Walking is hard, his joints start to hurt, despite the cold, sweat is running down his face, soaks his underwear which will accelerate the hypothermia. In the early morning hours of the next day, Rahman walks the steep slopes of a cape.

KONRADIN

(tries to light the stove)

It does not work.

Konradin puts the stove on the ground.

ABHISHEK

When he tested the stove in his hotelroom, it worked perfectly, but here in the cold, it won't work. Rahman is thirsty, his throat is burning, he yearns for water. But without the stove he cannot melt water. He tries to sleep, but within minutes the cold comes through and creeps into every part of his body.

*Konradin tries to burn the Bangladeshi passport.
Matches fall down and he tries to pick them up.*

ABHISHEK

(reads)

Only as long as he keeps moving he can be sure not to freeze to death. He becomes weaker. More and more often he has to rest. He sits, leans against his backpack, sleeps 15, 20 minutes. Every time it becomes harder to get up again. He cannot eat, he is too dehydrated, tries to eat frozen bread. With his knife he hacks pieces of ice and tries to suck on them, but his lips just get stuck to the ice and the snow does not melt in his mouth. In the second bright night Rahman walks over the frozen Mc Cormick Fjord. The mountains of the opposite shore look very close, an illusion created by the clear air. He cannot run away from the cold, his whole body has started shaking now. Shoes and socks are wet, the gloves don't keep the hands warm, his hands and feet become numb, his lungs hurt. High snow and muddy ice make him fall, when he gets up, his legs do not seem to be able to carry him anymore. He starts to cry. Nowhere a sign of life. With every fall the desire not to get up becomes stronger. When he finally reaches the other shore of the fjord, he has lost all hope. He is sure his life is going to end here. Still he drags himself along. Freezing to death might not be so bad, but dying of thirst is brutal. Later in the morning he discovers a dark spot in the distance.

Abhishek puts hut in the set. Konradin balances on chair.

He finds wood and petroleum, lights a little fire, melts a cup of water and eats a packet of instant noodles. He hears a noise.

Abhishek put the helicopter into the set. The helicopter flies away. Konradin slowly takes off the sweaters, the sunglasses. Helicopter sound.

Konradin tries to attract attention. Abhishek puts away Greenland set.

ABHISHEK

(as police officer)

Do you know you are under arrest now?

Konradin sits on chair, legs up.

KONRADIN

(as Hamidur)

Yes. I understand.

ABHISHEK

Your passport please.

KONRADIN

(as Hamidur)

I burned it, try to make fire in the ice.

ABHISHEK

Where do you come from? Where did you want to go?

Abhishek takes gloves and woolen hat from Konradin and helps him take off the jacket.

KONRADIN

I came from Germany to Denmark to Farö Island, Farö Island to Iceland, Iceland to Greenland, Kussuk. Kussuk to Nuuk. Nuuk to Sissimut, Ilulisat and then to Qaanaaq, Thule. I tried to... to go to Canada, on ice.

Konradin leaves the chair, plays the anthem of Denmark and prepares the set.

ABHISHEK

(as police officer: hands in pockets, facing audience)

Police report: Mr. Hamidur Rahman, 30 years old, born in Bangladesh was discovered near a hunters cabin close to Mc Cormick Fiord, between Qaanaaq and Siorapaluk, Friday April 20th 2007 about 1200hrs local time. The Air Greenland Helicopter changed it's normal route due to heavy winds and followed the coast line, which was the only reason why the refugee was discovered. He was waving at the helicopter, which afterwards picked him up. At that time he was freezing and very unhappy, but

happy to be rescued. He is now under arrest due to the Danish law regarding foreigners. A court meeting will take place in Nuuk Monday morning, it will then be decided what to do with him - sad story. John Hoejsgaard Hansen. Danish Police Chief Inspector. Thule Air Base. Greenland.

DENMARK
Sandholm/Tina

National anthem of Denmark, flag is waved.
Abhishek finally lands up sitting on the chair.
Camera turned to prison.

KONRADIN

Welcome to Sandholm prison, Denmark.

Konradin comes towards Abhishek with flag in his hand.

ABHISHEK

Denmark looks the same like Germany.

Abhishek sits on chair that is turned facing camera.

KONRADIN

Except for the Swedish curtains. (*indicates them*)

ABHISHEK

What?

KONRADIN

(*puts away flag*)
The metal bars at the window. In Germany we call them Swedish curtains. So, what do you do?

ABHISHEK

Wait.

Konradin comes towards Abhishek then turns to projected prison.

KONRADIN

For what?

ABHISHEK

To be deported.

KONRADIN

Where to?

ABHISHEK

First Germany. Because of the Drittstaatenregelung.
Then Bangladesh. See, I learned it.

KONRADIN

Yes, very good. But what can you do?

ABHISHEK

I try to sleep.

KONRADIN

You try, but you cannot.

ABHISHEK

(as Hamidur)

When I thought I'd die over there on the ice, I
thought, if I call for help, I'd be arrested and sent
back. I'd have rather died. But then I thought about my
mother and thought, I should not die before my mother.
But sometimes I cannot think.

KONRADIN

Rahman? Visitor for you.

ABHISHEK

A visitor? Who?

Konradin makes the Tina gesture.

Übel. But how come she visits me in Sandholm?

KONRADIN

(as Tina, down stage)

Well, I came back from a sledge dog tour with the
eskimos, and heard, a Bangladeshi was found on the ice.
And at the airport in Thule, there he was with a guard.
At the check in he talked to me in German. He knew, he
will be sent to prison, and now God has sent him a
journalist. And I was interested in his story not only
as a journalist, but also as a human being and writer.
I promised to try to find him.

ABHISHEK

(comes to Konradin)

Yes, but time is too short and she has to go back to Hamburg.

KONRADIN

So, what can you do?

ABHISHEK

I am not going to eat anymore.

KONRADIN

You are not Gandhi. No one will notice outside the prison. They will force feed you.

Both in center stage.

ABHISHEK

I cut my wrists.

KONRADIN

Ok. You cut your wrists, they find you and put you into a hospital. What do you do now?

Konradin changes the prison to hospital set.

ABHISHEK

No swedish curtains anymore. I tear my bedsheets into pieces and tie them together.

Konradin puts the sheets in the hospital window.

KONRADIN

Ok, here they are.

ABHISHEK

I use them as a rope and climb out of the window.

Konradin changes hospital to church set.

I escape into the woods. I hear dogs barking. They are searching for me. Then I find a church. There is an open window. I climb inside and sleep.

Abhishek throws himself on the floor, sleeping.

KONRADIN

Ok. Next morning a priest comes and finds you. What do you do?

ABHISHEK

I tell him my story. I have Tina's phone number. I call her. I want to go to Hamburg.

KONRADIN

The priest buys you some shoes and a train ticket to Hamburg.

GERMANY 2

Elbstrand/Hanna, Philip

Konradin changes church to Hamburg set (beach, ship, houses). Sounds.

There you are. The Elbstrand.

ABHISHEK

(sitting on chair)

It looks nice. Is it the sea?

KONRADIN

No. It is a river. But like in Bangladesh it has tides. When I lived in Hamburg I liked to sit at the beach and watch the ships go by.

ABHISHEK

Was it at the same time that Hamidur was in Hamburg?

KONRADIN

Yes, maybe I walked along the beach when he was sitting there.

ABHISHEK

Jonathan?

KONRADIN

Maboud?

ABHISHEK

Hamburg is in Germany.

KONRADIN

Yes.

Abhishek moves down stage, facing audience.

ABHISHEK

Ladies and Gentlemen.

KONRADIN

No!

Konradin sits down on chair, face in his hands.

ABHISHEK

Please stand up and sing with me Deutschland,
Deutschland...

KONRADIN

Not again!

ABHISHEK

By the way, where is Tina?
(makes Tina gesture)

KONRADIN

Well, you called her. She meets you in Hamburg, but she
doesn't want you to stay at her place.

ABHISHEK

Why?

KONRADIN

(as Tina)

Because she wants to write an article on you, and as a
journalist she has to keep some distance. But she
arranges a place for you run by the church. A secret
flat for refugees. And there you meet...

Both hug each other.

ABHISHEK

Hello Hanna. Nice to finally meet you. But what are you
saying?

KONRADIN

(as Hanna)

We had an intensive relationship, he always called me/

ABHISHEK

(as Hamidur)

My German mother. She is also as old as my mother.

KONRADIN

(as Hanna)

Come, Hamidur, I show you the city of Hamburg.

Both hold hands. Improvisation: Shopping with the audience. After that they face each other.

KONRADIN

He could laugh, really, he was a very positive... He just had charisma, you know? And he was always so happy when somebody came and had time for him. He loved cooking. He often called me and said: Hanna, I am cooking today, do you want to come?

ABHISHEK

(as Shati)

He liked cooking and sometimes he did not like my Mother's cooking and he tried himself and it was tasty. Actually if man goes to kitchen here people say that boys are like woman.

KONRADIN

Shati, nice to meet you again but you are in Dhaka and we are in Hamburg.

ABHISHEK

(comes to Konradin, excited)

Right. Don't I meet with Tina Übel?

KONRADIN

Seems you want to marry her.

ABHISHEK

(smiling)

Good idea. I could stay in Germany then.

Both face audience, smiling, humming.

ABHISHEK/KONRADIN

(as Hamidur)

Hi. I'm Hamidur Rahman. Welcome to my profile. Do You like me? Please send me a message. And one red rose for You.

KONRADIN

(shakes head)

No, Tina won't marry you. Neither will any German girl who sees your profile on the internet. But Tina takes you to this beach.

Konradin indicates the beach and digs in the sand

in the set.

KONRADIN
(*as Tina*)
Hey Humidor!

ABHISHEK
Yes, Tina?

KONRADIN
(*as Tina*)
See, I dig a tunnel to Canada for you.

Abhishek watches Konradin digging.

ABHISHEK
(*as Hamidur*)
Yeah. But Canada has also some snow.

Konradin runs to right center stage and gets a bag of gummi bears.

KONRADIN
(*as Tina*)
Wait, I will get some sugar from the beach bar.

Abhishek turns around and watches Konradin.

ABHISHEK
(*as Hamidur*)
Yes. And paper napkins for the glaciers.

KONRADIN
(*as Tina*)
Gummibears! Choose one.

ABHISHEK
(*as Hamidur*)
I take the orange one. At least that is a bit brown like me.

Abhishek plays with the gummi bear in front of the camera on the beach.

KONRADIN
(*as Tina*)
It's your story you got to start.

Puts the gummi bear bag away again.

ABHISHEK

Ok. At the airport, Thule airport. I get off at the airport, I try to cross the ice. Smith sund. I could not move anymore. Somewhere here I am going to die.

KONRADIN

You have a visitor.
(comes to Abhishek again)

ABHISHEK

Who?

KONRADIN

(makes Tina gesture)
Tina's article has been published, someone reads it and wants to meet you.
(as Philip, Philip gesture)
Hi I am Philip, I am a filmmaker.

Abhishek walks and looks around him.

ABHISHEK

(as Hamidur)
Hello Philip.

Both shake hands.

KONRADIN

(as Philip)
I want to buy the rights to you story. 2000 Euros?

ABHISHEK

(as Hamidur)
Hhum?
(watches Konradin interested)

KONRADIN

(as Philip, talking to the audience)
He is a dreamer definitely. A dreamer who is still street smart enough to get dangerously close to the realization of his dreams, too close for someone like him maybe. His plan to go to Canada was still on.

Both face each other center stage.

ABHISHEK

(as Hamidur)

Tina, I have to chose a small rubber boat. It's price is only 2000-3000 Euro and I saw it in Nuuk.

KONRADIN

(as Tina)

Did you read the e-mail from my expert friend?

ABHISHEK

Ex boy friend?

KONRADIN

(as Tina)

Expert friend. He knows what he is talking about. And he very clearly says: You'll die in a small non-sea-going boat. You die without any expereince in boating in extreme arctic ocean condtions.

ABHISHEK

(as Hamidur)

I need your help to buy it in Greenland, maybe we can find one 2nd hand cheap price.

Abhishek turns around with hands in his pocket, walks a few steps.

KONRADIN

(as Tina)

I most certainly won't assist you in killing yourself. I'm sorry, I know it seems like this is your only hope and you don't want to give it up. But you have to. It sucks, I know, but you have a son, you cannot go and kill yourself.

Suicide attempt/Härtefallkommission

KONRADIN

So, what can you do?

Abhishek walks towards Konradin. Konradin listens with his hand near his mouth.

ABHISHEK

I have 2000 Euros from Philip, I buy a direct flight to

Greenland and fake my visa using Photoshop.

KONRADIN

But your fake visa does not work at the check in. The last flight to Greenland leaves without you, the money is gone. So, what can you do?
(hands on hips)

ABHISHEK

I try to find a job.

Abhishek nervously walks up and down.

KONRADIN

You are illegal and the only jobs you can get are in Indian restaurants in the kitchen. for 2 Euro 50 an hour. You do that for a while, but you get totally exploited there. So what can you do?

ABHISHEK

Wait.
(stands behind chair)

KONRADIN

For what?

ABHISHEK

For nothing.

Konradin talks to audience, Hanna gesture.

KONRADIN

(as Hanna)
He was a powerful young man but his power slowly vanished. I went to this young doctor, we always thought about how can we get him treated. This young doctor gave him pills because he couldn't sleep, so he collected them. Naive as I am I didn't even think about that. He planned his suicide with precision. Wrote farewell letters. Put a letter to his son there.

Abhishek takes the letters and puts them carefully on the ground.

ABHISHEK

(as Hamidur)
Dear Baba Faris, when you read this letter you will be more than 8 years old. Dear Hanna, when you read this I am no longer in this world.

KONRADIN

He cleaned everything, tidied up, and left the keys on the table.

Abhishek starts to hop around and scratch himself all over.

KONRADIN

(looks to Abhishek, hunkers down)
Hello? Hello, what are you doing?

ABHISHEK

I took a lot of sleeping pills. Sometimes they have a paradox effect.

Abshishek stands silent.

KONRADIN

Hamidur, Hamidur Rahman? You are in a hospital in Hamburg.

ABHISHEK

(as Hamidur)
I thought I'd killed myself.
(looks at Konradin)

*Abhishek drops to his knees next to the chair.
Konradin touches his shoulder, sitting beside him.*

KONRADIN

Someone has seen you in this state and called the police. You have surfaced into the legal system of Germany again. But Hanna gets you a new lawyer.

ABHISHEK

New lawyer for what, I thought the verdict is final?

KONRADIN

Say Härtefallkommission.

ABHISHEK

Härtefallkommission. What is it?

KONRADIN

It's the hardcore commission. If your application for asylum has been rejected, but your life is not only a little bit horrible, but hardcore horrible, the hard case commission can grant you asylum.

ABHISHEK

You are telling me now? After all this waiting and the
ice and suicide attempts?

KONRADIN

*(helps Abhishek to get up and walks
around him during his speech, watching
him)*

Now you have the right friends. And you meet Julia
Fischer-Ortmann, a psychologist who makes an assessment
of your inner space.

(as Julia Fischer-Ortmann)

When I heard and read about the case Hamidur Rahman
without knowing him, I pictured a radical man on the
border of craziness. I was very surprised when I met
him personally. Mr. Rahman is a sympathetic and
intelligent man. Mr. Rahman suffers from Anxiety
disorder as an effect of post traumatic stress
disorder, which accumulated over time. For Mr. Rahman,
his son is the most important person in his life. No
therapy in the world can heal this loss. But if Mr.
Rahman can start a new life with a legal status and a
work permit, the chances to heal his condition are
high.

ABHISHEK

So this will be presented at the Härtefallkommission?
(touches Konradin)

*Konradin has his hands behind his back and watches
Abhishek.*

KONRADIN

Yes, but there is a problem. According to § 56 Asylum
law you have to go back to Idar-Oberstein in
Rheinland-Pfalz to wait for the trial. Say
Idar-Oberstein in Rheinland-Pfalz.

*Abhishek walks around, nervously touching his head
and drops down to his knees.*

ABHISHEK

Oh no. Not again. This story is grinding me down.

KONRADIN

Not just you.

ABHISHEK

Please, Jonathan, Konradin, can we end this play now?

It's depressing and leads absolutely nowhere. No climax
no solution, no end.

KONRADIN

So, what do you do?

ABHISHEK

What do you do?

*Abhishek leaves the stage and sits with the
audience. Konradin talks to the audience.
Idar-Oberstein set.*

KONRADIN

(looks at watch that lies on the chair)

Well, I am alone. I am in Idar-Oberstein. It's 10 pm
and I call Mr. Del Penner. A priest who takes care of
refugees.

(as Hamidur)

Mr. Penner? Mr. Penner?

ABHISHEK

Yes?

Konradin takes chair and puts it center stage.

KONRADIN

(as Hamidur)

This is Hamidur Rahman. I am not feeling well, can you
come?

(holding his own hands)

Suicide/Del Penner

ABHISHEK

(prompting)

Hamidur?

KONRADIN

(as Hamidur throughout the scene)

Yes, Mr. Penner.

ABHISHEK

Sorry, it took me a while to get here.

KONRADIN

No, I am sorry, I called you late.

ABHISHEK

So, you don't feel well?

Konradin stands up, looks at Abhishek who is offstage.

KONRADIN

No. I... Do you want some tea? Coffee?

ABHISHEK

Oh, thank you. At this time of the night I can't have tea or coffee. Otherwise I will stay awake all night.

KONRADIN

(smiling shyly)

Yes. I also cannot sleep. But not because of coffee.

ABHISHEK

Yeah. You told me last time.

KONRADIN

Some water?

ABHISHEK

No, thank you. So, it is still that bad?

KONRADIN

Yes. I feel like... like my blood becomes thicker and thicker. And my heart will stop beating.

Konradin touches his wrist.

ABHISHEK

You don't sleep at all?

KONRADIN

(sits down again)

Yes, sometimes... but I have bad dreams. And when there is a sound like phone ringing or bell, I think now they are coming.

ABHISHEK

To deport you?

KONRADIN

Yes. Police. But when they come, I won't go back to Bangladesh. Even my dead body shall not go to Bangladesh. I want to lay in Germany's land forever.

ABHISHEK

God has given us life Hamidur. You should not take it.

(reports)

Clinic of Idar-Oberstein. 4th of may 2008. Dear colleagues, we report on Mr. Hamidur Rahman. He is transfered from the psychiatric wing in a somnolent condition.

KONRADIN

Here, these are some pictures. From Hamburg. Emails.

Konradin shows Abhishek the printouts hanging on the line center right.

ABHISHEK

(from off)

It is reported that the patient has taken an unknown amount of Trimiparin 100 in suicidal attempt.

KONRADIN

Hanna and me. With Tina at the river Elbe.

(shows the pictures that sticked)

ABHISHEK

So many nice people you know! All these emails. They all care about you.

(reports)

According to the person present, Mr. Del Penner, he threw up some of the pills. How many he has taken is not known.

KONRADIN

My wife. My son. Faris.

(shows pictures)

ABHISHEK

Are you still in contact with them?

(reports)

The patient has a medical history of depression.

Konradin sits on chair, hands folded, looking down, sad.

KONRADIN

(as Hamidur)

I call, not many times. I try to work, send

money. Life is difficult in Malaysia. Yasmin has problems. She is a divorced woman with a dark skinned child.

ABHISHEK

(reports)

At first his cardiovascular system is stable, he reacts to pain stimulation but cannot be woken up.

KONRADIN

(opens his arms)

I don't know what to talk about with Faris, or even how. He was just learning to speak German. He was always calling me to play with him: Papa, komm, komm! But now he will not learn German or Bengali. He will learn only his mother's language, Chinese. And I don't speak chinese, only a little bit. See, this is my Ausweis, my passport. I made it with the computer. Global Identity Card.

Stands up and gets the ID from the line and holds it first in the camera directly, then puts it in the set.

ABHISHEK

After a series of short cramps, the patient has a long seizure which can be ended with Tavor and Diazepam.

KONRADIN

(goes back to his chair)

Holder of this Global ID card is allowed to stay, work and travel to all countries of the world.

(closes his eyes)

ABHISHEK

The patients falls into cardiac arrest and has to be resuscitated with continuous doses of Adrenalin.

KONRADIN

This world was made by God and all people have the right to live, work and travel everywhere in this world.

ABHISHEK

After 45 minutes of cardio resuscitation and resistance to the therapy, the resuscitation had to be stopped. The caretaking priest, Mr. Del Penner is informed about his

death. The police also needs to be informed now. We
pity the loss of our young patient.

Shobuj? Shobuj? Hamidur?

(reports)

Hamidur Rahman's body was flown back to Bangladesh on
the request of his parents. He is buried in Gazipur.

This was supported by a muslim organisation from
Frankfurt.

Shobuj?

Shobuj?

Jonathan?

(as Shati, then himself)

*Konradin opens his eyes. Abhishek comes back on
stage. Konradin offers him Gummibears.*

KONRADIN

Choose one.

*Abhishek takes an orange one and puts it in the
sand. Video of Elbstrand.*

***WORST CASE* by Kathrin Röggla, translated by Katy Derbyshire**

The play asks the questions: What catastrophe has to happen, so that humankind starts to change something? When will people really believe that a catastrophe will actually take place? Only after the catastrophe itself has happened? Will nothing else convince them? In the catastrophe itself there might be the chance for change, for a new beginning... But what if the disaster is omnipresent – in the news, in talk shows, in films? Will anyone ever notice anything? How will it affect the way we talk to each other about other events, when we are always looking for clues of the next coming disaster?

The play is about finding that anticipating disasters has entered our narratives and dominates our perception and our way of reporting these events. The constant anticipation and worry then creeps into the way we speak, always reporting what we have heard about the next disaster and never living in the moment.

In an interview Röggla stated that “people who were witnesses of the 2004 tsunami took videos of the event instead of seeking shelter. Their instincts failed perfectly. It is a wrong conditioning of humans, caused by media. On the other hand, too many social and ecological catastrophes are not being realized as they don't match the criteria for press coverage. We don't seem to see the causal correlations for those disasters in a globalized world.”

Kathrin Röggla is an Austrian writer. She was born in Salzburg in 1971 and has lived in Berlin since 1992. Röggla is one of the most important German-speaking dramatists of the younger

generation. In 2008 she received the Anton-Wildgans-award. She writes prose, radio plays and theater texts and produces reviews for newspaper arts pages, literary magazines and Austrian and German radio. She has also published several books of prose texts including “irres wetter” (2000/2002) and “really ground zero” (2011).

Katy Derbyshire:

Katy has been earning a living through translation since about 2003, beginning with commercial work and moving more and more into literary translation. She writes about her translating work: I get a lot of joy out of it. Most of my literary work is contemporary novels - unlike many translators, I prefer to work with living writers who can answer my questions, respond to my translation, present it around the world, and so on. I haven't translated many stage plays - this was my third - but I enjoy the challenge. It's always tough to rescue the semblance of spontaneous dialogue, I find, when you slow down to translate it from one language to another. But this play in particular was tricky because the dialogue is never quite spontaneous, always has something artificial about it. And the hardest thing is that it's all in reported speech, which is used a lot in German reporting, but less so in English. It sounds odd on stage in German, because we rarely hear entire conversations in reported speech, but I assume it sounds even stranger in English. People - amateur critics in particular - have a habit of blaming the translator when they don't get what they expect out of translated fiction (which is why I try never to read Amazon reviews of books I've translated). So I was concerned that theatre audiences might do the same with this play - but I hope the whole thing was just so incredibly strange on stage that they realized it was “supposed to be like that.”

Worst Case

Kathrin Röggla

Translation: Katy Derbyshire

SCENE 1: THE OBSERVERS

characters: square male, assiduous male, expert female, squeaky-voiced female, (me)

scene: private apartment

(me:)

let's see if the forests catch fire again, let's see if heat hits us in the face. let's see if the smoke drives the animals out of the bushes, animals we don't know the names of, let's see if it brings a silence in its wake. let's see if rain sets in, pressed across the country by a black wind, let's see if water masses push against bridges or dams have long since broken.

let's see if parts plummet down on us from buildings, hey, let's see if it all comes falling down and a cloud of dust hits us in the face, swallowing up all colors. let's see if cars turn upside down and metal intertwines. let's see if there's a live electricity cable lying across the road.

let's see if they stand on the bridge again and look down, a stone's throw away from things they just don't understand. let's see if they go back to other things again because they get far too bored. let's see if something happens again.

part 1: shortly before

square male (as if quoting from a movie): “look at that! look at the parking lot, the parking lot with all the people! do you think that's the panic shoppers already, the panic shoppers with their panic buying? look at the cars they're turning up in! there's space for so much in them, and there's so much getting put in them. all the food and cleaning products, all the tools and the clothing, the disinfectant and the water. is that the water supplies already that you absolutely have to build up?”

“hey, have they thought of the power supply too, the external power supply? you have to think of that now, every little kid knows that: you have to think of the fuel, the electricity and the heating oil, sustainable energy supplies, you know. and right! here come the canisters now, the diesel canisters, the oil canisters, the gas canisters, lugged across parking lots, over highway bridges and sidewalks, if they even exist. and where are they lugging them to? to gas stations, from gas stations, that's the motto right now. you can see plenty of people walking across parking lots with canisters right now, across parking lots and spillover parking-lot extensions, which they've set up as if they always had to reckon with a state of emergency here, as if that had always been part of the equation. and there they are now on the way back to their vehicles again, to their all-terrain vehicles and mini-trucks, and they never have to fill up the gas tanks, they're always full of gas. cars that never need the tire pressure checking, that always have the right oil level.”

(he changes his tone of voice)

and still, he (*points to himself*) had imagined it differently, he had imagined this panic buying a little differently. at the moment it seemed indecisive at best. he meant, even just looking at that parking lot. the way they got in their cars and drove off, the way they'd entrenched themselves behind their steering wheels and occupied their passenger seats and back seats, as if they never wanted to release them again, as if they never wanted to get out of their cars again.

was it just him who found it so strange, the way they were driving out of their gas stations now, off their supermarket parking lots, the way they were leaving their shopping zones? he found it odd, you see, how calmly they were turning onto the approach road. "is that how people look when they're about to disappear off the face of the earth?"

*

square male: "don't tell me you're not all thinking of the live electricity cable, don't tell me you don't all see what's going to happen next at that junction. don't say you're not all looking fearfully over to where the pylon is about to tip over, where the cable is about to rip at any moment. don't say there isn't much to see yet!"

(*to expert female*) he hardly thought it'd leave *her* cold, for example, what with her being the one who knew everything better, what with her being the one who'd always found out that kind of thing so far. he meant, who was the expert here anyway, who was the one who'd always got all the information? because he was the one who'd always asked the wrong people, while she'd always asked more of the right people. the ones who'd known, when something was going wrong, what was going wrong. how often had he heard her debating with random people? there was no need for her to pretend she didn't know anything right now.

hey, she was the one who'd been sufficiently informed about keeping still in alarm situations. he only had second-hand information, he'd never been at the forefront of an alarm situation.

he meant, what on earth hadn't people seen before, what on earth hadn't they experienced? couldn't she remember what she'd said not long ago: "it's the little things that trigger the big things, the little shifts of power that entail the big shifts. a chemical irritation, a blown fuse, a flicked switch."

but this time it was starting with the big things, was he right? all it took now was a trigger, we were all still waiting for the trigger.

*

square male: was anyone even listening to him though? or did we have our minds on other things? he thought so actually, he thought we ought to listen to him because if we didn't listen to him then there was no point in him going on talking. and he didn't think we wanted to miss anything either.

*

square male: well, he for one didn't want to miss the people, unlike her (*to the expert*) he didn't want to miss all the people who'd now be developing an interesting life. "who can that be? someone who'll make it through, someone who'll simply manage it." but he could tell she wasn't interested in that right now, she was busy with other things, and that way we'd miss a whole lot of stuff. it was her fault they'd skipped the young man they could have just noticed, it was her fault they'd skipped the young woman who'd no doubt have turned out to be a geophysicist. there was no need to look like that: a geophysicist always turned up at moments like that, and then explained whatever to you, and possessed whatever special information.

but it was her fault they'd skipped all those dialogs, the dialogs they could be having with each other right now, for example why certain things were broadcast and others weren't. no doubt there were normally experts for those issues too, experts to discuss it—

hey, there was no need for her (*the expert*) to look at him like that, she was putting him off his stride, staring at him like that. so she might as well start giving up all her being offended, and the rest of us might as well stop all our withdrawal nonsense, because if we went on that way forever then he just might get mad, and by mad he meant really mad. he was the one keeping the mood up here, he was the one taking care of things, and he could expect just a little bit of support. and there was no need for her to keep pretending nothing was up.

(listens, hears assiduous male saying something)

pardon? “they haven’t learned a thing from the events in san francisco, they haven’t learned a thing from the events in new orleans and houston, they haven’t learned a thing from the events in denver”? what was he *(to assiduous man)* trying to say? he could hardly understand him, he ought to speak up. why all the mumbling around here?

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assiduous male: “hey, they haven’t learned a thing from the events in new orleans, san francisco, and houston! but too late, too late, because there’s action coming into the picture now, something’s happening at last!”

square male: and after that no one could say it had been silent. there was action coming into the picture now, i.e., a number of things had disappeared, they’d only looked away for a moment and then they were gone, i.e., he could swear there’d been a family there a minute ago and now they were gone.

assiduous male: right, there’d been a family there that had suddenly disappeared. it was looking like a clear case of missing family within a one-kilometer radius!

square male: “hey, where have they gone, that man and that woman? where have they gone, the two children just seen coming out of the shopping mall? something of theirs must still be there, they must have left something behind.”

expert female: “different things take place in different houses, that’s how the saying goes, but in this case it doesn’t apply for once, because the same thing is taking place in all houses. but the passengers on the boeing 747 won’t know that. The plane’s just about to take off, once it’s accelerated sufficiently to 300 km/h—and really, it’s lifting off the runway with a barely perceptible jerk and will gain more altitude above santa monica bay any moment now. we’ll be able to see it through the various layers of early-evening mist.”

“it’s already clear it’s going to be a fantastic sunset, if anyone were to look towards the horizon. but nobody does look; they’re all looking in a completely different direction.”

part 2: afterwards

square male: “now we weren’t paying attention, it’s gone and happened already and we weren’t paying attention.”

squeaky-voice female: “you weren’t paying attention.”

square male: “no, no—because where have they all gone, the fleeing people we were promised, where are they, the sliding hills, the tumbling chunks of rocks, the crazed bee populations that were conjured up for us so realistically. where are the onrushing floods, the houses simply collapsing under the pressure of the wind, where are the dust clouds, the raging torrents and the wild animals? hey, the nervous animals you can see shooting out of the bushes, all the rodents, the sudden deer and stags, flocks of birds whose formations can tell you all sorts of things, long before people come on the scene. and where are they, the people knocking each other down in their haste, stumbling and getting up again, where are the ones who keep on running, who are going to make it? surely we should be seeing them by now? or in fact, how will they ever reach the gas station if they haven’t even made it though that little wood? and how are they going to get there if they haven’t even got near the side road?”

assiduous male: “hey, how are they going to get there if they haven’t even left their homes?”

expert female (jaded): well, she could do without people who didn’t understand anything about their escape movement, who froze still in the midst of taking flight, had she said that before? she just couldn’t stand it any more. she had to cover her eyes and her ears when she saw them looking in the wrong direction, she just wasn’t cut out for that.

expert female (starts again): well, she could do without people who fell into a kind of rigor mortis and stayed that way. people like that ought not to be too numerous right now. and it would be good for us too not to be people like that, practicing for their rigor mortis right now already.

square male (loudly): well, he could do without people who'd never heard of reaction speed too, but there was no need to get as loud about it as she was. there was no need for her to shout.

assiduous male: hey, they mustn't forget me after all, there was always still me after all, I wasn't to be forgotten.

square male: who'd forgotten me? he certainly hadn't forgotten me, for one.

squeaky-voiced female: well, she had to admit she hadn't thought of me for a good while.

assiduous male: he meant, they couldn't very well cover my eyes and ears to it all.

square male: he didn't think I was that easy to shock.

assiduous male: no, I shouldn't be underestimated, I wasn't a little kid, after all.

square male (to assiduous man): he was right, and what was much more interesting was whether this was still the famous warning-response gap or in fact already cases of displacement activities, which could take on a bizarre appearance sometimes.

squeaky-voiced female: come on, please: how long had we been watching this woman stumbling around the place? she didn't want to watch her any more, she felt like they'd been watching her far too long by now.

assiduous male: she ought to be glad we had anyone to watch in the first place.

square male: well, he had to say he'd actually rather watch a team as well, setting out in search of solutions, better than this crowd of disoriented people, but he wasn't going to just drop them, he wasn't about to turn his back on them like she was doing right now.

assiduous male: hey, he was totally scared of missing something important too, although actually they were always getting distracted at the important moment.

expert female: and she thought she was the only one in the room asking herself: "what's up on the plane to frankfurt?" there were still people, and they were still traveling. "nothing's happened yet on the flight to frankfurt." they could probably hear any minute now that the plane was still gaining elevation but would soon have reached its cruising level of 10,000 meters. that would be the last thing they'd hear from the pilot though.

squeaky-voiced female: while the nightly prairie extends beneath them, was she right? a landscape they know nothing of, the endless wastes of the californian desert...

expert female: ...an inhospitable landscape where an emergency landing seems almost impossible.

part 3: later

square male: well, he'd expected almost anything, he'd reckoned with snipers, military convoys and helicopters fleets. aircraft carriers off the coast, the national guard at the very least.

squeaky-voiced female: national guard?

square male (ignoring her): he'd expected them to come right away, to divide the city immediately into different zones, different accessibility zones and inaccessibility zones, that's what he'd thought. but there didn't seem to be any different accessibilities at all. probably the same inaccessibilities had turned out everywhere.

"but how can that be?" we were surely asking ourselves, and the only way he could explain it was: there must be some reason. perhaps a delay, a failed news transfer—

(he suddenly calls out:) no, we shouldn't start in with the security forces' failings, for god's sake, he didn't need that. we shouldn't start with that, for god's sake.

assiduous male: right! what people ought to be saying was: "nonsense, we may not expect all that much of the governor..."

squeaky-voiced female: of the chief of police!

assiduous male: "of the senator of the interior—but at the moment he's the man who has to make the decisions." people ought to be saying: "we may mock the security systems, but right now we have to hope that parts of them work."

square male: but he had to admit: we'd imagined even the failings of the security forces rather differently somehow, even the failings of the security forces ought to take some sort of specific form.

assiduous male: perhaps that was the famous organizational gap I had once mentioned—

squeaky-voiced female: who? me?

assiduous male: yes, the famous organizational gap that could easily come after the warning-response gap, and which they were sure to close up soon and then they'd all be back again, the fire brigades, the authorities and institutions, the city police force and the private security services, the military.

square male: they could hardly ask me, could they?

assiduous male: right, they could hardly ask me.

expert female: well, she hardly thought I'd be in a position to say anything.

squeaky-voiced female: she could hardly imagine that either, they ought to just take a look at me!

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assiduous male: “looks like we were lucky this time!” someone had just said on the radio—someone who’d been hard to understand clearly, admittedly. his voice was already fading, all kinds of technical sounds were already covering it up, until it got swallowed up entirely by the radio cosmos it came out of.

expert female: hey, “no contact to the neighbors, no contact to the important authorities, no contact to family members, no contact to TV or news.”

square male: “we simply don’t have the information, my dear. we don’t even know what’s up with the water supply. we don’t know who’s at the other end of the pipeline, i.e., if anyone’s at the other end of the pipeline taking care. if anyone’s monitoring what gets added to it, i.e., if anything’s got in there already. and things get in there pretty quickly in these kind of situations.”

assiduous male: “yes, we have no idea of the overarching measures, the evacuation plans, the chains of command. we can only speculate about where things are going now.” he meant there ought to be collecting points, for example, collecting points for family members, for example, who always got lost in this kind of situation.

expert female: him and his family members!

assiduous male: and her and her airplane fixation, her with her defective boeing, which must have crashed in the californian night long ago by now!

expert female: nonsense! the plane ought to be over nevada by now! and anyway: it didn’t happen that quickly!

squeaky-voiced female (interrupting them): there was certainly nothing comforting about the constant statistical predictions on tv—

square male: but still, who didn't they see sitting in front of their screens in anticipation of the precise figures?

he meant, who didn't they hear cursing now that nothing was coming in, that no one was informed? yes, (*to expert female*) even if she was the only one in the room still thinking about the boeing 747 on its way to frankfurt, they were still all sitting in front of their screens in anticipation of the precise figures, and he hoped all the concentration wouldn't wane at the very moment when the information did come in.

squeaky-voiced woman: "yes, it's better for us to wait, better for us to watch the doctors, the doctors in the hospitals, who ought to come any minute now, the doctors in the empty hospitals, who are apparently waiting for their patients, for the big rush." they were always talking about the big rush, although they secretly knew already not to expect a rush of patients with an incident of this size. because most of them would be gone.

assiduous male: it'd be better for us to wait a bit and look at the empty streets, where all the emergency traffic ought to come by any moment now, all the alarm sounds, which wouldn't give way for a good while after that.

expert female: she meant, "outside help"—they'd probably have to wait a long time for that.

square male: but perhaps she ought to lower her voice a little. there was still me, after all, or did she want to give me shock, did she want to have to explain everything to me? no, nobody here wanted that.

squeaky-voiced female: she thought I knew everything, wasn't I fully informed?

square male: she ought to pipe down.

expert female: she'd have expected a little more of me, she meant, someone like me might just develop engineering skills in times of need.

squeaky-voiced woman (laughing): yeah, right, I ought to discover my real inner macho engineer, take matters in hand and not just sink into passivity, as was generally the case around here.

square male: she ought to pipe down.

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square male: but she knew what was coming next, didn't she, he didn't have to reel it all off for her. now came the tedious moments, the moments when a team usually comes together. what? never heard of a team that comes together now somewhere? no wonder: team skills were still an alien concept in this room, he'd been presenting his team face to us all along, and we'd answered him with our separate voices, as if we didn't know any better.

squeaky-voiced woman (imitating him): "no negative thoughts now please!" no negative thoughts, for god's sake, that was the last thing we needed right now.

square male (ignoring her): it would be really great if she, for instance, were to say something constructive for once—

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square male: well, for example, had she heard yet that there was no need to expect looting, and wasn't that an absolute sensation? after all they'd been expecting nothing but looting all along, was he right?

assiduous male: another thing that ought not to go unmentioned: they could expect help between neighbors, neighborly help would be arriving at any moment.

expert female: she didn't know whether she was all that crazy about neighborly help, but she really hadn't expected this phone connection.

assiduous male (agitated): what phone connection?

squeaky-voiced female (loudly): true, a phone connection's arrived!

expert female (sharply): someone ought to get round to picking up the phone. well, she'd get round to it herself but she'd do quite a few things differently anyway.

assiduous male (his voice breaking): hey, could someone just pick up the phone?

squeaky-voiced female: the phone!

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square male: right. now look what trouble they were in, now I was crying. now I'd got a shock. hey, now they were in trouble.

squeaky-voiced female: but how to calm me down?

square male: the way she was going about it presumably wouldn't help matters at all.

assiduous male: I presumably needed something to eat by now. they'd have to start taking care of that now.

squeaky-voiced female: well, why would I need something to eat now of all times?

assiduous male: it's time, he guessed.

squeaky-voiced female: as if he knew. as if he'd ever even thought about it.

square male: it's the fatigue, he told himself. all of us were having trouble keeping our eyes open, we were all having difficulties concentrating now.

squeaky-voiced female: but could nobody switch off the crying? it was getting annoying. what would we do if it never stopped?

assiduous male: no, they probably couldn't switch off the crying. she could see that for herself.

expert female: they'd just have to wait it out.

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expert female (suddenly): she couldn't believe it! it couldn't be true! right at the very moment when they needed to work together, that's when arguments broke out over competencies.

expert female (repeatedly): the famous marital strife at the last minute, that was what we were stumbling into!

assiduous male: well, that just made him aggressive. all he could do was shout out: "hey people, don't you know what this is all about?" but not to worry, he had himself under control, if only out of consideration for me.

square male: no, he could reassure her, the arguments at the last minute weren't coming yet, they were being left out for the time being because they were busy with other things. they were still busy with team-building—military team-building, if we got his meaning—he meant, there they were again, the flattened voices of people who worked under pressure, who were deliberating and didn't want to be a disturbance factor, the almost soundless speech of people who didn't know what to do next out of sheer exhaustion, but didn't want to give up. and the bomb disposal tone setting in again now.

squeaky-voiced female: but did these dialogs happen often?

square male: that's what he'd have asked first as well, and he had to say: yes, unfortunately, they were unavoidable.

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expert female: "let's sum up: there may have been a successful emergency landing in nevada, a rescue operation, the engines stopped just in time. a warning may have been issued in time but how does that help us here?"

squeaky-voiced female: right, an emergency landing is no use to us here!

expert female: that wasn't quite what she meant.

assiduous male: “let’s sum up: we still don’t know exactly what’s wrong with the water supply, and we don’t know either whether something’s wrong with the air.”

square male: yes exactly, we ought to act like professionals, that was the least—

expert female: “let’s sum up: we don’t even know whether anyone’s still out there looking for rescue. and vice versa, we don’t even know if it isn’t a perfectly normal day that’s just begun once again.”

square male: that seemed strange to him, he couldn’t believe she assumed that.

expert female (continuing): “let’s sum up: perhaps everything is all over, perhaps what we’re seeing now is a perfectly normal day that’s gone back to normal.”

square male: she ought to stop that. she ought to think of me instead. now that I’d calmed down.

expert female (continuing): that couldn’t be true, it couldn’t be that a normal wednesday morning was breaking, starting with the normal working day, so to speak. we should just imagine, perfectly normal hustle and bustle in the subways and streets. the offices and airports were filling up again with conversations about cheap flights and cellphone deals.

(after a short pause): “but perhaps everything was a perfectly normal procedure from the very beginning?” that was in the realm of the conceivable, wasn’t it? perhaps nothing had happened that could be referred to as a state of emergency? perhaps it was perfectly normal fires, perfectly normal collapses that showed up and not emergency fires and emergency collapses at all? but if that was the case, what conclusion could people draw from it?

part 4: about seven in the evening

(the expert female has left the room)

square male: that's not how they talk, that's not how special investigators talk or SWAT teams, the expert female expertly established right away. apart from that they didn't explain so terribly much. they only ever explained to people what they probably knew anyway. she'd noticed that right away, she knew all about that kind of thing. "what can we do?" he'd answered. "these are the only ones we've got." but she'd only sucked in her breath and said: "you don't understand what I mean." "still," he'd tried again but she'd simply walked off.

squeaky-voiced female: what? just walked off?

square male continues: now he knew of course what she'd been getting at. he'd just had a bit of a mental block when it came to her.

squeaky-voiced female: just walked off?

assiduous male: hey, he'd always thought something couldn't be right.

squeaky-voiced female: how can she just walk off? can we just walk off? is that possible?

(squeaky-voiced female walks off)

assiduous male: and then?

square male (to him): she'd whispered: "it'll turn out in the end it was just a test."—"what?"

he'd asked, "in the end it was just a test?!"—i.e., everything had just been a trial run.

"preparation", she'd said slowly, and he hadn't understood. it was only now that the meaning of her words was dawning on him.

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square male: he'd had to digest it to start with, but he'd thought for a while and come to the conclusion, yes, it was just a test—

assiduous male (interrupting): but why? and when would they publish the test results? and what would we do with them then?

square male: yes, a test, but test or no test, that wasn't the question here, because it might have got out of control.

assiduous male: well, no one could say he hadn't paid attention, he wouldn't let anyone accuse him of that. someone like her or me, we hadn't paid attention, but he'd paid attention. he'd been on board, he'd been on board from the very beginning.

(after a short pause): it was just, was I really all right, he was starting to wonder, I didn't look like it. he meant, was that normal? he meant, did I always make such strange noises? he couldn't quite interpret my behavior.

square male: he didn't know either what was normal for me.

assiduous male: he thought the noises sounded dangerous.

square male: something else was dangerous.

assiduous male: what?

square male: he should look at it like this: there were still people out there who didn't know what liquid explosives were, just imagine. who thought it wasn't necessarily to be informed about certain bacteria.

assiduous male: what bacteria?

square male: anthrax bacteria, smallpox, cholera. there were just people who had to have everything explained to them at the last moment.

assiduous male: well, he didn't want to be one of those people right now.

square male: exactly!

assiduous male: but still: he didn't want to go on watching me any more either. he had the feeling something ought to happen.

square male: viruses! of course, that was where everything was heading.

assiduous male: well, he really couldn't stand to watch what I was doing. it made him feel sick.

square male: why hadn't anyone thought of viruses?

assiduous male: he meant, was it normal for me to be losing fluids, was that drooling and all that foaming at the mouth normal?

square male (to himself): why hadn't he thought of it sooner?

assiduous male: well, it was about time help started arriving. it was about time something really started happening to me. there was no point in just waiting around.

square male: nobody here was just waiting around any more. those times were over.

assiduous male: he didn't know either. he didn't know whether he wanted to stay now.

square male: he didn't want to miss the ending, did he?

assiduous male: he just didn't feel comfortable. he thought he wouldn't watch any more.

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square male: it couldn't be true! they wanted to know who the man was who pulled the trigger!

hey, where were the sayings? “wolves don’t do that kind of thing, and neither do coyotes,” and no, “it wasn’t wild animals that did all this!”

where were the questions? “is the time of self-appointed sheriffs breaking out, in the metaphorical sense as well? are we arriving in an inevitable re-run of the middle ages?”

oh, they’ll have said, there’s bound to be a group of formerly isolated individuals formed somewhere and now roaming the landscape in joined forces. roaming this insane landscape with its insane geography to found a new community, a survival community far removed from the hewing and stabbing going on here.

*

square male: I had my own ideas about it all, didn’t I? I did have ideas, didn’t I? I wasn’t reacting at all any more.

(after a while)

he couldn’t believe this was the end, he felt really quite cheated. it couldn’t be true. he’d thought something else would come out in the end.

(after a while)

now we must be alone, now everyone was gone—

(after a while)

had I heard him?

so now it was just the two of us. on our own together, so to speak. the others had let themselves off the hook. did I know they’d never be coming back? did I know they were really gone for

good? they thought you could just walk off. but really only someone who knew what was going on could walk off, and that was him, wasn't it. hey, he was sorry to say it but it had to be said.

(after a while)

well, he didn't believe it, that I wasn't scared. but I was probably too dumb to be scared. or not imaginative enough. people were always saying that, that people with no imagination have no fear. hadn't I noticed we were heading for an ending? well, there was no need for me to think everything would go on as before, tomorrow, there was no need to think that.

*

square male: of course he could tell me what would happen then: here in the apartment the fuses would blow, one after another. after that there'd be no power at all. and there'd be no water from the faucet, and no one would call on the phone either. the tv wouldn't work any more and the radio wouldn't either. it might give off sounds for a while but not for much longer. I couldn't imagine it, could I? and then, then a new future would stretch out before us.

(after a while)

well, I ought to have noticed by now that the situation was risky. but I was probably too little to be scared. I couldn't be scared properly yet. I lacked the correct connections in my brain. "the know-how!" the correct skills, that was it. but perhaps it was about time I learned them, that really would be better. I didn't want to stay here all on my own, I didn't want that, did I?

(after a while)

but if I didn't start getting it soon he couldn't help me either.

(square male walks off)

*

(the others' voices become audible)

assiduous male (whispering): if only they knew if I was still breathing. I'd really gone pretty damn quiet.

squeaky-voiced female (whispering): just leaving me behind like that, though—she thought that was strange.

assiduous male (whispering): that wasn't what he did. the old rule still applied: life comes first.

squeaky-voiced female (whispering): “even if it's a miserable life in the strictest sense.”

expert female (normal volume): “more vegetating than anything else.”

squeaky-voiced female: “says the doctor in charge?”

assiduous male: he had the feeling I was still registering things. but if he was honest that scared him, he didn't think it was a good thing at all, at the end of the day.

squeaky-voiced female: she thought it was creepy, they should just imagine: what if I heard every single word. what if I'd understood everything?

expert female: she'd rather not think about that right now.

SCENE II. THE ALERT FEMALE

characters: cassandra's secretary, (me, on the other end of the phone)—the cassandra fan can also be on stage, but doesn't speak.

scene: on the telephone

cassandra's secretary: I ought to just take a deep breath. take a deep breath before I went on talking. no one could understand me, no one could understand what I was trying to say. a deep breath in and out, ok? it was so easy to forget breathing out, she'd been told. and in fact breathing out was more important than breathing in, but she couldn't remember why. perhaps because used air was more damaging than no air at all, although she couldn't imagine that because she much preferred used air to none at all.

so I ought to make myself understood perfectly calmly, and above all I ought to start at the beginning, start telling the whole story from the beginning so that it made sense, one thing after another and not the other way around. otherwise she'd imagine god only knew what, she'd think god only knew what had happened, and I didn't want that, did I, I didn't want her to panic, one of us doing that was enough.

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but was I even sitting down in the first place? could I drink a glass of water? was anyone there, where I was now, who could bring me a glass of water?

*

fine. had I calmed down now? could I speak normally again? I sounded so quiet—

*

“well, great, let's start over from the beginning!” I'd always been so good at that, at telling a story from the beginning, I had a real talent for it, although when she thought about it I'd never really known where to start—all I'd always known was where to stop, where I wanted to head for, and sadly she didn't want to go there, she could tell me that already because she knew where that place was.

*

what? didn't she have to listen to me talking about water, about water with its water temperatures, with its flow velocities and its salt content? didn't she have to listen today to how much the particles communicated with each other, how they carried information across tens of thousands of kilometers? "well, who knew!"

but to be honest she didn't want to get these facts out of me, she'd rather switch off. but she wasn't allowed to switch off, wasn't she right? that is, the only thing allowed to be switched off was the underground waterfall that drove the gulf stream, and that was only for test purposes, to see what would happen.

would an ice age really break out in europe in ten years' time then, like I promised? that ice age that would change the appearance of continents for the coming hundreds of years, if not the coming thousands, ten thousands, was she right? what was going on out there would affect us all, sooner or later, and some of us were being affected now already. but still she hadn't heard me talking about sea water for such a long time now. it had somehow drained away in our most recent conversations, which had all been telephone conversations if she remembered rightly. no one got to see me in person any more. and still she'd simmered with excitement before our night-time conversations, spent a good while in pure anticipation of lectures on plankton, and for some time now there'd been nothing from me on the subject.

but perhaps it really was better now to return to plankton—I ought not to be like that: who was it who'd hammered the thousand meters' depth into her, who'd pretty much forced the water with its plankton down her throat, the water with its suspended particles and microorganisms, which could only thrive at zero degrees and made a big, big difference.

but I didn't have a patent on them, the things that counted as everyday meteorology, she could call a spade a spade too if she wanted, even if it sounded different when she said it. with me, a term like "polar drift" made people think automatically of the end of the world—but she'd lost her nerve for that kind of thing. she'd always tried to keep her nerves. she'd taken possession of part of my vocabulary and defused it, so to speak.

*

she meant, it was no wonder nature would take its revenge one day. she'd have expected a statement like that from me, actually. she didn't know whether she'd agree with me all the way, i.e., if you could call what was happening out there revenge. she'd always imagined nature's revenge as involving animals, and there was no animal involvement to be seen here. flocks, prides, packs, whatever. there was no revenge of the frogs or revenge of the birds and insects. it seemed to have been forgotten. nature takes its revenge differently, I'd presumably say now, but I wasn't saying it, which was a shame because then she could come in with the forest fires—

*

didn't I know: forest fires were part of the natural cycle. if there weren't any forest fires then there wouldn't be a certain kind of vegetation, then certain plants would die out. she hadn't quite understood it but the biologists and landscape gardeners I'd met on my trip to california started the fires themselves to keep the cycle going, she'd heard me exclaim down the telephone more than once: certain conifers wouldn't exist any more, trees and shrubs that needed the soot, that required the scorching. she'd always thought there was no such thing as masochism in plants. she'd imagined nature had a strict will for survival, but of course she'd had to admit I was right. and now I'd have to admit she was right for once—a strange process, wasn't it? admitting someone was right who I didn't really want to admit existed.

but did I want to confront the normality of forest fires now, seeing as I'd brought it up? she'd gladly admit she was very bad at confronting the normality of forest fires in california and the south of france herself, the normality of bush fires in australia and whatever else went up in flames from time to time. but it had to be done.

*

I didn't seem to have mastered the thing with the breathing in and breathing out properly yet. especially the breathing out. that didn't sound good at all, she noticed that kind of thing, she even noticed it over the phone, there was no need for me to think she'd gone deaf or she'd stopped listening to what I had to say. although no one would think badly of her if she did; she was one of those people you can tell things to, she had more of a talent for listening, and she wasn't going

to let that talent go to the dogs just because she was feeling rather exhausted, just because I'd made excessive use of it.

but that was what it was always like. the minute she got into a conversation with me, an image of permafrost popped up between us, which had begun to sway. and suddenly there were migration maps coming along from all sides, migration maps of birds' passages, of insects and butterfly swarms. or I'd launch into ice cores that betrayed something or other about stabilities or instabilities of vegetation periods across thousands of years or hundreds of thousands of years. hey, she was pretty amazed that I hadn't yet started in again with those migration maps, which I'd put up in my mind's eye and had no intention of taking down again, shifts in animals and plants: six meters up and sixty kilometers to the north over ten years.

not that she'd ever wanted to talk me out of climate change back then, she'd always known she couldn't do that, even if she'd wanted to. but there were still some very different ideas about climate change—

*

pardon? I wasn't going to deny that there were still people today who had a completely different relationship to carbon dioxide. up until not that long ago, there'd even been what might be called climate optimists—

and no, I wasn't to worry, she didn't want to force climate optimism on me in retrospect once everyone had generally turned their back on it, she couldn't possibly do that, just as little as she could force any other kind of optimism on me, because she knew me as a pessimist, albeit a cautious pessimist. but I did have to admit, even if anyone wanted to go into my cautious pessimism, then they couldn't help hearing the hum in the midst of that pessimism, the hum of the countermeasures that had long since been planned. and I'd have to agree one could only hope that hum would turn into a more solid sound, a solid backdrop of sound.

*

as if I didn't know it best of all myself: they weren't only building dykes in holland and denmark, there was also talk of constructing plastic shields that they wanted to put into orbit. there were stories of sulfur particles they wanted to add to airplane exhausts because they reflected the sunlight. of underground carbon dioxide depots to which pipelines could be laid across the country. so there were ideas going round, and they were ideas that always revealed their practical origins immediately. but I didn't seem to be interested in those ideas because in reality, I wasn't all that interested in saving anything. sure, there might be something ridiculous about the organic mayor with his organic light bulbs, but wasn't it those very people who made a difference?

*

there was no need for me to shout down the phone. did I know a person could talk to her perfectly calmly? there was nothing wrong with her hearing. she wasn't about to lose her nerve, just because I seemed to have done so, for my information. because that was what I was trying to achieve, wasn't it? I was bursting in on her down the telephone with my panic and all I wanted to achieve was to put her in a panic. but she was going to shut up shop now, she'd practically battened down her hatches, she wasn't going to put up with it any more.

and anyway: the result of my constant alarm was that nobody wanted to listen to me any more. did I know that, that I had to turn down the dosage now and then, the alarm dosage, so that it still had any effect? but I didn't seem to know that. anyway, the constant overdosing had the result that all I got were depleting alerts, depleting responses.

*

no, there was no need for me to complain! hadn't she gone along with everything voluntarily? hadn't she followed me into every scenario I'd set up? all the bse hysteria, asbestos angst, subtle fears, alzheimer inklings, bird flu exhortations, cellphone radiation terrors that had gone before the climate thing. surely I remembered they'd all come from me! I believed in climate catastrophes long before they ever took place.

did I remember the 80s? the 80s with their 80s obsession with the end of the world? she didn't remember any more, that was the thing, but people had told her about it, otherwise she'd be able to remember the typical 80s end of the world mania and decode the end of the world hum in my voice as a specific 80s retro thing.

but they'd made it out of the 80s, she'd been told, in the end. a little battered and bruised, but still.

one thing was for sure: the constant alarm had the result that the response depleted, in fact it had depleted almost to zero by now. my alarm glares hunting out alertness were all falling on stony ground now, the alertness was all alerted out, so to speak.

*

they ought to call me cassandra, had she said that before? a double cassandra to be precise, not a one-way-street cassandra, no, a cassandra who goes in both directions. because nobody listened to me and I didn't listen to anyone else either. but perhaps that had been the same with the original cassandra; there must have been some reason why a god cursed her or whatever, or things wouldn't have gone the way they did for her.

had no one ever thought of calling me cassandra? she'd christened me that long ago, in private, in public she called me by my name of course, but in private I was firmly called cassandra for her. and she thought other people secretly called me that too—she meant, there were astounding similarities, and if I wasn't careful I'd soon come to a cassandra-like end, and that wasn't a good end to come to, she could tell me that.

but when she thought about it, I wasn't only a double cassandra, I was also a fake cassandra, because the prophecies weren't even my own, they weren't plucked out of thin air as a kind of divine performance, a consultation with the gods. and on top of that, my visions weren't exactly the newest thing on the market, they were cribbed from other people—oh yes, I had my sources, even though I didn't always reveal them immediately. but that didn't matter at the end of the day. i.e., it had never mattered to her because she'd always felt privileged that I spoke to her. she'd considered herself my first conversation partner, so to speak, my only confidante, the only one

who got caught up in the tide of my prognoses. but she'd found out some time ago how wrong she'd been about that, when she'd heard about the others.

*

what others? there was no need for me to act so innocent. she knew perfectly well that I had these conversations with the others too. she'd thought herself my only night-time conversation partner for long enough. but she'd been forced to realize that the others were on the line as well. I'd kept our entire old circle of friends on tenterhooks. I'd kept martin on tenterhooks and gerit, silke and marco and teresa too. they'd all told her the same story. she didn't mind that, I shouldn't go thinking she saw it as a betrayal—quite the opposite, it had got too much for her, she'd been glad she could practically share the burden with the others, her burden as cassandra's listener.

she didn't know anyway how the whole telephone thing had come about. it had got so normal for me to call every couple of days. but we'd turned into a race of phone freaks—

didn't I know I got on people's nerves, that it could all be pretty damn annoying, that martin, silke and gerit had already started finding me difficult: could I ever come out of my permanent present tense, my cassandra present tense that I was hiding behind, was that possible, even just for a few seconds? that present tense of the kelp forests in the pacific, the present tense of the arctic plankton particles and detaching ice shelves, and end up in the present tense of the people around me?

I ought to be forced, they'd said, to divert my attention for one moment away from the migration maps I'd hung up in my mind's eye, which were blocking my view, my sight for the real everyday life out there, where people had to earn a living, people were under time pressure and starting families. I ought to take my leave of the permanent need for activity I placed over everything, the windows of opportunity that remained for this and that.

and anyway I'd got quite a lot of competition now, cassandra competition if you like, but I'd always wanted to stand out from the crowd, wasn't she right, or otherwise there wouldn't have been that change of strategy, that headlong pursuit. and her, she'd accompanied me on that

pursuit, if only on the telephone, surely I remembered that? surely I remembered the furor of research. the research furor I'd got into, and the people who suddenly existed. hey, all of a sudden there'd been people, and train stations and hotel bars along with them, there'd been taxi trips and return tickets, appointment difficulties, parking space problems.

*

come on, I couldn't deny I'd suddenly been going to see all those people. I'd kept meeting people in those sudden train stations and hotel lounges, those environmental centers, they were suddenly in the midst of everything, the experts and the authorities, those voices of expertise. and all the people I'd called experts and authorities! she'd always had the impression I practically stumbled over them. when she went on the subway there were no doubt warning response gaps and organizational gaps, but no sociologists to call her attention to them. but when it came to me, there were always biologists, chemists, geophysicists, hydrologists, fire ecologists, nuclear physicians, insurance lawyers, civil engineers. (engineers who made long-distance detectors for heat or for the chemical composition of clouds. people who could take measurements in a stadium and say: "the temperature's rising right here, that's where you'll get a riot starting in ten minutes.")

hey, who was it who started talking about maneuvers and maneuver realities? she'd heard me say more than once that the maneuvers were missing—it was a terrible thing if a population couldn't prepare for a catastrophe. and who was it who'd said: you had to experience a civil servant flipping out to know what to expect from him when the going got tough.

there was one thing no one could say: that I hadn't made myself sufficiently professional. no one would be able to say that later on, and she'd just professionalized herself along with me.

*

but she could tell I didn't want to get involved in this conversation she was offering me. maybe because, unlike me, she didn't have any risk reports in any desk drawers that some minister had previously had in his desk drawers, that might well have gone from one desk drawer to the next and ended up with me at some point. or maybe because she didn't know how civil servants ticked before they flipped out, she couldn't just put herself into civil servants' shoes the way I seemed to do and come up with an idea of what was going on in their minds. but maybe nothing was going on in their minds at all. especially now, late at night, maybe, when civil servant realities were set to zero, or reset as they called it nowadays.

but still: even she'd caught herself starting to talk about the a,b,c,d,e,f hazards when I'd been talking about the a,b,c,d,e,f hazards, and all along she'd been thinking: she refused to play along with this alphabetization, and suddenly she'd caught herself doing exactly the same alphabetization, and that was the point when she'd awarded herself the title of cassandra's secretary, once the others had presumably long since awarded her with it anyway.

she'd practically become my secretary, my cassandra secretary, or at least that's how she'd felt, always one step behind me, always one statement later, a kind of permanent shadow that followed me everywhere, maybe limping behind me.

*

I must have noticed her, I must have seen all her activity, seeing as I'd basically ordered it from her.

but she could tell I didn't want to remember that, which was typical. cassandra's secretaries were always being forgotten, that was their destiny. they worked in the background, organized all the cassandra stuff, only to disappear without a trace when the time came for cassandra's end. and that time was coming, wasn't she right?

*

she hadn't heard me quite right, there were so many other noises on the line. what was that crackling sound? she'd been hearing that clicking on the line all along. could I put a stop to that

crackling? and anyway, what were those strange background noises? did I deliberately surround myself with those noises to scare her?

but that was typical of me! I acted as if this was the last phone connection to europe. and she was the last person to speak to california, usbekistan or bosnia. she had no idea where I was. hadn't I recently called from the airport in istanbul? was I standing in some other airport again now?

*

we'd agreed I was going to calm down. surely I could keep to an agreement?

but when she thought about it, she didn't find my panic all that bad after all. in fact she thought it was a very good thing for me to experience first-hand for once what I otherwise triggered in other people.

*

pardon? could I speak a little louder, she couldn't understand me again. and it wasn't the phone line, all I was doing was whispering, and she had her problems with whispering. was I doing it on purpose, speaking so quietly that a person had to make a huge effort to understand me? sometimes a person didn't even know if I was still on the line. she couldn't even hear me breathing any more. had I put the phone down? hey, in the end it'd turn out I wasn't even on the phone any more and she'd been talking and talking for nothing.

*

no, there was no need for me to ask her forgiveness, I shouldn't keep on apologizing like I was right now, and that wasn't like me at all. that made her pretty suspicious.

she hardly recognized me! she'd really thought it was me she was dealing with when she spoke to me, and now she was dealing with a woman who'd lost all control of herself, who couldn't

distinguish any more between sensible and the nonsensical fears. I'd changed completely, she had to say so.

hey, at the moment I didn't match up at all with the image she had of me. all I was doing was giving off diffuse fears; she pretty much doubted it was really me. maybe she'd got the wrong person.

*

no, it'd be better if I was me, better for me to stick to the version of me she had in her mind. because she could only help the cassandra person she'd got to know over the years. surely that couldn't be all that difficult?

because recently she'd been getting the feeling more and more that she had to teach me to find my way back to the person I'd once been. she had to train me step by step, she was there to recreate my identity for me over the phone. I was practically picking up an old version of myself from her, as if I didn't know who I was any more.

I wanted to know if I still existed, that was why I'd called. she could really understand it because she'd often asked herself whether I still existed at all.

maybe I was some kind of ghost caller, a phantom that only lived in other people's reactions, in the panics I triggered. A kind of linguistic feedback, an acoustic remainder? hey, she'd even started asking herself if I was really a kind of ghost caller, one of those present-day telephone demons that existed alongside the automatic answer-machines and announcers of imaginary prize-winnings. someone who only lived on the telephone line, someone it was better not to turn down.

there was all that talk nowadays of those strange ghost callers with their long-distance announcements. they were popping up everywhere, and she wouldn't be surprised if the others told her I'd disappeared, I didn't exist at all any more. I'd died years ago, so to speak.

*

why the sudden change of subject? what did I mean, it wasn't about me now, it was about her?
was I trying to threaten her?
and why were we in the same boat all of a sudden?

*

what did that mean, I was very nearby?
and what? she wasn't reacting right? she didn't understand. she thought she was reacting just
right, she thought it was the only way to react at all.

*

I wasn't to start with that, I wasn't to start with common sense, along the lines of: "if you see
your house is on fire you run outside!" no, if she saw a house was on fire she didn't run outside.
she stayed inside, she waited to see if it was really on fire.
I was to leave her in peace with my common sense, it was common sense to blame for many a
panic.

*

what did I mean, she was twisting things around? who was it twisting things around here! I ought
to just take a look at my example, the example of the house you'd run out of because it was on
fire. and my houses that stayed around us forever. what kind of ridiculous image had I chosen:
"houses that stay around us forever!" as if such a thing even existed. and now she was supposed
to take it literally, was she right?

*

what? I wasn't telling her it was over now. that she'd run out of air any moment because there'd
be no air around her. I wasn't going to tell her about some banal side effect, about a cable fire

caused by overheating, a defect in the boiler stemming from the dire lack of maintenance work because nobody felt responsible for boilers any more in this situation.

or the fire came from someone going crazy due to the general state of affairs, the kind of thing that happened so often nowadays. arsonists taking human victims? or what else was an option? I'd probably have a field day with the banality of apparently coincidental accidents, I saw their numbers on the rise everywhere, and of course I thought they weren't coincidental at all, they happened because of the radically changed conditions. I wasn't going to go on about specific side-effects, was I, and end up moaning to her about shortness of breath, about a sick feeling in the limbs. I wasn't going to say the lack of alertness, of willingness to react, was shifting to a lack of ability to react, was I, and tell her about various kinds of possible pain that might set in, might set in soon or even had set in already, pain that resulted from a decomposition process that had begun, that began when the lungs ran out of steam. I wasn't going to say she hadn't made it to the window, she hadn't been able to take measures against shortness of breath but had stayed down, stayed lying in that suddenly heated and smoke-filled room.

I wasn't going to talk to her in some perverse past tense. I wasn't going to say she'd arrived at a place where the pluperfect and the future perfect came together, I wasn't going to say that, was I, or that they'd been my last words.

INTERLUDE: CASSANDRA'S FANBOY

characters: cassandra's fanboy, (me)

scene: backstage

cassandra's fanboy: there were a whole lot of people out there wanting to talk to me. and he didn't want to take up all my time but he had the feeling I didn't want to talk to them at all, at least I didn't look like I wanted to go out there right now. I looked more like I wanted to switch to reverse and disappear, "but disappearing's not an option," was he right?

well he was going to disappear again in a minute, he for one, he could promise me that.

anyway, I was so right about all the things I said. he could only agree with me, that was what he'd wanted to say out there, where I'd got the totally wrong end of the stick. I'd understood it as criticism but actually it had been meant as exactly the opposite of criticism. but that happened to him quite often. it was something positive, what he wanted to say, he was a supporter of mine—and how great that he could tell me personally now. he just happened to have come by here and seen the door open.

well, the door had been open.

I'd been distracted out there. there'd been rather a lot of strange people in my audience, and presumably I'd thought he was one of those oddballs. one of those paranoid people who start off with secret satellite pictures showing mass migrations from africa to europe or one of those hand-knitted 70s types who always want to talk about nato, or one of those pseudo-theologians who wanted to bring on their washed-out ethics and their general do-gooder-ness, one of those nervous students who went on about ethical standards and their shifts but only ever in strict relation to their dissertations. but I was mistaken, he wasn't one of them.

no, he'd wanted to say one thing and nothing else, and he thought it was totally important that people like me were speaking out. that happened far too rarely in the first place. sure, he knew I wasn't interested in being in the right, but it was still obvious how many people were still against me, he'd been following my career, he followed practically every appearance I made.

so the first thing he had to say was: bravo! he'd noticed my change of strategy and he thought it was great. he meant, they hadn't been any good any more, my public appearances. the way I'd looked and how I'd dealt with my opponents, I knew what he meant, didn't I. and this time it had all been much different than last time. on that talk show with those odd characters, where he'd asked himself what I was doing there in the first place. hey, he thought it was great that I'd changed my strategy, my appearance had really been A-plus, sometimes he hadn't been able to follow me in the past. and then he'd thought: with a woman of my intelligence, he couldn't blame me if things sometimes came out a bit complicated. but all that interrupting myself, the stuttering, he'd found that rather counterproductive. and now my words were just right, they were just right for the gestures that always matched my words.

I'd said a lot, I'd practically left nothing out, so to speak—

and yet: I'd have to allow him one small criticism—one little criticism had to be allowed, didn't it? because sometimes I simply told people what they already knew. people were actually better informed than I thought, and we shouldn't keep telling them the same thing over and over as if it was totally new. otherwise we'd scare them off. the biofuels thing, that had hit home by now, everyone knew about it, people started yawning, they lost interest, they turned away and walked off, in private.

on the other hand I needn't take my conversation partners so seriously. sure, they'd been pure testosterone-beasts, people whose main problem was with their own visibility. they'd just occupied subjects, subjects that simply promised a certain amount of public attention—"but that doesn't matter!"—just another example of how ignorance coupled with a huge portion of ego-shooter mentality always makes it through.

and that comment was out of order, that comment that people like me always wanted to stand by the exit of history. always looked at the world from its ending, always knew better. as if I was just a passing maneuver.

no, he had to say: congratulations on my change of strategy!

he'd really plugged me, anyway. he'd say about 70% of the people, what was he saying, 80% of this evening was down to him, for sure. he was full of enthusiasm for me, he couldn't just keep his distance, so of course he wanted to see results.

he'd got really annoyed when I'd let myself get interrupted, very annoyed. he could really lose his temper when the same mechanisms kept coming into play, when my arguments were cut short, when people butted in on me in a group like that. he could hardly keep himself under control, he could hardly stay on his seat, he always wanted to leap up and tell them what he thought. but he couldn't do that, could he.

well, he'd been stinking mad, and he was surprised I hadn't got stinking mad too, that I'd put up such a friendly face. and in retrospect he still didn't understand why I shook hands with those

people afterwards. and why I went to dinner with them. he'd had that impression for some time now, that I went to dinner with the wrong people, attended the wrong appointments and shook the wrong hands.

and there we were back at that point that was troubling him. he was amazed at how seriously I still took certain people. but I'd correct that, wasn't he right? he had a right to that minor correction, he could demand that of me by all means—wasn't he right?

but he hadn't thought people like me could have blackouts. it had been relatively embarrassing in there. but I wouldn't have another blackout like that again now, wasn't he right? we'd work on that now, wouldn't we?

because otherwise he'd have to start looking for a replacement for me, and that cost a lot of time and energy. and I wouldn't want that, would I. it'd be better for me if he didn't have to look for a replacement.

was I ready to go back out again now, had I had a good breather and was I ready to face the public again?

SCENE III: THE ADULTS

characters:

parent council chairwoman (also a teacher and a "friend" of "me")

school psychologist

plus parents as silent listeners

"me"

scene:

parent council meeting in classroom

she: she wanted to clear up any misunderstandings right from the word go. there were enough complications on the table, so we shouldn't start in with a misunderstanding. because there'd been a misunderstanding. things weren't the way I said they were—she hadn't summoned me here, I'd been invited to a dialog and I'd accepted that invitation, as everyone could see. there was no need for me to turn it on its head and make a compulsion out of it.

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he: but I should take a seat first of all.
didn't I want to take off my coat?
no?

she: I was welcome to stay standing up, of course, if I preferred, but they just wanted to point out that it might take a while, and apart from that it wasn't exactly conducive to the communication atmosphere. we were here to talk to one another, weren't we? I'd always been in favor of that, of talking to one another.
and no, she hadn't come up with this meeting, as I seemed to presume, we'd agreed on it together, if I remembered rightly.

he: we'd agreed on it. all parties had expressed a wish for it.

she: and she'd made herself available as the first speaker, not only because she was the parents' representative in the class and a teacher at the school herself, but also because we'd known each other for some time, because we had a good rapport with one another.

*

he: "right, let's get to the point."

she: the whole way I was behaving only showed my distrust. my distrust, which she'd been keeping an eye on for some time now and which she didn't want to see any more, because she liked it less and less. a distrust that stopped at nothing, nothing and no one—

he: not even at my own child.

she: sure, regarding their children as time bombs that might explode at any moment, that was something lots of parents did now. a person heard all sorts of stories. there was talk of violence at schools, anti-social behavior, refusal to communicate, acts of sabotage, trouble spots. everyone here knew the phenomenon: we parents stood around our children and watched how they behaved on a social level. we observed them to spot the tiniest ailment, any failure to function. we registered the most minor comment from the teaching staff, even more than that, we even tried to egg on the teaching staff if they seemed lax to us, we demanded that the children had more homework, because we looked ahead and we were always thinking of the next level, of getting on—

he: so grade school from kindergarten, high school—

she: and sometimes we even skipped certain levels and only focused on the very end.

he: we were always worried that the children weren't sufficiently prepared, we lived with the knowledge that they had to prove themselves very differently now than in our day.

if he thought of all the parents who'd come to him with the question of whether their six-year-old was already having performance difficulties in any areas. they trembled at every test, at every growth stage, over whether their child would make it. sometimes they talked of nothing else but educational support, cognitive support, motor-skills support—

she: and that was fine.

he: because no one here in this room wanted a child with performance difficulties, an unconcentrated child, a hyperactive child, a child with attention deficits. they'd all selected this school carefully, and before that their kindergarten, their after-school care, their pediatrician, their speech therapist, their home tutor. they were all active members of the parents' council, they all took care...

she: unlike me, they all came along to the meetings.
no, there was no need for me to come up with excuses.

he: all parents had panics: grade-school panic, toddler panic, social and performance panic, all the usual parent panics that happened to everybody—

she: but not to the extent that I'd developed them. hey, I didn't have any of those part-time panics she saw in other parents, with me it was a permanent state of affairs.
the baby wasn't moving properly, I'd said right after the birth, it wasn't displaying the right reflexes. it was stand-offish, it wasn't learning to speak properly, it had an abnormal motion program. I sensed abnormalities at every opportunity. I hadn't measured and weighed my baby fearfully like other parents and then learned to love it, I'd kept on measuring. every measurement was followed by another measurement, as if I actually hoped to find something.

*

she: come on, how often had she sat with me, how much time had we spent at each others' kitchen tables discussing questions of coming and threatened calamities!

and also: she wasn't saying that alone, just on her own behalf, as an individual opinion. other people thought the same, my husband for example, she was speaking on his behalf too. hey, he thought she was just as right as the others did, and perhaps he'd like to say something right now, "gerit, would you like to say something?"—no? (*husband fends her off silently*)

this wasn't supposed to end up a monolog by her, that wasn't the point here—

he: as he said, I saw my child as a time bomb about to explode, and they wanted to inform me that that time bomb had now actually exploded.

*

she: well, there was one thing she knew for sure: children didn't do that kind of thing.

children didn't sit there and wait for nature's revenge, for example. they didn't say: "no wonder nature is taking revenge."

he: but a statement like that could be expected from my child at the moment—

she: and it was clear where the child got it from.

he: sure, all children had a propensity for catastrophe. they were just interested in volcano eruptions and that kind of thing: earthquakes, ice ages, threatened landslides, specific weather phenomena like whirlwinds, cyclones and hurricanes, mudslides, there was nothing we could do, these things just magically attracted them, there was no way to prevent it or stop it. it was incredible how much knowledge children had at their fingertips nowadays, what they had access to, not least through the internet. information they couldn't even understand properly.

*

she: this here was a grade school, for my information. we were in the third grade. we weren't dealing with fourteen-year-olds here.

he: as he said: normally, children of a certain age just had a propensity for catastrophe. but there were limits to it. I could trust his many years of experience on this one. sure, there were even children who referred to scholarly publications—

she: but they were basically hyperactive children.

he: yes, that group had gotten larger—

she: and what was the best thing to do at home in those cases? not intensify those impulses!

he: in the usa they made short work of it and prescribe ritalin, ritalin by the bucket, but that wasn't the way it was dealt with here, people here didn't tackle a problem on a purely chemical

level, they believed in the use of educational and disciplinary measures as well. they believed in the social environment, and that was an achievement that I ought not to just throw overboard.

*

she: was I aware of what my daughter had been saying? did I know what people she claimed to be in contact with? with doctors and medical historians, with catastrophe research analysts, with environmental officers, she claimed she'd spoken to virologists, people from the institute for infectious diseases! and where did she get all these people from, what did I think?

he: the teachers had told him they'd never been able to tell my daughter anything about epidemics, pandemics and virus infections, about sensible and nonsensical precautions, she'd always known all about it before they'd even started. she'd always already heard about the rising percentages, about the arrival of some bird flu in some corner of the country, about a sudden increase in mysterious deaths at airports. malaria due to climate change? my daughter was in the picture. viruses, bacteria, autoimmune disorders, systemic issues—my daughter knew all about it.

and not only that—she didn't approve at all of the way the teachers dealt with it. she was constantly contradicting them.

*

she: what? I didn't know anything about that? had I ever taken a close look at my daughter? had I ever listened to what she was always saying? did I talk to her? did I answer her questions at all? that didn't go without saying nowadays, despite all the advertising, the poster campaigns by the family ministry, the tv ads and radio slots aiming to make parents more willing to talk to their children.

he: it was often the parents who worried the most about their children who talked to them the least.

she: either they couldn't or they wouldn't, they'd say they were too busy,

he: which was usually true.

she: they'd talk about timeslots they had to organize for their children.

he: timeslots for a dialog, for a meal together.

she: then the children would pop in to these timeslots and catch sight of their exhausted and plagued parents—

he: but at least they could get an impression of them,

she: so they said.

could I assess my child's age correctly? she had the suspicion I secretly considered her an adult, what with the way I treated her, or almost an adult. what with the subjects I confronted her with. she'd be glad to inform me of how old my child really was, if I liked.

*

he: of course that was my own private business—but they didn't believe I really thought that way—

she: gerit didn't believe it either, and nor did martin and silke, etc. I could ask everyone in the room and I wouldn't find anyone who believed what I said—"right, silke?"

he: after all, they knew me as a person who was cautious, but didn't disconnect herself from everything going on around me.

she: and they couldn't believe me that I of all people, the one who'd gone along with all the parent panics, had no idea of what was up with my daughter.

*

he: it was natural for me to defend my child, who wouldn't do that in my place, i.e., what mother didn't want that, and I was known, he'd been told, as a lioness of a mother—

she: but I still had to see that it couldn't go on this way.

and there was no need for me to prevaricate, a child simply repeated what it saw and heard at home, there was no need for me to deny it, and seeing as I was practically a single parent—“sorry, gerit!”—I was responsible for what went on at home. a child emulated other people's actions. if all they got to know at home was expectations of catastrophe, then they took that expectation of catastrophe along to school.

*

she: what? that wasn't what I wanted to say? and what did I mean by: she wasn't that wrong after all?

he: “let's look at the facts. the facts are: we're dealing with a regular epidemic right now.”

she: “but it's a parallel epidemic, an unreal epidemic, an imaginary one. an epidemic that has to be nipped in the bud, so to speak, i.e., its elictor, its cause has to be found, an elicitor who isn't suffering the symptoms though.”

he: it was hard to say what kind of epidemic it was exactly. he suspected it was more the willingness for disease than a specific disease itself. parents didn't recognize their own children. they were drifting out of their control—“that's how you put it, mareike, wasn't it?”

*

she: maybe I didn't want to understand it—we weren't just dealing with huge attention deficits here—the children weren't listening in class any more—

he: we were also facing a huge occurrence of psychosomatic phenomena. did I realize these concentration difficulties were accompanied by vulnerability to hay fever and asthma, all the suddenly occurring food allergies that had increased over the past months?

she: fine, I'd say, phenomena like that weren't contagious. but that assumption wasn't quite right. it seemed that children didn't just infect each other with colds, measles, and mumps, they also caught each others' forebodings, imaginings and fantasies, allergic reactions, psychosomatic phenomena. and the rest of the children were sufficiently distracted not to listen in class any more.

he: surely I wanted my daughter to become a more positive person too, someone who integrated into society.

she: and the parents. had I thought of the parents? of the parents who really did have to keep weighing their children, measuring them and taking blood samples, and not just as a prophylactic measure like I did. had I thought of the real peanut and strawberry allergy parents, the lactose intolerance parents, the fructose intolerance parents, the glucose and diabetes faction, of the parents with real skincare situations, with breathing sensitivity issues? and the children who had enough to deal with their the excesses of their central nervous systems, the mis-reponses of their autoimmune systems.

he: surely I could show a little empathy. how would I feel if my child was constantly switching off, constantly getting shivers and coming out in rashes?

*

she: what my daughter did exactly? my daughter was keeping an epidemic alive.

he: "the facts are: we have an exceptional situation here." these were the facts:

she: my daughter was manipulating the other children. she was exerting her influence, just like I exerted my influence with my suggestive nature.

and to pre-empt my argument, there was no point in talking to my daughter directly. she was almost impossible to speak to. that is, she evaded pedagogical approaches in an extremely clever way. of course she wouldn't admit to that.

he: they'd only found out the whole thing by coincidence, and now it had to be sorted out by the adults. I no doubt remembered the working group on "mini machiavellis" we had last year: "how much assertiveness is good at grade school?" we'd been through the study and established that it was about children who were highly likely to remain in a perpetrator continuity—

she: ...because they were encouraged by their parents, who only ever thought of their children's later working lives.

he: did I want that, for my daughter to remain in a perpetrator continuity, should her manipulative behavior be encouraged?

she: she remembered what ms. gerlach had said: "we're all involved in these children's strategy formation, we can't close our eyes to that!" and now I was the one closing them, "right, martin?"

*

she: she wasn't speaking as a teacher, she was speaking to me as a friend.

and as my friend, she was saying we should open up the question of how to go on now to everyone in the room, simply and uncomplicatedly. and as she said, she didn't want to hold any monologs, other people were welcome to have their say.

*

she: what she was doing exactly? they didn't know precisely, they only had second-hand information. and she didn't know my daughter's behavior at home, she probably didn't tell me what went on at school, but her son did report to her, thank god.

*

she: she'd thought that would come along about now. but there was absolutely no need for me to get personal. there was no need for me to insult her or her son. that was absolutely unnecessary.

he: I ought to look at it like this: we were all being held hostage in this strange situation that had come about over the past few weeks.

*

she: did she have to remind me? as I knew, there'd been a death at another school, and I surely didn't want there to be a death at this school?

he: it had to be nipped in the bud. something like that mustn't be allowed to happen here.

she: or did I want to wait until there was a dead child to show for it?

he: hey, we'd heard all sorts of stories of other schools where extreme phenomena had occurred because they hadn't taken care.

she: she was talking about body management that backfired, about developments such as those at many high schools in recent years—I did remember?—the media had talked about a regular epidemic of anorexia. and there'd been talk of a wave of suicides. surely I knew that the pupils at a school in scandinavia had agreed to—

*

she: she wasn't saying my daughter was telling people to commit suicide!

that is, she wasn't doing it directly, it was more subtle than that.

he: but sure, it was about self-harming, it was about a kind of refusal to be healthy, but on such a subliminal level that it couldn't really be proved. a refusal to conform to the norm, the green zone that children were usually happy to be in.

*

she: the teachers were alarmed, I could take their word for that.

he: but as long as my daughter didn't display any learning abnormalities the teachers' hands were tied, he was sure I'd understand that.

she: no, they needed my support. surely I'd show sense. I wouldn't want to let them down. I did have an influence over my daughter and I'd be able to exert that influence?

he: but perhaps she was being influenced from the wrong direction—had I thought about that at all? did I give my child to other people to look after from time to time? people who might be suspected to have some kind of religious background?

she: it was fine for me to admit I sometimes gave my child to other people, after all that was what practically single mothers did—"sorry, gerit!"—

*

she: she wasn't being aggressive, I was the aggressive one here. I wasn't proving very willing for a dialog, and she thought that was a real shame—actually though, she'd expected me to deny everything and react with aggression.

*

she: no, how many times did she have to say it, we'd discussed it already, I hadn't been summoned here as I was putting it again—

he: I'd been invited to a dialog—

she: as she'd said, she'd made herself available because she was actually close to me. She had to say, she was disappointed, pretty disappointed. she was stepping aside now, if I wanted it that way, she was letting the others have their say, seeing as I'd rejected her offer of a dialog, and I'd soon see the odd hard word being spoken here.

“the facts are,” and she was saying this to everyone now, “we have a mother here who refuses to cooperate.”

“who wants to say something?” she'd collected opinions, there was a list of people involved, there was a series of speakers. and I'd have to take my turn in the list of speakers.

he: “it's heike's turn now, I think”—

*

she: no, it was nothing to do with uptight eco-freaks.

*

he: “gerit, it'd be really great if you'd say something,” it'd be great if he'd give them a little support right now.

she: “georg, what about you?”

*

he: he thought the best thing would be to take my daughter out of school. as quickly and simply as possible, not making a big deal about the whole thing.

she: and yes, the faculty were behind the idea.

apart from that, she had the feeling the discussion had run its course. i.e., I didn't have anything constructive to contribute. the others' participation had been fairly minor, but as there hadn't been any votes against, she hereby declared the meeting closed—

that is, if she could say something personal to me to finish off: she thought it was about time my daughter got sick herself for once, so that she'd see what harm she'd been doing. hey, she guessed a decent infection might bring her back down to earth. something that really knocked her out for once, but she was sure something like that was bound to happen soon anyway. and she had an idea what it might be.

SCENE IV: THE RELATIVES (german public radio)

1: male presenter, 2: female presenter

3: male financial expert, 4: female citizens' advisor

5 & 6: female and male backup engineers

scene: radio studio

1 and 2 on air, 3 and 4 arriving, 5 and 6 in the control booth

1: the press spokesman said they don't have a quick-fire answer at hand, but then who does?

2: it's important to wait until normalization occurs now. it's important to go back to everyday routine now, after we abandoned it so hastily.

1: in retrospect things tend to take on a different color, one mustn't forget that. they have different temperatures, they're cooling down and then they look different.

3: retrospectively, you wish you'd gone up closer.

4: but there wasn't really anything much to see, was there? i.e., not as much as you always imagine. it's a shame really, when you think about it.

3: you'd have liked to see more, at least.

2: but we're still right in the middle of it, things are still going on, "ladies and gentlemen".

4: things are always going on.

3: you want to have something to tell your grandchildren.

1: we've been lucky, the press spokesman has just repeated. it could have ended differently. But the skill, the tenacity and the self-sacrifice of the intervening forces had done their bit, he says.

2: we've been lucky.

4: things are always being exaggerated. back then with chernobyl they thought all sorts of things and then nothing happened after all.

3: well, did nothing really happen? nobody really knows that.

1: in any case it's a good idea to say how cooperative people have become.

2: one shouldn't think that doesn't make it through to us here, it all makes it through.

1: from broad-based solidarity campaigns to stories of spontaneous neighborly help.

2: it all makes it through. not to forget the incredible wave of donations.

1: the red cross have had to block their accounts because they don't know what to do with all the money.

3 and 4 on their way to the recording booth.

3: because the donations are ring-fenced?

4: other organizations have it easier.

1: he can assure us that everything's being dealt with correctly, the red cross spokesman has assured us. no one needs to worry that their money's going to end up in the wrong channels.

3: we're a donor nation in that respect as well, when it comes down to it.

4: even though it's for our own sake.

3: we've always rushed to people's aid whenever there was a need somewhere.

*

all four now on air

1: however, the final all-clear signal isn't being given yet, there can't be a final all-clear signal, that's just the situation we have to live with. in the expectation that something like this will happen again.

2: but he's not always on the lookout, the young listener from bremen just said, and one can only agree there...

1: the caller from stuttgart sees that very differently. one shouldn't tempt fate, she says, but a certain level of alertness is imperative.

2: ...after all, it's important to put together some form of everyday life.

1: we've just had someone on the line who has bigger problems with the issue. the money still hasn't reached her. she hasn't seen any relief supplies, says a lady who'd prefer not to be named.

4: there have to be people who profit from these situations. you'll always find people like that.

3: it's perfectly understandable that people want to return to their everyday lives.

1: it's understandable that they want answers, mr meyer from dresden points out, one mustn't keep fobbing them off.

2: but now and then even this particular institution can only announce its own helplessness.

3: no wonder: even the public authorities are overstretched.

4: you can't even reach the relevant institutions by telephone.

1: they were always available for questions, the government emphasizes, they were always on standby, one can't simply claim the opposite now, after the fact. they always had an open ear for people's problems.

4: but as soon as the media pressure lets off you can't reach them on the telephone any more.

2: and all we can do too is to keep on reassuring people: go back to your workplaces! do what you can! go shopping, spend time with your families, concentrate on your lives again!

1: people are glad of these suggestions, even if they don't put them into practice.

4: and the relevant institutions, the federal office of civil protection and disaster assistance, you can't reach them on the telephone either. you could clear up all sorts of things on the telephone.

3: such as?

*

2: the caller from a moment ago has something else to ask: have we survived?

4: pardon?

2: she means have we survived now or is there more to come?

4: I don't know, they didn't say anything about it in the special broadcast an hour ago.

3: it's not clear whether it's over or not.

1: yes we have, we have survived.

2: just that there's no final all-clear signal.

1: there can't be a final all-clear signal, that's just the situation we have to live with.

2: let's put it like this: the experience hasn't left most of us unaffected, says mr berger from bischofsheim, if we think about the strange silence that reigned in the relevant places. if we think about the willingness to help again. cases of willingness to help that one wouldn't have thought possible any more.

3: yes, that's how it is, isn't it? once the first screaming matches happen in the subway stations, that's when you know it's over. when people start passing one another without saying hello, that's when you've got back to everyday life.

4: a good benchmark.

3: everyone likes to look back on that, that voluntary help among peers.

4: so it really does still work, people said spontaneously, and happily.

1: and yet: there are gray zones now, gray zones in the way we think about security, mr zikowski from ingolstadt would like to point out.

2: she's certain, says ms merker from lüneburg, that anyone with specialized skills is always glad to show them off.

1: the listener from schwalmstadt would like to respond to the listener from regensburg, who said earlier that he couldn't get hold of anyone. the responsible institutions had shut up shop. she's only too familiar with that problem. it's still difficult to get hold of anyone at all, to this day.

4: the institutional problem has been discussed enough elsewhere. and anyway the majority of the population know the numbers they have to dial.

3: perhaps they're not that well known after all? perhaps they have to be said over and over?

1: the listener from schwalmstadt would like to add something: setting up self-help groups is a tried and tested method. the problem only comes about when we're dealing with fundamental societal issues, with infrastructure issues. no self-help group has ever built a functioning electricity grid.

2: even hypothetically?

1: even hypothetically.

2: mr kasten from bavaria would just like to comment: he always got hold of everyone. when the danube flooded two years ago, just as an example, they set up an emergency hotline straight away.

4: ...is he suggesting the danube flood can be compared with the situation over the past few weeks?

1: ms berger from quedlinburg had very different experiences as well. ms berger, would you like to tell us about your experiences? ms berger doesn't want to tell us.

2: she'd like to add something to what's been said, says the lady on the line from bielefeld, to what the gentleman from bremen—or was it ingolstadt?

1: ingolstadt!

2: what the gentleman from ingolstadt said before. one mustn't throw the baby out with the bathwater. but one still has to take people's fears seriously.

1: the listener from schwalmstadt would like to respond to the listener from regensburg, she'd like to—

2: the listener from regensburg has hung up.

1: that's a shame. the listener from schwalmstadt asks if she can still have her say anyway. The listener from schwalmstadt isn't a religious woman, she says, but she has noticed something. people generally expected it.

2: the listener from regensburg has hung up. so has the listener from sindelfingen, the friendly gentleman from bochum, and the lady from meckenheim.

1: only the lady who doesn't want to be named is still on the line.

3: what's she doing?

1: she's waiting to see.

6 via the internal line from the control booth

6: what? what's she waiting for?

2: ...that's what mr schreiner would like to know too. who'll answer him? you, ms wisotzki? or maybe you, mr kleinschmidt?

1: who'd like to answer?

3: *(sighs)*

silence. 6 cuts off the internal line again.

1: we only have limited timeslots, as I'm sure the two callers from pasewalk are aware. they want to speak together. they're right, the situation is rather more complex.

3: we have to roll out the energy policy discussion, of course, and the issue of public health provisions. there are lots of construction sites we have to address with more determination at last.

4: then there'd be the whole social issue, but we haven't got time to cover that.

3: that'll have to go unsaid this time.

2: even the callers know that. they've started speaking collectively, it seems.

1: yes, time is short.

3: just as we won't be able to discuss the water levels forever.

4: why the water levels?

3: or get caught up forever on the wind velocities.

4: we stopped talking about that ages ago.

3: yes, it's crazy how quickly everything becomes the past.

*

2. mr wurster, I'm afraid we can't understand you very well right now. mr wurster, is it a bad line?

1: we seem to have a minor technical problem at the moment.

2: mr wurster, perhaps you could call back in a minute or two.

1: we have a minor technical problem at the moment!

2: please don't call right now!

1: the connection is rather difficult at the moment.

2: we have a technical problem that will soon solve itself.

1: the networks are under too much pressure.

2: no, we can't hear you any more mr schreiner, we can't hear you any more! mr schreiner, can you hear me, we can't hear you any more, mr schreiner, the contact is—mr schreiner, please contact the relevant institution with your problem—mr schreiner, are you still there? mr schreiner?

1 & 2 remove their headsets.

*

5 & 6 use the break to cut in on the internal line.

5: we all aged over those few days, we've all got more mature.

6: and quieter.

5: yes, the experience maneuvered us into a new stage of our lives, with nothing of the carefree hanging out and messing around we used to do all the time.

6: we've survived, but certain things had to be sacrificed.

3: yes, for the time being we'll have to turn a blind eye to the government's austerity plans.

4: it's obvious you'd say something like that. a financial expert has to make that kind of statement.

3: we'll just all have to tighten our belts a little.

4: well, some more than others...

2 puts on headset hectically

2: what we have to say at this point is that people should stop donating physical goods. the people out there are drowning in physical goods.

1 puts on headset

1: (*stuttering*) in this respect we're facing huge logistical problems.

4: another interesting thing: the spectator phenomenon. the last storm, for example. people wouldn't let anything stop them from being there. a lot of them even drove to the affected areas specially. there was a mass tourism movement that blocked the rescue work.

3: you can say a hundred times over: don't go there, and still they block the rescue work, they don't react.

4: they stand there and stare at the suffering.

5: they were relatives.

1: they're not relatives, they're rubbernecks, says the herald tribune.

2: oh please, they're mostly people who want to help, writes la libération.

1: and la repubblica says: people ought to stay at home and go about their work, that's what would be most helpful in this situation, if this form of state of emergency, which is accompanied by huge economic sacrifices, isn't drawn out artificially.

2: no, de volkskrant from amsterdam corroborates.

1: and der standard from vienna: for the time being we'll have to trust blindly in the forces of stabilization.

a short silence

3: it's crazy how quickly something becomes the past.

2: we ought to be concentrating entirely on the present.

1: and we—

4: the only ones who remember it are the bereaved.

5: yes, in the end there's always a little group of relatives standing around somewhere, preserving memories nobody needs.

6: the little group of relatives that nobody can get rid of. there's always a remainder on display.

5: yes, in the end it's relatives again, getting in the way of every operation.

6: making every assignment more difficult... not letting any expert team do their work and questioning every commission's decision.

4: they're the ones who make all access more difficult.

6: they're the ones who have to be taken care of in the end. it's absurd.

5: they're the ones who distract attention, who are always making trouble. hey, let's be open about it:

3: let's look at the facts.

5: if they hadn't been permanently in the way the whole thing would look very different. we'd have been one step further long ago.

6: you'll find them all over the planet, these little groups of disgruntled relatives everywhere. alright, let's give them a hearing for a while. let them have their say, but at some point enough is enough, at some point it puts you in a bad mood. in the end it'll be time to bury all their complaining just like everything else.

5: but there's no room for the complaints of so-called relatives alongside the dead.

6: right.

2: we ought to let things take their course and not hold onto them artificially.

1: we have to make sacrifices.

5: hey, let's be open about it: if it wasn't for them we'd have had a very different basic situation.

6: but we won't let them spoil our joy, the joy that we're still around.

*

intermission and musical interlude

6: strange—they hadn't heard anything from me for a good while now.

5: but they remembered me well.

6: no need to worry.

5: I always popped up in their conversations, I was always popping up in their thoughts.

6: I was still around there. he personally had prepared a little rite for me, a remembering rite, a little aide-memoire. he'd put together a mnemonic to help him remember me.

5: she always turned to the newspaper articles for help.

6: it wasn't always easy to remember the details.

5: people told different versions.

4: on the other hand, they couldn't keep thinking about me all the time.

3: no, that was true.

5: just like it's impossible to believe you were there yourself in the end.

6: that you weren't there.

5: sometimes both, even.

6: these things just grow apart.

*

3: a shame I couldn't experience it all actively any more.

4: she was sure I was listening to them, wherever I was now. I'd see the positive side.

5: I wouldn't carp on like some people, people who always craved attention.

6: I could take a step back now and then. and make room for more important subjects.

*

end of intermission, back on air

1: no need to worry, they wouldn't forget me, but first of all people wanted to get on with their lives, with their jobs, with their health.

6: but we won't let them take away our pleasure.

2: getting on with their own health, that's the goal of any thinking person now. the health of the masses has gathered together and wants to get what it's entitled to.

6: the joy that we're still around.

1: that joy would like to be heard too for once.

2: let's listen to it!

*

big delays on the a1 southbound from cologne-north all the way back to the cologne-lövenich junction.

the a1 northbound toward dortmund is loaded up from gevelsberg to westhofen junction, with a long backup after an accident at a construction site. we've got a defective truck across one lane but the authorities are on the scene.

on the a2 from hanover to dortmund, the kamener junction exit to the a1 toward bremen is closed for construction until the end of the year. traffic is being diverted but you're best off looking for alternative routes.

reports are coming in of very slow traffic on the a2 from dortmund to oberhausen, with only two lanes open due to a building site.

on the a3 westbound from oberhausen to cologne, watch out for backups. traffic lights continue to malfunction between the langefeld and cologne-dellbrück junctions after a crash.

we're still looking at significant delays on the a3 nuremberg to passau: an earlier collision has been cleared but traffic's backed up to the regensburg-burgweinting junction.

a6 kaiserslautern southbound to saarbrücken, there's been some fire department activity between kaiserslautern-west and ramstein-miesenbach, with a domino effect and the right lane still blocked.

watch out on the a7 hanover to kassel: we've got pedestrians on the lane between derneburg/salzgitter and salzgitter junctions.

the end