

GOING TO HEAVEN

by PIETER-DIRK UYS

Paradise is Closing Down took shape for me on that day in June 1976 when the revolution hit Adderley Street, like the stones in Stuttaford's elegant shop windows.

When this play was first presented at the Grahamstown Festival on 6 July 1977, the bubble of our Good Life had burst and the Soweto Riots coloured South Africa's tranquil orange, white and blue red.

The 'coloured' character had no name; it was also illegal for black and white actors to be on stage together. Val de Klerk and Christine Basson (later Magda Beukes) played Molly and Anna in that production, which toured from Cape Town's Little Theatre to the Market in 1977, with Melanie-Ann Sher as Mouse and William Meyer as The Young Man.

The play was later produced at the Edinburgh Festival in 1979, with Naomi Buch, Barbara Kinghorn, Helen Bourne and Frank Williams in the cast, directed by Roberta Durrant. It was also first seen in the USA in a production by the Syracuse Theatre Company.

In 1988 I revised the text for the Penguin Plays publication *Paradise is Closing Down and other plays* and twelve years later found that what was appalling in 1976 had become a way of life in 1988. The Young Man got a name and a passion that had been omitted in the original version. It was now legal to act together, sleep together and kill together. Then in 1992 the New South Africa burst open like a boil in the midday sun, and fifteen years after *Paradise ...* started closing down, the play was performed at the Grahamstown Festival, the Wits Theatre, Johannesburg, the Baxter Theatre, Cape Town, and the Sneddon Theatre, Durban, in a form that no one would have dared to imagine.

This is the play you have here. It is called *Going to Heaven*. Paradise is still Cape Town, but in the 1990s: a city in recession, its vibrancy muted by violence, its optimism dependent on finance. Molly and Anna have been replaced by Mervyn and Andre, two well-off gay men, one boer, the other bagel.

I see no reason why a story set over a decade ago should not have something as valid to say today, once the dated political decorations have been replaced and brought into perspective. And hopefully as we grow up, the universal story will still have an impact on audiences now, to whom 'the beginning of the end' in Soweto on 16 June 1976 when the original *Paradise* started closing down, is now in the 21st century just a reason for another public holiday.

Pieter-Dirk Uys
Cape Town 1992 / Darling 2009

Paradise is Closing Down (Revisited) opened at the 1992 Grahamstown Festival, directed by Lynne Maree with the following cast:

<i>Mervyn</i>	Chris Galloway
<i>Mouse</i>	Stephen Raymond
<i>William</i>	Randall de Jager
<i>Andre</i>	Pieter-Dirk Uys

8 Pieter-Dirk Uys

Going to Heaven is strictly protected by copyright.
Applications for performance rights should be addressed to:

P.D. Uys Productions
PO Box 175
Darling 7345

ACT ONE

The action takes place in Mervyn Levinson's cottage in Loader Street, Cape Town, on a Saturday night in 1992.

It is tentatively the New South Africa. The 1994 Election is still in the future. White South Africa still rules. Black prisoners have been released. The banned ANC is legal. Nelson Mandela is free. No one knows what will happen now.

A prominent sign in the kitchen reads:

**Swearwords R5
Blasphemy R10
The Truth R100**

It is early evening in the open-plan kitchen. A couch looks out on the view of Table Bay. There is a bar with stools. The radio is on C a news bulletin.

NEWSREADER: A... and later tonight, on our weekly news survey, we discuss in depth the current problems in former Yugoslavia, the Philippines, Northern Ireland and Lebanon, while we have reports on the plight of the aborigines in Australia, urban terror in Berlin, and the historic massacre of red Indians in the USA.

On the home front, we discuss South Africa's latest cricket triumph, as well as the chances our Miss South Africa has at this year's Miss Planet Earth contest being held in Moscow.

Mervyn lies on the couch in his house coat, wearing a black face pack and two pieces of cucumber on his eyes.

This is Radio South Africa, the time is 6.30 ...@

He switches the radio off.

MERVYN: I'm so sick of politics, I could go into lifelong quarantine. >Everything about this country is political,= he said. >Sex. Homes. Colour.= Even death is political, if you can do it in front of a TV camera in time for the seven o'clock news in the US of A!

He starts putting on make up.

I don't know why I shacked up with him in the first place. I didn't even get used to his surname before it was all over. >Politically incompatible, Stephen and Mervyn.= When in doubt, blame politics: shame, poor little eight-letter scapegoat! Forget that Stephen couldn't get his options up in bed. Oh God, how can I forget.
>Hey, Merv, help me, talk dirty ... >

›Okay Stephen, poofy-shitty, poe-pie-drek ...=

Calls.

Mouse?

You can imagine what Michael and Graham=s farewell gavotte did for his liberal conscience.

›I can=t believe they=re going to Canada. In winter!= he gasped. ›The chapter of apartheid is closed! Why are they running away?=-

Running away? Oh do me a favour, those sly queens made so many bucks off the system, they can now move into a condo in Vancouver and blame our politics.

Calls again.

Mouse, are you dead?

›The writing=s on the wall, Mervyn,= he said. What wall? He should be lucky to find something so concrete around here.

›So okay, Stephen, the rioting might be on the wall,= I said, ›but who=s got the education or the time to read? Give me something real, like an earthquake or a tidal wave, and I=I also pack the Kruger rands into the wooden leg and flee. But do I have to rewrite my will every time a stone flies through the air?=-

Do you know, he actually had the cheek to demand that we put off tonight!

What does he want? Us to burn candles for the oppressed masses in China and starve? I told him:

›We=re going to Heaven and we=re going to have a fantastic night and would you please stop wasting my time with your advice and just pay my palimony!= Bloody cheapskate!

›The end of the world,= he called it.

He=s right, this is Cape Town. So what else is new?

Mouse enters.

MOUSE: I can=t find it.

MERVYN: You didn=t look.

MOUSE: I=ve been looking everywhere. They=re so sore, I can scarcely see.

MERVYN: Don=t rub your eyes ...

MOUSE: I=ve already used the eyedrops, Mervyn ...

MERVYN: Have you looked in all the cupboards?

MOUSE: Yes.

MERVYN: Then look in the fridge.

MOUSE: For God=s sake ...

MERVYN: And put that in the Tin.

MOUSE: Why?

MERVYN: You said a swearword. Tin!

MOUSE: Oh for God's sake, Mervyn!

MERVYN: That's a double fine! The ex-lover tells me a Stock Market Crash is just around the corner, so pay up: I want to live!

MOUSE: I don't think that's funny.

MERVYN: Then forgive me for laughing. [*he laughs*] My dear, just the thought of all those white nipped-and-tucked kugels stampeding down Adderley Street pursued by a bunch of black school kids with big sticks is rather funny!

MOUSE: How do you know? You were still in bed with those twins.

MERVYN: In the old days, a first taste of teargas and they packed their bags and got their visas C shame. Now they use teargas for perfume! Amazing how even kugels can adapt!

MOUSE: Those twins are too young for you, Mervyn.

MERVYN: I'm not reacting to that personal attack, so you can change the subject, Mouse. Jealousy will get you nowhere.

MOUSE: I was terrified!

MERVYN: Well, if you must stand around a massacre watching ...

MOUSE: I was just walking to the agency. I had to take a tour round the Peninsula ...

MERVYN: Oh come on, you watched with everyone else, waiting for blood and guts and dead kids to have something to tell at the next ANC mass rally on the Parade!

MOUSE: There was no massacre ...

MERVYN: How do you know, if you didn't stand around and watch? Look, take my advice and stay in bed until after the revolution. Then you get a nice job as a char, or a nanny to ten black brats on the Cape Flats! [*pause*] Mousie, come here.

He wipes Mouse's face with a tissue.

I never thought you could look worse than usual ...

MOUSE: The girls at the agency carry guns now ...

MERVYN: About time too, with randy butch buggers like you around! So who did you take on your tour? I didn't think normal tourists came here any more.

MOUSE: Six black American businessmen. They're here to re-invest.

MERVYN: That makes sense. Blow your nose. You'll live. Now where is it? I had them on last Friday. The one was in the bedroom, the other one must be here somewhere. Look in the side cupboard with the other costumes!

MOUSE: I looked there. For God's sake ...

MERVYN: Since when are you so rich to be so glib? If you go on like this, swearing and cursing like a politician, I'll have to scrub out your mouth with washing-up liquid!

MOUSE: You said you wouldn't get involved with those twins, Mervyn. They're younger than me!

MERVYN: And don't lecture me, Mouse. You're not my mother!

He exits.

MOUSE: I can't imagine what you do with both of them at the same time. Mervyn? [*mutters*] If you had a chandelier, you'd probably swing upside-down with a rose in your bum ... [*giggles*]

MERVYN (off): I heard that, you unimaginative bitch!

MOUSE: Don't you have any others?

MERVYN (off): Bet your arse!

MOUSE: You said 'arse!

MERVYN (off): So did you!

MOUSE: I'll have to owe the Tin ...

MERVYN (off): You're a foulmouthed little queen and I'll write to your poor mother!

MOUSE: My mother's dead ...

MERVYN (off): What?

MOUSE: Was there anything on the news about this morning's violence? Mervyn?

MERVYN (off): I'm busy, Mouse! Just play with yourself for a bit ...

Pause.

MOUSE: One reads about people thrown off trains and just shot in broad daylight, but you never expect to see it with your own eyes. They were all so young, the kids and the police. All playing a sort of cowboys and Indians. They even seemed to be enjoying themselves. On a killing spree. I remember things happening in Rhodesia in the old days C my father had a friend who used to keep his money in a purse made of a black man=s ball .. er .. you know .. but these children? They were laughing as they were being arrested. Some were bleeding. I really give up.

Mervyn enters with his make-up tray and starts putting on his glamour face.

MERVYN: Very moving speech, and what do you mean xgive up=? That=s just what they want! They want to frighten us to death. Not this old soldier. Do you realise what would=ve happened to me, if I=d ever said xgive up=? After all I=ve been through C before you were even born C and did I ever say xgive up=?

MOUSE: It=s not the same ...

MERVYN: It wasn=t easy. When Stephen left me for that teenaged surfer with the broken arm ...

MOUSE: It was wrong that he beat you up ...

MERVYN: The boy had the broken arm, because Stephen was the doctor, you twit! Which reminds me: he did hit me once ...

MOUSE: You told me.

MERVYN: I don=t remember telling you ...

MOUSE: You did. He hit you here ...

MERVYN: Mmmmm. Anyway, look around you ... go on, what do you see?

MOUSE: Er ... your kitchen?

MERVYN: Look further!

MOUSE: I don=t understand ...

MERVYN: Mouse, would I have had all this C a cottage, a sports car, money, the twins, a maid, a fashion consultancy, the twins, a home computer ...

MOUSE: The twins?

MERVYN: ... would I have had all this if I=d ever allowed myself to say xgive up=?

MOUSE: No, Mervyn, I don=t suppose so.

MERVYN: So there, what have I always told you?

MOUSE: Never give up.

MERVYN: You're not just a pretty face.

Pause.

MOUSE: Mervyn, I should go home and get changed.

MERVYN: Why?

MOUSE: I need a bath and to wash my hair ...

MERVYN: Nonsense, you look fine.

MOUSE: I can't go out in public like this!

MERVYN: All right, Mouse, leave me! That's friendship for you!

MOUSE: I want to put on something nice.

MERVYN: We won't notice the difference. Don't worry, we'll make you the centre of attraction tonight.

MOUSE: Yes, I'll be the youngest.

MERVYN: Bitch!

MOUSE: The Tin, the Tin, the Tin!

MERVYN: Oh fuck off!

MOUSE: Washing-up liquid!

MERVYN: You're supposed to help me!

MOUSE: Don't shout at me, Mervyn!

MERVYN: You know what a state I get in every time I see that klutz Stephen!

MOUSE: I thought it was the twins that kept you out of your sleep!

MERVYN: Bloody snotty-nosed limp-wristed ... [*opens fridge*] Ah ... come and look here, Mouse ...

MOUSE: What?

Mervyn takes a high-heeled shoe out of the fridge.

MERVYN: If this were a snake, you'd be as dead as democracy!

MOUSE: A high-heeled shoe in the fridge?

MERVYN: He was happy to exploit cheap black labour and make a disgusting amount of money not so long ago. Now, just because I want to have a night out with my friends, he suddenly behaves like Mother Teresa and says: 'Merv, doll, this is no time for fun!'- God, I hate men.

MOUSE: You mean Stephen.

MERVYN: Especially wholesome, brawny, good-looking bastards like Stephen whats-his-name. Screw screw screw and when you eventually come C they go!

MOUSE: Do you really want me to go like this?

MERVYN: Why is it always so perfect when you go out with someone? But the moment you're shackled up 'til death do you part, the guerilla war starts.

MOUSE: The crack in the wall's getting bigger.

MERVYN: Freudian little thing. It's those damned neighbors with their priceless crap drilled into my wall. I just don't know what this street is coming to.

MOUSE: They've got two Mercedes sports cars. Two of the same colour!

MERVYN: Yuppy-schluppys! You know, when I moved into this cottage back in the days when cash was a commodity, I still had a coloured family living next door. Forget about 'trendy area'- it was the pits. But Mousie, they were as clean as could be wished for. That's where I met Mrs Peters.

MOUSE: You met your maid when she was living next door?

MERVYN: No, she was out on the Cape Flats. A relative or something lived next door. The best maid I've ever had. Mrs Peters. Or was. Went off at lunchtime today! Just like that! She's starting to get so cheeky nowadays. God, free Mandela and they get whiter by the day!

MOUSE: What was it like living next to them?

MERVYN: A damn sight more predictable than this new drek. Two Mercs of the same colour? How's anybody going to know you've got two new cars, if they're both the same colour?

MOUSE: Maybe they got a discount ...

MERVYN: They probably think it's the only thing you can take out of the country and sell overseas. [ye//s] Mercedes comes from overseas already! Schmucks!

MOUSE: The husband is with our travel agency.

MERVYN: God help this country!

MOUSE: Is that a prayer?

MERVYN: You can bet your arse!

MOUSE: And that's a fine!

MERVYN: Oh, this area had atmosphere then. All right, they stabbed and raped and brawled, but shit, they had Life! My family grew up in the most terrifying violence C bombs, guns, death. But there was life. Did I tell you about my grandmother?

MOUSE: Yes, Mervyn. Poland. 1943. You were two.

MERVYN: It's like yesterday. The agony, the suffering! You kids just don't know how lucky you are, you with your Zimbabwe and Andre with his kaffirs. We had Hitler!

MOUSE: Mervyn, I must go. I'll never be able to get ready in five minutes.

MERVYN: Flattery will get you nowhere! Oh, what's the point of all this!

MOUSE: Have you bought something new for tonight?

MERVYN: All this tarting up C for why! For what! For who!

MOUSE: It was all your idea!

MERVYN: Thanks, blame me again. The good times are always my fault! Pour me some wine, Mouse. No, not in the fridge; that's the good stuff, costs a fortune. Give me a poeswyn spritzer. [*Mouse pours from box wine*] So? What are you going to wear?

MOUSE: I don't know ...

MERVYN: You don't know? We've planned this night for weeks and all we've talked about is how we're going to drag up and turn every queen in Heaven green, and suddenly you don't know what to wear? Don't let me down; the Boer's having a thing specially made for the occasion.

MOUSE: I must look in my wardrobe.

MERVYN: Oh, welcome back Laura Ashley. That Andre. All the money that relatives in government can embezzle, and what does he do? A dreary radio job reading the news.

MOUSE: And nice messages ...

MERVYN: Ja, to boys in what's left of our Army: >And here's one for Johann in 32

Battalion, who's just shot his third black by mistake. Your ma sends love, Johann, and your cat Mitzi's had kittens ...=

MOUSE: How can you say that ...

MERVYN: I'm not criticising him, I mean, he's my best friend. It just all came too easy too soon.

MOUSE: Andre's also been through his bit of hell.

MERVYN: Oh really? What's that got to do with it? He lost a brother in a stupid landmine explosion; I lost half my family in a stupid world war. We've all suffered, but life must go on.

MOUSE: Maybe that's what the riot was about today ...

MERVYN: That wasn't a riot, it was a skirmish among bored brats. Please, who needs to be told these things by school kids. Have we become so impotent that the babies now lead the armies?

MOUSE: What does Mrs Peters say?

MERVYN: I've said it for years: What we're fighting here is a losing battle. I said it long before the first stone was cast.

MOUSE: So why haven't you left yet?

MERVYN: Don't start on me, Mouse! Spare me your sarcasm please. I'm as South African as you and I'm proud of it!

MOUSE: I was Rhodesian, remember.

MERVYN: Then why don't you >Go Home=?

MOUSE: Because now home is here.

MERVYN: You're the one who's running away, Mouse.

MOUSE: People don't run away, they run towards.

MERVYN: What?

MOUSE: I don't want to talk about it.

MERVYN: Touchy, touchy, you and the Boer. You're both very quick to point fingers, but when I give you some reality, you both clamp up and make a biceps. Well, I'm also here, and by God and her boer cousins, this is where I intend to stay!

MOUSE: Why did Mrs Peters leave early, Mervyn? Is she okay?

MERVYN: Oh yes, I was telling you about the coloured family. Not so quiet, but what the hell, that's one thing they had and that was lust for life. All night! Noise, shouts, fun. I even went next door one Friday to threaten them with police action if they didn't shut up, and there I ended up in their humble kitchen drinking American Cream Soda out of their cups and telling them the story of my life. So, I didn't have a baby after that drink, or come out in a rash!

MOUSE: And where are they now?

MERVYN: Probably somewhere on the Cape Flats, rubbing sand out of their eyes, while we rub teargas out of ours, and where's the real life gone to? Now it's matching Mercs!

The phone rings.

I'm not home.

MOUSE: I don't think they heard you.

MERVYN: [*yells*] I'm not home!

MOUSE: Shan't I answer it?

MERVYN: Just because it rings?

Mouse answers the phone.

MOUSE: Hello?

MERVYN: God, I remember when I so briefly was the doctor's only true love, the phone never stopped ringing ...

MOUSE: Who?

MERVYN: Stephen always went out on these house calls, especially with 18 year old boys who broke their fucking arms. No, he was a good man.

MOUSE: Is she okay?

MERVYN: He was also a pain in the arse as a lover and a self-centred bastard ...

MOUSE: Don't you want to talk to Mervyn? The Madam, yes.

MERVYN: The Madam? Jesus, you make me sound like old Sarah of the brothel up the road.

MOUSE: Okay, I'll tell her ... him.

MERVYN: It's a capitalist society: the poor people get moved out, but the whorehouse stays.

MOUSE: Yes ... bye.

He hangs up the phone.

MERVYN: What's the time?

MOUSE: Mrs Peters was hurt.

MERVYN: How do you know?

MOUSE: Her neighbor just phoned. She was hurt in some unrest ...

MERVYN: So who's in charge here? Why didn't you let me talk to them?

MOUSE: It was just to say Mrs Peters can't come to work on Monday.

MERVYN: Oh. I'm so sick of all the excuses! My auntie has lost a leg- or >There was a fire- or >flu- or >a riot-! What do I pay her good money for?

MOUSE: You pay her R200 a month.

MERVYN: For half days and every other weekend off, plus all the food left over and my old clothes for her layabout husband, who fucked up the plumbing in the bathroom. Mrs Peters should be luckier!

MOUSE: Well, I just think ... [*a look stops him*] I'd better rush.

MERVYN: So rush! Rush! I've told Heaven we want the table by 9.30; the cabaret starts at 12.00. Anyway, if you can get yourself together in under an hour, you shouldn't be allowed out after six. How do I look?

He adds the wig.

MOUSE: Who are you supposed to be?

MERVYN: Winnie Mandela!

MOUSE: You look more like Tina Turner.

He laughs.

MERVYN: You recognise me with laughter! Thanks for nothing!

MOUSE: No really, Mervyn, you look wonderful.

MERVYN: How wonderful?

MOUSE: Outstandingly wonderful!

MERVYN: Outstandingly wonderful?

MOUSE: I swear to God.

MERVYN: R10 fine!

The phone rings.

MOUSE: Shall I answer it?

MERVYN: Whose phone is it? [*picks up*] Yes! No, I'm busy. Who is it? Oh? Checking if I'm HIV positive? Wait, I can't talk here ... I'll take it in the bedroom. [*puts down the phone. Looks in mirror*] This is not an H-I-V face, it's a K-A-K face! I hate this face! I want another one. Do you hear, Mrs God, I want another one!

Exits.

Mouse is dying to pick up the phone and listen in but doesn't. He clears up dutifully. Lifts the Tin and shakes it. It is empty, bar one coin. He looks to see if the coast is clear, then swears softly.

MOUSE: Fart .. piss ... shit!

There is a knock on the door. Mouse drops the Tin.

Who's there? [*another knock*] Yes, who is it? Mervyn, there's someone at the kitchen door. Who is it?

Mouse puts on the chain and opens the door.

Yes? Can I help you? Mervyn! [*unchains the door and opens it*] You'd better come in, he won't be long.

Mouse then realises that William is coloured.

Oh, just wait, I'd better tie up the dog. [*pushes William out and closes door*] Vicious Alsatian! Come on ... Rambo ... box! Horrible vicious dog! [*then mutters*] What am I doing?

Mouse opens the door and William enters with carrier bag.

Sorry ... yes, well ... Mervyn? Is this for Mervyn? [*takes the bag from him*] You must be from the corner shop ... [*puts bag on sideboard*] What's in here?

WILLIAM: Fruit and vegetables ...

MOUSE: I didn't know Mervyn ate sensibly.

Looks into bag.

WILLIAM: You live here?

MOUSE: No, heavens. I live in the boarding house two blocks down. Number 14. Mervyn lives here. He's in there on the phone. [*pause. Calls*] Mervyn?

MERVYN (off): Leave me alone, I'm doing a transplant in here!

MOUSE: That's Mervyn. He's off the phone now. Maybe it was one of his friends. He has many friends. [*pause*] Look, are you from the corner shop?

WILLIAM: No.

MOUSE: Oh God, I'm sorry ... here. [*hands back the bag*] I don't know where the other place is, but it's not here.

WILLIAM: Old Sarah's place.

MOUSE: I wouldn't know. You've got the wrong address.

WILLIAM: Oh?

MOUSE: Oh hell, you are here to see Mervyn? [*calls*] Mervyn, quick! Wednesday night's happening on Saturday!

WILLIAM: We used to live in this house.

MOUSE: Really? So you know Mervyn well! Mervyn! Surprise!

MERVYN (off): Bugger off!

WILLIAM: No, I don't know Mervyn ...

MOUSE: But you said you lived here.

WILLIAM: My family lived here.

Pause.

MOUSE: Oh.

WILLIAM: Ja, since ... oh, forever. 'Til Mervyn and you whites moved in.

MOUSE: I'm just passing through.

WILLIAM: Oh?

MOUSE: I was born in Salisbury. Harare. I work in a travel agency. I take people round the Peninsula on scenic tours. The views are fantastic.

WILLIAM: Oh.

MOUSE: I'm just saving a bit of money, then I'll move on.

WILLIAM: That's nice.

MOUSE: I have a British passport. [*pause*] So, what was this place like when your people lived here?

WILLIAM: A little more primitive. No, I'm only joking. It didn't look like this. There was an open stove. Ma says the place always smelt of burning wood from the fire.

MOUSE: How romantic.

WILLIAM: Ja? There must've been a wall there ...

MOUSE: Mervyn had the whole place redone. It won a prize in *Style* magazine: the Confirmed Bachelor's Dreamhouse.

WILLIAM: The backyard looks nice.

MOUSE: Mervyn's patio. When Table Mountain is lit up on festive occasions you can see the bergies brush their teeth at night.

WILLIAM: What?

MOUSE: Mervyn's joke.

WILLIAM: When we were here it was full of bits of old cars. My uncle used to work on cars.

MOUSE: Amazing.

WILLIAM: I've heard a lot about this place, but I've never been myself. Mrs Peters works here?

MOUSE: Amazing! You know Mrs Peters?

WILLIAM: I was born on the Flats, me and my little brother. There was another brother, but they say he died here of the pneumonia.

MOUSE: I'm sorry.

WILLIAM: Is there still a little room next door?

MOUSE: Mervyn's dressingroom.

WILLIAM: He died in there.

MOUSE: Mervyn-s had a walk-in cupboard made for all his clothes and shoes and things.

WILLIAM: I think that-s where my grannie slept with all the other kids. And Auntie Vera. Grannie-s also dead.

MOUSE: They all slept in the same room?

WILLIAM: Not at the same time. Auntie Vera worked nights at the hospital. Grannie never slept they say. Maybe in the day, I don-t know.

MOUSE: And where do they all live now?

WILLIAM: From here they went somewhere in Town, then when that house was declared white, they moved out to Manenberg.

MOUSE: Oh yes, Manenberg. It-s a lovely name, Manenberg ...

WILLIAM: You know the Cape Flats?

MOUSE: Only the way to the airport, but I-ve been meaning to ...

WILLIAM: Not on your sightseeing tours?

MOUSE: Black townships?

WILLIAM: People fly all the way to South Africa to have their pictures taken in Soweto.

MOUSE: My job isn-t political.

WILLIAM: Just the views.

MOUSE: Hey? So why are you here?

WILLIAM: I can-t stay anyway. I was looking for Mrs Peters.

MOUSE: She only does half-days and she-s not staying late during the troubles. Mervyn says that-s a typical excuse, but maybe she can-t manage. She was hurt.

WILLIAM: Who?

MOUSE: Someone phoned and said Mrs Peters was hurt in some or other incident on the train. Nothing serious though.

WILLIAM: Good, so she-l be back to do the floors tomorrow.

MOUSE: No, Mrs Peters doesn-t come in on Sundays.

WILLIAM: Ja, the day of rest. I thought your friend was Jewish.

MOUSE: Yes. His family escaped from the Nazis.

WILLIAM: Funny.

MOUSE: Funny?

WILLIAM: Jews escaping from Nazis to live here happily under apartheid. Funny.

MOUSE: I don't understand ...

WILLIAM: There's a crack in the wall.

MOUSE: Hang on, Mervyn is very anti all that. We all are! It's terrible what you people have had to go through.

WILLIAM: Who ever Mervyn got to do his dreamhouse ripped him off. Bad plaster job.

MOUSE: Maybe you can fix it? I mean one day ...

WILLIAM: Ja, before I move back here?

MOUSE: Oh, that's funny.

Pause.

MERVYN (off): Mouse! Are you talking to yourself? Is the Boer here? Andre, you old Milnerton moffie, come and show me what you're wearing! Oh shit, why can't Tina Turner have normal hair like everyone else!

WILLIAM: Sounds just like my old grannie.

MOUSE: I'll tell Mervyn, he'll be delighted.

WILLIAM: Have you been crying? Your eyes ...

MOUSE: I was caught this morning in the teargas.

WILLIAM: And how did it feel?

MOUSE: Terrible.

WILLIAM: You get used to it.

MOUSE: Oh. [*pause*] Yes ... well ...

WILLIAM: You're going out tonight?

MOUSE: Celebrating.

WILLIAM: Birthday?

MOUSE: No, there's a fancy dress thing in the Docks at Heaven. Have you been?

WILLIAM: To Heaven? Not yet.

MOUSE: It's a club. You see, it's the anniversary of Mervyn's breakup with his lover, Andre's lost 4 kilos and I've saved the deposit on my airfare to London.

WILLIAM: Hell hey, congratulations.

MOUSE: Thanks.

ANDRE (off): Waar is almal?

MOUSE: That's Andre, you'd better go.

WILLIAM: Okay, but ...

Mouse looks off for Andre. During this William opens a drawer in the sideboard and looks into it.

MOUSE: I actually want to get out of this thing tonight. I wonder if Andre ... [*turns and sees him*] What are you doing?

WILLIAM: Checking the woodwork. Also a rip-off.

ANDRE(off): Where can I change? Waar is al die meide?

MOUSE: Please go!

He pushes William out without his carrier bag.

ANDRE (off): Mervyn, waar is jy?

Andre enters.

Here Muis, jy lyk soos iets wat die kat uitgekots het.

MOUSE: What?

ANDRE: You look gorgeous.

MOUSE: No. I must still go home and change!

ANDRE: Red eyes. What's Mervyn been saying?

MOUSE: No, I was caught in the teargas, Andre. It was terrible. There were these children ...

Andre opens a box.

ANDRE: Like it?

MOUSE: What is it?

ANDRE: A German microwave that seats twelve. [*He takes out a wig*] I'm still not sure if it has the right effect.

MOUSE: Put it on.

Andre puts on the wig.

ANDRE: I borrowed it from what's-his-name at CAPAB. These wigs cost a fortune.

MOUSE: But where's the rest?

Andre wears it underneath. His costume is a Pietersburg Blue Angel / Lilli Marlene variation.

ANDRE: I didn't feel like the Voortrekker Rok and the Clicks earrings. Give me a drink.

MOUSE: Did your mother see you like this?

ANDRE: My mother saw me naked, Mouse.

MOUSE: When?

ANDRE: When I was born. Of course not, you doos. That's why I'm wearing all this kak under my clothes. Drink drink drink!

MOUSE: We've got soda water.

ANDRE: Well, then turn it into wine!

MOUSE: Your diet ...

ANDRE: A dop wyn won't show tonight. [*sighs*] Here, my ma werk op my tiete!

MOUSE: Tiete tiete tiete!

Points to the Tin delightedly.

ANDRE: How much in the Tin?

MOUSE: A coin. Either R2 or 20 cents.

ANDRE: Put me down on tick for the rest of the night. [*calls*] Ethel Mervyn!

MOUSE: You already owe the Tin R220,000 and 20 cents, Andre.

ANDRE: So, in real money that's just over \$40. Twenty cents? What truth cost me twenty cents?

MOUSE: Andre, I've been trying to get away, but it's not been easy.

ANDRE: You mean the orgy is off!

MOUSE: Mervyn's having one of his nervous breakdowns.

ANDRE: Ja, always when he washes his hair and it goes down the drain.

MERVYN (off): Who's there?

ANDRE: Die Boere is hier! Come out with your hands up and your broeks down!

Shriek of delight from off.

Why are we doing this thing tonight?

Andre stands in his outfit and puts on the shoes.

MOUSE: You've lost so much weight, Andre. It shows.

ANDRE: It's the outfit. I've got a dozen lunch bars in the car, if I count more than thirteen ribs. Can't afford to get too thin nowadays, if you know what I mean.

MOUSE: How much did you pay for all that?

ANDRE: Last month's cigarette money and Wednesday's horses. I feel silly dressed up like this.

MOUSE: You look fantastic.

ANDRE: Mouse, Naas Botha's wife in her wedding dress looks fantastic. I look silly.

MOUSE: Mervyn will platz!

ANDRE: I'm not so sure I should be seen in public dressed up like this with you and Mervyn. We'll look like three lesbians!

MOUSE: We will not look like three lesbians! Stop always saying that! You always try and be funny, even when we went to the Paul Simon show with those guys.

ANDRE: Those what? Those guys? Good God, Mouse, my Neanderthal surfer with his knuckles trailing in the dust, your little travelling durex salesman who was prettier than you, and Mervyn chewing away at his pink-cheeked police reservist with the big nose, and you don't think we looked like three lesbians? Even the guys looked like three lesbians! I'm not going!

MOUSE: Andre, it's been planned ...

ANDRE: Ek het net daardie gevoel. Rooi lig, Andre, rooi lig! I don't need any more reason to feel like shit. Every time someone just looks at me, I ...

He cries. Mouse is shocked.

Pour me some more rubbish ...

MOUSE: Is it something I said, Andre?

ANDRE: Whatever happened to Mervyn's well-hung pink-cheeked guardian of law and order? Don't tell me Madam had him for breakfast the next morning? Shame, gone the way of all Mervyn's firm flesh. Brian.

MOUSE: Henry. He was killed by a sniper in Guguletu.

ANDRE: He even looked like my boet. Andre se pienk-cheeked boetie playing Schwarzenegger met die kaffirs.

MOUSE: That Brian was killed in a car smash. He was on drugs. Mervyn says ...

ANDRE: His things suddenly appeared on the dressing table this morning. That little leather wallet I brought him from Florence with those snaps of me and Ma and the spaniel. I'd hidden all the stuff from Ma, but the maid always seems to find them in time. And today being what it is, Ma laid them all out like on an altar: his matriek-afskeidsfoto from school, the certificate with his medal for bravery, the letter of condolence from State President P.W. fucking Botha. For the last four years, Ma's been showing that letter to everyone with such pride. I keep saying, 'Ma, condolence from P.W. Botha is nothing to be proud of today=

MOUSE: It's the thought that counts.

ANDRE: Some consolation prize. You never knew my boet, hey?

MOUSE: No, unfortunately.

ANDRE: Why unfortunately? You wouldn't have liked him. He was so Afrikaans: rugby, meisies, rugby, bier. Spoke English like a Van der Merwe joke ... 'No man, Andre, no sis man sis ...=

MOUSE: Andre, I was caught in the teargas. It was terrible ... there were these kids ...

ANDRE: ... and yet he loved kids. Wanted his own kids one day. That's a joke - he was blown up by a bomb set by kids, while hunting down kids. What the fuck's happened to us?

Mervyn enters all dressed as Tina Turner. He has his cassette player in his hand and mimes to a Tina Turner song. Then:

MERVYN: You Boer bitch! That's not a casual little Errol Arendz number from a secondhand shop in Long Street. That's an original Eugene Terreblanche ensemble from Pietersburg! No, no, NO! I don't like it! The colour's too predictable, the cut's too old-fashioned; you're too thin where it counts and too fat where it doesn't. Your hair looks terrible and you wear makeup like a man. Otherwise, it's a great improvement on last week's crimpelene khaki. Right, Marlene van der Merwe, start with the floors and work your way up. And please wear a doek ...

BOTH: ... Madam doesn't want your hair all over Madam's food.

MERVYN: ... and start with Madam's bedroom, thank you, dankie. Mouse, are you still here?

MOUSE: I've been very busy ...

MERVYN: The table's booked for 9.30! Move your arse, Mouse ...

MOUSE: That's a fine ...

MERVYN: ... before I kick your arse, Mouse!

ANDRE: Mouse-mollester!

MOUSE: Okay okay...

ANDRE: Let him wear something interesting of yours, Mervyn. That SAP uniform with the zip up the back?

MERVYN: The zip's jammed.

ANDRE: Coptis interruptis?

MERVYN: I don't lend out my clothes.

MOUSE. I'll be quick. I want to shave.

Mouse exits.

ANDRE: Shave?

MERVYN: And take your carrots or whatever ... what is all this kak ...

ANDRE: Don't tell me he's on his vegetarian kick again. Well, that does it! I'm not dragging up to go steak-vreeting with a vegan and a kugel!

MERVYN: It's pork we don't eat, Andre. Steaks are fine.

ANDRE: But you eat bacon.

MERVYN: That's different.

ANDRE: How come?

MERVYN: Breakfast doesn't count; Jehovah's still sleeping. And Mouse, bring your own make-up! He's always using my things. Mouse!

ANDRE: I'm parked up against their garage next door.

MERVYN: Fuck them. They've got a Merc sports each.

ANDRE: They've got a garage!

MERVYN: Latest model.

ANDRE: Yes, he told me last week. Mine's a later model.

MERVYN: Pity you can't take it with you.

ANDRE: Oh, but you can.

MERVYN: Yes, to Australia or the States. I meant to God's heaven.

ANDRE: Same thing. Do you need a pin for that glue?

Andre starts putting glue onto false eyelashes.

MERVYN: My dear, you won't believe what Stephen said to me on the phone this afternoon, just after I spoke to you ...

ANDRE: Frankly, I've never had the urge to even want to go and live somewhere else.

MERVYN: ... He phones me up and sweet as a virgin asks if he can come over and have a bath!

ANDRE: Maybe if I had kids who needed a decent education, one would plan with them in mind, but I don't ...

MERVYN: A bath? I said: >Listen, you unmentionable bastard, we are now die-vors-ced! It's over, finito, basta, in sy moer. Go piss in someone else's bathwater! =

ANDRE: ... but just me and my Mercedes in a foreign land? Ag nee wat, I'm not prepared to start all over again somewhere else at my age. And for what?

MERVYN: What?

ANDRE: Vir wat!

MERVYN: A bath.

ANDRE: Hey?

MERVYN: Yes, can you believe the chutzpah! I mean, who the hell does he think I am? Some horny wallflower panting for a reconciliation? Fuck æm! I=ve lived! I=ve licked my way through the armpit of life ten times over and I=ve learned the hard Hard way, my dear, and I don't need you or men or anyone!

He helps Andre put on the eyelashes.

ANDRE: Okay. Bye.

MERVYN: No! You don't count!

ANDRE: That's even worse!

MERVYN: You're on my side.

ANDRE: And what gave you that comforting idea?

MERVYN: We sing the same tune, Andre my dear, just the words are slightly different: me Stephen, you Helmut, me four years, you six. Me the Schul, you the Kerk ...

ANDRE: We couldn't be further apart ...

MERVYN: And suddenly bang goes the drum and the dream is over! Same tune, same drum! That's why we get on so well, Andre doll, because we don't need them!

ANDRE: Really.

MERVYN: Yes, really.

ANDRE: No really, I'm sorry to shatter your delusions, but I had lunch with Helmut on Monday, because I still adore him, the bastard, while all you do is stick pins into the Stephen doll next to your, may I say, not exactly empty bed!

MERVYN: Then why are we celebrating?

ANDRE: Certainly not because we don't need them. We're doing all this tonight, Mervyn ou meid, at great expense to salary and self-respect, because we don't have them. Three rampant cocks between us and no man to share them with.

MERVYN: Oh poo, speak for yourself!

Pause.

ANDRE: It should be my brother's birthday today.

MERVYN: I know. Don't think about it. Try and enjoy yourself for a change.

ANDRE: I still miss him terribly, Mervyn ...

MERVYN: I don't want to think about it. It's just too depressing. Want some paté?

ANDRE: He's a man, or he was nearly a man, and I love him and I need him and I want to think about him, so don't tell me to enjoy myself, because I'd rather be with him right now than anything in the world, but he's dead! And bang went that dream, and that's why I'm here dressed up like a geflopte pornstar, because I'm raw inside and a bit of your salt might make it better!

Phone rings. Andre picks it up.

Ja, Solly se Slagtery! No, it's not Mervyn, who's that? John. *[to Mervyn]* It's John.

MERVYN: Mazeltov.

ANDRE: Are you home?

MERVYN: No.

ANDRE: He's not home.

MERVYN: John who?

ANDRE: John who? Andrew's friend.

MERVYN: Ah. Andrew who? Give me the phone. *[takes the phone]* Yes? John who? Who the hell are you? Who's Andrew? I don't know any Andrew! Of course I'm not home, schmuck, this is a recording! *[slams down the phone]* Pig!

ANDRE: What did you do that for?

MERVYN: What do they think this is? Old Sarah's Bargain Basement? John who, Andrew who? Se gat!

ANDRE: Listen, you pretend you can't even understand Afrikaans after being here for over forty years, so please don't use our sacred phrases like »gaan kak« or »se gat«, because I know you don't even enjoy saying them. Rather lash out with your own Polack-Anglo-Saxon-kugel showstoppers!

MERVYN: Oh touchy-touchy! You'd really make someone a wonderful friend. What happened to you today, besides the family horror story which even by my soap operatic standards makes the stomach turn ...

ANDRE: Then shut up!

MERVYN: No! This is my house, my life! I've also been through the mill and dug the grave and smelt the flowers and patted the wreaths, so don't try your anything-

you-can-suffer-I-can-bear-better on me! What am I supposed to say? I said it when it happened: I'm sorry the little brother is dead. I didn't create the situation that demanded his blood! It's not my fault!

ANDRE: I never said it was your fault.

MERVYN: Thank you. Postmortem closed!

Pause.

ANDRE: He died protecting your comforts!

MERVYN: Rubbish! He died because that's what happens to soldiers in real life. They don't sell washing powder, they die!

ANDRE: Okay okay! I was just putting it into perspective ...

MERVYN: Fine. Just don't blame me for your pain, you uptight bitch! It's going to be a happy night and we're all going to suffer our defeats gladly. Do you understand, Andre, ou boer? A lekker time! So tuck away your open wound and smile. You're with someone who knows. *[pause]* Andrew? Andrew! Oh no, he's that accountant with the boat! Did he leave a number?

ANDRE: What?

MERVYN: Andrew ... no, who did you speak to?

ANDRE: John.

MERVYN: John! Did he leave a number? He invited me to go for a sail tomorrow. Oh shit, what am I going to do?

ANDRE: Try going to church tomorrow.

MERVYN: I went yesterday.

Looks through his private phone book.

ANDRE: Let's pick up Mouse on the way. Kom nou Mervyn, tomorrow will sort itself out.

MERVYN: I've been looking forward to that sail all week!

ANDRE: You've also kastig been looking forward to tonight!

MERVYN: Tonight's nearly over. I want something nice to look forward to. *[reads]* A ... A ... A ... Here's Adrian uncut/red hair. Avril ... she's emigrated ... goodbye Avril ... Ackerman. Abe the chemist, Abe the broker, Abe the lawyer. Abul chlora/uncut/curly black hair ... no Andrew!

ANDRE: Hang around the yacht basic tomorrow, Mervyn, someone nice under twenty is bound to notice you, shame.

MERVYN: The little bastard didn't even give me his surname. Anyway, who can afford a yacht like that at his age, rich little prick! Let me tell you, a nice long session in the Army would do him a lot of good. Teach him some manners for once.

ANDRE: Are we going to take our own wine to Heaven?

MERVYN: Of course, it's because educated brats like him managed to dodge the conscription and run and hide overseas, that those who enjoy killing kids had such a free hand!

ANDRE: Who can enjoy killing kids?

MERVYN: You're asking me? It's because you lot so desperately try to cling to your master-race status that kids are being killed for nothing!

ANDRE: My brother wasn't killed for nothing.

MERVYN: Oh no? So what's really changed since his pointless death? The so-called terrorists he was trained to fight have become the allies, the communists he was drilled to hate, our comrades!

ANDRE: Everything has changed!

MERVYN: Changed, or got worse?

ANDRE: My boet wasn't killed for nothing!

MERVYN: And the violence down the road?

ANDRE: Ag, violence ...

MERVYN: Christ, and you're supposed to be part of the media!

ANDRE: Sixty-two of them were killed.

MERVYN: So don't exaggerate ...

ANDRE: I saw the unrest report: sixty-two. I read the bulletin: twelve.

MERVYN: Are we still not being told the truth!

ANDRE: That we're fighting for our survival?

MERVYN: Your survival, ou boer. Mine, I fight for all the time. It's part of my heritage. At least I know the day I fall it won't have been for nothing.

ANDRE: You're so right, Mervyn. As an unclaimed corpse you'll look half your age and

have the best manicured nails in the morgue. Some survival!

MERVYN: You're really at your best when you're in a corner. Frankly, you boer, you lot deserve everything you get. You needed something radical to kick you out of your supremacist sleepwalk and I think a little senseless death in the family was just the beginning ...

Andre grabs him. There is violence.

Jesus!

Mervyn's wig comes off.

... what was all that about?

The phone rings.

I was only joking ... you mucked up my hair, you butch bitch!

ANDRE: I'm sorry ...

MERVYN: Oh fuck off, will you! Fuck Off!!! [*pause*] Answer the phone. If it's John or what's-his-name, say I'm in the bath; take a number ... be nice to him ...

Andre picks up the phone.

ANDRE: Ja? Mouse? Hang on, speak slowly ... Is jy okay? We can pick you up ... Ja ja, tell them to drop you here ...

Puts down the phone.

That was the Mouse. His room was burgled.

MERVYN: What?

ANDRE: The police will drop him here.

MERVYN: You see what's happening? You can't move without people invading your space, demanding their chances, stealing all the useless rubbish you can't breathe without!

ANDRE: For God's sake, Mervyn, no one's dead!

MERVYN: No? It's all so much easier now. Nothing can keep them out. No burglar alarms, no rottweilers, no guns ... Youth is a burglar. Money ... beauty ... hope. All burglars who creep in so quietly you don't hear them, 'til they laugh at you and leave you lying for dead ...

Pause.

ANDRE: Did I hurt you?

MERVYN: Not as much as I hope I hurt you! I'm going to phone the police.

ANDRE: Mouse already did that.

MERVYN: Please! You know what Mouse is like! Stand on his foot and he says I'm sorry. I know that nice young konstabel in Simonstown.

ANDRE: Which is now about as useful as a state pension paid out in 2001. Let's wait 'til Mouse gets here!

MERVYN: But this is an important night! Things might happen tonight! Not tonight!

He dials.

No little burglary is going to make me lose the best table at Heaven. You know it's the right place. Ever since that MK colonel was found in the toilet dressed as Betsie Verwoerd. Everyone who's anything tries to get in on a ...

He speaks into the phone.

Hello, who's that?

To Andre.

... God, it's the Italian piece ...

Into phone

Hello Emilio darling, it's Mervyn! Hey? Ah, Franco amore mio, Mervyn. Mervyn Levinson, you foreign queen! Yes, Andre's friend. You know, the old kugel with the wart on her twat? Yes? What do you mean yes, you schmuck! Listen Mussolini, I've got contacts in high places. Si signorina, you can bet your flaccid mortadella! I'll have your work permit revoked, your club declared an unrest-related area, your food branded non-kosher. You'll starve and I'll laugh ha ha ha! Suddenly you remember me? Listen Mario doll, I booked that table near the staircase for three at 9.30. Keep it, we're all dressed up and ready to go. I know it's a special night, Mario, but aren't I one of Heaven's best customers? Hey? But ... look, we won't be long... I promise ...

To Andre.

The fucker won't keep our table ... what do I do?

Andre takes the phone.

ANDRE: Pronto. Luciano? Andre. Bene grazie. Siamo un po' in ritardo nell'uscire. Sì, Mervyn e qui e sa la cretina come al solito. Tienimi il tavolo, mi

raccomando. Per favore ...? Luciano, sei un tesoro! Mettimi da parte un po_ dei tuoi calamari. Ciao.

Puts down the phone.

He'll keep the table.

MERVYN: When did you learn to speak Italian?

ANDRE: I was bored one Saturday afternoon. Are you all right?

MERVYN: I'm fine. A bit battered around the ego, but that's nothing new.

ANDRE: You always have the habit of bringing out the savages in the best people.

MERVYN: Only when you're around; other people call it a scintillating personality. Don't rub it in.

ANDRE: Which of your TVs is working? I need a Valium for my conscience ...

MERVYN: Please don't go. I'm nearly ready ... please just sit ... Andre?

Andre sits.

It's funny.

ANDRE: Funny.

MERVYN: Yes, funny: >bringing out the savages in the best people=. I do, you're right. I even get a whiff of their socks from here while I sip my health coffee, knowing I should put that special cream on my face as an investment for the future, and lemon halves on my elbows. Beauty Queen of the morgue? But I can't, knowing that they're twenty and having pretended in the dark under them that I was too.

ANDRE: So fill the tomb with happy laughter.

MERVYN: I could demonstrate to you now. Pick up phone ... button button button ... wait, ring ring ring ... >Hello someone this is Mervyn! Help!!!!!!!!!!!!=[*pause*] Too quick, too quick. You see, they need at least an hour to register my name, recognise my voice.
>Mervyn? Mervyn who? Oh that Mervyn! It's that boring old white moffie; pass the coke ...=
Don't you think that's funny?

ANDRE: Hysterically.

MERVYN: Yes. Funny. [*pause*] Did I tell you about the pain I get here, over my heart?

ANDRE: Heart's on the other side.

MERVYN: Oh no, I think it moved. Agony tore it loose from its moorings to cast it adrift in my Dead Sea within. I really think I'm going to die soon.

ANDRE: Shall I phone Heaven and cancel the table?

MERVYN: Maybe not quite yet, but soon-soon. And what would I have left behind?

ANDRE: The echo of a noise.

Pause.

MERVYN: Is that what you think?

Mouse enters fraught.

MOUSE: Andre! They're writing out a ticket for your car!

ANDRE: Who?

MOUSE: They say you're illegally parked on the pavement or something.

ANDRE: If these damned streets were wider, there'd be no need to park on the sidewalk! Shit!

Andre exits.

MERVYN: Not dressed like that! Andre!

MOUSE: I don't believe it. The worst violence and crime in the history of the country and they go around giving parking tickets at night! At night!

MERVYN: Since when do police give parking tickets? Stupid question.

MOUSE: No, traffic police came to get me. The real police are too busy. They say they had a complaint.

MERVYN: The thieves broke into your room, looked around in disgust and phoned the police to complain about your drekky belongings?

MOUSE: A complaint about Andre's new car.

MERVYN: Bet you it came from my neighbors. It's her. She's menopausal and hideous to boot. Called the police once because I had a party here and didn't invite her. I invited the husband. He was quite tempted. Always had my doubts about him. I know what I'll do! I'll make her so terrified, she'll be on the next plane to Perth!

He picks up the phone and dials.

MOUSE: You know the number?

MERVYN: That dishy Canadian hippy used to live there with that feather-brained actress with the fat arse, remember? No, before your time ... Ah, it's ringing! Come on you fascists! Answer. It's her!

Breathes heavily and groans.

Amandla ... amandla ... amandla ... amandla ...

Stops.

She laughed and hung up! The bitch! You know I think it actually turned her on! She's probably fucking the garden boy.

Mouse is hysterical with laughter.

What's wrong with you?

MOUSE: ... you're mad ...

MERVYN: Compared to what?

MOUSE: ... who's going to be frightened of that!

MERVYN: Don't make light of heavy breathers. They can really be a menace!

MOUSE: Obscene phone callers?

MERVYN: No, that's safe sex.

MOUSE: You did it wrong, Mervyn. You should have said: 'Madam, we're going to put a burning tyre round your neck and have a barbeque with your brains!'

Mouse cries with laughter.

MERVYN: God, that's disgusting ...

This makes Mouse laugh even more. He stumbles out in hysteria.

Andre enters.

ANDRE: Is he sick?

MERVYN: That's an understatement!

ANDRE: Have they nothing better to do?

MERVYN: What happened out there? You must've caused a stir.

ANDRE: I was nice to him.

MERVYN: Ah. Afrikaans cop?

ANDRE: Of course, the best of them always are.

MERVYN: Mouse! For God-s sake, are we never going to get out of here!

Andre pours more wine.

Oh shit, look at this hair! You=ll never believe I spent hours fiddling with it, trying to get it to stand up.

ANDRE: Moer!

MERVYN: And what-s wrong with you now?

ANDRE: I=am hungry!

MERVYN: You got a parking ticket, big deal.

ANDRE: Ek is nou wragtag nie lus vir hierdie kak vanaand nie!

MERVYN: I hate it when you go all uptight and Afrikaans and unreasonable!

ANDRE: Wat bedoel jy unreasonable? I just want to eat, drink and be merry C not get a black eye, or a parking fine, or to apologise that I exist!

MERVYN: Here comes the chip on the shoulder! Leave the wine!

ANDRE: So what did the Mouse say about The Burglary?

MERVYN: And don=t change the subject! Even if you don=t like it, I still have the right to say certain things to you. That-s what best friends are for.

ANDRE: And you=ll make some poor retard a wonderful friend one day, Mervyn.

MERVYN: Because I=am sober. And you=re fairly sober, for a change. So cool it on the dop tonight.

ANDRE: I=am just sipping little bits to keep sane.

MERVYN: If you=re tense, take a Mogodon like any normal person. You sip too much. You always get pissed and become loud and political and embarrassing.

ANDRE: Oh, make a phone call, Mervyn. I don=t need the Ten Commandments from you!

MERVYN: We, at least, own the copyright! You drink too much!

ANDRE: I wonder what's really happening out there ...

Sirens outside.

MERVYN: I know, because I don't drink and I watch you fall to pieces nightly and I worry, because I love you and care for you.

ANDRE: Careful I'll cry.

MERVYN: You'll just have an accident one night in your expensive new car and you'll be dead. Andre, just because you're so full of cheap wine, you won't even notice your head come off!

ANDRE: It's so quiet out there you can hear the angels of death beating their wings in time to the requiem ...=

MERVYN: Talk about it, damn it!

ANDRE: Talk about what?

MERVYN: Don't be so cool and monumental!

ANDRE: Talk about what!

MERVYN: Crack a bit, Andre! It's all in the family!

ANDRE: I don't want to talk about my ... what is the word ... Love= ... for ... God, wie? Helmut? My boet?

MERVYN: Me.

ANDRE: You? Loathing for you? For me? Definitely for me. Pick your card.

MERVYN: You see, hairy round the gills, woof woof woof!

ANDRE: Woof woof woof!

MERVYN: You Afrikaners have a wonderful sense of humour, but only when you're amused! You can't bear to take a friendly word of warning! Forget criticism; I mean, who am I to criticise you? One chosen people doesn't criticise another chosen people! I care. I worry. You lie to me.

ANDRE: I tell you nothing.

MERVYN: Exactly. You all pretend: nothing's wrong, nothing's wrong, nothing's wrong ...

ANDRE: No screams, no shots, no nothingY=

MERVYN: You're lonely! I'm lonely! I don't lie, I rub it in! You're getting old, I'm getting old C I don't lie, I rub it out! I bitch about the cost and pay the bill, but I don't

lie! You're so desperate to be loved, Andre, you'll soon just be that charmless bodiless voice on the radio, giving false truth to even more lies!

ANDRE: That chapter is closed!

MERVYN: You're a professional liar!

ANDRE: Ja, ek is 'n Afrikaner!

MERVYN: Once in our lives together, we laughed a lot, you remember Andre?

ANDRE: Nee.

MERVYN: We laughed at each other, with each other.

ANDRE: Is dit?

MERVYN: Why don't we notice those things any more, Andre?

ANDRE: Because those things just aren't funny any more.

MERVYN: No? But other people still laugh. Something must be funny somewhere, mustn't it?

ANDRE: Black humour?

MERVYN: Must we also first go mad to be able to laugh again?

Mouse enters, crying.

Ah ha! No more sick little jokes about disgusting things? Like my bobba always said in Poland: 'Mein kind', she'd say, 'after the big laugh always comes the big tear'!

MOUSE: They took everything I've saved ...

ANDRE: Your deposit? You didn't keep your money in a bank?

MOUSE: Someone said the banks might collapse, so I took it all out last week and hid it in my room ...

MERVYN: I don't believe it! Where did you hide it?

MOUSE: Under the mattress ...

MERVYN: You should've hidden it in your underpants! No one would've looked there!

ANDRE: But is your passport safe?

Mouse holds it up. Andre takes it and puts it in the sideboard drawer. He stares into the

drawer as:

MERVYN: My bobba knew writing on the wall when she saw it. She'd laugh today, let me tell you.

ANDRE: Mervyn, where do you keep your gun?

MERVYN: What?

ANDRE: Your gun.

MERVYN: Next to my bed, why?

Andre shakes his head and closes the drawer.

My grandmother was an incredible person, let me tell you. Of course, sadly, I never knew her. She was killed by the Nazis. My father's cousin was murdered by the SS. My father's oldest sister was massacred by the Russians. My second cousin on my mother's side was accidentally executed by the Americans. My family has in turn been killed by everyone and here I am: Mervyn the Masugana, with as his best friends a Boer and a Shiksa! Where? The southern tip of nowhere. Why? Because it's heaven and it's mine and I love it and who took everything?

MOUSE: The burglars. My shampoo, the suitcase which was real leather, my alarm clock, those shoes I got last month at the sale ...

MERVYN: Yes yes yes, well go and find something in my room. We must leave now!

MOUSE: I don't want to go ...

MERVYN: What was that?

ANDRE: What did the police say? Start from the beginning, Mouse ...

MOUSE: They suspect a coloured gang or gangs. They say this afternoon riot police and Army kids chased a whole lot of coloured skollies up into this area. It's all political you know, Andre. If I'd been in the room, I'm sure they would've killed me!

MERVYN: Mmm, put a tyre round your neck and barbequed your brains?

MOUSE: I'm sorry I said that ...

ANDRE: But aren't you on their side, Mouse? Always sticking up for the communists and the radicals.

MOUSE: Oh, Andre ...

ANDRE: What happened to law and order, God! Now any poephol can kill and old lady

and call it political, and get away with it!

MOUSE: The traffic cop said he would say it was political unrest and asked if I was insured for riot cover.

MERVYN: And are you? Stupid question I know ...

MOUSE: What's riot cover for?

MERVYN: Anything in this country that doesn't end with a climax.

MOUSE: Riot cover. I don't know ...

MERVYN: What was the policeman's name? The one you spoke to?

MOUSE: He was a traffic cop.

MERVYN: Yes yes yes, but you said the police spoke to you as well!

MOUSE: The traffic cop phoned the police, yes.

MERVYN: Where was he stationed?

MOUSE: I don't know.

MERVYN: What do you mean you don't know? Are you insured against riot loss or aren't you?

MOUSE: I don't know ...

MERVYN: You don't know. Didn't I say let my broker handle your affairs? Didn't I say give me your savings to invest on an on-call basis at 22%?

ANDRE: Waar 22%?

MOUSE: I didn't want to be a burden, Mervyn. I'm old enough to handle my own affairs.

MERVYN: Handle your own affairs? You've got no damned affairs left to handle! At least with me they would've been in good hands!

ANDRE: A debatable point.

MERVYN: And you stay out of this! What have you been doing that's so constructive? Mouse, how did they get in?

MOUSE: I don't know ...

MERVYN: Ask a silly question ... [*dials*] I hate being forced to use my contacts. But I will, seeing as you don't have clue how to sort this shit out. Dear God, help us all ...

[into phone] Hello Simonstown? Listen my dear, can I speak to Konstabel ... I can't remember his surname ... I think his name is Gert ... or is it Gary? No, Gert. He's blonde, big ... big. Yes, it's very important.
[to Mouse] You don't know. If you want to live like a punk, this is what you should expect!

MOUSE: I'm not living like a punk ...

MERVYN: Shhh ... Hello Gert skattie, dis Mervyn. Listen, we've just had a terrible burglary down the road, and my dear, we know it's the skollies and they're all over the place and ... hey? Oh okay okay, I'll hang on.
[to Andre] They told me to hang on. What's the time?

ANDRE: We've lost the table.

MERVYN: For God's sake, Mouse, go into my room and look in the side cupboard for something nice to wear. You can't go to Heaven dressed like a ...

ANDRE: Punk.

MOUSE: Andre, I don't want to go.

MERVYN: You're all making too much noise, I can't hear a word!
[into phone] Hello? Yes? I'm holding on for Konstabel Gert ... oh yes, that's his name. Sersant Andries ... of course, he knows me as a friend ... of course, it's urgent! All hell's breaking loose up here! Okay okay I'll wait!
[sighs]
[to Mouse] Mouse, there's a nice kimono thing I got from those Japanese fashion people ...
[into phone] Yes, I'm still here ... What's happening in Simonstown, for God's sake? The Second Coming?
[to Mouse] Mouse, don't sit there looking like a Muppet! Help me make this night a success! At the moment it's death C death!
[into phone] No, no, no one's dead, we've just had a burglary. Yes, we've seen some traffic cop from Town ... well, it's a long story. The police seem to be too busy. Oh, are you? I'm sure you are, but this boy has lost everything. Passport, money, gold watch ... Listen, you rude little man, what do I pay taxes for? Oh, but ... yes ... but ... okay okay okay bye!

Hangs up the phone.

They say my friend is out on a call. It's very busy. In Simonstown.

ANDRE: Useful contacts you have.

MERVYN: Sersant Andries whats-his-name has a father who knows the Minister.

ANDRE: Be still my beating heart ...

MOUSE: Everybody's on standby ...

MERVYN: Simonstown? Jesus, what could be happening there that's more important?

MOUSE: Mervyn? Andre? I'm sorry, I just can't face a fancy dress party tonight, really ...

ANDRE: We quite understand, Mousie ...

MERVYN: Nonsense! You're both being menstrual about tonight! Tonight has been booked for weeks!

MOUSE: But ...

MERVYN: Tonight is Christmas! Tonight is Easter! Tonight is The End of The World!

ANDRE: And we're going to have a party?

MERVYN: You're damned right! So get your arse in there and find yourself a suitable skin and smile! [*he pushes Mouse out*] Some help you've been.

ANDRE: But I'm an uptight useless alcoholic, remember?

MERVYN: Don't tempt the Devil ...

A knock at the kitchen door.

Now what the hell is this? No thank you, I already gave!

The door opens and William appears.

WILLIAM: Evening. You must be Mervyn?

MERVYN: Hey?

ANDRE: O Andre, maak toe die ore!

WILLIAM: I've come for my bag.

MERVYN: Andre, it's for you.

ANDRE: Just whistle God Save the Queen when you've finished.

Exits with wink.

MERVYN: Wait, Andre! Damn it! Look, you've got the wrong house. Does this look like Old Sarah's Brothel? Don't answer ...

WILLIAM: I wouldn't know the answer.

MERVYN: Oh, quick too? What do you want? I'm on my way out. To a party, in case

you thought I usually dress like this.

WILLIAM: Oh, now I feel better. You don't remember me then?

MERVYN: Eh ... should I?

WILLIAM: No, it was some years ago.

MERVYN: Some years ago?

WILLIAM: When I was here.

MERVYN: Oh? Well, since then I've had a few other boys in to fix the house. Plumbers and painters and electricians and carpenters and TV men and mechanics and electricians ...

WILLIAM: And a plasterer that ripped you off. You hadn't done all this when I was here last.

MERVYN: Did I carry you in my arms? You must've been five years old.

WILLIAM: Six. I've always wanted to come up here and have a look, but I've never had the chance, you know.

MERVYN: Fancy that.

WILLIAM: Ja. Who's next door?

MERVYN: Pigs. Want a job there?

WILLIAM: Does the crack go through to their side?

MERVYN: The thought keeps me awake all night, but you really must forgive me. I have to drag myself away now, I'm so sorry, Goodbye.

WILLIAM: You got a message from Mrs Peters?

MERVYN: Mrs Peters?

WILLIAM: She was hurt? I can't get through to her house. The phones must be down.

MERVYN: You're not looking for Old Sarah's whorehouse?

WILLIAM: Oh, is she here too?

MERVYN: Wait now. You're not looking for a job?

WILLIAM: On a Saturday night?

MERVYN: I don't put anything past you people.

WILLIAM: Us coloureds, you mean?

MERVYN: Oh please! Lighten up. I've got nothing against coloureds. Some of my best friends ...

WILLIAM: Are blacks?

MERVYN: ... sleep with blacks. And coloureds. Now, if you're such an intimate friends of Mrs Peters, maybe you can tell her that I need her here pronto Monday morning.

WILLIAM: She gets up at 4 o'clock to be here for you at seven.

MERVYN: That's what she gets paid for. I have an important luncheon on the patio and it looks a mess!

WILLIAM: Just needs a sweep with a good broom.

MERVYN: You seem to know a lot about my house?

WILLIAM: No, not everything. What's through there?

MERVYN: Rooms.

WILLIAM: Bedroom?

MERVYN: Yes.

WILLIAM: Nice.

MERVYN: Yes. Where I sleep.

WILLIAM: Nice.

MERVYN: Very seductive, very exotic. No windows, teak coffin on crushed velvet; you know, the very latest ozone-friendly design. I keep a bottle of Perrier filled with the best blood at body temperature. Wonderful for hangovers.

WILLIAM: You're funny,

MERVYN: And you're a wonderful audience. It's just that we're on our way out, okay? Maybe you can pop round some other time?

WILLIAM: You want to offer me a job?

MERVYN: Depends on what you do best. And next time, come to the front door. I'm not ashamed of receiving coloureds.

WILLIAM: Gosh thanks hey.

William goes to the door and tugs at the chain.

Is this all the security you have ...

MERVYN: Hey?

WILLIAM: No good. Okay bye.

MERVYN: No, wait a minute ...

WILLIAM: Oh, by the way, thanks for keeping Rambo locked up.

William exits.

MERVYN: Rambo? What the hell is going on here?

Andre enters ready to go, in his wig and all.

ANDRE: What did he want?

MERVYN: My hand in marriage. I had this chain put on only last month!

ANDRE: I can't make it a late night. I have to prepare my programme tomorrow; we record on Monday.

MERVYN: Jesus Christ!

ANDRE: Wat is dit?

MERVYN: That little fucker! Do you know, I think he was planning to rob me!

ANDRE: Oh come on!

MERVYN: No, he was taking a chance, first trying the door and then giving me all that pathetic spiel about Mrs Peters.

ANDRE: I wouldn't worry if he knows Mrs Peters ...

MERVYN: That little skollie would've walked into my house and just helped himself to all my things! Like they did to Mouse!

ANDRE: Nonsense, we're all here!

MERVYN: So, he'd bang us on the head and rob and rape and plunder ...

ANDRE: Wishful thinking.

MERVYN: ... damn this country!

ANDRE: You've got your gun, Mervyn ...

Andre takes the gun out of the drawer in the sideboard.

MERVYN: Let me see that ...

ANDRE: It's loaded ... no, it's been used ... who did you shoot with this thing?

MERVYN: That's not mine. [*studies it*] I think it belongs to one of the twins. They always come to bed with their guns strapped to their thighs. Very confusing.

ANDRE: I can imagine. But why have the twins got guns at their age, for God's sake!

MERVYN: Why does the sun rise?

ANDRE: Well, I'm not going to hang around to watch it!

MERVYN: Don't bellow, I heard you!

ANDRE: Frankly, I don't feel like it.

MERVYN: You don't feel like it?

ANDRE: No, I'd much rather go home and watch a video.

MERVYN: Really, you'd rather go home and have a wank?

ANDRE: Yes, frankly.

MERVYN: Yes, very frank. And Mouse?

ANDRE: I think he should come and spend the weekend with me at home.

MERVYN: Oh how cosy. And what about me?

ANDRE: Hey?

MERVYN: Don't hay me, you bitch! Hay is what horses eat. What about me!

ANDRE: Mervyn ...

MERVYN: I want to go out. I need to go out ...

ANDRE: OK, just not too late!

MERVYN: Mervyn exists!

ANDRE: All right!

MERVYN: Mervyn exists!!!!

ANDRE: Your one eye looks paralysed!

MERVYN: I've just had a stroke! Damn these fucking eyelashes! What am I doing in all this camouflage. When will the world be ready to accept me as I am, warts and all! Now where's that ... f ... unmentionable glue! Mouse!!!

Mouse enters wearing a kaftan.

MOUSE: I feel like an Oriental Plaza.

MERVYN: Well, you won't find one in this house.

ANDRE: My God, Muis, jy lyk mooi!

MERVYN: Oh nonsense, ek lyk mooi. Now I'm just getting some eyelash glue. No one move. I have this terrible feeling you'll both run away and leave me to face it on my own. It's going to be a happy night. I can't do it on my own!

Mervyn exits.

ANDRE: You look amazing.

MOUSE: Really?

ANDRE: Ja.

MOUSE: Dankie.

ANDRE: Plesier. [*pause*] So what else did they take?

MOUSE: Everything: my writing paper, my aftershave, my spare pair of glasses ... [*he suddenly laughs*] Cleaned out.

ANDRE: You okay?

MOUSE: That's the funny thing, Andre. Yes I'm okay. I can still walk and talk and smile and see. I'm not as attached to things as you and Mervyn.

ANDRE: No, that attachment only comes when you can afford it. [*pours wine*] Sayonara.

Mervyn enters, ready.

MERVYN: Come on, come on, we're terribly late! Fridge closed, door locked, chain on ... fucking useless chain! Stove off, oven off, microwave off, phone off ... will you two bitches get out of here, we'll lose the table. Mouse, is Heaven licenced?

MOUSE: I don't know.

MERVYN: You don't know? Who knows?

ANDRE: Yes, if you're prepared to pay.

MERVYN: Then bring the red wine.

ANDRE: It's in my tummy.

MERVYN: All of it? Alcoholic queen!

MOUSE: There's some semi-sweet in the fridge ...

MERVYN: It gives me pimples! But don't worry, men, I've found a cure: I'll wear a mask! Now Mervyn, you sweet thing, have you done everything? Yes, I'll leave suicide for later. Cheer up, my faithful friends, the night is but a teenager. What's this waste?

ANDRE: Dregs.

MERVYN: Very suitable. I drink to three of the nicest girls I know. Lachaim! And now, let's go and kick the world up its arse!

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

Later that night.

Andre and Mouse are in the kitchen. Andre is drinking, pacing, testy. He is still in full drag.

ANDRE: Is this his idea of a joke?

MOUSE: They say the roadblocks are for our own protection.

ANDRE: So now one can't even move about one's own city!

MOUSE: It's to search for illegal weapons.

ANDRE: No one looked in my handbag!

He grabs at his crotch, glares at Mouse.

MOUSE: I still think we could've got into that nice Indian place. We didn't have to come home.

ANDRE: Us in an Indian restaurant dressed like this, with a raison each between the eyes?

MOUSE: It was just an idea.

Pause.

ANDRE: What are people doing in expensive restaurants feasting and boozing and having such a good time in the middle of the worst unrest since the last time?

MOUSE: He's going to blame me.

ANDRE: It's disgusting!

MOUSE: I can't help being burgled.

ANDRE: They even seem to have been celebrating something.

MOUSE: It is Saturday night, Andre ...

Pause.

ANDRE: Has anyone ever told Mervyn what a kak place this is?

MOUSE: It won a prize in *Style magazine*.

ANDRE: And how much does he pay for the honour? R3000 a month?

MOUSE: That's what you pay on your new car.

ANDRE: No one was thrown out of my car to make room for me!

MOUSE: I want to go home.

ANDRE: What home? You don't have a home!

Mervyn enters, changed into his casual clothes.

MERVYN: So we lost the table; so big deal! It's not the end of the world! We'll just never go there again, that's for sure. Fuck Heaven!

ANDRE: I knew this would happen.

MERVYN: Oh, my clairvoyant friend! If you had any real clout, you could've got out of the car and talked those police into letting us through their roadblock, instead of letting us waste an hour breathing exhaust fumes!

ANDRE: I said: don't take the Main Road ...

MOUSE: Only because if we broke down, we'd not be seen in the Main Road dressed like this ...

ANDRE: God, moenie jy nou begin met jou ...

MERVYN: Yes, yes, blame Mervyn for everything! You two have been enough of a pain in the arse all night, so I'll be relieved to take the blame for my party. Well, sit down and shut up, we've only just started. Who's got money?

MOUSE: They took all my ...

MERVYN: I've only got my plastic and the chequebooks. Come on, who's got real money?

ANDRE: In my sak.

MERVYN: I'll go get us some Chinese takeaways down the road. We all love Chinese food, don't we? Of course we do. And you don't have to look so murderous, Andre old Boer. You're stuck with me tonight, so make the best of a bad job. And don't either of you move! I'll be back before the blacks take over!

Mervyn exits. Pause. Andre pours more wine.

ANDRE: Wil jy hê?

MOUSE: No.

ANDRE: Wat wil jy hê?

MOUSE: Ek is nie dors.

ANDRE: Wat wil jy hê, Muis!

MOUSE: Oh, hê. I don't know: a friend, a home, a life. Like you.

ANDRE: No.

MOUSE: No?

ANDRE: No. Friend, home, life: consolation prize. I want everything, at any cost.

MOUSE: I don't like you.

ANDRE: Nor do I. Can't you wear a belt or something? You look pregnant.

MOUSE: Don't worry, I'm not. I was robbed, not raped!

The phone rings.

ANDRE: How come Mervyn's always alone if that phone never stops ringing? Maybe he's phoning himself from the corner tickey box just to impress us.

MOUSE: Shame. Shouldn't we answer it?

ANDRE: You answer it. You've made a career out of taking messages.

MOUSE: I'm not on the switchboard any more, Andre. I now take the scenic tours.

ANDRE: Sorry.

Mouse picks up the phone.

MOUSE: Hello? 443.0809? No, he's not here. Oh, yes, hold on please. Andre, it's for you.

Hands phone to Andre.

ANDRE: Suicides Unanimous? O, Mammie. Nee Mammie, ek is okay. Nee, Mammie, ek is nie dronk nie! Net ek en Mervyn en die Muis! Ons was op pad uit maar ... ag, dis 'n lang storie. Ons is nou hier. Ek het gedink ons het dit klaar bespeek, Mammie. Tannie Sybil is mos daar. Mammie, dis my aand af! Ek weet dis sy verjaarsdag en my plek is daar by Mammie, maar ek is nou hier, so asseblief ... hello? Fok-it ma!

He puts down the phone. Pause.

It's my brother's birthday today.

MOUSE: I know.

ANDRE: So there.

MOUSE: I'm sorry.

ANDRE: Why?

MOUSE: He's dead. It's different when you're dead.

ANDRE: Is it?

Pause.

I want nothing more than anyone else. Is that asking too much? And when I drive around Town after midnight, looking at all the young men and brown men and gay men and shit, I always end up driving home alone, and I ask myself: Hey Andre? Wat's verkeerd met jou? Why don't you have someone nice to love you like everyone else? That's all I want, Mousie. The impossible. The ordinary. We're not ordinary, you know, you and me and Mervyn. We're the last of the Great Blind ... Nothings! Here, now, with what's falling apart around us, so does it really matter? With your head up your own arse, you can dance for a long time before you hear them laughing at you.

Sings and dances.

Siembaba mama se kindjie ...
Draai sy nek om
gooi hom in die sloot
trap op sy kop ...

Takes a cigarette from Mervyn's box.

Matches?

Mouse has none.

Hey Muis, where's that lighter I gave you for your birthday? Don't tell me you lost it?

MOUSE: It was in my jewelry box, where I kept my special things. How can you think I lost it?

ANDRE: You're supposed to use a lighter, Mouse, not keep it hidden for your old age.

MOUSE: Well, I don't smoke.

ANDRE: Oh. Hoe laat is dit?

MOUSE: Laat.

ANDRE: So the fuckers even took your lighter? It cost a fortune!

MOUSE: I'm sorry, Andre.

ANDRE: Ja, toemaar. People shouldn't steal.

MOUSE: Maybe they need my things more than I do.

ANDRE: Now you're going to become a nun?

MOUSE: No. It just scares me that some stranger can so easily get into my life without me knowing.

ANDRE: Some people call it marriage. Toemaar jong, now you can just fax Daddykins for a cheque!

MOUSE: That's not nice, Andre.

ANDRE: But I'm not a Nice Andre.

MOUSE: I've never run to my father for help.

ANDRE: Then you're a fool.

MOUSE: I don't think so.

ANDRE: Ek gaan nou loop.

Andre starts changing his clothes.

MOUSE: Andre, you can't drive in your state.

ANDRE: Ek is siek en sat vir al hierdie moffie kak. I feel like a cunt sitting around here like this, talking to you. Jesus! Tell Mervyn our house was burnt down by the AWB or something. I better take the gun ...

MOUSE: Where will you go?

ANDRE: I don't know ... No, I've just remembered I was invited out ... that's right, a nice young man, slightly older than me. He has prospects and manners and money. He can talk about all sorts of things, like me and my work and my life: the ultimate companion. I'm going to meet him now. I said I'd come anyway, because I knew tonight would be a flop!

MOUSE: Let me come with you?

ANDRE: Where to?

MOUSE: Do you think I'm enjoying myself?

ANDRE: Oh yes, we're all suffering and we love it!

MOUSE: Please let's go somewhere where we can talk.

ANDRE: I don't want to talk to you, Mouse. You're a neurotic. You get burgled. You'll probably get murdered one day. You have no secrets, no success, no opinions. You're a sponge, my diertjie, a drain on the brain. And you're not even pretty. And about as sexy as a stuk droëwors. I'd rather talk to myself.

MOUSE: Or one of your Burg Street rent boys?

ANDRE: Rent-a-death? At least ›Wat dink jy van my fokkin Mercedes= usually leads to something. I can't sleep with you. I can't love you.

MOUSE: You've never tried to love me.

ANDRE: You're just not my type, little Mouse. Your brand of wild homosexual passion don't happen among us Boere Volk. One is so puur soos suiwer stront!

MOUSE: You've had too much to drink and you're saying things we'll all regret, Andre.

ANDRE: Too late ...

The phone rings again.

Can you believe it? Imagine if they ever bugged Mervyn's phones, they'd never have time to go to the lavatory! Hey, maybe that's a call from Casualty. Some sexy young medic with Mervyn's gold chain between his fingers, still sticky with his blood.

Andre picks up the phone.

Next of kin's not home! Gooi maar vir Mervyn weg!

He hangs up the phone.

Okay okay, I'll stay ›til the bitch gets back, all right! But what do I drink! What do I do!

MOUSE: Try dropping dead!

Mouse exits.

Andre opens the sideboard drawer and looks for the gun. He pulls out all the contents of the drawer in the process, making a mess.

The gun is gone.

Mervyn is heard in the passage offstage and enters.

MERVYN: Party! Party! Pull up your knickers, Mother's home! Enough noodles to kill Pavarotti!

The phone rings.

Mervyn sees the mess on the floor.

Jesus Christ, what's been happening here? Well, answer that bloody phone, for God's sake! What do you think I invited you here for? Company? Like hell! Sweet and sour pork, chicken chop suey and a nice mushy slushy vegetarian thing for the Rodent. I said answer the phone!

ANDRE: Answer the phone yourself!

MERVYN: Oh me, oh my, but we are on good form tonight! What a joy to have around! Oh bugger off Boer, I don't need you! I'm having a wonderful time, so don't piss on my picnic! Go home, go to hell, do anything, just don't sit around my kitchen looking so tragically monumental, self-indulgent cow!

Mervyn picks up the phone and speaks in an Irish accent.

You've got the wrong number. We're all nuns and we aren't supposed to do that sort of thing. Goodbye.

He puts down the phone.

I think that was your Ma looking for you! Right, you like sweet and sour? I've got some spring rolls C >Spring lolls=? If you can't do it, you might as well eat it! God, you smell of death! And cheap wine!

ANDRE: Your cheap wine!

MERVYN: Now, where the hell is Mouse? Mouse! Don't tell me he's run away, don't tell me!

ANDRE: It smells like garbage!

MERVYN: Well, it's not garbage, it's Chinese. Unless they also rate as rubbish in your all-white mastermind? Tell me, who do you lot like? You hate the Jews, the Catholics, the Blacks, the Yellows, the Browns, the Reds. There's no one left. You've chased them all away and now you're alone, old Boer, so shut up and eat your chicken soup! Mouse!

Mouse enters in a dressing gown.

MOUSE: I don't feel well. Do you have something ...

MERVYN: A pelvic massage? Easy, look in my phone book under Wank. There's a lovely pederast in Woodstock!

Mouse cries.

Oh, for heaven's sake!

ANDRE: God!

Andre exits.

MERVYN: And don't you blaspheme in my house! You fucking fascist! Why is everyone behaving like pigs! It's not Xmas! Okay Mousie, I'm sorry, I'm also tense. Come now, stop the tears, you'll rust the gold in your little chain. What do you want? A pill? Do you have a headache? Mouse?

He takes down the medical kit.

Here, a pill for each season. What's sore? The head? Take one of these ... no, these are for ... a dog? I don't have a dog! Ag, what the hell, it'll make your bark worse than your bite. Here's one for ... piles. Oops, have you got piletjies, Mousie? Ask a silly question. Gastroenteritis ... have you been sick? Oh sis Mouse, I can smell it! You've been sick! Listen, you didn't vomit all over the bathroom, did you? Mrs Peters isn't coming in 'til Monday! Know what your problem is, you don't eat. Listen to me ... I know. What do you expect when you always nibble at leaves like a rabbit, you get sick. If rabbits just ate ice cream, they'd also get sick. Here's a nice spring roll, Eat it. Go on; I won't stop yakking 'til I see you eat properly. Eat the fucking roll, Mouse. It's okay, no meat, I specially asked. There, nice hey? Hey? Want some sweet and sour pork ... oh no, no pork. Some of this? Ugh, what is this kak? Oh, it's the nice vegetarian thing I got specially for you. Now eat! You'll feel better, I promise.

Pause. Mouse chews listlessly.

What went wrong for God's sake? It was so simple. A little dinner for three in Heaven. Simple.

MOUSE: Sorry ...

MERVYN: Ja ja sorry sorry, and when do I get my chance? You all throw tantrums and bitch and snot and vomit and then say sorry and forget about it, but what about me? When do I have my moment? I'm not a saint: I also need to explode.

Mouse laughs.

All right, you'll choke to death; rather cut your wrists.

Andre enters.

Look what's back! Coming to apologise? I thought being a New Afrikaner mean never having to say: 'I'm sorry Nelson'!

Andre picks up the phone and dials.

ANDRE: Hello? Luitenant van Heerden asseblief. Ja, natuurlik is dit belangrik.

MERVYN: Police? I have my special police uniform in the side cupboard, if that's what you fancy.

ANDRE: Hello Jan? My kar is gesteel ... Andre. Hier bo in Loaderstraat. Ja. Jan ek weet dis Saterdagand in die Kaap, maar dis my nuwe Mercedes! Maar dis mos die Riot Squad se probleem!

MERVYN: Andre, what's going on?

ANDRE: Nee Jan, kom nou! Of sal ek liewers direk vir my Oom bel? Goed.

Andre hangs up the phone.

MERVYN: What was that all about!

ANDRE: If you're that interested, learn the language!

Andre exits. Mervyn follows.

MERVYN: What about the Riot Squad? Is something happening? Andre!

Mouse is left alone in the kitchen. He waits for a moment, checks that no one is looking, and then he digs into the pork with his fingers.

William enters from the house, where he has been all along.

Mouse gets a fright when he sees William.

MOUSE: Oh ...

WILLIAM: Shhh! Don't say a word!

MOUSE: Don't you say a word either!

WILLIAM: Why?

MOUSE: I'm a vegetarian eating meat! What's happening outside?

WILLIAM: It seems your friend's Mercedes was stolen.

MOUSE: You'd better go ... but ... what are you doing in here?

Pause.

Were you in the house all the time?

WILLIAM: You must believe me. I'm William Peters.

MOUSE: Who?

WILLIAM: Mrs Peters is my mother.

MOUSE: Oh.

WILLIAM: I came this morning while she was working here. I gave her something to keep for me. I just came back for it, that's all.

MOUSE: How did you get into the house?

WILLIAM: It's okay now. I got what I came for.

He holds up the carrier bag with the vegetables.

MOUSE: Were you being chased by the police?

WILLIAM: We call it jogging. Here, don't leave this lying around.

He hands Mouse his passport. Mouse opens the sideboard drawer.

MOUSE: The gun! You took the gun!

WILLIAM: It doesn't belong to me ...

MOUSE: Here they come ... go away ... go ...

Mouse pushed William to the door, but the safety chain is on.

Oh God, they'll get the police if they find you here! Hide!

Mouse hides William. Andre enters, followed by Mervyn.

MERVYN: ... but Andre, just locking things doesn't help! I've told you before. It's okay for the insurance, but they get into anything nowadays! Nothing is safe! Now he's blaming me!

ANDRE: I'm not blaming you!

MERVYN: You make me feel it's my fault!

ANDRE: My fault for coming here tonight! Shit!

MOUSE: And that's a ten rand fine.

They look at him. Mouse points to the Tin.

You said a swear word. Tin.

MERVYN: Fuck the Tin, Mouse! How can I help it? Cars get stolen all the time. It's the coloureds! They steal everything!

MOUSE: Let's go and sit inside?

MERVYN: And who has a car like that in this present political climate anyway? The country's economy has gone down the toilet and still you lot get glossier cars every year.

ANDRE: It's called Going Out in Style.

MERVYN: That's asking for trouble. There is no more punishment for crime. These kids are like viruses. They get into anything they fancy!

MOUSE: Leave the coloureds out of this please.

MERVYN: Oh hello. And whose side are you on?

MOUSE: Isn't there something nice on the TV in the lounge ...

MERVYN: After what they put you through this morning, nearly blinded by teargas, nearly blown to bits by bombs, nearly massacred, definitely robbed, now you take their side?

MOUSE: It's not always coloureds who steal ...

MERVYN: So who steals around here? The whites? What for, we've got everything already!

MOUSE: You stole this house from the coloureds.

MERVYN: Oh, don't start the bleeding heart with me again! I didn't make the laws around here. It's not my fault I'm white!

ANDRE: Calm down, Mervyn. Back off, Mouse. Look, Jan said he'd be up here as soon as the pressure is off.

MERVYN: You mean by 1999?

MOUSE: You mean that Jan van Heerden who took us mountain climbing that weekend?

ANDRE: I thought you gave him the eye, Mouse.

MOUSE: He's a policeman ...

MERVYN: >Y.as soon as the pressure is off=? God! A few petrol bombs and burning tyres and bodies on the railway lines and they call it Violence? Shame! You should've been in Poland in the ghetto in Warsaw!

ANDRE: Well I wasn't!

MERVYN: Obviously! Now it's all cold! Where are the fucking plates!

MOUSE: I'll get them ...

He is very aware of William in his hiding place.

ANDRE: But tell us more, Mervyn.

MERVYN: About what?

ANDRE: Your pre-natal Polish Connection.

MERVYN: It's too painful. Mouse, what are you doing?

MOUSE: Getting the fucking plates ...

ANDRE: Then suffer a bit, Mervyn. Tell me again about the horrors, the atrocities. Was your mother ever raped?

MERVYN: Hey?

ANDRE: In that Warsaw ghetto? Raped: by ... who were they now?

MOUSE: Nazis, Russians, Allies, Americans. Can't we go and eat inside?

MERVYN: Look, it might be a joke to you, but it's my life! I don't need to prove anything! Here's a spring roll!

Mervyn throws a spring roll at Andre.

MOUSE: No, Mervyn, if you're going to start throwing good food around ...

ANDRE: And what about the inhuman suffering, Mervyn? The Warsaw Ghetto overcrowded and stinking? People forcibly removed from their homes and transported to camps of tin shacks and no water or warmth?

MERVYN: So you've seen *Sophie's Choice*, big deal!

ANDRE: No, I've just driven our maid home a few times.

MERVYN: What are you getting at?

ANDRE: You and me, Mervyn: same drum, same tune, except here you're the one who says: >But I swear I didn't know what was happening, I swear, as true's God!-

MERVYN: Mouse, come and eat something before I really start throwing it around!

MOUSE: I'm not hungry ...

MERVYN: God, you make me sick! Both of you! You bore me to death!

ANDRE: Boredom, our national disease! The symptoms are all the good things in life without the need to pay for them in blood! I think I caught the virus from you, because here I am again spending valuable time in order to forget, in case I look down and see my real face reflected in the pools of blood at my feet. At least in the good old bad old days of boere politics, there was something to live for, eh Mouse? Such fun playing dodge the purple water and get home in time to watch it all again on TV. God, all you had to do was wear an illegal T-shirt and get locked up without trial, as an investment for future international martyrdom. But that chapter is now closed!

Andre-s drinking fires up his passions.

So here we are, relics of a bygone barbarian age, dying pathetically of boredom. Life we shun because we've never been taught how to live it decently. Rather hide behind our armour: God, degrees, debts, investments, because that's the reality of survival. The colour of our money is now our sex, and the trappings of fear our appeal!

MERVYN: Welcome to the Club, Andre!

ANDRE: But the death-defying difference between me and you, is that me and mine went through it all here, and stuck to it, and fought for it, and even changed it before going rotten, while you and yours went through it somewhere else and lost and ran. But there's still a lot of room left in our laager, Mervyn, if you can bear the smell. So welcome to the Club!

MERVYN: You're drunk!

ANDRE: But now that you've both got rich and fat on the evil laws of my land, remember that yesterday, because of me and mine, you two also had a convenient soap box to stand on, and tomorrow, without me and mine, where would you be? Back in a ghetto behind barbed wire? And somehow I don't see you taking that last train to Manenberg with a smile on your face. So cheers, meide! I drink to us and what's left of our orange, white and blue heaven. Let's enjoy it while it lasts: very quietly.

MERVYN: You're drunk!

ANDRE: I ... eh

He looks ill.

MOUSE: I think he's going to be sick, Mervyn ...

MERVYN: Andre!

Andre recovers.

ANDRE: Who's sick.

He recites a familiar routine.

➤Paradise is closing down, my friend, and only soldiers and police and one frightened voter pitched up for the Final Sale, locking up and cocking guns.
➤And in the only sunbeam somewhere on the sand, lies a small child with a bullet in his head and a stone in his hand.
➤It's so quiet out there you can hear the angels of death beating their wings in time to the requiem.
➤But the sun is gone forever.
➤And the birds will cry until they die in the dark.
➤And the empty landscape ... and the empty landscape ...

MERVYN: ➤And the empty fucking landscape of shame and anger colours the soil red and the sky black! =

Okay Andre, go in there and wash your face!

MOUSE: Here it comes, Mervyn ...

MERVYN: Not in here! Bathroom, Andre. Bathroom!!!!

Andre exits and is sick off.

Lift the toilet seat ... Oh shit! I won't have him staying over here in that state. Andre always trots out the chip on his shoulder and then stands on his political soapbox and talks utter kak!

MOUSE: It's always usually over after his poem, Mervyn.

MERVYN: Oh please, after that fucking poem he starts on me! Criticises my business, the way I've redone the house. Thanks a lot. I don't need that in my life. Go on, take him home with you. The party's over.

MOUSE: I don't have place for him.

MERVYN: Then make place for him. He's not staying here!

MOUSE: Let him take your car ...

MERVYN: Nobody takes my car. I've worked damn hard for my car and my clothes and my security. I don't have a rich daddy, or a dead hero's military pension, or a black skin. You can take that sleeping bag what's-his-name left here. I don't want it.

MOUSE: But Mervyn, I've no space ...

MERVYN: Then sleep in the same bed! God, Andre's not that desperate to fuck you!

MOUSE: Don't be disgusting!

MERVYN: And put on some trousers! I hate sniveling drag queens sitting around in dressing gowns! Go on, behave like a man! Don't say I don't care about my friends. And pull yourself together, Mouse, you're the one who's supposed to be young and attractive. Get out!

Mouse is pushed out.

Oh God, I hate this place. I think I'll move.

Mervyn sits. The silence is overpowering. He picks up the phone and dials.

Hello? Hello! Is that Freddie? This line is terrible ... hello, Freddie? It's Mervyn! What? Damn ... Mervyn! Ah, that's better ... terrible line, typical, my dear. Who's that? Jeremy? Do I know you? Mervyn. You know me? Oh, has he? What did he say about me? Listen, I'm over sixteen ... twenty-two, swear to God! What did Freddie say? Okay, you don't have to tell me if you don't want to. Where is the bastard! Oh ... oh yes, he told me. With ... eh ... what's-her-name? Ivan? My God, has he gone gay at last? Gay! Oh, never mind. No, don't say I phoned.

During this William comes out of his hiding place and edges towards the door unseen by Mervyn.

Listen, Jeremy ... That's a nice name. I said, Jeremy is a nice name. You must be nice with a name like that. Ja ja, flattery will get me everywhere. Me? Nothing, just sitting around. And you? Want to come around? Loader Street. Yes, come round and we can ... hey? Did he tell you that? Yes, I've got some here ... is that what turns you on? Oh. No. Oh. No, no, it's okay, fuck off and enjoy yourself, you little prick!

Mervyn slams down the phone.

Oh no, why do you do that ... why do you always do that!

He turns and sees William.

How the hell did you get in!

WILLIAM: I was here earlier ...

MERVYN: Andre!

WILLIAM: No, it's okay, really ...

MERVYN: Mouse!

WILLIAM: You said come to the front door. You said you weren't ashamed of receiving coloureds. Isn't that what you said?

Pause.

MERVYN: What do you want here?

WILLIAM: I came earlier. I talked to you, remember?

MERVYN: Yes, yes, but I don't know you.

WILLIAM: But we talked.

MERVYN: What's that got to do with it?

Pause.

WILLIAM: I left my bag of greens here.

MERVYN: What?

WILLIAM: These carrots and things.

MERVYN: Is that why you came back?

WILLIAM: I'm sorry?

MERVYN: Were you so desperate for carrots and lettuce and onions that you come creeping around here in the middle of the night, scaring me to bloody death? I might have been sleeping!

WILLIAM: I was around ...

MERVYN: Oh? What were you doing up here? There's nothing here for you.

WILLIAM: I was up the road.

MERVYN: Doing what?

WILLIAM: Old Sarah. I went to see her.

MERVYN: Aren't you a bit young for all that?

WILLIAM: For what?

MERVYN: Paying for it?

WILLIAM: Old Sarah is a friend of my family.

MERVYN: Lovely friends your family has.

WILLIAM: My family used to live in this house. We know her from those days.

MERVYN: I see.

WILLIAM: Old Sarah's a good person.

MERVYN: So am I, but I should be so lucky to have half her visitors.

WILLIAM: I'm here.

MERVYN: Indeed you are.

Pause.

Well, so how do you like your old home? A bit better than you remember it?

WILLIAM: Very nice.

MERVYN: >Very nice=? Don't tell me you had all this? Fridge, deepfreeze, microwave, home computer, underfloor heating ...

WILLIAM: Underfloor heating?

MERVYN: For winter.

WILLIAM: It doesn't get that cold.

MERVYN: It does now. It also leaks like hell, and there's a crack in the wall.

WILLIAM: Sloppy plasterwork.

MERVYN: Oh yes, I forgot. An architect.

WILLIAM: Not yet.

MERVYN: Not yet? Oh excuse-moi. Are you at university?

WILLIAM: High school.

MERVYN: Aren't you a bit old for high school?

WILLIAM: It takes longer for some of us.

MERVYN: You look quite bright to me.

WILLIAM: That's the problem.

Pause.

MERVYN: Mmmm. So, you got rabbits?

WILLIAM: Rabbits?

MERVYN: Bunny rabbits! I mean, what are the carrots for? Listen, I'm a sophisticated man of the world and I've seen it all, but carrots? What do you do with carrots?

WILLIAM: Eat them.

MERVYN: No, really! And what else is in the bag?

WILLIAM: Why don't you come and have a look, madam?

MERVYN: Don't be cheeky, boy!

Pause.

WILLIAM: Squash, potatoes, onions, lettuce and ...

MERVYN: ... and dear little carrots.

WILLIAM: They're quite big.

MERVYN: I'm sure they are. A real bachelor boy?

WILLIAM: I like it that way.

MERVYN: Old Sarah's girls must've exhausted you.

WILLIAM: No, I didn't ...

MERVYN: Oh, tough guy. After an all-night romp with Sarah's bargain-basement beauties, now you come window-shopping up here?

WILLIAM: You're really funny.

MERVYN: Want to see my jokes?

*Andre enters, now wearing the police uniform Mervyn keeps for fun.
William reacts, relaxes when he sees Mouse enter.*

ANDRE: The bathroom is now free, if you want to wash it before you eat it, Mervyn.

MERVYN: Oh bugger off, will you!

ANDRE: The carrots!

MERVYN: This is ... er ... Carlo.

ANDRE: Natuurlik.

MERVYN: He brought me some vegetables.

ANDRE: For tonight's meal, no doubt?

MERVYN: Yes, for tonight's meal.

MOUSE: Mervyn, I think ...

WILLIAM: It's okay.

MERVYN: Thank you, Carlo, you're a treasure.

ANDRE: Carlo? Ek is Andre.

WILLIAM: Andre.

ANDRE: En dis Mervyn.

WILLIAM: Ja, ek weet.

MERVYN: There, you see! Carlo, pop round some other time; we're just on our way out.

ANDRE: Nonsense, we're not going anywhere.

MERVYN: We're going out!

ANDRE: Hier, Carlo, is jy lus vir 'n dop?

MERVYN: We'll be late!

ANDRE: For what? Carlo? Wyn?

Pause. William looks at Mouse.

WILLIAM: Okay.

Andre pours a glass. William sits.

ANDRE: Okay. Hier. Now, what about some delicious sweet-and-sour pork to go with Mervyn's nice fresh carrots!

Andre takes the bag, but William doesn't let go.

Come now, boy, this is a civilised place. Traditional cultural weapons stay at the door.

MOUSE: I'll hold it ...

Mouse takes the bag from William slowly. He lets go.

MERVYN: Andre, what the fuck do you think you're doing?

ANDRE: You like cold Chinese takeaway, Carlo?

WILLIAM: It's okay.

ANDRE: Now well then, eat. This is Mervyn's Kitchen. You can't ever go away hungry. Everyone always has a good meal here, especially onse Mervyn.

MERVYN: Carlo has to go, Andre, please don't interfere.

ANDRE: Ag nee, and where does Carlo have to go? Carlotjie? You see, Mervyn, the boy's hungry. The mouth is full. Don't expect a miracle. Let it eat. It needs its strength. It's so young and healthy. Oh, I love watching young men eat. It's so sexy!

MERVYN: Christ, Andre!

ANDRE: Tin, Mervyn!

Andre sits next to William.

Lekker kos? You know, I once had a brother, Carlo, who used to eat us out of house and home. A loaf a day. You like bread? Shame, Mervyn's only got cake. My boet never put on weight. I mean, take Mervyn. He sees a crust and blows up like a petrol bomb, but my boet had a hard flat stomach. Do you have a hard stomach?

Andre feels it.

Ja-nee, a nice hard one. Mervyn, come and feel the boy's body. It's so hard. Don't let me interrupt you, Carlo. Finish your last spoonful. Think of the poor starving black children. Mustn't waste ...

Andre empties leftovers onto Mervyn's plate.

Daar-s hy. Waste not, want more.

MERVYN: That's my plate!

ANDRE: Toemaar, he won't catch it from the plate. And where are you from, Carlo? Your name sounds Italian, but you somaar look like a common old coloured boy to me. Don't answer with your mouth full. You'll choke and die and Mervyn will kill himself. Yes, >Carlo= sounds Italian. I like Italians. I also like coloureds. In theory of course. Don't count any among my friends, but Mervyn here always tells me how lovely they are. He should know, treating his poor old coloured servant like a piece of shit. Sit down, Mervyn doll, you'll wear down your heels. Toemaar, Carlo, moenie rush nie, daar-s baie tyd.

MERVYN: What the hell do you think you're doing!

ANDRE: I'm being nice. I can, you know, it's part of my Christian Nationalist Education. I can look the angel of death in the face and be nice.

Andre takes the spoon and feeds William.

Siembaba mama se kindjie
Siembaba mama se kindjie
draai sy nek om
gooi hom in die sloot
trap op sy kop
dan is hy dood ...

Stops on third spoon. William refuses to eat.

Die kind is klaar. Take away his plate and wash it nicely, Mervyn. We don't want to overburden poor Mrs Peters on Monday. Now, Carlo, how about a nice cigarette?

WILLIAM: Thanks.

ANDRE: Gee vir hom 'n sigaret, Mervyn?

MOUSE: Andre, I think we'd better ...

ANDRE: You give him a cigarette, Mouse!

Mouse offers William a filter. He takes one.

WILLIAM: Do you have plain?

ANDRE: Do we have plain? Of course we have plain.

Andre breaks off the filter.

Give him a light, Mervyn.

WILLIAM: It's okay. I've got.

William takes out a cheap lighter.

ANDRE: Nice lighter.

WILLIAM: Oh?

ANDRE: Beautiful. Just like the one you had, Mouse.

MOUSE: What?

ANDRE: The lighter. Laat ek sien? What a coincidence. Mouse, just like the one I gave you.

MOUSE: No, mine was a Dunhill ...

ANDRE: Don't be so grand, Mouse. Your lighter was just like this one. It was even the same colour, just like this one. You know, Carlo, Mouse had a lighter just like this one.

WILLIAM: Ja?

ANDRE: Until tonight, that is. He lost it, silly Mouse. Where did you get this lighter, Carlo?

WILLIAM: I bought it.

ANDRE: You bought it? My maggies, ne ...

MOUSE: Andre, it's nothing like mine!

ANDRE: But I gave you yours. I should know.

MOUSE: What are you doing!

ANDRE: Being nice. So tell me, Carlo, do you drive?

MOUSE: Andre!

WILLIAM: I don't have a licence.

ANDRE: But you do drive.

WILLIAM: I can.

MOUSE: Mervyn, stop this!

MERVYN: Andre, this is getting boring!

ANDRE: Can you drive an automatic, Carlo?

WILLIAM: My uncle had an automatic Chev.

ANDRE: Haai nee, regtig?

WILLIAM: Ja, I used to drive it when I was a kid.

ANDRE: Good price today for cars like that.

MERVYN: Stop it, you sordid bitch! Leave the boy alone!

ANDRE: But I'm just saying to his face what you've been saying behind his back. It's the coloureds!- Nou wel, there's the coloureds.

MOUSE: How can you accuse him of those things!

ANDRE: He's already been accused and convicted! He's guilty!

MERVYN: Carlo, you'd better go ...

MOUSE: You can prove nothing!

ANDRE: Here's the living proof! What's a coloured kid doing up here in a high risk area?

MOUSE: Must you always simplify everything!

ANDRE: Simplify everything?

MOUSE: This was his home!

ANDRE: Exactly! And what is happening out there? Tribute to whitey? Affectionate thanks to us for 'closing the chapter'? You were terrified!

MOUSE: Yes, but at last something is happening! Whatever it is, no matter how horrible it is, at least, thank God, it's started to happen!

William laughs.

ANDRE: Lag jy vir ons?

WILLIAM: To think some of us are scared of you people! You're funny!

ANDRE: Funny?

WILLIAM: Ja.

ANDRE: You think you can just sit there and laugh and it will all just fall into your lap.

WILLIAM: I don't live around here anymore.

ANDRE: Well then you'd better start working for the privilege, boy! Hey, Boy!

Andre tried to provoke William.

You want to live here again? Boy? So do something! Steal something! Kill someone! I dare you! Make us hate! Help us to hate!

MOUSE: Andre stop it!

ANDRE: Here. Take. Help yourself ... its yours anyway ... go on ... take ... take!

Andre pushes Mouse at William. Throws things at William as he says

Take ... take ... take ... take ...!!!!

Pause. Andre has collapsed.

MOUSE: Andre ...

Mouse helps Andre up gently.

ANDRE: Here, Muis ... I'm sorry ... I'm sorry ...

Andre exits. Mervyn follows.

MERVYN: You're sorry? Sorry! Andre! ...

WILLIAM: What was all that about?

MOUSE: Andre's very tense. You see his brother was killed in the coloured townships.

WILLIAM: Oh.

MOUSE: And Mervyn's still crazy about Stephen, but he's got another guy.

WILLIAM: Oh.

MOUSE: And Andre's car was stolen.

WILLIAM: And he thought it was me?

MOUSE: Well, you see my room was burgled ...

WILLIAM: Sounds like it's been a hell of a party!

MOUSE: Saturday Night.

MERVYN (off): Mouse?

WILLIAM: Is your friend all right?

MOUSE: Remorse. Guilt. Babalas. Very Afrikaans.

WILLIAM: You could've just told them, you know.

Mouse looks in the bag and takes out the gun carefully.

MOUSE: I was going to. But then when they were so horrible to you ...

WILLIAM: I'm a big boy now, you know ...

MOUSE: ... I wanted to use this. How can you be so calm?

WILLIAM: I can handle drunks.

MOUSE: Oh.

MERVYN (off): Mouse, you'd better drive Andre home in my car.

MOUSE: I have to go.

Mouse puts the gun back in the bag and hands it to William.

WILLIAM: Can you drive all right?

MOUSE: When I was small, I drove Landrovers in Rhodesia. Want a lift?

WILLIAM: It's okay.

MOUSE: Even the taxis have stopped. They say there's a lot of violence in your areas.

WILLIAM: Yes.

MOUSE: Are you involved in all this?

WILLIAM: Yes.

MOUSE: Would you use that?

WILLIAM: I hope not ... you see, my little sister was shot by some masked gunmen this morning. We think they're cops. Maybe AWB. That's why I came to see my ma. That's why she left early. I actually came tonight to ask Mister Mervyn to advance us some money on Ma's wages ...

MOUSE: Oh my God, William ...

Mervyn enters.

MERVYN: Mouse, come on! And stop that eternal snivelling! Andre's waiting in the car!

Mervyn pushes Mouse out of the door.

And for the Tin's sake, drive carefully! We've had enough drama for one night! Phone me tomorrow C after eleven! And don't take the freeway! They're shooting people! [*sighs*] Jesus Christ!

WILLIAM: Tin.

MERVYN: Hey?

WILLIAM: You said a swearword. Tin.

MERVYN: No, that wasn't a swearword. And anyway, what do you mean 'ain'? I don't even know you!

WILLIAM: Aren't I Carlo?

MERVYN: Are you?

Pause. Siren passes.

Ow ... I've got that pain again, here over my heart ...

WILLIAM: Go and see a doctor.

MERVYN: I need to pay some specialist good money to hear all I need is love and affection? I can get that from a vet.

William picks up cutlery.

Leave that. The maid will be in tomorrow.

WILLIAM: Sunday?

MERVYN: Whenever.

William stacks the plates.

Old habits die hard, hey? Careful with those plates. They're from Poland. Belonged to my grandmother. She was an incredible person.

WILLIAM: So was mine.

MERVYN: At least we've got something in common. So, aren't you dying to see the rest of the house?

WILLIAM: It's very late.

MERVYN: Yes. Well then, let's start with the bedroom. Come on 'Carlo', leave the carrots. They'll still be here in the morning. [*holds out his hand*] Be nice to me ...

Pause.

Then William opens the back door and exits. The chain swings uselessly.

Mervyn stands alone.

END