

THE STATION

A play by Dzeni Redzepovic

A Creative Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

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The Station

BY

Dzeni Redzepovic

**A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University of
Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the degree
of
MASTER OF ARTS**

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“ I begin my story for nothing, without benefit for myself or
anyone else, from a need stronger than benefit or reason.

I call to witness the ink , the quill, and the script,
which flows from the quill;
I call to witness the faltering shadows of the sinking evening,
the night and all she enlivens;
I call to witness the moon when she waxes, and the sunrise
when it downs.

I call to witness the Resurrection Day and the soul
that accuses itself;

I call to witness time, the beginning and end
of all things – to witness that every man always suffers loss.”¹

¹ Selimovic, Mesa. *Death and The Dervish*. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press.

Writings From an Unbound Europe. Translated by Bogdan Rakic and Stephen M.Dickey. 1996. Pg.3.

"So alone we are,
the living and the dead,
always the same."²

" Tako smo sami,
zivi I mrtvi,
uvijek isto."³

² Epitaph on the grave of Elias Kabiljo in Sarajevo. My translation.
³ Ibid. In Bosnian language.

“Jekh dilokerel but dile hai but dile keren dilimata.”⁴

“One madman makes many madmen and many madmen make madness.”

“Prohasar man opre pirende – sa muro djiben semas opre chengende.”⁵

“Bury me standing. I’ve been on my knees all my life.”

⁴ Fonseca, Isabel. *Bury Me Standing*. New York: Vintage Departure. 1996. Pg.37.

⁵ Ibid. Pg. 304.

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Abstract

The play that follows is a creative thesis. More than this, it is my personal testimony and dramaturgical investigation, an “anthropological expedition” into the dramatic situation of the Balkans in the late 20th century. The play echoes the human tragedies and atrocities of the Bosnian war. The story is structured through the existential, dramatic situation of two, then four, then three, then six people caught in a small railway station in a mining area in the Balkans, somewhere at the border between European states, that is besieged by heavy gunfire and snipers. They are thrown into the station because they *happened to be* in the area. Among them is foreign TV crew and a small Gypsy family. In the process of migration their paths became interwoven and knotted together. The station exposes these individuals whose lives and identities are at stake. Existential suspension of these characters, their helplessness, limitation, and awareness, exposes their essential humanity. The story of “The Station” has been told through a dramatic structure which doesn’t follow the conventional dramaturgical pattern. It shows the collapse of reason and demonstrates that collapse through a dramatic structure that unveils a traumatic memory of our time.

The Characters

Ishak - early forties

Pasha - early thirties

Inga, Schmidt - Welsh - early forties, foreign war correspondent

Bill - thirties, cameraman on duty

Roms - Gypsies

Die Zigeuner (German), Cigani (Slavic)

Choro - late twenties, violinist and horse dealer, handsome, black moustache, high black boots, a gold watch in his pocket which doesn't work; longish hair. Choro in South Slavic slang means blind; one who can barely see; in Romani it means an orphan and poor.

Mother - fortune teller; Choro's mother, sixties, attired in the traditional flowered dress of the gypsy, head scarf tied at the back, apron, carrying a bag, smoking a pipe called a chibouk.

Luludja - Choro's pregnant wife, eighteen, beautiful and shy; Luludja, in South Slavic Romani, means flower.

Voices: Soldier I

Soldier II

Last Dictator

Setting

A waiting room in an old railway station somewhere on the border between European states; a war zone.

Two large wing doors, down stage right, form the main entrance to the station. Another door leading to a washroom, down stage left; WC sign on it and graffiti. Ticket booth at center stage, with smashed glass window. Inside the waiting room there are two old wooden benches and a few old wooden chairs. Next to the booth a stove with a chimney sits in the corner, a poker hangs on the wall and a metal garbage can stands under it. Against the wall, stage left, hangs a stand up desk upon which are small dusty boxes, train schedules, ink boxes, tourist brochures; one side of the desk is broken. The walls in the waiting room are dirty, with numerous gunshot holes, and littered with dusty, ripped, big and colorful posters announcing:

“ Sunny Mediterranean”, “ Alps - Breathe Freely In Our Mountains”,

“Azure Blue - Waiting For You”, “Europe - Your Home – Get to Know It”,

“Sarajevo My Love,” “ Dubrovnik”, “ Ohrid Lake – The Pearl of Macedonia”,

“ St Stefan – Casino Nights”.

The Scenes

- Scene 1 Prologue - If You Want to Live
- Scene 2 A Quick Piss
- Scene 3 The Standard Sarajevo
- Scene 4 The Smell of Cherries
- Scene 5 Night Shift - Your Turn
- Scene 6 The Blueberry Bar
- Scene 7 Brought by the Wind
- Scene 8 Fffffff..... Adonai Will Be Alone Again
- Scene 9 But People Are Around Us
- Scene 10 Luludja
- Scene 11 I Am Your Story
- Scene 12 Mother of All Mothers
- Scene 13 Shukar Soba – Clean and Beautiful Room
- Scene 14 Yokki Juva – Fortune Teller
- Scene 15 Gry Engro – Horse Dealer
- Scene 16 Muzikanti – Gypsy Orchestra

Scene One

Prologue - If You Want to Live

(A politician at a rostrum, the last dictator. Is he? He is dressed in a black suit, a glass of water in front of him (he looks like a modern day tycoon). Frenetic ovations are heard. He silences the crowd with the typical silencing gesture of raised hands. The clapping and shouting stop.)

(Pause.)

The Last Dictator:

You want to live?

Do you want to be free to live?

Do you want to hold your fortune in your own hands?

We are gathered here, at this sainted place, to tell ourselves once again: nobody is going to stop us. We are all as one. We always were. Nothing has changed. In our past lies our future.

(Applause and shouts: Zivio! Zivio! Zivio Predsednik.⁶)

You are strong. Our will and power is still strong and it is becoming greater and greater with the blood of our sons, but they have to change. Here I speak in the name of many people. *(Applause and shouts: Zivio, zivio zivio!!!⁷)*

My people. *(Frenetic applause.)*

⁶ In Bosnian / Serbian / Croatian: Long live the president!

⁷ Ibid. Long live, long live.

Let us be free and strong in our land, land that they have occupied with their hamburgers, and cars, and computers, and dirty sex, and their music, and heretic books, and films and... We don't want their feet spoiling our homeland.

They manufacture people to fit into their mold. They talk politics in a so – called, free – democratic state. Alternative politics. Hmmm.

You know what I told them?

No!

(Applause and shouts of approval.)

We say no! There is no such thing.

Brothers, friends; we are not alternative. We are the historical truth. Let us make our sainted nation breathe as one.

(Shouts: Yeah!!!!)

Comrades...you are a field from which our state will grow, and grow. Don't let weeds overcome our fields...look around you... distinguish the healthy seeds from the rotten ones, nurture them so that they grow high.

Look around. This world is shaking, it is collapsing, and crumbling.

Can you hear it?

We are here now, today, to give the order; to reorder this lost world, to gather every man of our nation and march toward a new horizon, where fortune is waiting for us in the shape of our great state, with our great people... our fatherland.

(Ovations.)

Our land, with all its turbulence, turns and whirls; with its victories, its defeats, its sons; with its lies and betrayals.

To rise from the ashes! Kindle a light. The voice of a patriot can transcend obstacles. To rise from the ashes is our imperative. Look at our history ...look at it. We are the history. The dust of European archives lies here, among us. Our fingers are stained and sticky. Let's blow the dust from them. Let us clean the drawers of European history. Brothers, we are not going to waste time anymore. Today, we are the force that fights in any way we can to recreate our homeland, cleansed and new. They will be damned, choked in the mud of their progress and markets, choked by their theories and technologies. We don't need those parasites, ink parasites. Turn them into workers, miners, and diggers in our fields. Listen... We have constructive thought, not their agitation...beauty and concord will bloom in spite of their hi-tech hysteria and fanaticism. Stay wide-awake, don't dream, and be on guard. Let us gather under our tree, the salvation tree, on our island, under our sun. My people, be silent and listen... they are choking.

Blackout

Scene Two

A Quick Piss

(The sound of a man's heavy and painful coughing; nearly choking. Lights up. Interior - train station. Pasha kneels, peeks through the keyhole of the station entrance - two wing doors stage right front.)

Pasha:

Psssssst.

(Pasha moves back, then again slowly kneels and lies down on the floor. He elevates his head and peeks through the keyhole, again.)

Ishak:

(Covers his mouth with a handkerchief, trying to smother his cough.)

Pasha:

Somebody can hear ...

(Pause.)

(Peeks once again.)

Clean...

Nobody's in the field. It's only light shining on the tracks. It must be sunny outside. It must be.

(Ishak stands; almost choked. Shaking and stuttering, he is making his way to the washroom stage left. Suddenly, there is the sound of sniper gunfire and breaking glass. Ishak freezes in place. Pasha falls to the floor, covering his head. A second round of sniper fire. Ishak, unable to move, a growing stain of urine darkening his pants. He steps out of the puddle he has created and grabs his crotch to stop the flow.)

Silence.

Ishak:

It stinks.

(He makes a tentative move toward the W.C. – then turns back. Pasha rolls along the floor and lands in the puddle.)

Pasha:

Augh, shit!

(He rolls away, shivering. Lifting himself up he approaches Ishak.)

You damp mole. You stinky polecat! I will choke you. Choke you with these hands. With my own hands! It is the fifth time in six days. Do you hear me?! The fifth time. You will be drowned in this. Five times...in...five...

Tie it up!

Ishak:

Seven days.

(Short pause.)

Pasha:

Is it?

Ishak:

Seven days Pasha. Seven.

(Pasha walking toward the W.C. stops and turns.)

Pasha:

Are you sure? Seven? Seven...Friday...Wednesday, Monday...with you I don't even know if Monday comes after Sunday. Hmm, something is wrong...

(Pasha continues, counting the days while exiting.)

...six days...strange the way time passes.

(Off stage sound of urination and Pasha's moan of relief. At the same time Ishak takes off his shoe and pours out the urine.)

Pasha:

(Off stage sound.)

A hhhh....

(Ishak grabs his shoelace and hangs the shoe on the stove to dry. He takes off his sock and wrings it out, then stretches it in his perfectionist manner.)

A hhhh....

(Pasha enters the room, zipping his fly.)

There is nothing like a quick piss, eh Ishak?

Ishak:

You got that right.

Pasha:

And we fucked them up again. Ha! We fucked 'em.

Blackout

Scene Three

The Standard Sarajevo

(Pasha lying on the bench. Ishak squatting next to the stove.)

Pasha:

After all, life is not so bad... for now, not at all. It could be worse.

It can always be worse...old saying. Hmm. What demagogy. Hey prof, what about positivism? Ishak ?

(No response.)

No tanks since last night. It seems that the heavy artillery has moved. Maybe they forgot about us. Listen...the earth is silent... do you hear it?

(Pause.)

Ishak...

(No response.)

Ishak, you know what?

(Pause.)

I have been thinking ... and...I have come to a conclusion.

(He gets up for a moment, lights the butt of an old cigarette, and sits again.)

You're worse than those fucking horseshits outside. Yes, you are.

What are you doing? What are you doing besides peeing your pants and waiting for a bullet? You thought that you would be welcomed, that everybody would be impressed by your return? *(In German accent)* Herr doktor professor's homecoming. You're so stupid... you didn't even consider the possibility of being caught. Ha?!

(Imitating Ishak.) This is not my war...not my war.

That's what everybody thinks.

(Short pause.)

It's different with me. I took a risk to cross the border. You know the kind of risk it is now days? There are borders everywhere; they're breeding like fucking rabbits. If you believe they're just a mirage you're screwed. So, to break through, you have to develop a very subtle technique, which I did.

Ishak:

I see.

Pasha:

But those fucking trailers of Marlboros and whisky were not enough for a fucking passport. Three trailers of Marlboros were not enough for them! Do you know how much money I invested in that? And remember, it's the war price, not the regular one. It's twenty deutch marks for one pack of cigarettes. Count it! Twenty blues⁸ for each pack; ten packs in each carton; a hundred cartons in each box; three trailers of boxes. A fortune. Light tobacco. Selected fine tobacco dried under the Mediterranean sky and wind. That is the best kind. They took all of it. What can we smoke now? Fucking criminals. At least I took action.

Ishak:

Yes...

⁸ Bosnian slang for deutch marks.

Pasha:

I developed a plan, a business plan, and I took pleasure in it.

Ishak:

And?

Pasha:

Ended up here. And I find you, you here. It's too much.

What I am supposed to do with you? What's the plan? What's the action? What now?

What to do? Nothing...you are useless.

(No response. Ishak still squatting next to the stove, rocking back and forth.)

What a scene. Look at us... look at... you.

If anybody can find another fool like you, another idiot, I... I will kiss his ass, even if he is a man. If this were a play, even then it would be too, too much. Nobody would believe it. Is there anybody who would return from the world to this hell, to this damned war, to this fucking slaughter? Is there anybody?

Why did you come back, Ishak?

(Long pause.)

Ishak:

I want to go home...

Pasha:

Forbidden.

Ishak:

To open the door...

Pasha (*Cuts in.*):

Forbidden.

Ishak:

To jump through the window...

Pasha:

Forbidden.

Ishak:

To drink water...

Pasha:

Forbidden.

Ishak:

To walk...

Pasha:

Forbidden.

Ishak:

To read...

Pasha:

Fuck you man! To fuck! Forbidden.

Ishak:

To sit on my chair... at home...or is this home?

Pasha: *(Cuts in.)*

Don't bring up that moral bullshit again. Fucking moralists. Who would leave teaching for this? Who would leave deutch marks and all those beautiful women for this? Don't tell me you didn't mess with the students, I mean the women. Come on. It's not that you teach politics or ecology. You teach philosophy, man...my dear professor ...

(With German accent.)... Herr Doktor Professor, freedom and choice.

(Whispers.) Don't tell me! I'm not buying that.

Home... hmm, there is no home anymore. Capish?

(Pause.)

So, here you are... what are you thinking?

Ishak:

Who is going to be next?

(Pause.)

Pasha:

Oh, my ass is killing me. *(He stretches, and leans over the bench and reads the label under the seat.)*Standard⁹ Sarajevo 1968... serial number 060492. *(Knocking.)* It's in pretty good shape considering how old it is. First rate oak. *(Hitting the bench with his fist.)* The best. 1968. That was the year. New design. Domestic product.

(Pulling one of the bench's legs) It survived *(Leans even more.)*...almost. Here is a crack. *(Suddenly turns to Ishak.)*

I don't give a shit who's going to be next. What's the difference?

(Imitating him.) Who is going to be next?

⁹ *Standard* was a popular furniture warehouse in Sarajevo, which manufactured newly designed furniture in the early sixties which was considered very modern.

Ishak:

I am serious. Really...seven days and we haven't seen anybody. It's like there are no people.

Pasha:

Listen to him? People? You're concerned about people?

What about us? There is only u s. (*Elevating his hands and turning around.*)

U s ... h e r e. People? Open that door and you'll get all the proof you need. Bang! A bullet right between the eyes. Those deep blue eyes.

(*Imitating Ishak again.*) There are no people!

Ishak:

That is my sentence...

Pasha:

Yours? Ha?

Ishak: (*Continuing.*)

...and you are not allowed to repeat my sentence.

Pasha:

I am not allowed ... to repeat my sentence.

Ishak:

My sentence.

Pasha:

Only you are allowed...ha? Allowed to die in this shit hole!

You are allowed, not me.

Ishak:

I am wasting my time with you.

Pasha:

You have plenty of time; sure...you have ...three days, maybe another week...or maybe just a few hours, if those bastards outside are drunk. Recounting it in minutes or seconds makes plenty of time that's for sure. Twenty four times sixty, times sixty is...two hundred and forty times six is zero...four, twelve plus two...fourteen hundred and forty times sixty again, uh, zero, again zero ...four and four ...eighty four thousand and four hundred seconds! Ha! Per day. Then add how many days... it's simple mathematics.

(Pointing at himself.) This one doesn't need a calculator. Hi - tech is here and here.

(Pointing to his head and holding out his hands.) How many days did I tell you to recount?

Ishak:

If it makes you happy, recount. Be happy.

Pasha:

What do you know about happiness?

(In the distance the sound of heavy gunfire is heard.)

Blackout

Scene Four

The Smell of Cherries

(Pasha lying on his bench, Ishak squatting next to the stove.)

Pasha:

If we were locked in some church, I would feel better, way, way better.

Ishak:

You expect help from Him?

Pasha: *(Continuing.)*

Church is the best place to hide. They always have plenty of wine and food hidden under the altar. Have you ever stepped down and seen it? Oh, I forgot that you're a Marxist. It's a pity. You should see those subterranean vineries. In vino veritas! They have the best wine. Believe me Ishak.

Ishak:

And you know that.

Pasha:

Yeah.

Ishak:

You went to church...regularly?

Pasha:

Yeah.

Ishak:

The world is full of wonders.

Pasha:

Yeah. So what? We were partners.

Ishak:

Holy shit! Pasha and the church. Partners?!

Pasha:

If I were you I'd watch my words.

Ishak:

A partner with the church?!

Pasha:

Hey man, you know me? I'm a businessman, the businessman. I trade with them...ask me... ask me about anybody, about any serious moneymaker around and you'll see. I have international connections. I am a spider...not a bookworm.

Ishak:

A spider?

Pasha:

When I say that the fucking church has the best wines you better believe me. And... I said – the best. And, you know what else...there are always women wandering down the halls...dark shadows, but their smells reveal them... in the darkness... do you hear the rustling of nightshirts? Women. They always have something to confess.

(Pasha rises from the bench, moves down stage as if trying to touch someone.)

(Loud.) Ahhheeyy!

(Whispering.) Hey, come...I've been waiting for you... let's go ...confess.

(The sharp sound of sniper fire, Pasha falls back on the bench.

Another sniper shot.

Pause.

Pasha curls himself up into the fetal position.)

My loins are heavy.

(Pause.) Can you smell it?

Ishak:

Smell what?

Pasha:

A woman. There is nothing like the scent of a woman. Nothing...cherries maybe. You can't even imagine how I miss a woman. I thought that I would never, ever be in such a situation...never.

Ishak:

Don't think.

Pasha:

It's easy to say. Don't think.

Ishak:

Thinking doesn't help. Even thoughts can be stacked like fish bones in the throat. Then they slide down into your chest until they choke you.

Pasha:

That is what I was saying. Don't think; just break their bones!

Ishak:

Pasha, listen.

Pasha:

What?

Ishak:

It's all here, between the soil and the sky. Listen...listen to the legends, the collective struggles through the ages...maybe we could find ourselves here.

Pasha:

Find ourselves ...not a woman? Fuck that. What do we have to look back on? Haven't we gone down that road?

Ishak:

Already enlightened.

Pasha:

Uh! No! No Ishak. No. Not again. We are really enlightened here.

(Pause.)

It's easy, man. Everybody knows that, Ishak. But I don't get what were you doing over there in Germany. As if they don't have their own professors. They're Germans. They don't need anybody. Were you really paid for your teaching and your books?

(Short pause. Ishak nods his head.)

How can somebody make money through books? I don't get it.

Ishak:

Erst kommt das fressen¹⁰.

¹⁰ In German: Eating comes first.

Pasha:

What? I thought that the Germans wrote all that philosophy, and poetry, and history, and bullshit just to make others busy and confused. I know it's not only them, but still.

(Ishak is quiet. Pasha jumps from the bench, walking up and down, getting ready for a speech.)

There was a guy, I mean a guy like me, or you maybe...

(Turns towards Ishak, then turns away.) ...like you...anyway, this guy takes the apple, gets the woman and ...what? We have a situation here. He is fucked up. Punished.

What for? A bite? Was it one bite or more? I've never thought about it. O.K.

...O.K... Or take this case:

another guy, takes all his belongings, and his wife, loads his ship and floats away, runs away. Sounds like the Titanic, the first version, doesn't it? O.K... O.K...I know what you are about to say... even His son got fucked... it was explained as a sacrifice for the people. For us? Come on. O.K. O.K.

Then along comes another guy, and ... hmmm...he was fucked because of the fire,

(Slowly.) f i r e. They nailed him on the shore; but at least he had the birds and the Mediterranean sky. Now, that sounds like a money - maker, ha? *(With accent.)* So, Herr Doktor Professor?

Don't, don't tell me. Don't even try to explain it to me. If I put two and two together it comes out that they all fucked me. Man, you could maybe find some reason for all of them to be fucked, but why me? I don't like apples and even if I did, there is no woman I

believe in. I don't have children that I know of or a wife, or cattle and all that stuff. Only trailers and a Golden Visa. Wife...hmm. I was burned once and never again, no, no, don't play with fire. I have my own personal safety program fully developed. Fucking luck.

(The sound of church bells in the distance are heard through sudden and heavy gunfire.)

Why did you come back Ishak? You left the world ... for this ... why?

Ishak:

Which world?

Pasha:

The real world.

Ishak:

You mean this one or the promised one?

Pasha:

Which one is real?

Ishak:

The one we are dying in.

(Silence.)

Pasha:

Don't act like a ham.

Ishak:

I am not the weak character you think I am, Pasha. Slavic sentimentalism?

No. The world...I was over there. I saw it. I lived there.

Pasha:

Yeah, we know that.

Ishak:

Everything tastes different there, apples, and bread...even wine.

Pasha:

Only Mc Donald's tastes the same.

(Short pause.) How long has it been since we've eaten?

Ishak:

There are no plums as blue and delicious as...

Pasha:

Write a report you fool! There are no plums in the supermarkets!

Ishak:

Even the sky seems lower somehow.

Pasha:

(Under his breath.) What did I do wrong?

Ishak:

Everything there is sell, sell, sell, sell...they'd sell their mothers.

Pasha:

And here? Here there's nothing to buy, nothing to sell, nothing to eat, nothing to drink, nothing to fuck, nothing to steal, nothing to think. You are nothing. Nothing multiplied by nothing.

Ishak:

(Continues, as if Pasha hasn't said anything.)

I know how it feels to walk down the street, with shadows around you and no one has your name written on their lips. There are no known eyes passing by... you are an empty space.

(Ishak stands in front of the broken mirror on the wall, stage left next to WC door. Turns his head to one side so that he can see himself, then huffs his warm breath onto the mirror and sweeps it with his arm; slight pause; he turns back.)

Pasha:

Empty space you say.

(Pasha huffs at Ishak. Ishak pulls his body back.)

And here you are, compressed air. Here, at this fucking station. Even God said good night here. He smelled gunpowder and hid behind the clouds. Compressed you are...here...breathe... *(He huffs again.)*

Do you feel it? Compressed with me. Me! Be careful not to explode. So many known eyes are watching you here...

Hell of a crowd here tonight. Man, they're looking powerful...

Dear visitors, welcome to the National Park of the Balkans! You get in free, but you pay when you leave.

(Sound of sharp gunfire.)

You sentimental fool.

(Pasha crawling to the door, murmuring.)

Pasha:

Fucking air, and lips...and eyes. You are crazy man...you read too much.

(Stops for a moment and turns his head toward Ishak.)

You mind walking down the streets? Foreign streets? Foreign cheese, foreign lips? Man, how can lips be foreign? They're soft or not, desirable or not. Ishak, you should stay with your used books.

(Crawling towards the door, kneels and peeks through the keyhole.)

Books are easier to live with, aren't they Ishak? Philosophy doesn't hurt. You can turn it any way you want. Up – down. Down – Up. Up-Up .Up – down. Down – down – deeper.

(Still peeking. Pause.)

Nothing. Nothing moves. Nothing to see... only the tracks. Fucking hole.

(Lies on his back, hands under his head.)

Those church bells were pretty loud, weren't they Ishak? I doubt that it's a wedding...it must be a funeral. Even antichrists bury their dead. There must be a lot of them.

Ishak:

The more they kill the more they dig.

(Pasha crawling to Ishak.)

Pasha:

Do you know who's digging? You don't? You don't know who's digging the trenches? Oh, I forgot, you're a tourist.

(Facing him.)

My dear bookworm, you will see very soon. People like us... like us, are digging; digging the trenches and digging their own graves, holes for dogs that we are.

We at the front lines are the live shells, the live meat...and women... ..women and bells...

(Pause.)

(Second wave of heavy gunfire - louder.)

Pasha:

I wonder if they ever take a piss... or if they're like you, and they pee in their pants.

(Imitating the church bells ringing.) Ring ring! Ring...ring...ring...ring, ring ring, ring.

The professor has to pee... pee, pee... pee! Ring ring!

Ishak:

There were no bells.

Pasha:

Do you hear him? Ring the bells...ring the bells... ta..ta..ta.. *(Imitating gunfire.)* ring!

(Ishak moves his head, gesticulating no. Pasha takes a poker from the wall and hits the stove, making a loud metallic noise. He hits the metallic garbage can, then the stove again, then the can again.)

Bells, guns, bells, guns, bells, bells...there are bells.

(The sharp sound of heavy gunfire. Pasha goes rigid on the floor. The poker falls out of Pasha's hand. Ishak takes the poker, holding it under his knees, swinging it back and forth; his head on his knees.)

Ishak:

It's faster now...closer.

(Pause.)

The only thing that surprises me is how slow it is. With all their modern technology I expected a quicker solution. After the final solution they invented cleansing solutions but we still die - hard and slow. Oh, how slow it is.

Pasha:

(Loud, towards the door.)

Ahhheeeey!!! Speed him one up the ass!

(Gesturing with his hand; giving the finger.)

Here, have it!

(Pause.)

The gentleman would like to finish it quickly. No-no- noooo, wait a minute Herr professor. It's not easy to leave this world. Wait your turn. In that way we are all equal.

You don't believe it? Whom are you going to ask? Your books?

(Imitating Ishak, moving towards entrance door – stage right.)

O, Lord when is it my turn? And where? Which location?

(Roaring sound of a jeep engine approaching. Stops. Soldiers' voices threatening, Pasha jumps suddenly and moves backward. He has been interrupted in his performance.)

(Voices off stage.)

Soldier I:

Get out ! Do you hear me? Get out, or you will see! Out!!

Soldier II:

Get in! You will see where you have come! Take advantage of my good will.

(Beating.) Get in!

Bill's voice:

Hey, no, no, you can't...you don't understand... mister... you don't get it, you don't have a right. Wait man...why? Why me?

Soldier II:

Shut up! Shut up or I'll kick your fucking American ass.

(Two people thrown through the entrance door. Inga and Bill. Door is slammed shut.)

Bill:

What the hell!

(Getting up, collecting himself. Nobody reacts.)

Did you see them? Did you see what they did? To me?! What they did to me?

(To entrance door, stage right.) You primitive bastards!

(To Inga.)

Did you see that? Say something! Your damned project... you ... you fucking bitch...tell them who we are!

(Inga still frozen and silent. Bill yelling towards the entrance door.)

Hey soldiers! Listen ...It's not me. I'm on duty. I am just a fucking cameraman. See. My documents, my press card, my Social Security Number, my ... my... here ...here is my camera. Here...take it. It's yours. Take everything: my watch, my wallet, my...it's ridiculous!

Inga:

(Still standing at the same spot.)

Give it to me.

Bill:

Fuck off.

(He is heading towards the entrance with the camera in his hands. Opens the door.)

Comrades.... This is not my war. It's a mistake... It must be. People make mistakes. It's somebody's mistake. It can't be me.

(Sniper's gunshot, Bill falls dead.)

(Pause.)

(Pasha is crawling, pushing the door with his leg, moving with it, he moves Bill's body outside of the station.)

Pasha:

The truth always hurts.

(Pasha is trying to pull the camera, which is next to the dead body; he is pulling the strap on the camera; he is successful and the cameraman's body is pushed outside through the entrance door; door closed.)

Pasha:

Fucking gravity. *(To Inga.)* What was his name? It must be Joe, or Clint.

Inga:

Be careful with it. Give it to me.

Pasha:

(Continuing while pulling the camera strap.) Jeremy? Kurt...?

(Pause.)

(Camera is in his hands finally.)

Ishak:

(To Inga.) You came a long way.

Pasha:

No, no. It can't be Kurt. Clint? It must be Clint.

(Turns to Inga.) And yours?

(No response.)

Pasha:

You got to have a name?

(Short pause.) No name? Oh, well it doesn't count here anyway.

Ishak:

Open your name to us.

Blackout

Scene Five

Night Shift - Your Turn

(Begins in darkness.

Silence.

Lights up slightly. Pasha gets up from the bench, takes a few steps and stands next to Inga who is lying on another bench, and watches her sleeping. A bit of light spills in through the broken glass. As he is about to touch her hair, there a shadow falls from behind; from stage left door, Ishak approaches.)

Ishak:

Your turn.

(Pasha's hand freezes and he looks toward the stage left exit.)

Pasha:

Did you hear anything?

Ishak:

Just tongue clicking.

(Pasha exits.)

Blackout

Scene Six

The Blueberry Bar

Pasha:

I know, I know! Listen... (*Clearing his throat.*)... hmmm...

I, You, He, She, It...

You, They, ...aaa... Wait, I told you that I know.

(*Pasha starts repeating personal pronouns again.*)

I, You, She, He, It...

We... Yeah... We, They, This... Ups!

A door...ze door.

Inga:

The, the tongue is up. Lean it on your front teeth, let it slide...like this: the, the.

Pasha:

(*Getting closer to Inga as he watches her demonstrating English pronunciations.*)

Let me see, aha...oh, the top of the tongue...I see.

(*To Inga.*) You have pearly-white teeth.

(*Continues.*) ...ze...zes, this, ...the, the, I got it, the, ze, the.

Inga:

Good Pasha, it is veeery good. Your English is excellent.

Pasha:

I told you... not quite exellente but...o.k. (*To Ishak.*) Did you hear her? That's the

culture. Right in the face. Your English exellente. Honesty, whatever it costs. That is America. (*To Inga.*) Your Bosnian is good, veeeeery, veeery good.

Inga:

It's tough.

Pasha:

But it's nothing for Americans. Where did you learn it?

Inga:

It's part of the training for war correspondents. Bice dobro¹¹.

Pasha:

Your Bosnian exellente.

Ishak:

Use a verb.

Inga:

A verb. An action. Which one? Anything...let me see. To catch.

Pasha:

He caught.

You caught.

They caught... I ...

Inga:

I am caught; you are caught; he is caught.

(All together.)

¹¹ In Bosnian: "It will be good."

We are caught; you are caught; they are caught; again...

Ishak:

The Past Tense, The Present Perfect Tense, The Future Tense.

Pasha:

Don't mess with us you fucking scholar. *(To Inga.)* Let's take a picture.

Inga:

Oh, no.

Pasha:

For remembrance. Ishak, take the camera.

(Pasha hugs Inga while continuing to repeat the verbs.)

I was always good in grammar. You should have seen me in the Gymnasium. Oh, boy those were the days.

Inga:

I can imagine.

(They both laugh; he poses for a picture, turning her, to Ishak.)

Pasha:

On: one, two, three. Cheese....

Inga:

(To Ishak.) Leave it Ishak. I asked you not to touch it.

Ishak:

What do you have here?

Inga:

My work.

Pasha:

Then, let's take a picture and improve your work.

Inga:

Leave it there. It's my job.

Ishak:

What is so important?

Inga:

I am a journalist.

Ishak:

I see that. Sony camera, international accreditations, cellular...

Pasha:

Which doesn't work.

Ishak:

Cables, video - phone, cheques, American Express, Visa...

Pasha:

The Gold one.

Inga:

How dare you? You rummaged through my stuff!

Ishak:

Small radio, no batteries...

Pasha:

Radio doesn't work either. Ishak, don't forget to mention a pack of tampons, deodorant, tooth paste, painkillers... *(To Inga.)* What are they for? P.M.S.?

Inga:

Aren't you ashamed of yourself?

Pasha:

For being here, yes.

Inga:

For stealing my things!

Pasha:

Anger suits you...grrrr.

Ishak:

Peace to you. Everything is in place. Check your bag... Miss. Schmidt... or Miss. Welsh? How shall I address you?

Pasha:

Two names. Is it for cover? And all that preparation, and training, and masquerading... just to end up here, with us? Here? Oh, how flattering.

Inga:

(Inspects her bag on the bench and finds that everything is there.)

This isn't the first time I've been in your country. Six months ago I was covering the elections and the first demonstrations. I was in Sarajevo when the first sniper shots were heard from the Holiday Inn.

Pasha:

Why did you come back then? To fly? To die?

Ishak:

Why?

Pasha:

Somebody sent you? Somebody invited you here?

Ishak:

No.

Pasha:

She has to be with somebody.

Inga:

No.

Ishak:

Pardon me, Miss. or Mrs.?

Inga:

Inga.... You can call me Inga.

Pasha:

Inga...Good one. Inga ... is it for public cover, or just for your intimate friends? What do you do here, Inga?

Inga:

Inga Schmidt – Welsh.

Pasha:

Address?

Ishak:

Free land.

Pasha:

Profession?

Ishak:

Free lance. Am I right?

Inga:

Right.

Pasha:

Marvelous, bloody marvelous!

Inga:

I go where the story is. I came back here, not exactly here to the station, but... to your country....

Pasha:

(Impatiently.) Go on. We get it. Go on.

Inga:

I came back to tell the truth about this war...to show the world what they don't know, what they are mistaken...

Ishak:

And what is the truth?

Inga:

I do what I can. I want to help.

Pasha:

(Cuts in.) Ah, you are making stories! About us? U s... Ishak, you and me, the news...I am your news and they pay you? What logic. And, we can see that you're enjoying your work here, without Clint; god bless his stupid American soul.

Inga:

It's hard to know whom to trust and what to believe. Here.

Ishak:

You should have come here before the war.

Inga:

That's why I convinced Bill, *(Turning to Pasha.)* Bill Macintyre was his name...

Pasha:

Billy boy.

Inga:

... to come with me to this area. Journalists aren't allowed. They don't even know what's going on here. Only rumors about people...being killed and...to talk about problems...

Ishak:

Talk about problems...they call it problems, conflict, historical hatred, animosity... fuck that! It's crime. It's so simple, it's c r i m e.

Inga:

You hate what I do.

Ishak:

And what do you do now? Hm? Your life is bound up with the arrangement of words and the telling of stories.

Inga:

But I am H E R E!

Ishak:

We all are.

Pasha:

There's nothing like a bullet in the brain to raise consciousness. Inga...it drips pity. Don't pity me. Inga... Inga...It's a strange name for an American girl. Even Americans are not what I thought they were.

Ishak:

Here is your journal. (*As if apologizing.*) I just wanted to read something...but I didn't.

Pasha:

(*Comes closer to Inga.*)

And here is your blueberry bar. I only had one bite.

Blackout

Scene Seven

Brought By the Wind

(Ishak leans on the stove, his ear on the chimney.)

Ishak:

Listen Inga...can you hear it? It's the wind... coming from the south.

Inga:

Ishak, how long you have been here, in this

Ishak:

Station.

Inga:

...in this station?

Ishak:

Do you like seagulls Inga?

Inga

Seagulls?

Ishak:

Psssttt. It is coming.

Pasha:

Who?

Ishak:

The wind.

(Ishak is still in the same position, giving a hand to Inga without turning to her.)

Come closer and you will feel it. It is warm.

(Inga is about to take his hand, but Pasha runs between them, cuts through.)

Pasha:

No....psssst! I hear something ...Pssst! Let me see.

(Pasha hits the chimney, Ishak reacts – the metallic sound echoing in his ear-

In one step Pasha is next to the door. He peeks through the keyhole.)

Let me see.

Inga:

(To Ishak. Continuing.)

We don't have seagulls back home.

Ishak:

Seals?

Inga:

Oh...no, no seals either.

Pasha:

(Peeking through the keyhole.) W...What?

Inga:

(Continuing.)

No seals, no. I am not much into ornithology...

Pasha:

Shut up you fucking you... you...birds!

(He's glued to the door, still peeking through the keyhole.)

(Signaling with his hands.) There ...they are coming... see... my fucking luck...they are here.

Ishak:

I haven't heard anything, only the wind...from the south.

Pasha:

Centuria. The whole centuria is coming.

Inga:

Who?

(Sounds of human voices arguing, getting closer and louder.)

(Ishak approaches Pasha, wants to move him and see for himself, but Pasha is still hanging onto the door, he cannot move him ,Ishak still trying.)

Pasha:

Oh, no! No! No! No! Fuck.

(Steps back, stepping on Ishak.

Through the door three people are thrown onto the stage. Luludja, Mother and Choro. Choro is getting up and picks up something that fell from his pocket – it is a gold watch, he grabs it. He goes to the entrance door, stage right, door slams again.)

Choro:

Muzika¹²! Where is my muzika?

(A violin case is thrown in, almost hitting Pasha. Door slams, again.

Choro has a strange head twitch – a spasm. He is about to check the case, but Pasha's foot is on it. He moves the case around playing with the Gypsy, as if he wants to kick it, but no, it is just a game and Pasha laughs. Choro takes the case, tries to lock it, it doesn't work, takes out the violin, touches the strings, puts it back quickly and goes to the entrance door; front, stage right.)

Choro:

Fucking Gadzos¹³.

Mother:

Here we are ... *(Mother- Old Gypsy woman sits down on the floor.)*

... in the station. Stanica.¹⁴

(She is making herself comfortable, pulling her scarf and fixing it again. She takes a chibouk¹⁵ from her breast, blows through it and rolls the cigarette.)

It is time for smoke. *(To Inga.)* You want some?

Inga:

(Shaking her head, no.)

Mother:

It is good...it is not healthy...

(Smoking, taking a deep breath.) ...straight to the heart.

¹² In Romani: Music.

¹³ Or *gadjo* in Romani: Non Gypsy; Others; Dirty.

¹⁴ In Bosnian: Station.

¹⁵ Kind of pipe.

Choro:

Hey! Soldat.¹⁶ You don't understand. We are not taking a train. See. We are poor Gypsies. We don't have money. See...empty. We walk. See... walk.
(He walks a few steps, and then stops; strange head spasm comes over him. He yells toward the door.)

Soldato! You are a soldier, aren't you? Maybe, one day, you will be a general, who knows, ha? Let your mother live long...and your wife...and your daughter....sweet daughter...

Luludja:

Women's skirts have sucked your brain Choro, you Gypsy fool.
(Choro suddenly turns and moves a few steps forward, very quickly, as if he is going to hit her. Luludja jumps back, Inga approaches and hugs her, taking her to the bench.)

Choro:

Shut up you devla.¹⁷ Shut your dirty mouth Luludja or you will know who is Choro!

Mother:

Tel te jib!¹⁸ *(To Luludja.)* Luludja, leave him. Leave him I told you. You devla¹⁹.

Choro:

(At the door again. Loud.) It must be a mistake. We Gypsies... we always walk. What else can Gypsies do? Nothing... go here, go there...jogging, jogging....here, there, in a circle, depending on the ground. Do you hear me? Let us go soldier! We will show you. I swear on my dead mother's body. We walk and walk, and walk. Hear me?!

¹⁶ In Bosnian slang: Soldier.

¹⁷ In Romani: Devil.

¹⁸ In Romani: Hold your tongue.

¹⁹ In Romani: Devil.

(No response. He slams the door with his legs. Mother is shaking her head, blowing a few puffs.) Fucking Gadzo. May lighting strike you.

Luludja:

May lighting strike you.

Choro:

(Loud.) I will play for you! Free! No charge, take my word... you general.

(Still slamming the door, then turning and looking at all of them in the station.)

Java ker²⁰.

Pasha:

Oho, here is one more.

Mother:

Ja²¹ Choro! Calm down! See, there are other people waiting here, too. And this nice lady... she doesn't smoke. Calm your crazy head Choro, listen to your mother.

(Choro goes quickly toward the other door, stage left, sudden sound of sniper.

Choro flattens himself onto the floor.)

Choro:

Mullo.²² I am dead. Mullo. I am dead.

Luludja:

You are a fool.

(Another sniper.)

²⁰ In Romani: I will go home.

²¹ In Romani : Go.

²² In Romani: Dead man.

Choro:

You asshole! Have ...have you seen it? As if he knew where I was.

Ishak:

Stay where you are. There is a window in the toilet. An old fashioned one.

Mother:

Choro, stay where you are and shut up for once.

Choro:

(Getting up.) I swear on

Mother:

...your mother's dead body? You Gypsy fool. Silly kid. Yeckoro chavo.²³ You are the same fool as your father was.

Ishak:

You have to be careful when you walk here. They can see you. They can see us, and they are shooting all the time.

Pasha:

Bosnian roulette!

Choro:

How do you piss then?

Pasha:

In your pants.

Choro.

(Turns to Pasha.) You will show me?

²³ In Romani: Only son.

Pasha:

On your knees. Now! (*Laughing.*)

Ishak:

You have to kneel and then they can't see your head through the window. It 's high. But you can still breathe fresh air there.

(*Choro hits the wall.*)

Ishak:

Take a seat Choro. You need a rest.

Pasha:

That's my bench.

Ishak:

Don't Pasha.

Choro:

Oh, I see....Pasha...it must have been hard on you to carry the bench up here.

Pasha:

I'll get you, you Gypsy motherfucker.

Mother:

Ayyyyyya,ya,yayaya! Shame on you boys. Don't you see that there are ladies around?

Mother fucker... how rude...tctctctcc (*Tongue clicking.*)

Choro:

(*Now he sees that there are two benches.*) Oh, you carried two benches...Pasha?

(*Twitch again.*) The other is yours, too?

(On the other bench are Inga and Luludja, sitting on opposite ends.)

Mother:

(Lighting chibouk.²⁴) Devla, devla²⁵.

Ishak:

Here. This chair is yours, Choro...if you like it.

Choro:

I love it. *(He sits on the floor.)* When is a train coming? *(He gets up right away.)*

Ishak:

I am Ishak.

Choro:

(He looks at the train schedule on the wall as if reading it, but he doesn't know how to read, twitch again.)

These letters are too small Ishak..

Ishak:

(Approaches the ticket booth, reads the schedule and railway map on the wall.)

It's an old schedule.

Choro:

That's what is written there?

Ishak:

Euro Railways Transportation.

²⁴ Chibouk is a kind of a pipe.

²⁵ In Romani: You devil.

Choro:

For transport.

Ishak: *(Continuing.)*

Since 1946, printed in ...

Choro:

You read slowly.

Ishak:

(To Inga.) See... (Dusts the map, spits on it and wipes it with his hand.)

Inga, come here. Come....here... Hamburg...if you take a train here, up north, and go south to Berlin, the railway forks to the east and west. East to Warsaw, Lodz....then it curves on south to Katowice and Kracow, little bit west to Prague, then Brno, south to Vienna, Bratislava and Budapest, and it is forking now as we are going further south, left and right, south of Danube, Zagreb, Sarajevo to Dubrovnik, and see... we are at the Adriatic Coast. Do you feel closer to the warm Mediterranean? It is getting hotter there all the time. The Mediterranean sun and breeze...

Pasha:

You should overlook our peninsula Inga. Go somewhere else. Find yourself an island. Go to Ireland.

Ishak: *(Continuing.)*

...or, you turn east , here ...Belgrade to Skopje, Thessalonica, and again forking to Athens and Istanbul.

Pasha:

Do they speak English in Istanbul too? Do they? Probably... they should; tourism is blooming there. And Greek? Ishak, did ancient Greeks speak any English? They were very clever people, they knew everything, they must have been good in English too. Maybe they invented it. How do you know?

Inga:

(Inga is next to Ishak, in front of the map.) Where are we exactly?

Choro:

You talk funny. Doesn't she? Ha?

Mother:

Ja²⁶! Don't ask for trouble son. She is a stranger...gadzo²⁷, don't you see?
She doesn't smoke.

Ishak:

We are not listed on this map.

Pasha: *(On his bench.)*

Suha Greda, Gluho Selo, Vrtace, Dedin Potok, Bistra Voda, Konjska Glava, Most, Crni Vrh, Vucja Luka, Gluho Polje...

(An improvised list of possible small stations, names of villages such as:

Deaf Village, Clear Water; Horse Head, Black Top, Wolfs Bay, Death Valley...)

Inga:

And in English it would be ...

²⁶ In Romani: Go.

²⁷ In Romani: Non Gypsy ; Other ; Dirty.

Pasha:

English would make it sound...plebeian.

Choro:

Who is she?

Pasha:

An expedition to the Balkan Peninsula! Reality TV! American journalist.

Choro:

Televizija²⁸....

Luludja:

Amerikanka²⁹!

Mother:

Pjevaljka³⁰? But she doesn't look like one of them. She is too skinny...and poorly dressed.

Choro:

Is she going to shoot us? *(He grabs the case and takes the violin.)*

Hey televizija, I will play for you...I accept American dollars too. I am an artist. It doesn't matter to me. Money is money. You know what? I was twice on televizija³¹.

Inga:

Good for you Choro.

²⁸ In Romani: Television.

²⁹ In Romani: American.

³⁰ In Bosnian slang: Singer.

³¹ In Bosnian: Television

Choro:

Good. Good. Amerikanka³²...O.K. O.K. You have to pay something in advance. It was prime time. Choro on TV. The whole state watched.

(Inga gives him a few bucks.)

The first time was when the police arrested all the Gypsies. They had to do that.

Mr. President was coming to town. In a black Mercedes with flags...children greeting and waving small flags... Remember Luludja?

(No response.) You should show that. Do you have Mercedes in America? That was the day...

Inga:

Why were you on TV?

Choro:

(Macho reaction – sort of: Look at me! Baby I'm handsome.) Don't you have eyes?

Some journalist came to the police station. They locked him up, too. He stayed with us the whole night and the next afternoon...and he was gadzo³³. He was a journalist... like you ...pretty lady, but he swore like a trooper.

Inga:

And the second time?

Choro:

Some barracks were burned and we were carrying stuff, fire all around, and TV cameras came. They are fast...

³² In Romani: American.

³³ In Romani: Non Gypsy; Other; Dirty.

Pasha: (*Cuts in.*)

I bet they are.

Choro:

...faster than the ambulance. I wasn't exactly on the screen but you could see me through the smoke. Yes, if you knew me... you would have seen me. There, it is Choro. At that time I had no moustache. Choro on TV. Mother, tell them. That's the truth. I swear to God and ...

Mother:

... and my mother's dead body.

Choro:

...to God again. I swear. That was before I got married.

Inga:

Will you tell me all about it? I'll write down the whole story. Who set the fire? Where and when did it happen?

Choro:

Callico.³⁴

Inga:

What did he say?

Pasha:

You'll pay for it Inga.

³⁴ In Romani: callico / collico: to morrow, also yesterday.

Ishak:

(Still concerned with the Euro-Railway map and schedule.)

Inga come, I think that I know where we are.... See... forking railwayhere..

Choro:

I know this place. We were here Luludja. Weren't we?

(To Luludja, who gets up off the bench.)

Where are you off to? Crazy wife.

(Luludja runs towards left door entrance, toilette room, he is after her.)

Mother:

Idi Jojjon³⁵.

(Choro suddenly turns and takes his violin case.)

Inga:

(Trying to find the spot on the map.)

Are you sure that we are here? ...Let me see. *(She takes her notebook from her bag and compares the map on the wall with the map that she has.)* Yes...this is where we are.

South of...

Pasha:

Ireland is up north. Not so far from here.

Inga:

Ishak, then mines could be here...but there are no signs of them.

(She is briefly drawing into her small notebook.)

³⁵ In Romani: come here.

Ishak:

They are old mines. Closed old mines.

Inga:

Old.

Pasha:

Gillie³⁶! Pjesma³⁷.

Choro:

(Gets closer to Pasha, whispering.) Why is she here?

Pasha:

Let me see...miri chavi³⁸.

Mother:

Rakker Romany³⁹. You speak some Romani, Pasha. *(Pointing to Inga.)* Maybe the Lord sends her to us.

Pasha:

It wasn't god. It was television.

Choro:

Yah. Televizija.⁴⁰ You are right. Who knows what happened to God in America.

Mother:

(To Choro.) Don't go too close to her. She is American. Gadzo.

³⁶ In Romani: Song.

³⁷ In Bosnian: Song.

³⁸ In Romani: My son.

³⁹ In Romani: Talk Gypsy.

⁴⁰ In Romani: Television.

Pasha:

Pjesma⁴¹! I said pjesma!

Choro:

Just name it. Give me the word.

(He starts a vivid Gypsy theme.)

Mother:

Adje⁴².

(She goes and stands next to left door entrance, Luludja is vomiting there, then silence.)

Adje.

Choro:

What?

Mother:

Beval⁴³.

Inga:

Be..val... What beval?

Ishak:

(Leans again on the stove chimney.)

The wind is from the south.

Pasha:

North.

⁴¹ In Bosnian: Song.

⁴² In Romani: Stop; Enough.

⁴³ In Romani: Wind.

(Sound of the violin - Choro plays the first few notes, then stops, then tries again.)

Blackout.

Scene Eight

FffffffAdonai will be alone again

(Inga finishes her writing, closes her notebook, and then closes her eyes. Her lips move; her voice is not heard.)

Ishak:

Pouring out your soul to somebody Inga? What if He created the world for his own glorification?

Pasha:

Fucked it up.

Ishak:

No one can possibly doubt that fact.

Pasha:

Use your brain man. You have a brain, don't you? Think...what if...

(Pause.)

Ishak:

He could haul himself out of an accursed desert.

Pasha:

Think!

Ishak:

But it was not merely a question of his loneliness...

Pasha:

He had company?

Ishak:

(Continuing.) ...it could also be a question of satisfying a desire...

Pasha:

Upps,ha....here we are. A desire.

Ishak:

(Continuing.) ...for glory.

Pasha:

So, my dear friends, here we are! Look at us! The consequences.... of His action. You said desire?

Ishak:

Desire...

Pasha:

Too late for an abortion.

Mother:

(Crossing herself, and huffing, and puffing, and blowing smoke all around.)

Lord, forgive them; they don't know what they are talking about.

Pasha:

(Looking around the station.) Look at us...what style.

Ishak:

Let us blow our trumpets, and blow again, and who knows; a miracle may happen.

Inga:

Stop it.

Pasha:

(He stops for a moment.)

Your fucking father fucked your mother.

Ishak:

Ffffff...FF...ffffff..f...f.. double f...

Inga:

Stop it.

Ishak:

Ffff...ff...ff..ff.f.f.

Pasha:

Fathers fucked up.

Pasha : *(To Inga.)*

Who are you then?

Ishak: *(Hissing.)*

Fffffff.

Inga:

You're sick. Both of you. I...I'm sick of you. I'm getting out of here.

(She runs across to stage left door.)

Ishak and Pasha:

Fffff...

(Sniper shot.)

Pasha:

On your knees!

(Inga stops. Sound of another sniper shot.)

Choro:

They see her!

Mother:

Adje.⁴⁴

Inga:

Do you know who I am? Do you? *(Unbuttoning her vest, taking out her accreditations.)*

I am Inga Schmidt – Welsh. Senior War Correspondent. I am a professional. A member of the International Journalist Association; senior executive producer of ... I am I am...Welsh. Inga Shmidt –Welsh!

Choro:

Exe...execution...you heard her mother?

Mother:

Adje⁴⁵.

(No response.)

Inga:

You know nothing. *(She moves to stage right door entrance, and then stops.)*

Ishak:

You expect me to say: nice to meet you Miss. Welsh? I can't, Inga.

⁴⁴ In Romani: Stop; Enough.

⁴⁵ In Romani: Stop; Enough.

Pasha:

Inga...and such a coincidence. My late aunt was named Inga. How small this world is.

And we are all here now.

Ishak:

One is missing... Adonai will be alone again.

Blackout

Scene Nine

But There Are People Around

(It is late night. Everybody is sleeping. Choro gets up. On his knees he gets close to Luludja, pulling at her skirt.)

Choro:

Let's have it now.

Luludja:

Are you crazy?

Choro:

Now. I can't wait anymore.

Luludja:

Nooo. We can't now.

Choro:

Why not?

Luludja:

It's war.

Choro:

People do it during war.

Luludja:

They can kill you.

Choro:

Better to die on you than on that chair. Let me...

Luludja:

No. People are here.

Choro:

What people? (*Turns his head briefly.*) Ahhh, who cares about those people?

They are already dead.

Luludja:

They are not.

Choro:

They will be.

Luludja:

They breathe. Listen...

Choro:

Luludja, let's have it noooow.

Luludja:

That's all you think about?

Choro:

Give me...

Luludja:

Your mother!

Choro:

She is snoring. Don't you hear her? She is louder than the tanks.

Luludja:

But that Amerikanka⁴⁶, stranger...

Choro:

She would like it, too, but she can't have it. She is not as lucky as you are Luludja...

Luludja:

We can't do it here.

Choro:

We did it in worse places.

Luludja:

But it was not war.

Choro:

But a man always has to try something new. Oh, shut up.

Luludja:

But Ishak is on guard.

Choro:

Don't worry about him, he breathes fresh air.

(Choro is all over her.)

Blackout

⁴⁶ American.

Scene Ten

Luludja

(Starts in darkness. Door opens. Moonlight shines through open the door of the washroom, stage left, lightening one spot . Luludja walks through the spot, barefoot, holding a piece of red wool in her hands, passes into darkness again. At the same moment, Pasha appears at the doorway.)

Silence.

Blackout

Scene Eleven

I Am Your Story

Pasha:

Can you hear through the walls?

Choro:

(Choro lies down on the floor; ear to the floor; listening.)

Through the earth. It is shaking in the distance.

Pasha:

And?

Choro:

As if something fell... it echoes like a chain of explosions ...far, far away...

few might be...

Pasha:

I heard nothing. Where?

Choro:

(Listening again.) Up north.

Inga:

It might be a wall.

Pasha:

A wall? We haven't heard anything. What Inga? What? What is going on?

Do you know something? *(Pause.)* Inga?

Inga:

When we... (*Slight pause.*), we...

Pasha:

Go on.

Inga:

When we were... (*Stuttering.*)we...

Pasha:

Clint ...and you...

Inga: (*Continuing.*)

...we were ... coming we ... saw soldiers putting mines in the wall.

Between the mine and the bridge down the river.

Pasha:

Go on.

Inga:

It seemed like an old Roman wall.

Ishak:

It is an Austrian aqueduct. Aqueductus. The Memorial of Maria Theresa⁴⁷.

Pasha:

Shut up! Infant prodigy.

Ishak:

But the aqueduct is far away from here.

⁴⁷ Reign of the Habsburg Empress Maria Theresa.

Pasha:

That is the next station. A dead-end mine railway. Why would they destroy the old aqueduct? They're up to something.

Ishak:

But we heard nothing here...Choro?

Choro:

The soil is heavy...

Inga:

Who is Maria Theresa?

Ishak:

Only one among many. Visigoths. Romans. Slaves. Huns. Vandals. Ottomans. Napoleon. Third Reich... even Odysseus with a crew. Name me one who hasn't had his foot on this land.

Pasha:

Cut it out man. Now! Choro?

Choro:

It is shaking again...something is falling apart...

(Pause.)

Ishak:

Falling apart? They are building something? Trenches, barracks, wall...

Pasha:

Or covering something.

Inga:

But...we heard nothing. How can we know?

Pasha:

But...but. But what? What do you want to hear? Boooooooooom?! This is not the Bastille falling. This is not the Berlin wall. My dear, this is not the way to the revolution. It is only a station. See. The station. Our stage. And...we are...about to.... vanish, to be killed, crippled, raped, tortured, or released, or... forgotten. There are various possibilities for us. But still... we can try...

Ishak:

Try to escape through this door? Again? You are repeating yourself Pasha. It takes only a few steps forward.

Pasha:

Sixteen. Precisely sixteen.

Choro:

How come there are thirteen for me?

Ishak:

And don't forget, there are no steps back. Only progression in time and space.

Inga:

You are really helping, Ishak. In our situation...

Pasha: (*Cuts in.*)

...at the station. Ha!

(*Reciting.*) Situation at the station. Man, I am a poet.(*Repeating.*) Situation at the station.

Oh, that fucking language. See what you can do with it: situation at the station.

Inga:

Stop it. I said, stop it Pasha. Please.

Pasha:

(To Inga.) Forget the rest, Inga. There is nothing beyond our bodies.

Inga:

Pasha, I have a job to do.

Pasha:

You observe... I serve. And you know what Inga, when you see Clint tell him that in death we are all the same.

(Pause.)

Inga:

Pasha... in the mines... .. I have it all in my camera. ...there are...

Pasha:

Camps?

Inga:

In the mines...you know that? *(Pause.)* Pasha...

Pasha:

(Approaching her, slowly unbuttoning his shirt. She steps back, he gets closer.)

Inga:

Pasha...What are you doing? Don't. Don't you dare. *(He moves even closer to her.)*

Get lost.

Pasha:

Give me a hand.

(Inga steps back, almost in a panic.)

Pasha:

Don't be scared Inga. Don't.

(Pasha, unbuttoning his shirt, opens it wide. He stands very close to Inga, as if he is going to hug her; a very short pause. Pasha turns his back to her, moving away; elevates his shirt with his sleeves still covering his arms.

Silence.

Inga stretches her hands and moves forward. She touches his back. She leans on him, touching his back and shoulders with both her hands. Lighting change. Inga and Pasha in spot.)

Inga:

Pasha...

Pasha:

I told you, I'm yours. You didn't believe me. You need me.

(Pulls his shirt off completely and elevates it high above him, then lowers the shirt and wraps it slowly around Inga's waist. The two of them facing each other.)

(Whispering.) I'm your story.

(They hug. She kisses him. His back, facing the audience now, reveals deep wounds and lacerations.)

Blackout.

Scene Twelve

Mother of All Mothers

(Starts in darkness. The sound of heavy rain can be heard. Everybody is sleeping.

Silence.

Rain drops.

Luludja, in bare feet, approaches center stage. She kneels, puts a long silk scarf over her head and prays; blue light on her only, she faces the audience.)

I pray to you Mother. Mother of All Mothers.

Pitiful Mother. Merciful Mother. Pitiful Mother. Tormented Mother.

Merciful Mother. Compassionate Mother. Anxious Mother. Blessed Mother.

Loving Mother. Bright Mother. Mortified Mother. Holly Mother.

Painful Mother. Proud Mother. Inspired Mother. Bright Mother.

Mother of All Mothers, Who Knows the Pain of Being a Mother.

Mother of All Mothers, Who Knows the Joy of Being a Mother.

Mother, Who Knows the Pain of Losing a Child.

Mother of All Children, Who Knows the Joy of Having a Child.

Mother of All Children, Who Knows the Pain of Not Having a Child.

Mother Who Understands All Help Your Daughter to Become a Mother.

Mother. Make My Son Live. Mother. Take me away. Mother. Over the ocean.

Mother of All Mothers. Let me be a Mother.

Blackout

Scene Thirteen**Shukar Soba**⁴⁸

(Luludja takes a scarf from her bag and sets it in the middle of the room. Takes her shoes off, and takes items from her bag: a bigger piece of brown bread, a bottle, some cheese wrapped in newspaper, an apple, an ashtray, then a can of coke. Sits down and waits. Choro takes his gold watch out of his pocket, looks at it, twitches again; Mother joins them; they take off their shoes, put them aside and sit around "the table"; Choro pulls the chair closer and Mother takes out of her bag a small Venetian gondola – red with golden ornaments - and puts it on the chair; takes the piece of bread and crumbles it into smaller pieces. They eat.)

Choro:

Is the sky over Venice still blue, Mother?

Mother:

(Chewing.) Blue as always. But it is closer.

Choro:

And the water still stinks?

Mother:

Stinks.

Choro:

It is summer.

⁴⁸ In Romani: clean and beautiful room, used for the display of nice furniture, mirrors, gifts; also for displaying the dead before burial.

Mother:

Late fall, son. Late fall...

(Pause.)

Choro: *(Twitch again.)*

We shall keep moving Mother.

Luludja:

O lungo drom⁴⁹. I am too heavy...

Choro:

There are other stations down the road. We shall go.

Mother:

Where? The sky is high above ... the earth is down...heavy.

(They eat.)

Blackout

⁴⁹ In Romani: long road.

Scene Fourteen**Yokki Juva⁵⁰ - Fortune Teller**

(Luludja and Inga sit on the bench, Inga writes in her notebook, Luludja peeks at the strange words, she is still curling a small bunch of red wool around her finger. Inga smiles and repeats some words in Romani. Inga writes, repeating Romani.)

Inga:

Baxt⁵¹. ...baxt . Luck.

Choro:

There is a better word Inga. Listen: Koke per koke⁵².

Inga:

Ko...ke per koke.

Choro:

Eye. An eye for an eye.

Inga:

Koke per koke. An eye for an eye. Koke per koke.

Choro:

It means a head for a head.

Luludja:

Besh Inga....besh... Sit!

⁵⁰ In Romani: fortune telling.

⁵¹ In Romani: luck.

⁵² In Romani: an eye for an eye; a head for head.

(Luludja sits and then gets up, then sits, demonstrating.)

(Inga gets up, and then sits. Again.)

Inga:

Besh⁵³. Besh Inga. *(They laugh.)*

Luludja:

God bless your legs for bringing you here.

Inga:

We just have to believe and then we'll be safe again.

Luludja:

God bless your eyes that can see me, your mouth that can talk to me...these hands that are going to take me... Will you take me with you to America?

Inga:

Why America?

Mother:

To run away from her rom.⁵⁴ That is why she is all over you. *(To Luludja.)* Don't be stupid. Hish! Leave her.

Inga:

Why America Luludja?

Luludja:

Everything is good there.

Inga:

Like what?

⁵³ In Romani: Sit.

⁵⁴ In Romani: Husband.

Luludja:

Everything is beautiful in America. Everybody is rich.

Inga:

There are poor people in America, too.

Luludja:

They haven't seen us.

Inga:

No.

Luludja:

God bless your televizija⁵⁵ for bringing you here.

Inga:

What do you believe?

(Turning a few pages in her notebook.) God... Develehi⁵⁶...

Luludja:

You learn fast. You are...

Mother:

(Cuts in.) You will never learn our language. You are gadzo⁵⁷. For every word you record in your notebook, we have another one, and another, and another...

Inga:

Baxt⁵⁸. Luck. Why?

⁵⁵ In Romani: Television.

⁵⁶ In Romani: God.

⁵⁷ In Romani: Non-Gypsy, Other; Dirty.

⁵⁸ In Romani: Luck.

Mother:

We don't want you to know. You should have been born a Romany.

Romany chey.⁵⁹

Inga:

But why? There are Gypsies in America too.

Mother:

Never ask questions and don't wear short skirts. That's an old Gypsy saying. Learn that.

Inga:

That is the only way of...

Mother:

Asking is no way to get answers.

Inga:

You are not afraid.

Mother:

Sako peskero charo dikhel⁶⁰. Everybody sees only his dish.

Luludja:

Another old saying.

Inga: (To Mother.)

Dukker drey my vast⁶¹.

Choro: (To Luludja.)

Eh, devla, devla⁶².

⁵⁹ In Romani: Romany girl.

⁶⁰ In Romani: Everybody sees only his dish.

⁶¹ In Romani: Tell my fortune by my hand.

⁶² In Romani: You devil.

Mother: (*To Choro.*)

Tel te jib⁶³.

Inga: (*Repeating in Romani again.*)

My vast...

Luludja:

(*Whispering.*) Dukker...

Inga:

Dukker ... my vast...dukker drey my vast⁶⁴.

Pasha:

Your Romani is excellent. Really.

Mother:

Only because you are an American I will not ask for big money. You can give me that ring...if you don't have money.

Inga:

Oh, no. I can't give you my ring.

Mother:

It's a pity. It is such a nice hand.

Inga:

I have five dollars.

Mother:

Your watch isn't a big deal but...I could take it. I have a soft heart. You don't need it anyway. I am doing you a favor. But if you...(*Inga gives her the watch.*) This is a lady's hand. This soft hand is full of curves...funny lines...like a spider web, broken in pieces...let me see...hmmmm...

(*Tongue clicking.*) tctctctccccctc....beautiful skin, and nice...smooth, lady's hand ...

⁶³ In Romani: Hold your tongue.

⁶⁴ In Romani: Tell my fortune by my hand.

...roads of fortune. See. My child, you will have a happy and long life. See...
See...America. And in America there is a window, and a woman, here...running. She has
no face, she has no legs ...she is picking ...let me see...feathers of a water wagtail. And
there is a man, who finds his wife too skinny, and who wants the other man's
boots...here, a bigheaded fish is flying...pih, pih, pih (*spitting*)...bites ayayayyaaay...a
small fish but a big, big bite. Ja develehi⁶⁵!

Luludja :

Ja develehi!

Choro:

Hold your tongue!

Inga:

What else?

Mother:

Psssst. Nice lady's hand...smooth...big eye is watching you...your man looks for
you...

(Choro sneaks around Inga's bag, takes something.)

Mother:

There is a broken window in the house. Oh, what a beautiful house you have. Your man
is there... clothes hanging on a rope... be quiet my child. Wild apples bloom...white
apples...and house full of snow...

⁶⁵ In Romani: Go with god.

(Luludja gets up, spreads her skirt and runs around yelling - runs through stage left exit-WC.)

Mother:

Az develehi⁶⁶.

Choro:

Matchka⁶⁷. She has been the ruin of me.

Inga:

What have you seen? What does it mean? Tell me...Luludja! What have you seen mother? You have to tell me.

Mother:

I am an old foolish gypsy. Yokki Juva⁶⁸. I am tired from the road. O lungo drom.⁶⁹ My eyes are itching. See. Let me have a smoke.

Inga:

Tell me...more.

(Choro -examining her cell -phone.)

Pasha:

It doesn't work. I told y'a.

Inga:

Tell me my story, mother.

⁶⁶ In Romani: Stay with god.

⁶⁷ In Romani: Cat.

⁶⁸ In Romani: Fortune teller.

⁶⁹ In Romani: The long road.

Mother:

You really don't smoke? Nice lady. Amerikanka.⁷⁰

Pasha:

You are wasting your time. It doesn't work. No need to keep it.

Choro:

I will take it anyway. It is not a sin. Not for us.

(Gunfire.)

Inga:

Tell me...you see something.

Mother:

Dum gry⁷¹.

Choro:

Kekko. Kekko⁷². *(Gunfire is louder.)* Kekko!

Blackout

⁷⁰ In Romani: American.

⁷¹ In Romani: Black horse.

⁷² In Romani: No.No.

Scene Fifteen

Gry - Engro⁷³ - The Horse Dealer

(Sound of heavy gunfire in the distance, Choro bangs his head against the wall.)

Choro:

Miro ...miro gry⁷⁴...Why her?

I taught her Romani and... to be with children. Mi cocoro⁷⁵.

She never bothered them, or kicked them. I wouldn't sell her for any amount. No...no pengos⁷⁶ for her. You should see her eyes, her hips and the way she walks. Her hair.

There is no hair like hers in the whole of Magyar (Hungary). I never hit her.

Mother:

Ide jojjon⁷⁷!

Choro:

Jasmin, Shoshoj, Kriza, Chaja...they all wanted her. At Budapest I was offered 100 000 forints for her. No pengos⁷⁸ for her. Even Janosh Balash drank the whole night and spent his fortune but... couldn't get her. He offered his house, and money, and cart, and three pigs...and daughter. Ha! He had all that on his hands but...no, no, no, I didn't let her go. She wouldn't survive without me. She is Romany.

(Pause) God, strike them down.

⁷³ In Romani: Horse dealer.

⁷⁴ In Romani: My horse.

⁷⁵ In Romani: I alone, myself.

⁷⁶ In Romani: Money.

⁷⁷ In Romani: Come here.

⁷⁸ In Romani: Money.

Luludja:

God strike you.

Choro:

(Turns as if he heard what she said.)

Cursing? Cursing again?

Luludja:

No...

Choro:

Your curse has worked, as always. Shut your mouth or...

Mother: *(To Choro.)*

Ide jojjon⁷⁹!

(To Luludja.)

Devla, devla⁸⁰.

Choro:

I shouldn't have taken you with me. It was a mistake. You have an evil eye, Luludja.

I shouldn't have married you.

Pasha: *(To Ishak.)*

I told you. It always turns out that way; always married to the wrong person.

Choro: *(Continuing.)*

I'm gonna return you Luludja. Yes! Go! Go back! Go back!

(Approaching her as if he is going to hit her, or something. She jumps up.)

⁷⁹ In Romani: Come here.

⁸⁰ In Romani: You devil.

Running away, ha? Matchka⁸¹.

(He goes after her, as if playing, as if catching a cat.)

Inga:

Don't Choro. She is having a baby...your baby... no, please

Choro:

She ruined me. See her? She jumped on my horse, spread her legs and her skirt...

(Luludja moves backward into a corner.)

Mother:

There is no anger here, my son. See, they stopped fighting. Haven't you heard the silence?

(Mother gesticulating to Luludja to move.)

Choro: *(Continuing.)*

I told them... don't strike her boy. Don't do that. She is a Gypsy. Duma Romane. Speak Romani to her. They shot her...they laughed...they killed my horse...she was Romany...Romany...

(Heavy gunfire in the distance.)

Why my horse?

Luludja:

Mullo⁸²! She is dead! Do you hear me?! She is dead.

(To Inga.) I can't...I can't bear it anymore.

(Choro is after her, but she manages to run through the stage left door - washroom.)

⁸¹ In Romani: Cat.

⁸² In Romani: Dead.

Luludja:

Molo...mulo... she is dead...we are dead!

(Choro hits the wall with his head, again. His twitches are more frequent.)

Ishak: *(To Pasha.)*

He will spill his brains. You've got to do something.

Pasha:

Fucking Gypsy.

(Pause.)

(Approaching Choro)

Pasha:

Aheeeeeey, Choro!

Is it you? Choro, Choro...hey. You are early this morning...it is a fair. It's time for the fair. You think it's good to be early, Choro. I was thinking, too. I was thinking all morning, who is going to bring the best horse to the fair?

Who? Who, I asked myself again. Choro, as always. Ehhaha hha...Tcigany's a motherfucker; you Gypsy motherfucker. Is she yours? Ha?! Beauty. This is a beautiful horse. How much do you ask for this horse?

(Pause.)

Choro:

There is no money for her.

Pasha:

How much?

Choro:

For a hundred thousand forints⁸³ I wouldn't wake up.

Pasha:

(To Ishak, who is confused by the whole game.)

What did the Gypsy say? What did he say and is still alive? One hundred thousand forints!

Choro:

I wouldn't wake up for less. I will get more than a hundred thousand from everybody here at this fair.

Pasha:

From whom? For God's sake from whom?

Choro:

Somebody will enter soon, through that door. Next!

Ishak:

Who is going to be next?

Pasha:

Don't interfere! We are doing business here. Men's business. I'm dealing with dollars here.

Choro:

Let them bury me if I don't fuck all your dead and living relatives, and your dollars. American or Canadian?

⁸³ Forints are Hungarian currency.

Pasha:

Real dollars. American. But I wouldn't give you more even if you want it.

Choro:

Let him buy my coffin, right now, if I sell her to him. A hundred thousand I said.

Pasha:

Folks, let's go. Remain with God.

Choro:

Go where?!? You barimasko!⁸⁴ Are you in a rush? Life isn't a race ...it isn't.

Business.... Look at her. Isn't she a beauty? Just look at her...Sar ekh manus.⁸⁵

(Short pause.)

Choro:

Pssst... look at her. Eyes are for looking, eyes are for beauty...

You have eyes, don't you?

Pasha:

God be with you. Of course I have. Two. See!

Choro:

I paid, let my mother live, eighty thousand forints.

Pasha:

You fucking Gypsy liar. Eighty thousand ! You are crazy.

Choro:

I am telling you, honestly. Barimasko gazo.⁸⁶ I counted them with these hands.

⁸⁴ In Romani: Bighead.

⁸⁵ In Romani: Like a person.

⁸⁶ In Romani: Bigheaded non Gypsy.

(As if he's holding the money, he spits into his hands and mimes the flipping of bills, counting and skipping numbers.)

Five thousand, twenty, one, two, seven...six thousand and ten...seven thousand.

Pasha:

Fifty thousand and let's go for a drink. On me.

Choro:

(Laughs.)

Pasha:

I said fifty one thousand. Deal? And, I am not going to bring her back.

Choro:

What?! To bring her back? Look at her eyes... nobody returns somebody like her. For God's sake, did you hear him? Do my ears hear well? What did you say?

Pasha:

Fifty seven thousand and no returns.

Choro:

You would not bring her back.

Pasha:

I will let you buy my coffin, right now, if I give you more! Fifty nine thousand and not a penny more.

Choro:

Let us say good-bye to him, poor man. He is going home with his sixty thousand and a few pennies more.

Pasha:

Fine.

Choro:

Let him go! God give him luck, he needs it. I have my beauty. He won't give more.

How much did he give over my price? I didn't hear, three thousand, five? How much? Do you know? What you are looking at? What did you hear? Ahhh, never mind. He is not getting her.

Pasha:

You can sell her only for slaughter.

Choro:

Even that. If I have to put her to slaughter I will still get more than you give me.

Pasha:

Dream on ...dream...on...

Choro:

Pay the price or leave this fair.

Pasha:

Where?

Choro:

Home. Quickly.

Pasha:

Don't you want to sell?

Choro:

Let my mother die, and me die, too, if I give her to you for ninety-nine.

Pasha:

What he is talking about?

Choro:

Let me die if I sell her to you for less than ninety-seven.

Pasha:

Eighty seven? Do I hear well?

Choro:

Let me die...let me have no more horses if I give her to you for less.

Pasha:

Let me die if I give you more than ninety.

Choro:

You have ninety-two?

Pasha:

Fuck.

Choro:

I could get more than that.

Ishak:

Give him ninety-two.

Choro:

Shall I give her for ninety-five?

Pasha:

Live or dead, no!

Choro:

Then take your money and get lost.

Pasha:

Pasha doesn't run ...no...not in front of anybody. Fuck you and your nag.

Choro:

Nag? You are blind in your eyes. A crow ate your brain. Fucking gadzo. See her!? There is no horse like her. There is no beauty like this.

Pasha:

Ninety! Ninety thousand forints!

Choro:

Ninety one. Sold. Shinel⁸⁷ Shinel Gadzo!

(Pasha and Choro shake hands – the horse trading ritual. Ishak cuts their handshaking.)

Pasha:

Be lucky with your money, Choro.

Choro:

And you with her. She is Romany.

Mother:

(Whispering.) Gura' fada mhaireadh tu.⁸⁸

Blackout.

⁸⁷ In Romani: Cut.

⁸⁸ In Romani: Long life to you.

Scene Sixteen

Muzikanti - Gypsy Orchestra

(Pasha stretches and yawns on his bench.)

Pasha:

Great to be a busy man.

(Gets up, heading towards stage left door entrance. He has the urge to pee.)

I've got to pee again. Busy on both fronts.

(Bumping into Ishak who is coming from stage left entrance door -WC.)

Pasha:

Anything?

Ishak:

No, nothing.

Pasha:

Any moves? There has to be something.

Ishak:

It is not your turn yet.

Pasha:

Tell him. *(He is holding his crotch. Goes in.)*

Mother:

(Lighting a chibouk.) Latcho divvus manush⁸⁹.

⁸⁹ In Romani: Good day man.

Ishak:

Good day to you, too.

(Choro is sleeping on the floor, violin case under his head, Mother pulls at him.)

Mother:

Choro, wake up.

Choro:

Which song? Just name it. I know them all.

Mother:

Your turn.

(Choro lays back. Turns onto his side.)

Mother:

Jal.⁹⁰

(Inga walks Luludja to WC, supports her while Luludja holds her stomach.)

Inga:

Hold on. Lean on me. Shit! There's always somebody in here.

(She knocks on the doorway.)

Mother:

Pissing people here... Amerikanka⁹¹. Don't you piss in America?

Inga:

It's the fourth time tonight that she's had to go in. ...Mother...could it be time?

Mother:

Ah, no. Not yet. It is false. That is nothing. You spoil her.

⁹⁰ In Romani: Go.

⁹¹ In Romani: American.

(Inga knocks again.)

Pasha:

Aaaah.... What the hell! There is no peace on earth. What do you want to see, Inga? Ha?

Inga:

Get out.

(Luludja enters.)

Pasha:

You missed me, Inga?

(Sudden off stage - burst of rifle fire. They all hit the floor.)

Inga:

On this European soil man is dying out. Is he?

Pasha:

No. There are few of us still pissing. Aren't we Ishak? Dead or pissing. Both are silent.

Ishak:

Very nearly so. Even fools are silent.

(The sound of gunfire coming closer and closer. Choro curls closer to Mother. She has another cigarette. Inga lies next to Pasha. Ishak at his spot.)

Choro:

Fucking gadzo⁹², they don't let you sleep,

Pasha:

What the fuck...

(Off- stage sound, jeep engines approaching, heavy artillery attack in background.)

⁹² In Romani: Non - Gypsy; Other; Dirty.

Mother:

Play my song, son. Play it now.

(Choro takes the violin, hesitates a little, and then plays.)

Mother:

(Sings song "**Djelem, Djelem**".)

Djelem, djelem lungo negro menca,

Mala dilem shukale romenca.

Ay, Romale, ay chavale... ⁹³

(Pasha, Choro, and then Ishak from the corner, join Mother in her song. Luludja in the doorway; she is in pain. She lies down on Pasha's bench, holding her stomach. Inga is between Pasha and Ishak; she takes the camera and puts it in the Mother's bag, then she joins the song. The orchestra playing.)

"Djelem, Djelem"

The song is a story about a small Gypsy group **Cherga / Chergari**.⁹⁴

A small cherga wonders through the world,

like a bee, from flower to flower.

The thud of horses can be heard far away, the song echoes even further.

⁹³ Slavic Macedonian Gypsy song "Djelem, Djelem".

⁹⁴ Gypsy group called CHERGARI is considered very friendly and relaxed; Isabel Fonseca characterized them as "exceptionally elegant people...tall and dark as bitter chocolate, with long, thin faces and features and straight hair."

Ahhhey, Tcigani, born with a song,
lived with a song,
died with a song.

A small cherga wanders through the world,
like a bee, from flower to flower.

Mother bear each Tcigan
till he is alive, fire is in him
nothing can make it die
not even a tear that moistens a cheek.

Ahay, Tcigani, born with a song,
lived with a song,
died with a song⁹⁵.

(Door opening.)

Blackout

THE END

⁹⁵ There is original Slavic Gypsy version of the song and recorded music.

Appendix



Photo # 1
"Portrait of a Girl" I



Photo # 2
"Portrait of a Girl" II



Photo # 3
"Portrait at the Border"



Photo # 4
"Djurdjevdan"



Photo # 5
"Vranjska Banja"



Photo # 6
"Road to Macinec"

SARAJEVO ' 92 War Photographs



Photo # 7
"Vijecnica in Flames"



Photo # 8
"Vijecnica Burning"



Photo # 9
"Shot in Apartment Building"



Photo # 10
"Streetcar - Skenderija"



Photo # 11
" Movie Theatre - Sutjeska"



Photo # 12
"Vase Miskina" I



Photo # 13
"Vase Miskina" II



Photo # 14
"Tito's Street"



Photo # 15
"Death in Armchair"

Photographs:

- #1 "Portrait of a Girl"
- #2 "Portrait of a Girl"
- #3 "Portrait at the Border"
- #4 "Djurdjevdan"
- #5 "Vranjska Banja"
- #6 "Road to Macinec"

Sarajevo 1992 – War Photographs:

- #7 "Vijecnica in Flames"
- #8 "Vijecnica Burning"
- #9 "Shot in Apartment Building"
- #10 "Streetcar – Skenderija"
- # 11 "Movie Theatre *Sutjeska*"
- # 12 "Vase Miskina" I
- # 13 "Vase Miskina" II
- # 14 "Tito's Street"
- # 15 "Death In Armchair"

All photographs by Sahin Sisic photographer and filmmaker from Sarajevo.

They all were exhibited in various international Exhibitions of Photography in Europe and the United States.

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Susan Sontag's staging of "Waiting for Godot" in Sarajevo.

August 17 at 2:00 PM and 4:00 PM , 1993/ The Youth Theatre / Pozoriste Mladih

"Opened "with twelve candles on the stage"(there were no electricity in town), and
"during the long, tragic silence...of the Vladimirs and Estragons which follows
the messenger's announcement that Mr. Godot isn't coming today, but will surely
come tomorrow, that my eyes began to sting with tears. Actor (Velibor) was
crying too. No one in the audience made a sound. The only sounds were those
coming from outside the theater: a UN APC thundering down the street and the
crack of sniper fire." ¹⁰³

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Green Valley Media

¹⁰³ Susan Sontag, "Godot Comes to Sarajevo", "The New York Review", September 7, 1993.