

Ivan Viripaev

**DRUNKS**

A play in two acts

translated by Cazimir Liske

Characters:

Martha - a beautiful young woman, 21years

Mark - director of an important international film festival, 46 years

Laura - model, 30 years

Magda - Laura's friend, 30 years

Laurence - Magda's husband, 35 years

Gustav - Banker, 53 years

Lara - Gustav's wife, 40 years

Carl - banker, 50 years

Linda - Carl's wife, 47 years

Rudolf - manager of a tech PR company, 30 years

Max - operational manager of a bank, 32 years

Matias - manager of advertising company, 35 years

Gabriel - vice-chair of construction company, 31 years

Rose - Prostitute, 22 years

ACT 1

Scene 1

Night, a street. Across the street, standing before the entrance to a restaurant that closed up long ago, is a young woman. This is Martha. Martha is drunk. She is wearing a short summer dress, and she carries a small women's bag. Martha is very, very drunk. She can't stand in one place, she sways from side to side. Her stupor sends her delicate figure listing left and right, forward and back, she is like a section of newspaper being chased by the wind down the street. Finally Martha takes a few steps to one side, loses her balance and falls into a filthy puddle. After falling, Martha lets out a few continuous, unbroken sounds which can barely be deciphered as something like "What's it all for?" Martha lies in the muddy puddle. She tries to stand. She tries harder and stands on all fours. Muddy water streams down her face. All of her clothes are dirty. Her bare feet are dirty. Martha tries to stand. She succeeds. Martha's hands feel for her bag, first on her right thigh, then on her left. There is no bag. Martha looks down. Her bag is down there, in the puddle. Martha beds over to pick up the bag, loses her balance and falls once again into the puddle. This time she bruises herself painfully, and again shouts out something incomprehensible like "who's doing this, why?". Mark enters. He is very drunk and barely, barely able to move his legs. Mark notices Martha lying in the puddle. He wants to go toward her, but he's unable to do so just yet because he is swaying from side to side. He takes a few steps forward, then a few steps

backward, then forward again. It looks as if Mark is performing some kind of strange comic dance. Finally Mark manages to approach Martha. He stands near her and watches Martha's attempt to stand. Martha tries to stand up. She rises to her knees then, placing her hands on the ground, tries to raise her bottom and straighten out her legs. Mark is observing Martha's actions. But his body is leaning too far backward and Mark waves his hands and falls back several steps, though he manages to stay on his feet. Mark keeps his balance and once again approaches Martha. Martha has been unable to stand on her feet and has decided to rest. She has decided to sit down for a bit, sit down in the same puddle she has been trying to get out of. Martha sits on her butt and straightens out her legs. She is sitting in the very center of the puddle. Mark looks at Martha. Inside Mark is a thought process. Mark, tilting this way and that, is approaching Martha, who is still sitting in a puddle. Mark wants to get closer, but is unable to at first. Finally, Mark reaches Martha, and offers his hand.

MARK: Ykntek. (You can take it)

Martha looks at Mark, unable to understand what he wants. Mark waves his hand in front of her face.

MARK: Iwna hlp. (I want to help)

Martha looks at Mark and gives him her hand. Mark takes Martha's hand and pulls it towards him. Martha tries to stand. Mark sways sharply to one side, but he does not let go of Martha's hand. Finally, Martha manages to stand on one knee. Then on the other. In some time, she manages to stand on one leg. With all his strength Mark pulls Martha by the hand. Martha jumps to her feet, loses her balance and falls on Mark, Mark also loses balance and, unable to hold up Martha, falls into the same puddle. Upon falling, they both call out. Mark yells: "We fell over?!" and Martha: "I don't need this!" For awhile, Mark and Martha lie in the puddle. Mark is the first to try standing up. After a few unsuccessful attempts, he finally succeeds in rising to his knees. Martha meanwhile goes on lying in the puddle, unmoving. Mark tries to rise from his knees, but can't seem to do it, he keeps losing balance and falling again on his knees. After a third unsuccessful attempt, Mark decides to crawl off to one side a bit, moving along on all fours like a dog. Mark crawls out of the puddle and sits on his ass next to the puddle. He is covered in filth. Mark looks at Martha, who is lying in the puddle.

MARK: Hey, yh... Yourre... Hey...

At the sound of Mark's voice, Martha's body makes a few slight movements. Martha lifts her head. She looks around. Brown water streams from her face. Martha rises on all fours and crawls toward Mark. Martha crawls up to Mark and sits next to him. Mark looks affirmingly at Martha and nods.

MARK: Well, there.

Martha's hands wipe off her face--it seems she's slightly come to. Mark looks at Martha for a long time, as though trying to understand why she's wiping off her face with her hands.

Mark looks at Martha and starts talking. His tongue staggers and slurs. Mark pronounces each word with evident difficulty.

MARK: Well who's seeing what, there's a question right there..

Martha gazes at Mark, apparently trying to figure out who this is in front of her.

MARTHA: Who's asking?

MARK: It's me, Mark.

MARTHA: Who are you?

MARK: I'm Mark.

MARTHA: You're Mark?

MARK: I'm Mark.

MARTHA: I don't know anything, nothing.

MARK: You've gotta perceive the objectives and responsibilities you set in front of you, that's all.

MARTHA: What's your name, I forgot?

MARK: Mark.

MARTHA: Why are we sitting here Mark?

MARK: To find the royal diamond, my lovely Gülbahar.

MARTHA: My name is Martha, not Gülbahar.

MARK: That's a line from a movie.

MARTHA: What for?

MARK: From an Iranian movie that's called--I don't remember what it's called right now.

MARTHA: What for?

MARK: Because I saw it and now I'm giving it to you, Maya.

MARTHA: Martha. My name is Martha.

MARK: And I'm the director of the film festival, Mark Gardenitz.

MARTHA: You're drunk as shit.

MARK: And who are you, Gülbahar?

MARTHA: I don't know yet right now who I am. I'm in search of myself and I want to throw up.

MARK: You can throw up, only not on my suit, because I'm the director of the film festival and I can't be thrown up on. By the way my name is Mark, I came by here to visit some friends.

MARTHA: You're visiting friends, Mark?

MARK: Yes, I'm visiting friends, my friends who got me lethally drunk.

MARTHA: Does that mean you're going to die now, Mark?

MARK: There is no death, my lovely Gülbahar. The great almighty heavens above will envelop us at death, and that is all.

MARTHA: Oh, oh, oh! That is such nonsense, what you're saying right now! That is such a load of diarrhea, what you just said. That's just a heap of crap, what you're saying.

MARK: There is no death, and that is all.

MARTHA: That is such shit, what you're saying. That is just vile bullshit, what you're saying.

MARK: There is no death, lovely Gülbahar.

MARTHA: Stop it.  
MARK: There is no death, lovely Gülbahar.  
MARTHA: Stop it I said.  
MARK: There is no death, lovely Gülbahar.  
MARTHA: Knock it off, can you hear me? Who am I talking to?  
MARK: There is no death, lovely Gülbahar.  
MARTHA: Shut it, hear me, I'm talking to you--shut up!  
MARK: There is no death...

Martha begins beating Mark's face and screaming.

MARTHA: Stop it, stop it! Shut up your mouth! Shut your mouth!

Mark, his hands raised to shield against Martha's blows, goes on repeating.

MARK: No death. No. There is no death.  
MARTHA: Shut up! I said shut up! Be quiet! Stop it, stop repeating that crap! I feel sick!  
MARK: There is no death, lovely Gülbahar.  
MARTHA: I'm gonna puke all over you from this bullshit. Shut up, shut up!  
MARK: There is no death, lovely Gülbahar.

Martha throws all her weight at Mark, trying to block his mouth with her hands.

MARK: There is no death, lovel...  
MARTHA: Fucker, shut the fuck...  
MARK: No, lovely...  
MARTHA: Shut up, shut up...  
MARK: No death...  
MARTHA: Fucker, you fucker, shut up...  
MARK: There is no death, lov...  
MARTHA: Be quiet you fucker, shut up...!!

Mark twists his head side to side, not letting Martha touch his face. Martha beats Mark on the neck. Mark winds up and strikes Martha's face as hard as he can. Martha flies off to one side and falls to the ground. She lies on the ground motionless.

MARK: You need to properly think through your motions before you take action. You need to take a look at your thoughts. What are you thinking about? Think of what you're thinking about before you start talking. I'm the director of an international film festival and I know very well what's going on up there in your heads. What's going on up there is fear and uncertainty about tomorrow. Those of you who aren't afraid of getting this fucking cancer, take a step forward! Those of you who are unafraid of getting sick with this fucking cancer, please take a step forward! I'm asking you--whoever here is not afraid of getting sick with this fucking cancer, go ahead and take a step forward! Who's not afraid of getting this fucking cancer?! Silence. There. Now that is the beginning of real silence. And now we're going to sit here together and listen to real silence. Just like that.

Mark is silent. He sits and listens to the silence. Martha is lying on the ground. She begins to cry. Mark sits and listens to Martha crying.

Blackout.

## Scene 2.

Laura's apartment. A large living room. Two sofas, three armchairs, two low tables for cocktails and newspapers. The walls are hung with photos and movie posters. On one of the walls are shelves with books and DVDs. Near the window is a large aquarium with small red fish. The floor is covered in fluffy white carpet. The tables and floor are scattered with a large number of beer bottles, wine bottles, vodka bottles, whiskey, etc., plates with half-eaten food, spilled wine, overturned ashtrays. In the room are Laura and Magda. They are very drunk. Music is playing. Laura and Magda stand in the center of the room embracing one another. They are pretending to dance, though in reality they are just trying not to lose balance. Laura and Magda cling to one another, swaying from side to side. They give the impression of two fighters engaged in a bout. For a moment they hold still. Magda raises her head and looks at Laura.

MAGDA: You know what, I want to ask you something. You know what? I want to ask you something--but it's really important, you know? Answer me, do you know?

LAURA: I don't know.

MAGDA: You don't know.

LAURA: I don't know where what you're talking about, where is it?

MAGDA: Here.

LAURA: Oh, here?!

MAGDA: Yeah, 'cause it's here. It's all here! Silence and love. And what you are and what I am, and the interstellar vessel of my heart is flying away forever.

LAURA: That is so beautiful! That is so beautiful!

MAGDA: Who will open the door for a woman, when she is standing at the door?

LAURA: That is so beautiful, that is so beautiful!

MAGDA: Let them open the doors! Let them bring water! Let tears become rain!

LAURA: That's incredible! That is so beautiful! More!

MAGDA: The Lord is my cosmos, have mercy on me, your slave.

LAURA: Incredible, incredible! The Lord Cosmos, awesome!

MAGDA: Lord, ply me with drink and drive me to madness. Lord take me where I'll be somewhere where it's like I'm by myself. Lord, forgive me. God. Forgive me.

Magda suddenly pushes Laura away and takes several very unsteady steps off to one side.

MAGDA: You can't forgive me, huh? You can't forgive me, that's what you think, that you can't forgive me, huh?

LAURA: Hey, hey, hey, none of this is your fault.

MAGDA: My fault, can you forgive me? It's my fault, can you forgive me?

LAURA: None of it is your fault, hey, hey, hey!

MAGDA: It's my fault, can you forgive me?

LAURA: None of it is your fault!

MAGDA: Hey, hey, hey, can you forgive me?!

LAURA: None of it is your fault. It's not your fault!

Magda, barely able to keep herself up, approaches Laura.

MAGDA: Forgive me, I'm begging you, forgive me. For once in my life I'm asking someone to forgive me!

Magda and Laura meet at the center of the room and embrace.

LAURA: Hey, hey, hey.

MAGDA: Hey, hey, hey.

LAURA: You're beautiful, you're loved, you're precious, you're golden, you're a gem.

MAGDA: Oh God, I am so awful!

LAURA: You're a gem!

MAGDA: My God, I love only you, you hear me, only you, my God!

LAURA: Oh God, me too, I love only you.

MAGDA: Oh God, me too, I love only you.

LAURA: Oh God, me too, I love only you.

MAGDA: Oh God, me too, I love only you.

LAURA: Oh God, only you.

MAGDA: God, me too, I love only you.

LAURA: God, me too, I love only you.

MAGDA: God, only you.

LAURA: God, only you.

MAGDA: God, only you.

LAURA: God, only you.

MAGDA: God, me too, I love only you.

LAURA: God, only you.

MAGDA: God, me too, I love only you.

Magda and Laura take several steps to one side, lose balance and run into the corner of the room. They fall onto the table, upsetting bottles, plates and food. Upon falling they begin shouting: "Help us, God, help us! Help! Help!" Responding to their cries, Laurence enters. He is also very drunk. Laurence is in a business suit, but completely soaked. Water comes flowing off of him in streams. He must have been sitting in the tub, in his suit. Laurence runs into the room, swaying side to side, and stops at its center. He is dripping water.

LAURENCE: Who broke what here? I'm gonna fix everything!

Magda and Laura are lying on the floor by the table.

LAURA: Laurence, help us, we're dying.

LAURENCE: I'm ready to fix you. Give me your hands, I'm gonna get you up on your feet.

MAGDA: I'm dying Laurence, I'm in bad pain.

LAURENCE: I'm going to fix you now, Magdalene.

LAURA: And me, Laura, fix me too, Laurence.

Laurence goes up to the women, who are lying on the floor. He bends over them and holds out both hands to them. Laura and Magda each take a hand. Laurence pulls them toward himself. Magda and Laura try to stand up, Laurence pulls them up with all his strength, but their hands are slippery and slide right out of Laurence's. Laurence goes flying backward into the armchair, flips over it backward and falls on the floor. The armchair topples after him, coming to rest on his body. Then Magda and Laura also fall to the floor. Silence.

LAURENCE: (lying on the floor) When you love, you're always lying on the floor, because the earth disappears from under your feet.

LAURA: Beautiful.

MAGDA: (lying on the floor) Laurence, do you love me?

LAURENCE: And who are you?

MAGDA: I'm your wife Magda.

LAURENCE: I'm gonna find you, my wife Magda.

Laurence slowly stands, takes several steps toward Magda, lying on the floor. At the same time Laura starts getting up. She manages to set up on her knees.

MAGDA: Laurence! My prince, Laurence! My god, Laurence, today I became your wife Laurence, come here and take me in your arms. It's time for us to withdraw to our wedding bed, Laurence. Do you have a wedding bed, Laurence?

Laurence slowly moves toward Magda. Laura appears in his path. Laurence and Laura look at one another.

LAURENCE: Yes, I have a wedding bed, Magda.

MAGDA: Do you have it with you?

LAURENCE: Yes, it's always with me.

LAURA: Why did you leave me, Laurence?

LAURENCE: Listen, Laura, we already talked about this. Why do you want to start that up again...?

LAURA: I want to know why you left me, Laurence.

LAURENCE: We already talked about that, why do you want to start...?

MAGDA: (lying on the ground) What did you already talk about, tell me, what?

LAURENCE: Laura is asking why I left her, what should I tell her Magda?

MAGDA: What do you mean what? Tell her that you realized you loved me. We already told her about that.

LAURENCE: But she's asking again.

MAGDA: Well then tell her again and come over to me.

LAURENCE: Laura, I was happy with you all three years we were together, but I realized I love your friend Magda and today we got married. And we celebrated and got drunk. I think we already talked about this.

LAURA: Kiss me, Laurence.

LAURENCE: I can't, I'm married, my wife is lying over there on the floor.

LAURA: Kiss me goodbye, Laurence. I let you go, gave you to my best friend, and I'm just asking for one kiss goodbye.

LAURENCE: Well, I have to ask Magda.

LAURA: Well then hurry up and ask her, Laurence.

LAURENCE: Magda, can I kiss—

MAGDA: I heard everything Laurence. My answer is no.

LAURA: Well then I'll kiss you goodbye myself, and nobody can stop me.

Laura goes to Laurence, she presses her whole body against his.

LAURA: Why are you so wet Laurence?

LAURENCE: Because I was taking a bath, Laura.

LAURA: I think you forgot to undress.

LAURENCE: I think I forgot everything.

Laura kisses Laurence on the lips. They come together in a long passionate kiss. Magda tries to get on her feet, she manages to do so on the second attempt. Magda stands there, swaying like a pendulum, watching Laura and Laurence kiss. Then she slowly goes to the sofa and sits on it.

MAGDA: Why are you so wet, Laurence? Because I was walking on water and fell into the water. Why did you choose me, Laurence? Because I love you, with my whole being, my dear. And what is love, Laurence? It's the state in which you are no longer afraid of death, my dear. You mean you're going to die soon, Laurence? We're all going to die soon, Magda. You mean we have no choice? Nobody has any choice. You mean everything in this life is predetermined? Yes, Magda, everything in this life is predetermined. You mean we met each other and got married, and that was all predetermined, right? Well of course, Magda, everything in this life is predetermined. And you mean the fact that I stole you from my best friend, that was also predetermined, right? Yes, yes, of course, all that was predetermined. And how we decided to get drunk, the three of us together, and how we came over to Laura's house? And how now she's by herself, and you're leaving her for me, all that was predetermined? That's absolutely right. Everything in the world, all events and actions are predetermined.

Laurence and Laura stop kissing. Laurence moves away from Laura and goes to Magda. Laura stands alone, with her head down, swaying slightly. Laurence sits down on the sofa near Magda.

MAGDA: Who makes all these decisions? Who's deciding all this for us?

LAURENCE: God in heaven of course, who else.

MAGDA: What, you believe in God Laurence?

LAURENCE: I think I do, Magda.

MAGDA: And why are you so wet, Laurence?

LAURENCE: I was walking on water, and I fell in.

Laurence embraces Magda, Laura stands where she was. She cries.

Blackout.



### SCENE 3.

Night. Guest room in Carl and Linda's house. The interior reflects the fact that this is a wealthy home. Sofas, a table, a cabinet for alcohol and cigars, a book case. Two couples sit at the table. Judging by their clothes, they are well-off. Gustav is with his wife Laura, and Carl with his wife Linda. They are exceedingly drunk. On the table is a half-drunk bottle of gin, an unfinished bottle of expensive cognac, a few martini glasses, a few cognac glasses, a few glasses of water.

GUSTAV: ...therefore, I pray you, judge the cat.  
CARL: And what ever for, may I ask?  
GUSTAV: Because the cat is a criminal.  
CARL: The cat is a criminal?  
GUSTAV: Yes, the cat is a criminal.  
CARL: And how is the cat a criminal, may I ask?  
GUSTAV: Because he killed your mother, my dear friend.  
CARL: What-what?  
GUSTAV: Yes, precisely.  
CARL: I can hardly agree with that.  
GUSTAV: I declare it at my own accountability. At my own accountability I personally declare that the cat killed your mother, Carl.  
CARL: That's not true, Gustav.  
GUSTAV: It's true, Carl, the cat killed your mother, that's the truth.  
CARL: I don't agree with that.  
GUSTAV: Well you'd best go ahead and agree with it, Carl.  
CARL: Hm? But I can't agree with that.  
GUSTAV: Why not, Carl?  
CARL: Because what you're saying is a bunch of nonsense. I don't understand a word of what you're saying. Why a cat? What cat, Gustav?  
GUSTAV: What do you mean what cat, my dear friend? What do you mean what cat? Your mother's cat--what other cat could it be?  
CARL: Oh come on now, my mother didn't have a cat.  
GUSTAV: What do you mean she didn't have a cat?  
CARL: She did not have a cat, Gustav.  
GUSTAV: What do you mean she didn't have a cat? She had a cat. I saw it myself. I was at your mother's house a year and a half ago and I saw a cat. There was a cat.  
CARL: Okay, let's say she had a cat...  
GUSTAV: She had a cat.  
CARL: Alright, alright, she had a cat, and what of it?  
GUSTAV: That!  
CARL: What?  
GUSTAV: That!  
CARL: What, that?!  
GUSTAV: That-that. That's what that. That cat. And that cat killed your mother.  
CARL: But how can a cat kill a person, may I ask?  
GUSTAV: That's your question?  
CARL: Yes, that's my question.

LARA: And mine.  
GUSTAV: Then here is your answer: allergic asthma.  
LINDA: Bravo, Gustav. Bravo!

Linda claps her hands.

CARL: What nonsense! What are you talking about, what asthma are you talking about, my dear friend?  
GUSTAV: Your mother died of allergic asthma. She asphyxiated, because she had allergies. To what?  
LINDA: The cat.  
GUSTAV: See, your wife knows about it too. The cat killed your mother. The cat is a criminal.  
CARL: What nonsense, I don't want to hear it, what a bunch of nonsense!  
LINDA: Agree with him, darling, admit it, Gustav is right.  
CARL: Impossible!  
LINDA: But why not, darling?  
CARL: Why not? why not? Because he has absolutely no argument, that's why not.  
GUSTAV: Who has no argument? You mean I have no argument?  
CARL: Yes, he has no argument.  
GUSTAV: I have no argument?  
CARL: Yes, he has no argument.  
GUSTAV: Well in that case tell me, dear friend, how is it your mother died, hm?!  
CARL: My mother did not die--she's alive.  
GUSTAV: What-what?  
CARL: I told you what. My mother did not die--she's alive.  
GUSTAV: What in the world are you saying?  
CARL: Precisely what you're hearing. My mother did not die--she's alive.  
GUSTAV: What are you saying, Carl--come to your senses?!  
CARL: You come to your senses! You come to your senses, burying my mother alive, you come to your senses! My mother is alive!  
LINDA: Carl!  
CARL: *Carl!* Carl, what?  
LINDA: Stop it, Carl.  
CARL: My mother is alive, and he wants to bury her alive, he wants to kill her with allergic asthma, he and some God-forsaken cat. My mother is alive! I was talking to her on the phone just a few minutes ago.  
LINDA: Stop it, Carl.  
CARL: I was talking to her on the phone just a few minutes ago.  
LINDA: You mustn't say that, Carl.  
CARL: I mustn't say that?! I mustn't say that? And why not, may I venture to ask?  
LINDA: You yourself know very well why not, my dear.  
CARL: I repeat to you, once again, my mother is alive, and you can shut up, you hear me?!  
GUSTAV: Listen, Carl, chap...

CARL: And you shut up, alright?! Shut up, you understand? Don't say another word about my mother, understand? You understand me? Do you understand me?! Do you understand me?!

Carl suddenly latches onto the edges of the table and turns it over--everything on the table goes flying to the floor. Liquor from the flying glasses and bottles splashes onto their dresses and suits. The women scream from surprise. Tossing everything that remains on the table to the floor, Carl, swaying heavily, moves off to one side. The rest stand, and also swaying, move away from the table.

LINDA: What did you do that for, Carl?

CARL: My mother is alive.

LINDA: Listen, darling, Gustav and Lara are our friends--why do you want to hurt them? Carl, you mustn't!

CARL: My mother is alive.

GUSTAV: Listen, chap, let's have a talk, like two good old friends.

CARL: We must be held accountable for every word that comes out of our mouths.

GUSTAV: Well of course, my friend...

CARL: For every word that comes out of our mouths. God will make us answer for every word that comes out of our mouths.

GUSTAV: Listen, Carl...

CARL: No, you listen, chap. No, you listen to me, chap. God will make us answer for every word that comes flying out of our mouths. Every word!

Linda, Lara, Gustav and Carl stand across from one another, they are all very unsteady. It's as though they are performing a strange dance.

GUSTAV: Let me explain something to you, chap.

CARL: God will make you answer for every word that's coming out of your mouth right now.

GUSTAV: That goes without saying.

LINDA: Nobody's gonna make anybody answer for anything Carl, stop it.

CARL: God will make us answer for every word that comes out of our mouths.

LINDA: Nobody's going to make anybody answer for anything, stop carrying on all this nonsense, Carl. Don't ruin the evening with your stupid stubbornness.

CARL: God will have you answer for all your words, for every single word that comes out of your mouth.

GUSTAV: Let me explain something to you, Carl.

CARL: My mother is alive.

LINDA: My god, Carl, stop repeating that.

LARA: Everybody can do that, Carl. There's nothing tricky about it, everybody can do that. Me too, I can start endlessly repeating that my father--who died three years ago--that he's alive. Or that my brother, who was killed a year ago, that he's alive too.

CARL: You can repeat whatever you want, but my mother is alive--that's what I want to say, and no one can convince me otherwise!

LARA: My brother is alive too, Carl.

CARL: So what?!

LARA: So, a year ago he was killed by some Arabs, they stabbed him at the entrance to his building. Unemployed Arabs robbed him and killed him. So, you think now I should start endlessly repeating that he's alive?

CARL: You can repeat whatever you want, as much as you want. But my mother is alive--that's what I want to say! That's all!

LARA: My brother is alive too, so what?

CARL: Well, so what, my mother is alive, that's all.

LARA: My brother is alive too, he's aliver than anybody who's alive, and so what?

CARL: Nothing! My mother is alive, that is all.

LARA: My brother is alive, so what?!

CARL: So what? My mother is alive, so what?!

LARA: My brother is alive, so what?

CARL: My mother is alive, so what?

LARA: My brother is alive, so what? Oh, I'm gonna be sick, I'm going to the bathroom. Linda, can you help me, I can't get there on my own, help me.

LINDA: Well of course, of course. Come on, I'll help you, I need to pee too, let's go.

LARA: I want to throw up.

LINDA: I want to throw up too, let's hurry.

Linda takes Lara's arm and they very unsteadily go into the next room. Carl calls after them.

CARL: God will make you answer for every word that comes out of your mouth.

GUSTAV: I'm going to explain everything to you now, chap. I'll explain everything, and you'll understand. The thing is, Carl, that right now you are that very same God that you're talking about. You are that same God, Carl. I want you to hear what I'm telling you right now. You are that very same God, Carl. You are God, Carl. Do you understand me, chap?

Carl looks at Gustav in amazement.

CARL: I think perhaps I understand you, my friend.

GUSTAV: You understand me now, my friend?

CARL: I think perhaps now I understand you, my friend.

GUSTAV: You are God, Carl, do you understand me now, my dear friend?

CARL: I think that perhaps now I understand you, my friend.

GUSTAV: You are God, that's what I want you to understand, my friend. That's it, my dear Carl, you are are God, just understand that and everything will fall into place.

CARL: I think perhaps now I understand you, my friend. On your knees. Bow before me on your knees and kiss my hand, Gustav.

Gustav shouts.

GUSTAV: No! You don't understand, Carl. You don't actually completely understand, mate. See, I too am the Lord God, my friend. Yeah, yeah, yeah. See, I too am the Lord God, my friend! Yeah, yeah, yeah, you get it. See, I too am the Lord God, mate, you understand?

CARL: I think perhaps now I understand you, my friend. You are the Lord god, chap.

GUSTAV: I am the Lord God, my friend. And you are the Lord God, Carl. You understand, do you understand now, dear friend?

CARL: I think perhaps now I understand you, dear friend.  
GUSTAV: Then let me give you a hug, dear friend.  
CARL: Give me a hug, my friend.

Gustav and Carl embrace. They stand hugging one another, trying not to lose balance. They wobble from side to side.

GUSTAV: You are God and I am God, you understand, mate?  
CARL: We are two Lord Gods on this earth.  
GUSTAV: No, Carl, we are one Lord God on this earth. Not two, one.  
CARL: But there are two of us, Gustav.  
GUSTAV: There are two of us, but one God. You are the Lord God and I am the Lord God, there are two of us but one God, you understand?  
CARL: But which one of us is it?  
GUSTAV: Let me explain it all to you. We are the body of God, you understand? You and I, we are the body of God. All people living on this planet, all of us--we're all the body of God, you understand? Do you understand, Carl?  
CARL: Not really, my friend.  
GUSTAV: You're the body of God, you understand?  
CARL: No.  
GUSTAV: What's there not to understand, Carl, it's very simple. God is infinity, God is that which has no beginning, no end, but God also has form, and has a body. And that body us us. I, Linda, Lara, all other people, and of course you, Carl. You're the body of God, Carl.  
KARL: Don't, don't say that, I can't...  
GUSTAV: What do you mean, you can't?  
KARL: I can't be the body of God, I'm a very bad guy.  
GUSTAV: Don't get carried away, Carl, we're all the body of God, good guys and bad guys.  
CARL: Except for me, Gustav.  
GUSTAV: But why?  
CARL: Because I'm bad.  
GUSTAV: We are all God's body, you see, all of us. Furthermore, you're not such a bad guy, my friend.  
CARL: I'm bad.  
GUSTAV: You're not bad, Carl.  
CARL: Bad.  
GUSTAV: You're not bad.  
CARL: Bad.  
GUSTAV: Not bad.  
CARL: I slept with your wife, Gustav.  
GUSTAV: What?  
CARL: A few years ago I slept with your wife, Gustav.  
GUSTAV: Carl, what are you talking about?  
CARL: It's true, my friend, I did it. I'm so, so ashamed. I've been living with this for years and it's always so hard to look you in the eyes. I wanted to tell you about it a long time ago, but I just couldn't make myself do it. I'm bad, Gustav. I'm really, really bad. I can't be the body of the Lord God, sometimes I think I'm not good enough to be a human body, or

even an animal. I make myself sick, I make myself absolutely sick, Gustav. There you have it. There you have it, my friend.

Pause. Lara and Linda enter the room. Lara goes to Gustav, Linda to Carl. Each of the women takes her husband by the arm.

LARA: I think it's time for us to go home, dear. I feel completely exhausted.

LINDA: Yes, yes, I think it's time for us to get some sleep too.

GUSTAV: One minute, dear ladies, I must explain something to our dear Carl, I want him to understand something. We haven't finished talking just yet. You see, dear Carl, the thing is, it doesn't matter what kind of person you are--good or bad. That means absolutely nothing, because one way or the other you are still the Lord God. Whoever you are, Carl, you're still always the body of God, no matter what. You see, Carl? Whoever you may be, you're the body of God, you understand? Do you understand what I mean, Carl?

CARL: I think perhaps I'm beginning to understand you, Gustav.

GUSTAV: And my wife Lara, no matter what kind of person she is, and your wife Linda, we are all the body of the Lord God. You, and she, and Lara and I--all of us are the body of God, you understand what I'm saying Carl?

CARL: I think perhaps I understand what you're saying, my friend.

LARA: I don't understand what you're saying. What kind of strange philosophy is that, what are you talking about Gustav?

GUSTAV: You are the Lord God, Lara, you're the body of the Lord God, you understand? You are the Lord God, Lara. And Linda is the Lord God, and I'm the Lord God, and even our very, very bad friend Carl, he's also the Lord God. All of us are the Lord God. And even the Arabs that robbed and killed your brother, Lara, they're also the Lord God--that's my strange philosophy, my dear Lara.

LARA: Don't you dare call the people who killed by brother "God," Gustav.

GUSTAV: We are all the Lord God, Lara, and even people who kill us in this strange world, they too, and them, and them too, and them too...

LARA: That sounds very impressive, especially at three o'clock in the morning after the amount of alcohol we managed to drink today. And with that, I believe, it's time to call it an evening, my dear. Let's go home, our bed is waiting for us, let's go lie our tired, drunken bodies of the Lord God down to sleep.

LINDA: Well said.

CARL: Very.

GUSTAV: Linda, Carl, dear friends, it seems it is indeed time for us go.

LARA: Gustav as always has dismissed his driver, so we'll have to walk home.

LINDA: Carl's driver can take you, right Carl?

CARL: I dismissed my driver too, my dear, so we'll also have to walk home.

GUSTAV: Personally I'm thrilled that's the case, because you just can't fall asleep in such awful condition.

LARA: My darling, you're wonderful.

GUSTAV: You are too, my dear.

LARA: Carl, Linda, you're wonderful

GUSTAV: And this has been a wonderful evening. Let me hug you both goodbye.

Gustav hugs Carl and Linda. Lara kisses first Carl then Linda.

GUSTAV: Good night, Carl! Good night, Linda! Best to you both, good-bye.  
CARL: Good-bye, Gustav. Bye-bye, Lara.  
LINDA: Good-bye, Gustav. Bye, Lara.  
LARA: Good-night, see you later.

Gustav and Lara leave. Carl tiredly walks to the table and sits on it. Linda sits down next to him.

LINDA: Well, I have never been this drunk before in my life, how did this happen, Carl?  
CARL: To be honest the last time I got this drunk was on my graduation night in college.  
LINDA: And it's weird that we got so drunk, observing a year since your mother's death--she just hated liquor. How did that happen? And that idiot conversation about the cat, who killed your mom--I hope you weren't too offended by Gustav, Carl...  
CARL: What do you mean, Linda?  
LINDA: I mean that stupid story about how the cat killed your mother, that Gustav came up with.  
CARL: Nobody killed my mother, Linda, she's alive.  
LINDA: Carl!  
CARL: My mother is alive, Linda.  
LINDA: Carl, what are you saying?!  
CARL: My mother is alive--that's all I'm telling you, my dearest!  
LINDA: Oh God, Carl!

Carl stands and heads for the door.

LINDA: Where are you going Carl?  
CARL: I need to take a walk.  
LINDA: Wait, I'm coming with you Carl.

He leaves the house, Linda leaves after him.

Blackout.

Scene 4.

Night. Kitchen in a restaurant. The restaurant closed up some time ago, but in the kitchen, amid dishes, pots and pans, knives large and small and various other kitchen utensils, is a small gathering of five people. Four men: Max, Rudolph, Gabriel and Matias. And one young woman, whose name is Rose. They are all exceedingly drunk.

Rose sits on a cutting table, holding a glass of champagne. Standing next to her, also with a glass of champagne in his hand is Rudolph. He's very unsteady and holds himself up with one hand by the slender rod from which clean pots and pans are hung.

Max and Gabriel are sitting on a table beside the dishwashing platform. Gabriel holds an open bottle of champagne in his right hand, and pours some out for himself and Max. The champagne overflows from their glasses and wets their suits.

Matias walks unsteadily toward the large refrigerator, opens its door and gazes for a long time at its contents.

ROSE: Nobody can want more from me than I can give, therefore I suggest you shut up, your honor.

RUDOLPH: That's very funny, very funny, the way you just said that there--who said that?

ROSE: "Nobody can want more from me than I can give, therefore I suggest you shut up, your honor!" That's a line said by the heroine in the movie I saw this afternoon, that's called I can't remember what it's called.

RUDOLPH: Hey say that again, repeat that again, wait, wait, repeat that again!

ROSE: Nobody can want more from me than I can give, therefore I suggest you shut up, your honor.

RUDOLPH: That's so funny, Max did you hear what she said, that's so funny! Hey repeat that again, a?, for Max, he's getting married tomorrow, let him have a laugh for the last time in his life, just for today.

ROSE: Nobody can want more from me than I can give, therefore I suggest you shut up, your honor.

RUDOLPH: That is so funny, so funny what she's saying, did you hear that Max? You'd better laugh it up on your last night as a bachelor, by tomorrow your life won't have any room for giggles. Did you hear that?

MAX: I hear everything.

GABRIEL: I hear everything too.

RUDOLPH: Isn't that so funny? What movie is that from, I've got to see it!

ROSE: I saw it this afternoon at a film festival, but I don't remember what it's called--an Iranian film...I can't remember what it's called, it was an Iranian director, I can't remember his last name, I don't remember anything except that line.

RUDOLPH: Well say it, say it again, let's have another laugh, come on...

ROSE: Nobody can want more from me than I can give, therefore I suggest you shut up, your honor.

Rudolph tries to laugh, but he's unable, so he pretends to laugh, but it comes out false and even scary.

RUDOLPH: Oh, my god, how funny! Ha, ha, ha... Listen, Max, that is so funny! Ha-ha-ha!

Matias looks into the open refrigerator.

MATIAS: Max, why don't I see any meat in here?

MAX: Because.

MATIAS: Because what?

MAX: Because because.

MATIAS: Because because what? I said I don't see any meat in here, anywhere.



MAX: Because it's a vegetarian restaurant.  
MATIAS: Yeah? And what does that mean?  
MAX: It means there can't be any meat here. Because it's a vegetarian restaurant.  
MATIAS: And why, I wonder, is this vegetarian restaurant here?  
MAX: Because... we're in my parents' restaurant.  
MATIAS: What does that explain?  
MAX: It explains everything.  
MATIAS: What does that explain? It explains nothing. Where's the meat, Max?  
MAX: It explains that my parents are vegetarians and opened a vegetarian restaurant... There can't be any meat in a vegetarian restaurant. That's what it explains.  
MATIAS: Who needs that kind of restaurant, where there's not even a scrap of meat lying around?  
MAX: People who don't eat meat need it, ve-ge-ta-ri-ans.  
MATIAS: And who needs people who don't eat meat?  
GABRIEL: God, Matias. God needs those who don't eat meat. God loves vegetarians, and he sends carnivores to hell.  
ROSE: That's not true.  
GABRIEL: True.  
ROSE: Not true.  
RUDOLPH: You're a prostitute, how can you know what's true and what's not?  
ROSE: I may be a prostitute, but I know what's true and what's not.  
RUDOLPH: How?  
ROSE: From life.  
RUDOLPH: From what life? From your prostitute life?  
ROSE: I go to the movies.  
RUDOLPH: Ah, well that explains everything!

Matias goes on standing before the open refrigerator, staring at its contents.

MAX: Why did you bring a prostitute with you?  
MATIAS: To eat her.  
MAX: I told you not to bring anybody here, it's my parents' restaurant--especially a prostitute!  
RUDOLPH: It's your last night as a bachelor, Max. It's your bachelor party, what's a bachelor party without a prostitute?  
MAX: I didn't ask you to bring a prostitute with you, much less to my parents' restaurant.  
GABRIEL: Come on, Max, there's a place for love everywhere, especially in a vegetarian restaurant.  
MATIAS: I want meat, I suggest we eat this prostitute, fry her up on that pan over there.

Matias closes the fridge and goes to the wall where a large pan hangs on a hook. Matias tries to unhook the pan from the wall.

RUDOLPH: Don't worry, I won't let anybody hurt you, I've got you covered.  
ROSE: No one is capable of protecting us from love, my darling Gülbahar.

RUDOLPH: What? What?  
ROSE: That's another line from the film I saw today. It just appeared in my head out of nowhere.  
MAX: Why did you bring this prostitute here, this is my parents' restaurant--can she please leave?!  
GABRIEL: To love her, Max.  
MATIAS: To eat her.

Matias unhooks the pan from the wall, but it's much heavier than he anticipated. Imbalanced by the weight of the pan Matias takes several steps backwards and falls on his back.

MATIAS: Aaah! You f... son of a bitch...  
MAX: Are you alive, Matias?  
MATIAS: (lying on the floor) God damn your vegetarian restaurant!  
GABRIEL: He's not talking about your parents, he's talking about the restaurant.  
MAX: That's the same thing.

Matias stands, holding the pan by one hand.

MATIAS: All vegetarians are closeted fascists. A normal human being would never refuse meat, that's something only a pervert would do.

Max approaches Matias.

MAX: My parents are not perverts.  
MATIAS: Then why don't they eat meat?  
MAX: Because they're vegetarians.  
MATIAS: That's the same thing.  
MAX: You—

Max winds up to punch Matias in the face, but Matias manages to shield himself with the pan, and Max ends up punching the pan as hard as he can. Max screams in pain, shakes his hand, curls over and falls down on the floor. Gabriel shouts and throws himself at Matias.

GABRIEL: Aaaaaaaa!!!

Gabriel knocks Matias off his feet, and they go flying into the far corner of the kitchen, upsetting a table loaded with pans and silverware as they go, all of which loudly crashes to the floor. Gabriel and Matias fall onto a table with boxes of food, slide across the table sending all the boxes and bags onto the floor, then themselves fall to the ground. Upon landing they both cry out and then are silent.

A silence falls over them all--the only thing audible are Max's agonizing moans.

RUDOLPH: What's your name, Rose?  
ROSE: My name is Rose.

RUDOLPH: But what's your real name, when you're not a prostitute, what do they call you?  
ROSE: I'm always called Rose.  
RUDOLPH: Even when you're not a prostitute, you're the same old Rose you are now?  
ROSE: I'm always Rose.  
RUDOLPH: That's weird.  
ROSE: No one is capable of protecting us from love, my darling Gülbahar.

Max rises from the floor and wobbles toward the table, on which stand some bottles of water and alcohol. Max takes a half-liter bottle of water and takes a long drink from it, gulping down half the bottle. Gabriel and Matias also come to, helping each other to their feet. Once they're up they slowly, unsteadily make their way to the table where Max is standing. They approach Max, Max offers Matias a bottle of water, Matias drinks. Having drunk its contents Matias throws the bottle off to one side somewhere and turns to Max. They embrace. Gabriel drinks water from another bottle.

RUDOLPH: What do you cost, Rose?  
ROSE: You already know what I cost--fifty euros per person per hour. Speaking of which we've been here three hours and it's almost time for me to go.  
RUDOLPH: Why do you rate yourself so cheaply, Rose?  
ROSE: You want to pay more? Go ahead, I have no problem with that.  
RUDOLPH: But why do you rate yourself so cheaply, Rose? That's so cheap! Why?!  
ROSE: No one is capable of protecting us from love, my darling Gülbahar.  
RUDOLPH: My question: Why do you rate yourself so cheaply, Rose?  
ROSE: No one can want more from me than I can give, therefore I suggest you shut up, your honor.  
RUDOLPH: Tomorrow I'm definitely going to see that movie, before the festival is over. Want to go see a movie, Gabriel?  
GABRIEL: I'm watching a movie right now.

Max and Matias move away from each other. Max sits on a table, Matias stands close by. Gabriel turns to Rose and Rudolph.

GABRIEL: Love of liquor is the very same love a mother has for her child. The same as a monk's love of God. It's the same love. Loving poppy-seed doughnuts is the same as loving your neighbor. Loving sweets is the same as loving God. Loving fried meat and loving Jesus are one and the same. The main thing is to love!  
ROSE: I believe exactly the same thing--exactly the same as you.  
GABRIEL: It's not what I believe, it's what my brother believes. My brother is a priest. And I am always hearing these stories of his about how 'we are love.' You are love, he is love, them over there, Max and Matias, they're love. My brother says that, he's a Catholic priest, he says that.  
ROSE: I believe in God.  
GABRIEL: God is love, an elephant is love, cake is love, rats are love, Bin Laden is love, a prostitute is love. Everything is love. That's what my brother says.

RUDOLPH: Aw, what are you talking about, Gabriel, your brother can't have said that, no priest would say that--what kind of nonsense is that? I know priests, they would never say that, that "an elephant is love". No priest would ever say that.

GABRIEL: My brother says that.

RUDOLPH: That's weird. I think you're just making that up right now on purpose, to show off in front of us. I don't think your brother could've said that kind of garbage.

GABRIEL: How about we call him up right now and ask him?

RUDOLPH: Oh cut it out, we're not going to call anybody right now, it's the middle of the night.

GABRIEL: My brother is a Catholic priest and he says that everything is love, absolutely everything. Pots are love, knives, pigeons, turds, whiskey, puke, Jesus, angels, bubble gum, money, drunk prostitutes, dirty smelly socks--everything is love. My brother is a Catholic priest, and that's what he says.

MATIAS: He doesn't happen to be one of those priests that molests young boys, that they write about in the papers?

GABRIEL: You think I'm going to let you insult my brother?

Gabriel moves toward Matias with a threatening look--Max stands in between them.

MAX: Take it easy, take it easy. Gabriel doesn't have a brother, he's joking.

MATIAS: I know he doesn't have a brother, I'm joking too.

Matias and Gabriel move away from each other.

GABRIEL: My brother says we have to hear the whisper of the God in our hearts. Every one of us has to hear the whisper of God in our hearts. My brother says—

MATIAS: You don't have a brother, shut up.

GABRIEL: You must hear the whisper of God in your heart, that's what my brother told me to pass on to you.

MATIAS: Idiot.

ROSE: I know what he's talking about, he's not an idiot. I hear the whisper of God in my heart. Not always, but sometimes I can hear it.

RUDOLPH: Rose, you're a prostitute, you can't talk like that.

ROSE: But I hear it. Honest, sometimes I can hear the whisper of God in my heart.

RUDOLPH: Why are prostitutes always so religious?

GABRIEL: My Catholic priest brother says that every one of us, at least once in his life, has heard the whisper of God in his heart, but only few of us are able to admit it.

MATIAS: You don't have a brother, what's your deal.

GABRIEL: We all hear the whisper of God in our hearts, but we just hide it, we hide it even from ourselves.

ROSE: It's true, it's true, your brother is absolutely right.

MATIAS: He doesn't have a brother, what are you talking about?!

MAX: About my fiancée--she hears that whisper, and my parents often tell me that they also hear the whisper of God in their hearts.

MATIAS: Well of course, they're vegetarians, who the hell knows what else they might be hearing.

MAX: But my wife and I aren't vegetarians, and we hear it, even though we eat meat.

MATIAS: What do you hear in there, Max?

MAX: The whisper of God in our hearts.

GABRIEL: We all hear the whisper of God in our hearts, only we don't admit it even to ourselves.

MAX: I've just admitted it. I sometimes hear the whisper of God in my heart, even though I don't believe in God, and even though I'm not a vegetarian.

RUDOLPH: Well if we're gonna go there, then I don't believe in God either. And I especially don't believe anything said by Catholic priests, no offense to your brother, Gabriel.

MATIAS: He doesn't have a brother.

RUDOLPH: I know he doesn't have a brother, that's not the point, the point is that even though I don't believe in God I also sometimes hear the whisper of God in my heart.

ROSE: Yeah, sometimes it happens so clearly. Your brother is right.

RUDOLPH: Yes, yes, your brother is right!

MATIAS: You've all decide to play a joke on me or something? He doesn't have a brother, how can he be right?! What in the hell are you all talking about?!

MAX: Listen, Matias. We're all friends here, let's be clear and honest with each other. All of us, at least sometimes, hear the whisper of God in our hearts, and you don't need to pretend that you don't know what we're talking about. Admit it--you hear it too.

MATIAS: I am a grown man.

GABRIEL: That's exactly the problem, old man. My brother is a Catholic priest, and he says that the first sign of aging is that a person begins hearing the whisper of God in his heart. Children don't hear it. They don't even listen to themselves yet, they're happy as it is. But we can't find happiness in the world around us, because every year, more and more often, we close our eyes and listen to ourselves, to what's happening inside us, and then we hear the whisper of God in our hearts.

ROSE: I usually hear the whisper of God in my heart in the morning, when I'm coming home from work.

RUDOLPH: Do you work anywhere else?

ROSE: No. This is my only job. But I get so tired, I come home completely exhausted and crash into bed. And then I hear the whisper of God in my heart.

MAX: Gabriel, your brother is a bold man, he calls a spade a spade. He talks about the things that we're afraid to talk about aloud. We can all hear the whisper of God in our hearts, but we're ashamed to say so aloud. I'm sure that Matias can hear it too. Come on, Matias, do it, say I'm right.

MATIAS: But it's so stupid.

GABRIEL: Don't be afraid, we won't tell anybody.

RUDOLPH: Nobody at your work will find out that you hear the whisper of God in your heart, although they all hear it too.

MATIAS: Yep, you all just got drunk and went crazy.

MAX: We got drunk and confessed what we can't confess to when we're sober.

MATIAS: But know that tomorrow I'm going to deny it.

RUDOLPH: We will too.

GABRIEL: I won't. I won't betray the convictions of my brother.

MATIAS: You don't have a brother.

GABRIEL: So what?!

MAX: Come on, Matias, do it, admit it, admit that you also hear the whisper of God in your heart.

MATIAS: You're all a bunch of bastards.

MAX: Yes, we're bastards, but we hear the whisper of God in our hearts, and you hear it too, but you're afraid to admit it, you're afraid to become yourself, even for just an instant.

GABRIEL: Come on, Matias.

RUDOLPH: Don't be a sissy.

MATIAS: What'd you say?

RUDOLPH: Be a real man, admit that you hear the whisper of God in your heart.

Matias looks at everyone and thinks, visibly under pressure.

MATIAS: Well, okay.

MAX: Okay what? Say it aloud.

MATIAS: Say what?

MAX: Don't play dumb, Matias. Say it aloud, that you hear the whisper of God in your heart.

MATIAS: I hear the whisper of God in my heart. What a nightmare, I haven't been this drunk in a very long time.

GABRIEL: There, see how easy that was?

MAX: I, the fucking operations manager of a bank, I hear the whisper of God in my heart, for fuck's sake. And I'm not joking, for fuck's sake. Tomorrow I'm getting married--and that is definitely no joke, and if it weren't for the whisper of God in my heart I would have slipped way the fuck out of this world long ago.

MATIAS: Well alright, alright, I hear it too, although I couldn't give two shits about all your conversations on God. I couldn't give two shits about this God of yours. But I hear the god-damn whispering for fuck's sake, I hear the whispering for fuck's sake. I hear the whisper of God in my heart for fuck's sake. He's whispering, whispering around in there inside me, this God of yours.

RUDOLPH: I can hear the whisper of God in the morning a few minutes before that goddamn alarm goes off. I always wake up a few minutes before that awful sound, I lie there and think, time to go to that god-damn office again, time for me, again, to sit on the god-damn phone all day, time to see all those god-damn faces again, and then I begin to hear the whisper of God in my heart.

GABRIEL: My brother, a Catholic priest, says that God will never stop whispering to us, never. He never stops, not for a second. And I know that because sometimes I have these days when nobody can put any meaning back in my life. Nobody can put any meaning back in my life, and only the whisper of God—

MATIAS: Only the whisper of God for fuck's sake.

GABRIEL: Only the whisper of God! The whisper of God, it's like crying.

ROSE: Yes! Yes! Yes! Because when He whispers, I also think it sounds like He's crying.

MAX: Exactly, exactly--he's crying.

RUDOLPH: Yes, precisely. God is weeping in my heart--that is his whisper.

MATIAS: Yeah, it's more of a cry--the whisper of God in my heart--it's crying.

GABRIEL: Quiet now! And now is the moment when we can listen to the whisper of God in our hearts. Come on over here, all of you. Don't say anything, just come over here.

They all gather together in the center of the kitchen, arms around each other.

GABRIEL: My brother, a Catholic priest, says that it's especially healthy to listen to the whisper of God collectively. Put your arms around each other. Quiet now. Listen to the whisper of God in our collective heart.

They all stand embracing one another. Silence. No one makes any sounds whatsoever. After some time we hear a few sobs--it's Rose crying. After a few more seconds Rudolph begins to cry, followed by Max, and their crying is joined by Gabriel and Matias. They all stand at the center of the kitchen, embracing one another and crying. Night. From the silence rise the sobs of four drunk men and one drunk woman. This is the whisper of God.

Blackout.

## ACT II

### Scene 1.

Night-time, on a street. On the steps outside the door of a restaurant that closed up long ago sits Martha. She's caked in mud. Martha sits with her head dangling down, mumbling something under her nose. Enter Gustav and Lara. They walk past Martha, but suddenly stop. Gustav leaves Lara where she is and takes a few steps toward Martha.

GUSTAV: Miss, do you need any help?

Martha slowly lifts up her head and looks at Gustav, trying to understand what he wants from her.

GUSTAV: Miss, can you hear me, are you okay?

MARTHA: Good evening.

GUSTAV: Good evening. I'm asking you, is everything okay?

MARTHA: Good evening. I'm gonna tell you a secret. I love you.

GUSTAV: Oh?

MARTHA: Yep! I love you.

GUSTAV: Oh. That's very unexpected.

MARTHA: I love you.

GUSTAV: O, that's very unexpected! I confess I wasn't prepared for that kind of confession.

Gustav approaches Martha.

LARA: What are you doing Gustav? Why are you minding her, let's go home..

GUSTAV: Wait, Lara, I think I've just met a woman who loves me.  
LARA: What are you talking about Gustav? Stop it, don't get involved, please, let's go.  
GUSTAV: I'm sorry Lara, but how can I leave after what's just happened between me and this young woman?  
MARTHA: I was waiting for you, to tell you that I love you.  
GUSTAV: That's something, huh?! It just happened so unexpectedly. To be honest, I'm married.  
MARTHA: Your wife won't find out, she's asleep.  
GUSTAV: No, my wife is right here, she's not asleep.  
MARTHA: She's sleeping.  
GUSTAV: I think I see what you're getting at. She's sleeping. What else?

Martha stands up and walks unsteadily toward Gustav, stops in front of him. Gustav and Martha gaze at each other.

LARA: What are you doing, Gustav, have you lost your mind? Why are you teasing this poor girl, she's not herself, can't you see that? Leave her alone, come on, I'm freezing, I want to go home--Gustav!

GUSTAV: Wait, Lara. I think I've met the woman who loves me. I'm sorry.

Lara goes up to Gustav and Martha.

LARA: Let's go home, Gustav. Don't do this to me, I didn't deserve this. Come on. Miss, please leave us alone, alright?  
MARTHA: I can't. I love your husband.  
LARA: Oh god, what a nightmare. Gustav, this girl is sick, there's nothing you can do to help her, come on, I'm asking you, let's go.

Lara tugs on the sleeve of Gustav's coat, but Gustav lightly pushes Lara away from him. Gustav and Martha do not interrupt their gaze at one another.

GUSTAV: Wait, Lara--can't you see what's happening right here?  
LARA: I can see very well what's happening right here, I can see that you're making a fool out of me, only I can't quite understand what I did to deserve this, this kind of treatment...

Gustav and Martha do not interrupt their gaze at one another.

GUSTAV: Wait, Lara.  
MARTHA: I love your husband, Lara. He's the man I've been waiting for my whole life.  
GUSTAV: Isn't that something! I never could have thought this would happen today of all days. What's your name?  
MARTHA: Martha. My name is Martha, and your name is Gustav, I know. I love you, Gustav.



GUSTAV: I admit I wasn't ready for this. I can see this is the thing I've been thinking about for so long. This is exactly what I've been thinking about for so long, isn't it?

MARTHA: That's exactly right, Gustav.

LARA: Oh Christ, why are you doing this to me, Gustav? You're going to be so ashamed of yourself tomorrow morning. Please, I'm asking you, stop it, stop all this nonsense Gustav and let's go home!

MARTA: Love is when everything inside you wakes up, every little cell in your body. Until you love, are asleep. But when you love, you awaken from that sleep and the whole world seems full of this energy that you didn't even notice before. I love you, and that means I'm not asleep anymore, that means that I'm only just now beginning to live fully. Your love connects with mine, and the love in the world around us becomes greater and greater.

GUSTAV: Right! Something is waking up in my heart, in my whole body, this indescribable energy, it keeps getting bigger and bigger. It changes everything. It changes everything inside me, outside me. Your love awakens my love and it all comes out, awakening the love of everyone else!

LARA: What, have you lost your minds? What are you talking about? You're delirious, both of you! You too, Gustav! Wait a minute, I'm calling the paramedics, they'll come and give you shots and bring you back.

Lara starts searching through her bag for her phone

MARTHA: And every event in my life from this moment looks different now, because I know that everything and everyone around me is coming into love. I didn't notice it before, because I didn't love. It seemed there was so much shit and so much woe all around me. I could only see shit, it seemed to me this country was just nothing but shit. And all my peers and my friends, they're all such shit, they always talk about what shit everything is, what a pile of vomit this world is, the whole world is just a bunch of vomit. Everywhere, very fucking place I've been, it's been unbearable, my fucking parents don't fucking love anyone, my boyfriend is just a stupid premature asshole, there's no life anywhere to be found, everything everywhere is dead, it's all made of some kind of styrofoam or plastic, there's no life in anybody, nobody feels a fucking thing, nobody, nobody can feel the most important fucking thing, nobody feels it, what's happening, and I thought to myself why the fuck do I need to live in this fucking rubber world with these fucking plastic people that just eat, fuck and sleep? I thought there was not a drop of meaning in it, and now I see that there is, Gustav. The meaning is love, Gustav. Now I've met you, Gustav, and I know that the main thing in all this is love, because as it turns out, love is here, it's in all of this, it is all of this. It turns out that love *is* life. If you love, you live, if you do not love, you sleep, or you live in a pile of shit. The world has always been just as it is, the only thing that matters is whether or not you can love. It doesn't matter what the world is like, the only thing that matters is whether or not you can love. It doesn't matter what life is like, the only thing that matters is love. Only love matters, that's it. If you love, you live, if you don't love, you're a piece of fucking plastic wrap, that's it. You're either in love, or you're in shit, you know what I mean, Gustav?

GUSTAV: I get you absolutely 100% to the very end, my darling. I understood that the very second we first met, as soon as I heard that you loved me, as soon as I opened up to you. You see I'm already fifty-three years old and my whole life it's as though everyone around me has just been trying to fuck over their competitors, and I always thought all this

love around me was just sex and bullshit thrown around between married couples. Love is sex and bullshit--that's what I thought. And now we've met, Martha, and I finally understand that love is a desire to start truly living, that love is life, Martha. In our society we all want to live, no matter how we talk about it, we all want to live. And that means we all want love, Martha. We all want love, Martha. We can't talk about it, because it's against our custom, because we think it's too sentimental, it's too silly, too obvious as it is. But in fact it's not obvious to anybody, Martha, because none of us really, truly loves, because none of us is really truly conscious of the fact that this whole shitpile of a world surrounding us--it's all love. That this whole shit-caked life we live--it's all love. That all this shit all around us--it's love. None of us knows that, none of us could even fathom that this great shitplanet we live on is a planet of love. Martha, I love you.

Gustav takes Martha in his arms, and they stand there clinging to one another. Lara, who up to this time was sifting through her bag in search of her phone, is now calling.

LARA: (on the phone) Hello, hello, hello. Ambulance, ambulance. Help! My husband here is behaving very badly, he needs immediate assistance, he's very drunk. What's that? Yeah, yeah, I'm also very drunk, so what? We're all really drunk here and we all feel like crap. But especially my husband, he's talking to some dirty little hussy, he needs medical assistance. Hello? Hello? They hung up, those insensitive selfish pricks! What, drunk people don't need help? My husband has gone crazy and he needs help, what do I do? Christ, what do I do? God, help me, save me, what should I do? The paramedics won't help me! What should I do? What am I living here for, in this shitty world, where a bunch of Arabs killed by brother?

GUSTAV: The world is a pearl inside a piece of shit, Lara. You have to stick your arm in, up to your elbow, stick it into that smelly shit to take out the pearl inside. Stick your hand into that shit and take out the pearl, Lara.

LARA: You've gone crazy, Gustav.

GUSTAV: You know very well that I haven't.

LARA: The way you're acting, and what you're saying--it's all beyond insanity.

GUSTAV: I know you slept with Carl, he told me about it, just today in fact.

Pause. Lara covers her face. Gustav and Martha stand clinging to one another.

GUSTAV: But I still love you, Lara. It's alright, it's not a big deal. I thought I wouldn't survive it but then I met Martha and realized that love is something bigger than you sleeping with Carl, love is something much bigger, Lara. Love is when you want happiness, Lara. We all want it, because we're all unhappy, and we look for that happiness and come into contact with it as much as we possibly can. When a child looks at ice cream, he loves it, Lara, that's also a kind of love, Lara. And when your father looks at a glass of beer--that's also a kind of love, Lara. And when you slept with Carl--that was also a kind of love, because you wanted to be happy, Lara. And right now, you want to go home because you're tired--again, you want to be happy, my dear. You want to be happy, Lara, and it's so clear. But you can't find happiness in ice cream or in beer, and not even in Carl, Lara.

LARA: Where then, Gustav?

GUSTAV: You find it when you look into that God-damn pearl, hidden under those fat layers of Earthly shit, Lara.

Martha suddenly slips out of Gustav's embrace and very quickly walks away. Pause. Gustav and Lara follow Martha with their eyes as she leaves. Suddenly Martha returns at the same quick pace she left.

MARTHA: I want to thank you and your shitty family for this magical pearl of love.

Martha executes a low bow, a reverenza, touching her hand to the ground, and leaves very quickly. Gustav turns to Lara. Lara moves closer to Gustav.

LARA: You mean that everything is going to be just like it was--we're going to stay together?

GUSTAV: No, from now on everything will be completely different, Lara. Now, we're finally going to be truly together.

LARA: You're just saying that now, Gustav, because you're drunk, but in the morning, when you sober up, you're going to react to all this completely differently.

GUSTAV: I'm never going to be sober, Lara.

LARA: What, you mean now you're going to drink?

GUSTAV: No, I'm never going to drink again, but I'm never going to be sober.

Lara moves closer to Gustav, they embrace. Blackout.

## SCENE 2.

Night, a street. Laura stands on the sidewalk. She's just standing there in one place, swaying slightly from side to side. Her dress is wrinkled, her hair is disheveled, she is still drunk. Enter Matias, Gabriel, Rudolph and Max. They trudge down the street, barely moving their legs. Suddenly Matias stops and looks at Laura.

MAX: You really think your bus is gonna come, huh?

Laura raises her head and looks at Max.

LAURA: My bus doesn't exist.

MAX: Then what are you waiting for?

LAURA: I'm not waiting for anything, I'm just standing here, that's all. I'm very drunk.

MAX: We're also pretty drunk, we were at my parents' vegetarian restaurant, there's not an ounce of meat there, so I got shitfaced.

LAURA: The man I was together with for three years got married today to another woman.

MAX: So you're single?

LAURA: I'm single.

MAX: So I can offer myself as your future husband?

LAURA: I accept.

MAX: You'll marry me?

LAURA: Yes, I agree to marry you, right now, I accept.

MAX: You guys hear what she's saying--Rudolph?

RUDOLPH: I hear everything. But we've gotta keep moving, cause soon we're going to get tired and sit down, and if I sit down, I won't get up, so come on hurry up, let's go home.

MAX: Don't you see I've just met my bride-to-be? You're going to marry me, right?

LAURA: I already said, I agree to marry you, right now.

MAX: What does that mean, "right now"?

LAURA: Right now means right now, and right here.

MAX: Guys, you hear what she said? Matias?

MATIAS: I'll have to pass.

RUDOLPH: Me too, I want to go home.

MAX: Gabriel, I need your support, for the first time in my life I've met a girl who's prepared to do everything. You hear me?

GABRIEL: I hear you. But I think she's joking. Let's go home, a?

MATIAS: You think she's joking?

GABRIEL: I'm sure of it.

MATIAS: Don't forget what awaits you today, again, Max. We're all invited, we're invited to get together and drink till we're smashed out of our fucking minds all over again.

RUDOLPH: Jesus, what a nightmare!

MAX: Listen, you're making fun of me or something, right?, this is all just ha-ha-ha, right?

LAURA: No, this is all very serious, I love you.

MAX: Max, you hear what she's saying? It turns out she loves me?

MATIAS: It's all games, Max, let's go home now, or we're gonna look bad, especially you, Max.

RUDOLPH: I think I'm getting tired.

Rudolph sits on the ground.

MAX: You hear, my friend Matias thinks this is all games, are you playing games?

LAURA: Tell your friend Matias there are no games here, I love you.

MAX: Matias, she told me to tell you—

MATIAS: I heard it.

RUDOLPH: I heard it too, but I'm tired.

MATIAS: I suggest you take this girl home with you and get out of here as soon as possible. Because it seems I too am getting tired.

MAX: Come to my house.

LAURA: Before I go inside your house we have to get married.

MAX: I'm ready to become your husband but right now that's impossible, we have to wait till morning when that thing opens--what's it called...? You know the office, where they sign and seal everybody's marriages?

GABRIEL: That office is called a church, and our marriages are sealed in heaven.

MAX: I'm not talking about church, I'm not about to get married in a church tomorrow, we're going to get hitched in one of those damn offices where they give you those specially-made papers, what the hell difference does it make what it's called, it's closed. Let's go to my place, we'll celebrate our wedding night, and tomorrow we'll go into that office and take care of the papers. I promise.

GABRIEL: You can't make that promise Max, 'cause you've got other plans tomorrow, don't forget about that.

MAX: My plans for tomorrow were precisely to go to that office and now I want to go there with her. Because she's the only person who really loves me, because she's the only person who I really love. Tomorrow I'm canceling everything and everybody else and marrying only you, I swear. Come on, let's go to my place.

LAURA: We're either getting married right here and right now or I'm not going anywhere with you.

MAX: Listen, I'm ready to marry you right here and right now, but the office is closed, it's closed, you understand, what can I do?

LAURA: Either we get married right here and right now or we will never become husband and wife, your choice.

MAX: Well of course I choose here and now. That's obvious! Especially considering that tomorrow I've got all kinds of other business to take care of. You see, I love you, like you love me--we have to be together till death do us part. Of course I choose here and now. Let's get married here and now--only how do we do that, that's the question?

GABRIEL: There's no question, because you have me. I can marry you.

MATIAS: That's it, I just got tired.

Matias sits down next to Rudolph, puts his arms around him, and they sit there embracing one another.

MAX: How can you marry us, Gabriel, you're not a priest, only a priest can marry us!

GABRIEL: My brother is a priest, don't you remember? And if my brother is a priest, that means I can marry you right now.

MAX: Did you hear that? My friend Gabriel can marry us, his brother is a Catholic priest, and that means he can marry us.

LAURA: That doesn't carry over.

MAX: What doesn't carry over?

LAURA: From brother to brother.

MAX: You hear what she said, Gabriel?

GABRIEL: That's hogwash. She's a heretic. I'm not going to marry you, live your sinful lives, or however you want, I'm going home.

MAX: You shouldn't have said that, sweetheart, you've offended him, and he might change his mind. We have to agree, while he's still for it and before he gets tired. It does carry over from brother to brother, just like a disease. Their whole family are priests. His brothers and sisters, their father and mother, and even his brother's fiancée does some kind of religious hocus-pocus. Say yes, this is our chance.

LAURA: Okay, I accept.

MAX: We accept, Gabriel, marry us.

GABRIEL: You need witnesses.

MAX: We have witnesses, right here.

Max gestures toward Matias and Rudolph, clinging to each other on the ground.

GABRIEL: **Are they of legally responsible age?**

MAX: **Much worse.**

GABRIEL: Okay, let's begin. Everybody come over here. Max, Rudolph, everybody over here.  
RUDOLPH: No thank you, we're here.  
MATIAS: We'll come over as soon as you go first, and we'll go after you.  
GABRIEL: We're not going anywhere, we're getting married. Rather, our friend Max is getting married, and you are the witnesses to the bride and groom.  
RUDOLPH: Congratulations.  
GABRIEL: Too early. You need to come over here.  
MATIAS: That's impossible, at least for the time being.  
GABRIEL: Well okay, we'll come over to you. Let's go over to them, my children.

Gabriel takes Laura and Max by the hand and escorts them toward Rudolph and Max, who are sitting on the ground.

GABRIEL: There, stand right here. These are your witnesses here, and God above you, and I stand before you, Gabriel, brother of a catholic priest. Are you ready to proceed to the sacrament?  
MAX: I'm ready.  
LAURA: I love him.  
GABRIEL: Well that's perfect. Let us begin. Do you, Maximilian, take the hand of-- what's your name?  
LAURA: Laura.

Max offers his hand to Laura.

MAX: Max.  
LAURA: Laura.  
MAX: I'm very glad to meet you.  
LAURA: It's my pleasure.

Max and Laura shake hands.

GABRIEL: Do you, Maximilian, take Laura to be your wedded wife?  
MAX: I do.  
GABRIEL: And do you, Laura, offer your hand in marriage to Maximilian?  
LAURA: I do. I love him.  
GABRIEL: By the power invested in me by my brother, a Catholic priest, I announce you man and wife. Hallelujah. The floor is yours, Maximilian, give a speech.  
MAX: My dear friends, my dear young wife Silvia!  
LAURA: I'm Laura.  
MAX: Sorry, that's what I meant. My dear beloved Laura. My dear witnesses-- Matias.  
MATIAS: I'll pass.  
MAX: Rudolph.  
RUDOLPH: I'm tired.  
MAX: Father Gabriel.  
GABRIEL: May the Lord forgive you, my son Max, you shit-head.

MAX: But for the first time in my life I met a woman I can love.

RUDOLPH: And what about your future wife, Max?

MAX: I don't have a future wife anymore, I only have a present wife, this one.

MATIAS: 'Atta boy. Way to be a real man.

MAX: My brothers, and my sister--I mean, my wife. Well, who am I? I'm just shit-head Max, to borrow the words of Gabriel, our brother-of-a-Catholic-priest, I'm just a nobody-gives-a-fuck bank operations manager, that's it. I'm thirty-five years old and my entire life is just a long fucking dream that began the moment I was born and that continues to this very second--I was asleep for my whole life up to the moment I met my beloved Lara.

GABRIEL: Laura.

MAX: That's exactly what I meant. The thing is, my dear brothers and sister, that, you see, my generation doesn't feel a goddamn thing, it doesn't really truly feel a single fucking thing. Nothing. Only sex and stimulation, only work and alcohol, and these mother-fucking weekends, and visiting the folks, and endless shmoozing on different topics, and these women of ours that we don't love. Because we have lost motherfucking touch. We've lost contact. Contact with the motherfucking essence, God damn it. With the thing we come from, with the thing we cannot live without. We have lost contact with reality, God damn it, with the genuine reality that everything here is actually made of. And all our laws, our requirements, all our motherfucking liberalism, all our motherfucking tolerance, all our stupid politics, all the decisions we have to make--all that happens in complete disconnection from reality, God damn it. We do all this without feeling any contact with what actually matters, what's most important. Hell, we don't even know what the fuck is important. We don't suppose there *is* something that is important, we can't fathom what that could be, what it's made of. And all this freedom of ours that we are constantly talking about, that we're constantly striving toward. What freedom? You want to be free? Free from what, God damn it?! From who? What is this freedom? What kind of motherfucking freedom could we possibly have if we have lost motherfucking contact. Do you hear what I'm telling you? Ha? Come on now, come on, what have you got to say? Ha?!

GABRIEL: If I were as much of a believer as my brother, the Catholic priest, I would say that freedom is in the Lord, but since I'm not a believer, who the fuck knows what freedom is?

MAX: Because you've lost contact, brother.

RUDOLPH: Why does he keep repeating the same thing? What contact, Max?

MAX: *Your* contact, asshole.

RUDOLPH: Contact with what?

MAX: With everything, damn it. With the most important thing.

RUDOLPH: If we've lost something, why don't we try looking for it tomorrow, alright?

MATIAS: Yeah, right now it's highly unlikely we'd be able to find anything.

MAX: None of us feels anything, understands anything. Nobody knows what is actually happening to us.

GABRIEL: And what's that?

MAX: We're losing the most important thing.

GABRIEL: And tell us, Max, what is the most important thing?

MAX: Fuck knows what it is. I don't have it anymore. I lost it. I lost contact with it. And that contact--that's what's most important, damn it. You either have contact or you just slept through your goddamn life. I don't love anybody, I never loved anybody and only now, only now, now that I've met—

Max looks at Laura, summoning his memory.

MAX: Laura. And only now that I've met Laura, for the first time in my life I've realized that contact is the only reality we have. And all the rest is illusions and bullshit. And all we have to do on this earth is find contact again. And that means we have to love, love and motherfucking love. That's me talking to you, a citizen of the European Union, the thirty-five-year-old operations manager of a bank. There.

Pause.

LAURA: My god, I'm so proud of my husband. Max, I love you, I am honored to be the wife of such an exceptional person as you.

MAX: You really think so?

LAURA: Well of course. What you said just now is so important. It's so important.

GABRIEL: I agree, it's very important, I agree.

RUDOLPH: Sorry, what were you talking about?

GABRIEL: We were talking about how the world is love, Rudolph.

RUDOLPH: Ah, yes, that is very important, indeed.

MATIAS: I second that.

LAURA: All these modern relations between men and women--it's all such a load of crap.

GABRIEL: And now, a word from the bride.

LAURA: It's all such bullshit, that's all such nonsense: He doesn't owe you anything, you don't owe him anything. He's a motherfucking free man, she's a motherfucking free chick. Everybody's motherfucking free, nobody depends on fucking anybody. Who told us that's the way it is? Who said that, who told us that's the way it is? Motherfucking modern society told us that's how it is. But that's not how it is.

GABRIEL: I completely agree that something here is not as it is.

RUDOLPH: I second that.

MATIAS: I'm with you guys.

MAX: I'm proud of my wife.

GABRIEL: It has been a great honor for me to marry you.

MAX: Laura, go on.

LAURA: There is no freedom. It's all just a bunch of brainless, baseless horseshit, that we don't have to belong to anybody but ourselves. It's this outrageous pile of horseshit and now we've all gotten stuck up to our ears in this pile of horseshit, and we believe in it all and we live it, and we fight for our right to be free on this planet. But freedom is when you give yourself away. It's when you entirely belong to something, you serve, and you resign yourself completely to your servitude, freedom is when there is no longer any you, when you are the whole world. Freedom is when you have no choice whatsoever and your fate is already decided--that's freedom. Freedom is when your heart is given away once and for all, and your heart's keeper is not you, but the one to whom it rightfully belongs. My heart does not rightfully belong to me. That's what freedom is--it's when my heart does not rightfully belong to me.

GABRIEL: To whom then?

MAX: My heart belongs to love.



Laura goes up to Max, and they merge in a long and passionate kiss.

GABRIEL: By the power invested in me by my brother, a Catholic priest, I declare this marriage sanctified.

RUDOLPH: Does that mean we can go home?

MATIAS: Me personally, I have to get home immediately, otherwise I'm going to die from exhaustion.

RUDOLPH: Help us get up, brother Gabriel.

Gabriel goes to Rudolph and Matias and gives them a hand up. Rudolph and Max take Gabriel's hand and pull themselves to their feet. Max and Laura go on kissing.

RUDOLPH: Who could've thought Max would pick up such a hot chick.

MATIAS: Who could've thought such a hot chick would pick up Max.

GABRIEL: An hour from they'll chuck each other out. Together with the alcohol.

RUDOLPH: I'm going home, friends, otherwise I'll never make it to Max's wedding.

MATIAS: Our boy Max is going to get married a second time today.

RUDOLPH: Only this time for real.

MATIAS: And to someone else.

RUDOLPH: Oh Jesus Christ, and then we have to drink again! I have to go home immediately.

GABRIEL: Dear brothers and sister, by the power invested in me by my brother, a Catholic priest, I declare today's bachelor party complete.

RUDOLPH: What do we do with Max?

MATIAS: Leave him here, let him have a last shnog with a hot chick.

RUDOLPH: See you at Max's wedding.

MATIAS: See you guys.

GABRIEL: Bye-bye.

Matias, Rudolph and Gabriel go out. Max and Laura go on kissing. Blackout.

### SCENE 3.

Night. A street. A parkbench. On the bench, clutching each other, sit Magda and Laurence. Enter Carl and Linda. They walk past the couple, but Carl suddenly stops, turns and addresses Laurence and Magda.

CARL: No one can save us from lying. We are all liars.

LINDA: Carl! What are you doing, Carl?!

Laurence and Linda stare at Carl.

CARL: Every man lies to his wife--that's a rule. And no family has ever lived without lies!

LINDA: Carl, come to your senses! What's your deal?! Excuse us, please, my husband is drunk.

LAURENCE: We're drunk too, so it's okay.

CARL: Husbands lie to their wives, wives lie to their husbands, children lie to their parents, parents to their children, subordinates to their superiors, politicians to their voters, priests to their parishioners, parishioners to their God. And only God lies to no one, because he couldn't give a shit about what everybody else thinks.

LINDA: Carl, stop it right now! Let's go home, please.

Linda takes Carl's hands and tries to lead him off, but Carl breaks away and goes off even more angrily.

CARL: God doesn't give a shit what we think of him, and that's why he is who he is, while we're all a bunch of liars! Because we all want to be better than we are, we want to fuck each other over, we want to show off in front of others, but not as ourselves, not as we truly are. We all shit-talk each other, thinking that we look just out-fucking-standing. We think that we're out-fucking-standing! Next level! But who are we trying to fuck with, who?

LINDA: Carl, I'm asking you, stop it! You're behaving horribly! For goodness' sake, forgive him, he's very drunk.

LAURENCE: Hey it's no problem, it's alright--it happens.

CARL: That's exactly right! It happens!

LINDA: Carl, please, I'm asking you, I'm begging —!

CARL: That's exactly right, it happens! It happens, precisely, to everybody! It happens to everybody, because everybody is a liar!

LAURENCE: Dude, you're fucking Doctor House!

Carl goes to Laurence and Magda, addresses Magda.

CARL: I'm talking to the young lady, do you think that this guy of yours, sitting here next to you--you think he's not lying to you? He's lying!

LAURENCE: Hey, now! You'd be better off making this personal.

LINDA: For Christ's sake, don't listen to him, he's just out of it.

MAGDA: I know he's lying to me. And I'm lying to him. I know it's true, we all lie.

LAURENCE: Alright, alright, Magda, don't get muddled up in this.

MAGDA: Let him say everything he wants, it's the Lord Almighty speaking through him.

CARL: That's correct! The Lord Almighty is speaking through me, because the Lord always speaks with the world through those who are drunk. God speaks to us in the language of the drunk. And right now God is speaking through me, and he wants to tell you that your boyfriend is fucking you over, the same way we always fuck chicks over.

LAURENCE: Listen guy, wait, you think I'm going to tolerate this?

MAGDA: Shut up, Laurence. Just for this once you need to hear the truth about yourself. You're going to tolerate it.

LINDA: Miss, you're making a mistake, you don't know him, he'll talk our heads off.

CARL: Of course, I'll talk your heads off, because the moment of truth has come. God has decided to speak to you through me, and this is what he's decided to tell you. We all fuck over our wives, and wives fuck over their husbands. If not majorly, then minorly, if not in generalities, then in details. I've cheated on my wife more than ten times, on this woman right here. And I never confessed that to her, not till this very moment. And now God has decided to open her eyes and tell her the truth about me. Ten times, Linda, ten times I slept with other chicks, including your girlfriend Lara who I also slept with, and in fact

today Gustav learned about that as well, and now you know too, and so, there's the moment of truth, it has come.

Pause. Linda sits down on the bench with her hands covering her face.

LAURENCE: Hey, guy, what the fuck did you do that for? Who feels better about their life after what you just did?

MAGDA: I do. I feel better. Because I've been thinking about that for the whole evening. Because I look at the two of us, Laurence, and I see that our whole life together is going to be nothing but bullshit, because we started with bullshit, because you don't actually love me, because our wedding itself, and the way we planned it, all of that was a lie to begin with, and this guy is right, we all want to dick each other over, and dick ourselves over, and only God in heaven doesn't lie, and now God in heaven has told us the whole truth about ourselves through the mouth of this crazy-ass holy man.

LAURENCE: Where do you get the notion that I lie to you, Magda? I love you.

MAGDA: If you think that you don't lie to me, you're lying to yourself.

LAURENCE: How are you so sure that's the case? Why can't you believe that I genuinely love you?

CARL: Because you don't know what love is, my friend.

LAURENCE: And how is it you know what I know and what I don't? And who the hell are you to be judging us all? If you like I could smack you hard enough to make those god-damn evangelistic demons come flying right the fuck out of you.

CARL: You can kill me, but that's still not going to save you from your own bullshit.

MAGDA: He's absolutely right, the crazy-ass is right.

LAURENCE: And what makes you think that, that he's right?! He just got plastered off his ass and now he's spitting up a shit-storm, and you're engaging in it because it sits well with your depression, which you yourself are now rousing up to further inflate your bleeding ego. Why should I listen to the two of you when I can see that you're just bloating yourselves up, reveling in your god-damn sorrow and how unhappy you are and how the whole world is a lie?! Everything you're saying is just an abominable pile of shit. It's all nothing but motherfucking pity, on yourselves and on your egos. You just want to bitch to each other, cry about your shortcomings and your hangups, God damn it, you, like all of us motherfucking Europeans, have soiled yourselves in your own hangups and now you want to wipe them all over everybody around you. You're like that fucking director, Lars von Trier, you want to cash in and soak up the glory off other people's hangups and self-pity. And there it is, God damn it, there's the number one lie--the lie you tell to your own heart. You want to fuck over your own heart, you want to indoctrinate it with shit. What for? Your heart is not motherfucking shit and it doesn't fucking bitch and moan. We bitch and moan. We endlessly complain about how motherfucking bad we all are. We make shows about it, make movies about it, and it makes us worse and worse. Instead of loving, we bitch about how there is no love, instead of changing, we fucking convince ourselves that nothing can be changed. Now why in the fuck should I constantly go on shitting on myself? If we want to get out of this shit, then why in the fuck do we constantly keep pouring it on our heads?! People aren't shit, Magda, people just think that they're shit. Don't listen to this guy, he's not looking for the truth, he just wants to atone his guilt in front of his wife. He justifies himself by saying that he's supposedly weak and worthless, but in fact, that's just who he wants to be, and that's it. I can't promise you that I'll never cheat on you, Magda, but I do

promise you that I will do something with my life, that I will be better and that I will learn to look after you, and look after our love. All the rest is just our European shitfest and drivel. Our European shitfest, where we go on pouring shit over our heads and delight in the fact that we are covered in shit. There you go.

Pause.

LINDA: I might have lied to you about some small-change, Carl, but I never seriously deceived you, and what's more I never cheated on you, because I love you, Carl.

CARL: But what do I do, Linda, I feel like a stinky piece of shit.

LAURENCE: What do you do, Carl? You ask God to forgive you for the dumpiness that you've submerged yourself in here up to your head. Ask him to forgive you for defiling everything virtuous about man and simultaneously raising your filthy hand against God's creation--against us. We are God's creation, and you can't go around spraying shit and slime on us. Repent and ask God for forgiveness, and maybe God by His mercy will forgive you, you fucking fool. But you're right about one thing, Carl: God speaks to the world in the language of the drunk, I agree with you there, pal. And at this particular moment he's talking to you through me, because I'm fuckingass wasted and I can't seem to fucking sober up. And this is what God has to say to you through me. Don't suck. All of you. There, that is what God is saying to all of you through me. Don't be a sucker--that's his communique! Don't suck--that's the number one word of God. And don't bitch and moan, grab yourselves by the fucking ass and pull yourselves out of all this intellectual, rational horseshit that we've all covered ourselves in. Tear your fat asses off of that sweet god-damned dejection you've sucked yourselves into like flies in honey. All of that is 24-karat crap, it's just fucking dejection. Love, be strong, change yourselves, and the world around you will change, live as honestly as you can and don't suck. Be like me, that's what God tells us. Be as motherfucking badass as God, who never sucks and never gives up, but day after day keeps building this world, regardless of our bitching and our stupid-ass dejection, which in reality is nothing but a mass jerk-off. Quit your wanking, says God, it's time to start loving someone other than yourselves.

Pause.

MAGDA: Laurence, I'm an idiot. I'm sorry. You're a badass.

LAURENCE: Bullshit, I'm not a badass. I just don't want to lose you, because I love you.

Magda and Laurence come together in a tender kiss. Carl sits down next to Linda on the bench.

CARL: And what do I do now, Linda?

LINDA: You need to go home, Carl, and go to bed. And tomorrow we'll wake up and talk this all through when we're sober.

CARL: And you think we still have a chance to bring everything back?

LINDA: I don't think we need to bring anything back, Carl. I think we need to try starting from the beginning. Only this time without lies, Carl.

CARL: I don't know if I know how to not lie, I've been working in banks for my whole life.

LINDA: That's all nonsense, Carl, not lying is easy. You just have to not be afraid to be you.  
CARL: That's really scary.

Laurence turns to Carl and Linda.

LAURENCE: God says: don't suck. The main thing is don't suck.  
LINDA: He's probably right--we probably should do as the young man says.

Laurence takes Magda's hand and they go and sit on the bench next to Carl and Linda.

LAURENCE: It's not me saying that, it's God, because God always speaks to the world through drunks. If God thinks it, a drunkie says it. And now through his drunk servant the Lord God says unto you--don't suck.  
MAGDA: Don't suck.  
LINDA: Join in. Don't suck.  
CARL: Don't suck--that's easy to say. But how do you do that--how do you not suck? How do you live and not suck? What do you have to do in order to not suck? Ha?  
LAURENCE: Don't suck.

Carl, Linda, Laurence and Magda sit on the bench.  
Blackout.

#### SCENE 4.

Early morning. A street. Mark is walking down the street, slightly tipsy. Also slightly tipsy, coming toward Mark from the other way, is Rose. When they see each other they stop.

MARK: Stop. Everyone's time is up. Quit fucking with each other's minds. Give back everything you owe and get the hell out of this world forever.  
ROSE: Yes, yes, yes! That is so rad, what you're saying! That is so rad! Give everybody everything you have and get the hell out of this world forever. That's awesome!  
MARK: We stay here till we give everything back, until we give everything back they won't let us go, trust me. So you have to give everything back, every little thing, and then they'll let you go, then go on, you're free.  
ROSE: Oh fuck oh fuck! That is so fucking rad, what you're saying! I just realized that too, that is so rad! What's your name, man?  
MARK: Mark Gardenitz, director of the film festival, and you?  
ROSE: Rose, ballerina. That's so awesome, I was just thinking about that today. Give everything away.  
MARK: Everything. We stay here till we give every fucking thing away. Everything. God is the boss of the mafia we robbed our cash from. Like a mafia boss God has locked us in a smelly toilet and says he'll only let us out when we give everything back. We give everything back, everything we have, everything we took from him, everything he gave us, everything, to the very end. And then, only then, are we free. I realized this just today, watching a genius Iranian film at my festival. A genius Iranian film!

ROSE: I saw it too, I saw it too, I saw it too. No one can want more from me than I can give, therefore I suggest you shut up, your honor.

MARK: There is no death, my lovely Gülbahar.

ROSE: No one is capable of defending us from love.

MARK: You must give me what rightfully belongs to me, Djamshid, and then I will lift the spell from your people, and your children will be born free.

ROSE: That's so fucking badass, what you're saying! That is so cool! That is so cool! That is fucking next-level! Give away everything that doesn't belong to you. That is so cool!

MARK: Because nothing here belongs to us, that's the deal here, you get that? Nothing here actually belongs to us, you understand that or not?

ROSE: You're awesome! You're are awesome, for real! You're the awesomest of anybody! Really, you're saying some shit right now that just turns everything else into trash.

MARK: Because all of us, all of us, the only thing we ever do is take, that's why we end up crying. We only take, and that's why we cry, God damn it. That's why we have the Goddamn holocaust. That's why all this shit is going in in Iraq, because we take, we only take. We, God damn it, we just build our Goddamn business. We only fucking take. In that's why we're in this shithouse, because God is keeping us here--the boss of this whole cosmic mafia.

ROSE: Cosmic mafia--that is so awesome! You are so fucking badass, man! You are the coolest!

MARK: None of this is mine, you understand that? Everything that I have--it's not mine, I have to give it all back, you understand? Give it back. Give it all back! This business suit and this body and the fat on my stomach and the money in my bank account and my house and my children and my unrealized dreams and my short-lived happiness and all the shit inside me and the Goddamn cancer inside me that's going to fucking kill me in four months--none of it is mine! I took all of that at birth, I took it on loan, and now I need to give it all back. We all go on living here and we think that everything we have is ours, and we want more and more, and we take more and more. We make our goddamn businesses and our goddamn careers out of it, and it's all motherfucking, cocksucking credit. It's all just motherfucking, cocksucking credit. We have to give it all back, all of it to the very last cent, plus interest the interest we've accumulated all this time. We're incurring interest all this time! And the boss of the cosmic mafia won't let us out of this filthy shitshack until we give square up with him and give everything back. Everything. That's what it actually looks like, that's the cosmic business we're all involved in.

ROSE: Man, you are awesome! I've never heard anything like that from anybody, you are for real the coolest dude I've ever been with, and I've been with a lot of dudes who said a lot of shit. But you, for real, you're saying what's inside me, like you're just vocalizing my thoughts. You're the dude I've been waiting for, to come and tell me all that, for real. Do you really have cancer, man?

MARK: That's all horseshit, that cancer. What difference does it make what I die from--all that matters is giving back. And let me tell you, over the course of my life, I have collected so much shit through my life, I have so much of that bullshit that it's really fucking hard to pay these dues. And I'm still in this shithouse, and the boss of the cosmic mafia is still waiting for me to give him everything back, and with interest. But I don't think I have the strength to give it all back. It seems I'm stuck solid in this shithole. I think maybe I'm just never going to get out of this goddamn sticky-ass glue I've walked into. It ain't easy giving everything back.

ROSE: Man, I want to give everything back. For real, I want to give back everything, cause I've had enough, I'm so fucking sick of it, I just want to give it all back, the sooner the better.

MARK: What's your name?

ROSE: Rose.

MARK: Giving back is really hard, Rose. Because you have to give back yourself. And that's where the sonofabitch sucks so hard, that's why we can't seem to get over it. Nobody wants to give himself back, and therein lies our universal fuckup.

ROSE: I want to give everything back, I really want to give everything back. How do I do it, Mark? You can help me, you're so badass. I want to give back, teach me how.

MARK: You're a ballerina, right?

ROSE: Well you could say so, Mark.

MARK: You said you're a ballerina, Rose, is that true?

ROSE: No, it's not, Mark. I lied to you. I'm a prostitute, I'm just a regular dial-up whore, that's all.

MARK: You just gave back, Rose. Just now, you gave back, Rose. You just gave back your ballerina, the ballerina that you were borrowing till now. You see? You see how it works, Rose? You deceived me, you said you were a ballerina, and that means you took that ballerina for yourself, you understand? You took that ballerina on loan from God, see? You wanted me to think you were a ballerina and you took that ballerina on loan from God. And now you've given it back. And you've given back the interest, because the interest is the shame you feel before me for having lied to me, and for being a whore, Rose. You're a whore, Rose. You paid back your ballerina, paid the interest, and now you need to pay back the rest of what you've taken.

ROSE: But I don't know what else I've taken, I don't know, Mark...

MARK: You took everything, Rose. Your whole life. All the bullshit you've been busy with from dawn to dusk. You took all the bullshit that keeps you busy at work. You scream when they fuck you, Rose, you pretend that you feel pleasure, but that's bullshit, Rose, you're just pretending, all prostitutes pretend to like it, I know that. And you're no exception, Rose. You are deceiving your client, and that means you are taking, Rose. You are deceiving and that means you are buying on credit, Rose. You bullshit, that means you take; you admit your bullshit, you give it back. You have to give it all back, Rose, everything, all this motherfucking horseshit we've gotten stuck in, like flies in a sticky jar of honey.

ROSE: I lie all the time, Mark.

MARK: We all lie all the time, because we're all stuck in horseshit.

ROSE: But I'm scared not to lie, I'm scared not to lie, Mark. I just won't live through it, I won't survive in this scary place if I don't lie, Mark.

MARK: That's what we all think, Rose, because we're all stuck in horseshit.

ROSE: But Bill Gates isn't stuck in shit, Mark.

MARK: It's possible the shit he's in is even worse, Rose.

ROSE: But he's not in the kind of shit I'm in, Mark.

MARK: It's hard to compare shit, Rose. I think that for the most part, shit is shit.

ROSE: But is there anybody out there who's not stuck in shit, Mark?

MARK: He who has given all his shit back.

ROSE: But who gave all his shit back, who?

MARK: Aw, who knows, Rose? Well, Jesus Christ, for example.

ROSE: Well there you fucking go, Mark! Well now there's a fucking great example. Jesus Christ! That's simply un-fucking-real, Mark! Jesus Christ, well, you fucking said it, didn't you, Mark? And me, what am I supposed to do?

MARK: Come over here, come closer to me, Rose. Come over here.

Rose moves closer to Mark.

MARK: Put your arms around me and hold me, as tight as you can, with your whole heart, Rose.

Rose gazes at Mark, distrusting.

MARK: Come on, hold me as tight as you possibly can, what are you standing there for?

ROSE: You aren't fooling with me, Mark?

MARK: I have lung cancer, Rose, I can't fool anybody anymore.

Rose hugs Mark, holds him close with her whole body. Mark hugs Rose too.

MARK: There, there you go, Rose, come on, come on now, hold me tighter. I want you.

Rose tries to break free, but Mark doesn't let her go.

ROSE: Let me go! I knew it, I knew you were fucking with me, I knew you were a dickhead!

MARK: Wait a minute, wait a minute, I'm no dickhead, Rose, wait a minute now. I'm going to give you back everything now, I'm going to give you everything, everything I took from you, everything, to the last drop. Hold me closer, rub against me with your whole body, I'm going to give you back everything, feel me, now I'm going to give you everything back, everything.

Rose tries to break free, but Mark doesn't let her.

ROSE: You didn't take anything from me, I don't need anything from you, let me go, I'm going to scream, let go.

MARK: I took everything from you, Rose, everything! Your whole life. Your whole childhood, your entire unfulfilled life. Because I want bitches, Rose, my whole life I want other people's bitches, Rose. My whole life I crave women like you, Rose, and that's why you became a whore, Rose, because me and other assholes like me, we all want you. Because you can offer yourself to us, that's why you're a whore, because of me and other guys like me, who you can offer yourself to, Rose. Because we want you. Because you became a whore for me, Rose. I took your normal life away from you, because I needed sex, period. And now I'm going to give it back, Rose. Hold me closer, now I'm going to give you everything back, everything I took from you, give it all back. You know who I really am? I'm shit-man. My whole life I took, took everything from bitches, the bitches who surrounded me, my whole life I took and gave nothing in return.



ROSE: I don't want to hear it, prick, let me go, you prick!

MARK: I'm shit-man, I only take from bitches and I give them nothing. Never. I never give them anything. And now the time has come to give back, the time has come to give everything back, Rose.

Rose tries to break free, but her strength is gone. Rose cries and screams through tears.

ROSE: Let me go, please, I'm begging you let me go.

MARK: I'm going to give you everything back now, Rose, everything.

ROSE: I don't want it anymore, I can't do it anymore, let me go, please, let me go.

MARK: I'm giving back everything, Rose, everything.

ROSE: What are you gonna give me, motherfucking bastard? What can you give back to me? Let me go, please, let me go, I'm asking you, give me back my life.

MARK: Have it!!!

Mark releases his grasp and Rosa falls on the ground. Mark greedily gasps for air, trying to regain his breath. He comes to.

MARK: I gave it all back, Rose. Everything I took from you and others like you all these years. I gave it all back to you, I paid it all back. And now I have to go pay back the rest of my shit. Farewell.

Mark walks unsteadily down the street. Rose follows him with her gaze.

ROSE: Hey, Mark?

Mark turns around.

MARK: What?

ROSE: Are you Jesus Christ?

MARK: Yeah.

CURTAIN.