

BEYOND ALL REASON

A PLAY BY PIETER-DIRK UYS

The action of the play takes place round the luxurious swimming-pool of the Greenacres Healthfarm as well as the massage-room.

The time is during the early 1980s in South Africa.

The characters are:

MANIE – a coloured attendant

ELAINE GREER – a patient

SANTIE STEYN – a coloured patient

GRACE LIPSCHITZ – a patient

CONRAD GREER – Elaine's husband

KILLER JOUBERT – Grace's young man

Mrs. Greenwood, the masseur is not seen, but spoken to.

There are seven scenes.

There can be an interval between scenes four and five.

SCENE ONE

(Round the massage table. Manie is cleaning, with broom and rag. A large cardboard box.)

MANIE: Hey, Mrs. Greenwood? How many patients will you have today? The kitchen says many have run away because of last night. Mrs. Greenwood?
(No answer. He shrugs and carries on round the table.)
The spirits of darkness really had an Almighty old midnight orgy! Finished dancing in the moonlight, then the Great Landlord clapped his hands and our terra-firma got the shakes like a drunk reed! And when the old earth quakes in its own boots, then he's either yesterday's Bantu or tomorrow's Boer!
(He stops. Fantasises at the table.)
Please lie down, Madam. Take no note of my humble appearance and brown skin. I'm a BBL (Hon Come Laudie) from Fort Dare. And in case you're confused, Fort Dare was my old ma's shebeen in bygone Hanover Street.
Anyway, let bygones be byways, my name is Manie and I am at your beck and call any time of the day between seven and seven. Here you see me as the best massager that Greenacre Healthfarm has got.
I have rubbed the worst people up the right way – grumpy politicians, tired old and younger actors, business people with ulcers, real people, fancy people, fake people – but mainly bleddie fat people.
(He massages laboriously in pantomime.)
But also, illegally too, I place your bets on the tote, buy you a bottle of the good Lord's own five-year-old medicine or any other 'tonic' that the doctors didn't order; cigars, cigarettes (plain, filter or grassroots), chocolates, biltong, boerebeskuit, droëwors and maybe Playboy magazine of last May. I can also get you into any bungalow on this establishment for the nice cuddlement of the occupant – if that is your fancy old madam? – and all for only a token donation to the MSD Fund – to clarify, attentive old madam, the Manie's Drink Fund.
(He prods and explores the 'body'.)
Oh shame dear old madam, the good life is showing,, poor madam. The rolls round madam's stomach and the dimple of madam's knees are like two halves of a white bread sandwich. And what is between, let no man rend asunder, and so say all of us!
(He checks to see if he's alone. Picks up the cardboard box and packs out the following items carefully, while ticking them off his list as he goes.)
OK. Roll call: cashew nuts, gin, tonic, lemon, knife, CAR magazine, cigars, matches – for Mr. Harrison in bungalow Seven.
Brandy, ice ... damn, it leaks ... cigarettes-filter, TIME magazine, Chocolate Log and Marsbar – for old Harry Levine in bungalow Eight.
OK – polaroid film, one child's sunhat, smarties, toy motorcar, Stuyvesant, valium, earplugs – for Miss Elaine in bungalow number Nine.
Here's a blerrie tall order: Kentucky Fried Chicken, four slabs of cjokkies bitter, nuts and raisin, peppermint ... oh God two peppermint – it will be like sex, after the first taste you won't know the difference! – flavoured yoghurt: apple and spice ... not available ...
(he writes)
... but OK on banana, gooseberry, strawberry ... OK. Popcorn. Popcorn? No sis hell, she's too randy for food ... 'not available' ... OK, chips assorted flavours, pickles, salami, Texan, matches, Obex ... where's the blerrie OBEX? ... Here ... OBEX Slimming Pills present and correct sir, all for old fat arse Miss Grace Lipschitz in bungalow Two.
Shame. One day that old kugel will pop and I'll have to bleddie scrape her off the walls. OK, that's ...
(as he packs in he adds up)
... ten rand, twenty ... forty-six fifty cents ... eighty ... one twenty ... twenty-eight ... one hundred and twenty-eight rand and a half cents; not bad for a Tuesday.
(He stands back and views the box with glee.)
"Shoot him in the arse, baas, we don't want holes in the skin!"

INTERCOM: Manie, report to reception please.

MANIE *(calls)*: Coming!
(Carefully opens a brown envelope.)
And for me, for all my hard work, a good old puff of the good weed!
(Then he stuffs rags into the box to disguise the contents and calls on exit.)
OK Mrs. Greenwood, I'm finished with your room. I'm off to feed the lions.

SCENE TWO

*(Early morning round the swimmingpool.
On a deck chair Elaine lies motionless.
The Intercom gongs:)*

INTERCOM: Mrs. Greenwood? Could you please come to Dr. Graham's consulting rooms? Mrs. Greenwood?

(Manie enters with his garbage bag,. He flicks the end of his roach into the pool, then peers down into the pool.)

MANIE: No, who took all the water?
(He moves further down inspecting the empty pool, and doesn't notice Elaine.)
Hey? What could all this mean?

INTERCOM: Dr. Graham, calling Dr. Graham.

MANIE: Calling the police! Someone's stole the bleddie water!

(Grace Lipschitz enters in a flap, dressed in a voluminous kaftan.)

GRACE: What did that announcement say? Hey, what did it say!

MANIE: Someone stole the water.

GRACE: Someone stole the water? Whose water, for God's sake?

MANIE: There.
(He points into the empty pool).

GRACE: No, man, what did the announcement say? I thought I heard my name.
(Then under her breath).
Have you got my stuff?

MANIE: Shhhh!
(Then loudly).
No madam, I don't know nothing. I only clean round here.

GRACE: *(Loudly).*
Clean? Don't make me laugh!
(Under her breath)
Come on, damn it, I'm starving.

MANIE: I clean round here.
(under his breath)
Later ...
(Loudly)
And up there ...
(under his breath)
They're checking on us ...
(loudly)
Over by the carpark and around the bottom there – there where the road stops being tarred. Near the graves.

GRACE: What graves suddenly, for God's sake!

MANIE: The graves of the spirits of darkness. Mrs. Lipschitz has heard of the spirits of darkness that feast on the laughter of the unprotected?

GRACE: What do you mean? Politicians?

MANIE: It's simple when you've seen it with your own two eyes. I've seen it, true yesterday's cottage pie and chips, with tomato sauce and polony sandwich.

GRACE: (groans)
Oh please don't ...

MANIE: OK, I won't tell anything about the spirits of darkness! I swore never to tell. I closed my eyes and said: I swear – on a T-bone steak with béarnaise sauce and chocolate ice-cream on meringue ...

GRACE: (drools)
... meringue, crisp out of the oven, filled with soft cool syrup that mingles with the ice-cream ...

MANIE: And the fresh cream!

GRACE: ... and the fresh cream with a touch of liqueur ...

MANIE: ... ending off with bitter chocolate dipped in hot cherry brandy!

INTERCOM: Mrs. Howarth, please come to Dr. Graham's consulting rooms. Mrs. Howarth!

GRACE: Mrs. Howarth?

MANIE: Must be her enema coming up.

GRACE: Too late, I saw her leave an hour ago. Anyway don't be so disgusting. You make me feel quite ill with all that talk of food and then suddenly the one-track enema mind ...

MANIE: Sorry, Mrs. Lipschitz. It's that throwing together of the old chocolate ice-cream and the horseradish sauce ...

GRACE: Oh sis you bleddie bastard ...

(She exits.)

MANIE: Vetgat!
(He peers back into the pool and shrugs. Turns and sees Elaine lying on the chair).
Morning Miss Elaine!
(No reaction. He goes to her).
Miss Elaine?
(He shakes her, she stirs).
Miss Elaine? Is Miss OK? Must I call a doctor?

ELAINE: No ... I'm fine ... I was asleep ...

MANIE: You're full of dew.

ELAINE: Help me, my foot's asleep ... the tremor woke me up. That and the birds ... Manie, take my hand!

MANIE: Yes, Miss. Let me just put my things down here.
(Puts his things down. Helps her slowly. She seems in pain).
There's it, Miss Elaine ...

ELAINE: Thanks.

INTERCOM: Calling Sister Powell, to reception please, Sister Powell.

ELAINE: Not like sister Powell to have to be called like that.

MANIE: Everyone's still a bit all-shook-up by last night's drama. Miss Elaine is thirsty?

(Elaine remembers)

ELAINE: The drama, yes. Still, didn't think a little earth-tremor would keep Sister Powell away from her manipulations.

MANIE: Earth what-you-say?

ELAINE: Earthtremor! What did you think was happening when the world started hopping about this morning?

MANIE: Yes, because of us mixing with the whites on the beaches, in the streets, between the sheets. There's someone up there who wants to keep us Coloureds pure Coloureds. No, I'm joking.
(Looks up in thought).
Yes, to tell the truth, I thought to myself – this hopping around as Miss calls it, this, is no bleddie ordinary whatever it is. When the table and chair started twisting together but in contrast to the jiving of the walls and the floor, then I knew: hey, My God, the spirits is here! It's your end, Manie – your time is nigh, amen.

INTERCOM: Manie to reception, Manie.

MANIE: Ja, and then all it was, was a earthquakie, or what, Miss Elaine?

ELAINE: Something like that. They're calling you.

MANIE: Pity I'm deaf before breakfast. But how can such a thing happen here? This is not the area for earth shakings and such things.

ELAINE: There was one a few years ago. Down near Ceres, remember?

MANIE: Yes, but not here!

ELAINE: What was it then, my imagination?

MANIE: No, there was definitely one last night, that's for sure – as sure as roast pork ...

ELAINE: ... sleeps with roast potatoes ...

MANIE: ... under an apple sauce.

ELAINE: Thanks Manie, but I'm not here to lose weight. Your tortures are lost on me.

MANIE: What a waste, Miss. I forgot, Miss isn't here like everyone else. Miss Elaine isn't here for life, but for death ...
(he stops shocked)
... I mean ... not like the others for weight problems ... I mean ...

(An uncomfortable pause.)

INTERCOM: Manie, to reception please. Manie!

ELAINE: You'd better go.

MANIE: Yes. Just take my things. Have a nice day, Miss Elaine ...
(he backs away smiling, then peers into the pool trying to be a jovial).
Here's really been evaporatings going on ...
(He exits muttering).

(Elaine sits still for a moment watching him go, then slowly gets up. She picks up a towel on which she lay and wipes the moisture off her. Shudders. She wears a nightgown. Goes to the edge of the pool and peers in, then makes her way to a chair and sits relieved.)

ELAINE: Another day and it's still sore.

(She sits back with closed eyes. Grace enters.)

GRACE: Listen ... hallo? Where's that boy ...
(searches around the chairs)
Excuse me, I'm trying to find my tanning oil. I left it here yesterday and now I ... oh, it's you.

(Elaine immediately puts on a cheerful front.)

ELAINE: Yes. Morning.

GRACE: So how's it?

ELAINE: Fine. You've lost some weight.

GRACE: Can I have that in writing?

ELANE: I'll swear on ... you tell me.

GRACE: A cheese blintz!

ELAINE: A hot baygel?

GRACE: Spell it. Slowly.

ELAINE: Hot Baygel – yum-yum.

GRACE: Plus pickles and ham.

ELAINE: Ham?

GRACE: I'm kosher in real life, but hells-bells, when it comes to my ice-cream dreams, I think I'm forgiven when I stray, oy vay. No, I haven't.

ELAINE: You haven't strayed? So how come you've got some marshmellow stuck to your upperlip?

GRACE: Lost weight!! I had my consultation with Dr. Graham yesterday and all I lost was .2 kilos. I'm so depressed I could eat a horse.

ELAINE: I think you really mean that.

GRACE: You can bet your biltong. Are you OK?

ELAINE: Fine.

GRACE: You're looking better.

ELAINE: I feel it.

GRACE: Picking up a bit of weight.

ELAINE: Really?

GRACE: Of course, I can see it. In your face. Here. Colouring too.

ELAINE: I cheat. I put on lipstick.

GRACE: No, man, I can see it. It's health. I know health when I see it. You'll be fine.

ELAINE: You think so?

GRACE: What does your doctor say?

ELAINE: Not much. But he's smiling more now.

GRACE: So there, everything's going to be fine.
(Santie Steyn enters and watches them).
 But is it worth it? Starve yourself to bloody death and then start having nightmares about animated Vienna sausages like they were a gangbang of studs, only to triple across the street in your new thin clothes to be crushed to death by the tyres of a tank.

ELAINE: A tank doesn't have tyres.

GRACE: You haven't seen me on a bicycle. What's the time? Oh my God, I'm due for a damn massage in ten minutes. I'll never be ready in time. When you going?

ELAINE: I'm not scheduled for one today.

GRACE: Oh.

INTERCOM: Mrs. Lipschitz, come to reception please. Mrs. Lipschitz.

GRACE: Oh my God, they must've found the Chocolate Log in my brown shoe.

ELAINE: Is that all?

GRACE: Or my box of Black Magic in the peepot. They'll beat me with the spikes of a jogging takkie. See you later, bye.

(Grace exits. Manie enters with a suitcase.)

MANIE: This way, Miss Steyn.

SANTIE: Mrs. Steyn.
(Smiles at Elaine)
Morning.

ELAINE: Morning.

SANTIE: Lovely morning.

ELAINE: It's been like this for some time.

MANIE: Miss Elaine's been here for "some time", hey Miss?

ELAINE: Some weeks.

SANTIE: You've lost a lot of weight.

ELAINE: Well, I didn't ...

SANTIE: I hope I can lose as much. I'm only here for a week.

ELAINE: You'll enjoy it.

SANTIE: Yes, a friend of mine was here last year. Told me all about it.

ELAINE: Oh yes?

SANTIE: Yes. So I thought I'd come for a week.

ELAINE: It's lovely here.

SANTIE: Yes. I could lose some weight.

ELAINE: You look lovely.

SANTIE: No, really, I could lose a few bits here and there. And also rest a bit. They say you don't really get to eat here.

MANIE: No dinner, but lots of skinner.

ELAINE: We eat, don't we Manie?
(She winks at him)

MANIE: *(innocently)*
I don't know, I just work here.

ELAINE: Don't believe a word he says. Manie can get you the best food money can buy.

SANTIE: Really? Sweets and things?

ELAINE: At a price, of course.

MANIE: No, sis Miss Elaine, you make me come over like the local mafia smuggling cakes and tarts.

ELAINE: And Kentucky Fried Chicken and wine and hamburgers?

INTERCOM: Mrs. Howarth, to reception please, Mrs Howarth.

MANIE: I told them she's left! Come Miss Steyn, this way. You're in Bungelow 14.

SANTIE: I have to see Mrs. Greenwood, the message lady later, but I'll come and sit here first. Oh, no water in the pool?

MANIE: I don't understand it. Here yesterday, gone today!

SANTIE: What a pity, it's so hot.

(They peer in).

MANIE: I'll get it filled again. When I settle you in, Miss Steyn.

SANTIE: Mrs. I'm married.
(Manie nods and exits. Santie smiles at Elaine).
OK Bye.
(She exits).

(Elaine searches for a cigarette, doesn't find one. Look restless, agitated. Then to the edge of the pool and peers in. Seems to get lightheaded and stands back in case she falls in. Manie enters briskly.)

MANIE: Shame. Mrs. Steyn's got a husband fighting on the border.
(Elaine looks at him perplexed).
Mrs. Steyn. The coloured woman. Hey, don't stand there on the verge. You'll fall in and then what do I say to the judge?
(He helps her to a chair).

ELAINE: I can manage ...

MANIE: And I'm paid to help, so let me earn my bread.

ELAINE: You're paid to keep this place clean. I'm not an empty cigarette box or chewing-gum wrapper ...
(Pause)
... I'm sorry. I suppose I should go to my room.

MANIE: It's OK. Which reminds me, they at the desk want to know where Miss Elaine was when they did their rounds?

ELAINE: At Frikkie's Drive-In Hotdog-Palace on the National Road. Tell them. Me and Grace Lipshitz.
Midnightfeast.
(She gasps with pain and sits slowly)
Jesus, but it jumps on me.

MANIE: Let me help Miss to the room.

ELAINE: I want to give you some more money.

MANIE: It's OK. You gave me enough.

ELAINE: And the camera. I want some more pictures.

MANIE: I told you, Miss Elaine, I can't go today.

ELAINE: But you promised you'd try. You'd swap duties with someone and go today. It must be today ...

MANIE: I'll see him in two days then.

ELAINE: But today is his school sportsday. He'll be running in the race. I so want a picture of him in his little outfit.

MANIE: Miss Elaine, no, man, don't make me feel so grim. I'll try and take a chance, and go if I can, but I can't promise. I've got my job. In 2 days I'll see the child. I swear. No extra charge. And then I'll take a snap of him.
(*He puts his arm round her to steady her*).
Why do you sleep outside like us. You know it's unhealthy.

ELAINE: Haven't you also slept outside under the stars? It's so beautiful and romantic.

MANIE: It's beautiful and romantic when you've got a nice bed to go back to; it's just life when you haven't. Come Miss Elaine, the place is as restless as the heads that wear crowns.
(*They start off*).
Most of the patients suddenly went, hey.

ELAINE: Why?

MANIE: The earth tremulation. You know what they say, when the old foundations start cracking, the Gods on Olympus start packing their bags.

ELAINE: And what do you know about the Gods on Olympus?

MANIE: I clean up their mess.

(*They exit*).

INTERCOM: For the attention of all patients. The pool will be out of bounds till further notice, owing to minor damage caused by last night's earth ...
(*moment of confusion, then blandly*)
...listen, there's no water in the pool, so don't jump in!

(*Santie enters in a dressinggown. We see her discomfort. Sees that there still is no water in the pool. Takes off her gown, wears a sexy bikini. Starts rubbing on oil. Sits on the edge of pool. We see her do the whole suntan-thing. The gong makes her start with shock.*)

INTERCOM: Mrs. Elaine Greer to reception please.

SANTIE: ... there's no water.

MANIE:
(*He notices her discomfort*)

MANIE: Relax Mrs. Steyn, make yourself comfortable and rest. If you need anything, just ask.

SANTIE: No, it's OK.
(*She stands holding her gown tightly closed. Peers into the pool*).
See those broken tiles at the bottom of the pool?

MANIE: It must've gone down the crack at the bottom!
(*She starts giggling*)
What's it?

SANTIE: Sounds so rude.
(*Giggles even more*).

MANIE: What's rude?

SANTIE: Down the crack at the bottom.

MANIE: No sis, Mrs. Steyn.
(*He enjoys her hysteria, encourages it*).
Hey, no, come now, what's your case?

SANTIE: Hell, no really, it just slipped out ...

MANIE: No, it's OK.

SANTIE: Oh hell's bell's ...

MANIE: Relax and enjoy yourself, because tomorrow you can't afford it.

SANTIE: No, it's OK. Nobody heard me hey?
(*She looks around*) .

MANIE: Relax, Mrs. Steyn. Hey, no apartheid here, you can be a human bean. It's a case of: you got it or you ain't!

SANTIE: Got what?
(*He give a gesture: money*) .
I've got no money? From where?

MANIE: (*Laughs*)
That's what they all say: from where! R75 a day minimum for a sauna and a piece of lettuce. Water off a duck's back. From where?

SANTIE: Lettuce?

MANIE: Yes. Hot water for breakfast, lettuce for lunch and some stukkies fruit for supper.

SANTIE: No. Really?

MANIE: What you mean "no really". What you think this is? Barbeque Ranch?

SANTIE: A healthfarm, but ...

MANIE: So for your health you must suffer. And that's not all.

SANTIE: No?

MANIE: No. No smoking. You smoke?

SANTIE: No.

MANIE: No drinking. You drink?

SANTIE: No.

MANIE: No sex.

SANTIE: No.

MANIE: No?

SANTIE: No man!
(*Looks around embarrassed*)

MANIE: Sauna baths every day?

SANTIE: Yes?

MANIE: Yes.

SANTIE: What's that?

MANIE: Hot air. Sit naked in a box and breathe in hot hot air. Dry air, horrible air – makes you sweat out the fat. You bubble, you know like pigs skin when it roasts.

SANTIE: No, hell man ...

MANIE: Hydro-therapy.

SANTIE: Yes?

MANIE: Yes. They hose ice-cold water all over your naked body. Thin jets of water cascade over your melon breasts and down your spine. They say it's good for the blood circulation.

SANTIE: My blood's OK.

MANIE: And how's your tummy?

SANTIE: *(Annoyed)* No man, don't you have work?

MANIE: They pump your stomach out!

SANTIE: For what?

MANIE: Part of the treatment. Enema. "Colonic irrigation".

SANTIE: Sis. Not me.

MANIE: You. You! Everyone. You come here and you sign away your power of choice.
(Lyrically)
 "You want your health, give us your wealth, our ways up here are jolly smart, careful patient take aim and give the fatfarmfart!"
(They both scream with laughter)
 Hey, listen, no man listen ... the people come here and spend all that money on a so-called diet and then they cheat and go and eat everything against the rules and think we don't know. Like hell – we check the enema tubes ... there goes the chicken, there the potato, there the after-dinnermint
(Laughter).

SANTIE: No, hell man, you're rude! Listen, I'm a patient, you treat me with bleddie respect.
(snorts with laughter) Fatfarm-fart? Oh my goodness ...

MANIE: And if I may ask, Mrs. Steyn? If you don't like our methods why are you here to get healthy?

SANTIE: I am healthy.

MANIE: You mean you was on your way to the beach and took a wrong turn?

SANTIE: I won a competition in the Fair Lady magazine.

MANIE: You don't say!

SANTIE: First prize. A week at Greenacres Healthfarm.

MANIE: You should've chosen the washing machine.

SANTIE: *(Disappointed)* There wasn't a choice. I would've preferred a washingmachine. Anyway ...
(Looks around) I thought actually this place was like you see in the cigarette adverts.

MANIE: It is.
(Sings Mainstay Ad)
 "You can stay as you are for the rest of your life or you can come to Greenacres"!

SANTIE: And have a Fatfarm-fart!

(They laugh. She takes off her gown. He whistles his appreciation).

INTERCOM: Mrs. Greer, come to reception please.

MANIE: Mrs. Greer, the lady who was here, the thin one. She's quite sick. I thought she had "anorexis-nervousa", but maybe it's worse. You know then, you don't eat and get so thin you die.

SANTIE: Shame. She doesn't look well.

MANIE: Can you see?

SANTIE: I know a bit about nursing.

MANIE: Oh. A nurse?

SANTIE: You say it's OK for me to sit here?

MANIE: Yes. Listen, don't tell people you're a nurse or you won a prize. They're moneysnobs here. Tell them you're resting between engagements.

SANTIE: Engagements? I'm married!

MANIE: Engagements man, like a model. You've already got the body of a model. Oh dearie me, the old bats are going to hate you
(Conrad Greer appears unseen and waits)
 So keep your body classy. Don't ever tell the truth. It's never worth the money you pay here. Anyway on a nurse's salary, they'll never believe you, think you robbed your madam or something.

CONRAD: Excuse me ...
(Manie turns to him)
 I'm looking for Mrs. Greer.

MANIE: Reception through there, sir.

CONRAD: They called for her, but she doesn't seem to be around.

MANIE: Maybe in her room. I'll take you there OK?

CONRAD: I'd better wait here.

MANIE: Who should I say is waiting: family, friend or foe?

CONRAD: That's up to her.

MANIE: Husband.

CONRAD: A surprise.

MANIE: Surprises is the spice of life.

(He winks at Santie and exits. Conrad looks down at the pool. Pause.)

CONRAD: No water.

SANTIE: It's down the crack at the ...
(Overcome with giggles, she looks away) .

CONRAD: *(Peers down)* Mmmm, bad construction. *(She squeaks agreement. He turns to her. Her laughter disguised by cough)* Have you been here long? *(She shakes her head)* You've lost a lot of weight. *(She shakes her head, holds up a hand)* Five pounds? Kilo's?

SANTIE: Minutes.

CONRAD: Minutes?

SANTIE: I've only been here a little while.

CONRAD: Ah, I thought you didn't look as if you needed it.

SANTIE: No, I won it.

CONRAD: Oh?

SANTIE: No, I mean I'm a model, you see and I'm resting between marriages.

CONRAD: Yes, I thought your face was familiar.

SANTIE: Oh?

CONRAD: I suppose you need the rest.

SANTIE: Yes, my husband's on the border.

CONRAD: Which husband?

(Pause.)

SANTIE: Yes. Are you a new patient also?

CONRAD: Just visiting.

SANTIE: Oh yes, Mrs. Greer. Your mother?

CONRAD: *(laughs.)* No, Elaine's my wife.

SANTIE: Oh, Elaine! She's been here for some time?

CONRAD: It seems so.

SANTIE: Is she going home today?

(He doesn't answer. Stares off at Elaine coming towards him. They stand and face each other, with an uncomfortable Santie in the middle.)

ELAINE: Surprise?

CONRAD: Are you?

ELAINE: No.

CONRAD: Dr. Phillips told me where you were.

ELAINE: The gossiping unethical bastard.

CONRAD: He's also a friend. First and foremost a friend. He told me about ...

ELAINE: How's little Jackie?

(Pause. They are aware of Santie's presence.)

CONRAD: Fine.

ELAINE: Does he ...

CONRAD: Of course not, he's just a child. Look, do you think we could walk?

ELAINE: Where does he think his mother is? Dead?

CONRAD: Gone away with Uncle Graham.

ELAINE: "Gone away with Uncle Graham?" God, you're mean!

CONRAD: That's what you wanted him to believe; that you've gone away from him!

ELAINE: Don't punish me.

CONRAD: And I still don't understand any of it, Elaine.

ELAINE: Not now!

(They are aware of Santie's presence.)

SANTIE: Would you like to sit here?

ELAINE: No, this is fine.

CONRAD: Yes, fine.

(Pause)

ELAINE: No water.

CONRAD: I saw.

ELAINE: Probably the tremor.

CONRAD: Oh?

ELAINE: Didn't you feel it at home?

CONRAD: No.

ELAINE: It felt like the end of it all, being alone in a wobbling world ...
(She suddenly starts crying quietly. Conrad is at a loss.)

CONRAD: Elaine, please ...

SANTIE: Are you OK? *(Elaine nods and waves her away)* Here's a tissue.

CONRAD: Should I call a doctor?

SANTIE: Maybe that'll be better.

ELAINE: No ... it's OK ... leave me alone ... *(She blows her nose)* .

SANTIE: Anyway, I better be going, no really, I have a massage just now and I want to write a letter to my husband. OK then ... bye ...

(She exits. Conrad looks around uncomfortably.)

CONRAD: She says she's between marriages, but she still seems to write to her husband.

ELAINE: Friendly. *(She sighs deeply and wipes her eyes)* I'm sorry.

CONRAD: Why are you crying? You should be happy.

ELAINE: What did Dr. Phillips tell you, Conrad?

CONRAD: That you had a nervous breakdown ... that you came here ...

ELAINE: I'm happy.

CONRAD: I've never seen you cry because you're happy.

ELAINE: You probably don't remember.

CONRAD: When you were unhappy, then I saw you cry.

ELAINE: I'm happy now, I swear on a doughnut and chips.

CONRAD: I used to hear you get out of bed and go downstairs and sit and cry in the kitchen in the middle of the night.

ELAINE: I was thirsty. Then I suppose I found out how nice it was to cry in the kitchen. It made me happy, so I cried more. Why are we talking such rubbish?

CONRAD: Is our happiness rubbish?

ELAINE: My my, your capacity for turning a parking ticket into an MA thesis. I didn't expect you to come looking for me, not after what I did to you.

CONRAD: You're my lost property.

ELAINE: I don't belong to you, or anyone ... oh God, it's getting worse and worse now – soap opera. It's this idiotic setting, it makes you want to sing everything.

CONRAD: Soap opera is more original, I'm afraid Elaine. "Loving wife suddenly ups and offs with husband's younger brother without even a goodbye to her seven-year old son". Just a bit of minor incest. No murder, necrophilia, homosexuality, although on second thoughts, brother Graham was known to have found various ways of killing a cat.

ELAINE: I don't belong to Graham, to anybody; finished.

CONRAD: It's Jackie's sportsday today, did you know?

ELAINE: Tell me about Jackie?

CONRAD: What is this place for, anyway?

ELAINE: How long is his hair?

CONRAD: There's been a lot of bad publicity about places like this in the Reader's Digest.

ELAINE: Is it long or short ... Reader's Digest?

CONRAD: I don't know ... same as usual. Don't sniff at the Reader's Digest, Elaine!

ELAINE: Is it here or here?

CONRAD: What?

ELAINE: (*Exasperated*) The Reader's Digest!

CONRAD: It sort of hangs about all over the place. A fringe or something.

ELAINE: You really make a caring mother feel redundant. (*She laughs*) Oh you abandoned fathers, brave pioneers into the mysterious realm of housie-housie and grassburns on the knees and socks that don't match and ballpoint-pens that run out in schoolblazer pockets. As long as the child's eyes are open in the day and closed at night – he's OK.

CONRAD: If you don't like the way I'm trying to bring up my son ... our son, come home and do it yourself! I didn't apply for the job.

ELAINE: I never regarded it as a job. And don't shout.

CONRAD: I'm not shouting and it's a full-time job! (*He lights a cigarette shakily*) .

ELAINE: They don't encourage smoking.

CONRAD: I don't need encouragement. (*Pause while he smokes*) .

ELAINE: I won't fight with you, Conrad. I'll go inside and demand a colonic irrigation. They won't allow you in while they pump out all the angry speeches and the bits and pieces of something that ended a long time ago. Look around you. You now have a son who doesn't like you very much, so spend your energy on getting him on your side. He's a pretty seven-year old boy. I'd rather he grew up to be like his father.

CONRAD: And not in the memories of his dear mother?

ELAINE: I meant, not like his Uncle Graham.

CONRAD: (*Puts his arm round her*). You waste too much energy trying to live up to your birthsign.

ELAINE: Your birthsign's the problem? We're not compatible.

CONRAD: Aren't I Leo or something? Very compatible.

ELAINE: No, you're Scorpio, I'm Virgo: Third World War material!

CONRAD: I thought I was Leo.

ELAINE: Be what you like, just don't roar at me.

(*He kisses her. She is taken unaware.*)

CONRAD: I missed you.

ELAINE: Don't ambush me ...

CONRAD: Brother Graham hasn't seen you for weeks.

ELAINE: I've been busy.

CONRAD: Are you here as a sick person, or as rich fat bitch.

INTERCOM: We would like to remind patients that smoking is nor encouraged round the pool. Thank you.

ELAINE: There, you see. (*He puts out his cigarette*) I'm here to clean my blackboard. (*She laughs at his expression*) There was a teacher here last week. He said that, as a teacher, the one thing he never got a chance to do properly, was to clean his blackboard. That's what I'm doing at last.

CONRAD: Come now, Elaine, your little blackboard was never that grubby.

ELAINE: (*explodes*) You can't resist it! It's eating at you like a ...

CONRAD: Cancer?

ELAINE: ... I hadn't thought about that, but yes, alright, a cancer! You want to punish me, Conrad, is that why you tracked me down like a wounded waterbuck? To smack me smartly with a wet towel and make me feel sore and sorry for what I did? Well, I'm not sorry, but if a chauvinist broadside will clear your sinuses, let rip! Eliminate! It's part of the treatment here.
(*Pause*)
Well? Have I ruined your career by leaving you? Books are books are books, so that's solved. Do your friends make fun of you, now that you're abandoned, or will it help to make up some gruesome story to keep face? Say what you like, Conrad, I'll even help, lie for you! Remember, I came top of the class in creative composition.
Do you have a new lady? I'm still in the way? Wait till I get out of here and I'll go to a lawyer. If you're in a real hurry, I'll get the Yellow Pages and we can get divorced before the autumn.

CONRAD: What's the rush?

ELAINE: Who is she?

CONRAD: Can't we go inside? The heat is giving me a headache.

ELAINE: It's the spirits of darkness. They don't like people to break their rules round here. You smoked; naughty; headache. Is she young?

CONRAD: That has nothing to do with you.

ELAINE: Debatable. A younger woman could be a better friend to Jackie than someone my age. But unless she's screamed a child into the world, she won't have that special Mummy-touch. Small point, big problem. But then, there's nothing that the Reader's Digest can't fix.
(*She tries to hide her physical pain*)
How's the shop?

CONRAD: The censors have banned whatsisnames novel – yawn. Otherwise Harold Robbins sells like hotcakes and Joseph Conrad doesn't.

ELAINE: And your Gillian Woodin?

CONRAD: Runs the business perfectly.

ELAINE: As always.

CONRAD: She's the best.

ELAINE: Your Gillian Woodin's still in love with you.

CONRAD: What do they feed you here?

ELAINE: Food for thought. Do you want a quick divorce?

CONRAD: I must pick up Jackie at 3:00.

ELAINE: Where does he think you are? Watching him run?

CONRAD: He didn't seem that interested. I said the dentist. I think he was nervous of the rally race. He doesn't like letting the side down.

ELAINE: Like his mother. How could you have left him on a day like this?

CONRAD: How could you?

(*Pause*)

ELAINE: So why did you come? My birthday was last month, Conrad.

CONRAD: Oh. Yes ... Happy Birthday.

ELAINE: Thank you.

CONRAD: I want you to come home, Elaine. To me and Jackie. It doesn't matter anymore, except us being together.

ELAINE: I can't. Not now.

CONRAD: What are you doing that's so important?
(*He grabs hold of her in his frustration. Hurts her. She cries out*).

ELAINE: I'm trying to stay alive! Don't punish me ... don't hurt me, help me ...

CONRAD: I love you.

(*Grace enters.*)

GRACE: My God, as if my prayers have been answered before I could even say Amen – A man! Do you mind? No, don't turn round, they have ways and means of spying on everything you do in this place. If I'd known I would've brought my lawyer to check my room for bugging devices and two-way mirrors before I moved in. Just stand casually and look at the view. No, man, casually. Now slip me the cigarette, no, not round the back, they'll see! Just casually, like this. Ta. Now point down at the pool, point at the pool! Pretend there's water! God, no imagination! Listen, I'm giving you a valuable scenario for future illegal puffs! Elaine, want a drag?

CONRAD: She doesn't smoke.

GRACE: Since when? Here. Move down casually towards her and then I can pass her the fag. Casually! They watch everything through the windows up there ...
(The gong goes)
 Oh my porkpie, they saw!

INTERCOM: Calling Mrs. Steyn. Mrs. Steyn, report for your massage please.

GRACE: Phew! Bloody paranoia like a politician.

ELAINE: Give me the damn cigarette. Stop behaving like a schoolgirl!
(She takes the cigarette angrily and puffs) .

CONRAD: Since when do you smoke?

ELAINE: *(Shrugs)* Since I knew it was forbidden.

GRACE: She does all the things that aren't allowed! She the naughtiest patient here. And did you call me a *SCHOOLGIRL*? Bless you my darling and may you live forever.

ELAINE: Promise?

GRACE: Listen, I've always said it! What's the bloody schlep with all this dieting and new year resolutions. Don't do this, don't do that ...

ELAINE: And then one day you get leveled by the tank or tyres.

GRACE: So! Eat, drink, smoke, be merry, my dear, for tomorrow, who knows.

ELAINE: I knows.

GRACE: Don't make such jokes.

ELAINE: It's no joke, it's bad grammar – I knows.

GRACE: "I knows, you knows, we all knows, for I knows!"

ELAINE: No Grace, you don't know.

GRACE: No?

ELAINE: No. Let me introduce you: Grace Lipschitz, my husband Conrad.

GRACE: Oh my God the husband ... I mean ... hi ... he's divine. I thought you were a new patient.

ELAINE: You sound disappointed.

GRACE: I'm destroyed. I'm Grace. My parents called me after Grace Kelly.

ELAINE: I'd say vice-versa. Grace Kelly's young enough to be ...

GRACE: ... to be my mother, I don't know how she does it. Conrad hey?

CONRAD: That's what they call me.

(Pause)

GRACE: Ja. Hey, you run that bookshop, don't you? Elaine told me.
(He nods. Pause)
 Listen, do you get any banned books?
(Elaine sighs)
 She sighs always when I'm interested in things that broaden the mind. I mean, I've read Krafft-Ebbing, what more is there?

CONRAD: Well, I've got a copy of Tropic of Cancer. It's not a medical novel, you know?

GRACE: *(flustered)* Hey?

CONRAD: Cancer ...
(Grace is uncomfortable. Shoots glances at Elaine who smokes. Pause)
 You said you'd show me your room, Elaine.

GRACE: Fantastic, then you come to mine, because my dears, I've got something there that will absolutely blow your mind wide open as true as a hotdog with tomatosauce and a cold coke! Winkie-winkie ...

ELAINE: Some other time, Grace.

GRACE: She just has no appetite, I don't understand it. Maybe you've got a worm, you know that. Conrad, worms make you thin. Please pass it on to me, Elaine. I could do with a worm, in more ways than one ...

ELAINE: *(s.v.)* Let's walk ...

GRACE: ... You know, that's one thing about this place, it destroys a person's libido. I mean, what am I supposed to do when Killer comes to visit me? Teach him Scrabble? And how many times can one use the only word he knows?
(She laughs)

ELAINE: Killer is Grace's young man.

GRACE: Don't be so bitchy, just because he's twenty doesn't mean anything special. He's so mature, you know Conrad. He understands exactly what a woman of my experience needs, what makes me tick – if you get the gist.

ELAINE: Oh please Grace, give it a rest!

GRACE: I'm talking, if you don't mind. Anyway, he's so intelligent, especially for someone of his pathetic background. Not that I'm a snob or anything, I mean, some of my best friends are ... how shall I say ... raw, you know?

ELAINE: For the love of God, Grace, shut up! You're driving me mad!

GRACE: I'm sorry ... I'm nervous ... *(s.v.)* You should've told me he was coming ... I don't know what to say.

ELAINE: Don't say anything. Nothing.

GRACE: OK OK. *(Pause)* Did he bring any food?

CONRAD: Who me? No.

GRACE: Sis, why not? What sort of a husband have you got? Any bubblegum?

CONRAD: I'm sorry.

GRACE: Maybe there's some in your car, you know, that fell between the seats and you never saw.

CONRAD: I don't think so ...

GRACE: Hell, I'd die for a snack.

ELAINE: Find her a snack.

GRACE: Just a snackie, mind you, nothing against the rules.

ELAINE: You get your apple and watermelon today, Grace.

GRACE: That's no snack, it's a purgative.

CONRAD: What's your idea of a snack then?

GRACE: Oh ... two dozen calamari, nice thick juicy chips in butter, tartar sauce, crisp warm toast, iced wine, Irish coffee, nothing fancy.

ELAINE: All with fresh cream.

GRACE: No cream. It's fattening! (*Screams with laughter*)

(*Santie enters.*)

SANTIE: Oh hallo.

ELAINE: Hallo.

SANTIE: I was in the bath when they called me.

ELAINE: Don't worry, they'll wait. There aren't many of us left for them to do.

SANTIE: Lovely hot water. You also have a bathroom? (*Elaine nods*) Well, I'm off for my massage.

ELAINE: You'll enjoy it.

SANTIE: I've never had one before. It's not sore, hey?

ELAINE: Very relaxing.

SANTIE: Yes, well ... (*Looks at Grace's expression of suspicion*) ... I'd better go.
(*She exits*)

GRACE: Well, I didn't know they let them in here!

CONRAD: Them?

GRACE: Coloureds or Indians or what do you think she was?

ELAINE: A well-tanned kugel?

CONRAD: Malay, probably.

GRACE: No that's different, I suppose.

ELAINE: How different?

GRACE: Malay? That's Islam hey? They control the oil. I suppose it's worth closing an eye to them. What the hell, I don't have any prejudices. Live and let live, I always say. But it's when they have no manners that I really get upset. No culture. They throw their rubbish all over the place, they have sex in public, use the sidewalk as a toilet. Sis, that's where I draw the line. If people are decent, I don't care what colour they are.
(*Looks after Santie*)
She must be quite well-off to come here. These Malays are, you know. My friend Gwen knows a Malay millionaire, I swear to God. People don't know that when they always say: oh shame the poor coloureds. They're damn rich.

CONRAD: Like the Jews.

GRACE: Don't you like Jews?

CONRAD: Some of my best friends are.

ELAINE: Must I sit, or are we going to move?

GRACE: You don't have to be snide about Jews, my boy. We all have our crosses to bear and I know many Jews I don't want to mix with also.

ELAINE: Mrs. Steyn's a very nice woman, believe me.

GRACE: Mrs. Steyn?

CONRAD: Your rich Malay.

GRACE: Funny. I bet the government must be peeved – fancy that, a coloured called Steyn.

ELAINE: She's very sweet.

GRACE: How do you know?

ELAINE: We talked.

GRACE: Really? What did you talk about? You see, that's the difference between you and me. I just wouldn't know what to say to a Malay. I suppose it's because I'm shy.

(Elaine and Conrad burst out laughing. Grace smiles along, but doesn't quite know why.)

ELAINE: The only way to shut her up is to feed her.

GRACE: As an alternative, yes.

CONRAD: Well, I think Jackie left a packet of sweets in the car, will that do?

GRACE: For a start. Run! I'll time you ...
(Conrad exits smiling. Pause. Then Grace goes to Elaine and puts her arms round her and holds her tight with love)
I hope I didn't say anything wrong.
(She brushes Elaine's hair out of her face)
You can be cured. You're not the only one in the world who's sick, Elaine.

ELAINE: Don't tell me. Being unique makes me brave.

(She breaks away from Grace.)

GRACE: He loves you. Go home with him.

ELAINE: I'm not going home till I'm ready. I made that decision months ago when I was told of the symptoms and what would happen to me ...

GRACE: Could happen, they never did. You look fine!

ELAINE: One night he lost his temper with Jackie for being naughty ... I don't remember for what. He cried and ran to me and I held him in my arms in the spare bed and stayed with him. I didn't dare falling asleep in case those pills caused me to have those spasms. He's just a baby ...

GRACE: Elaine, no biopsy report is good enough reason to disrupt a child's life!

ELAINE: Mind your own business!
(Pause)
I needed time to think. I'll go back when I'm ready.

GRACE: And when will that be?

ELAINE: They say Autumn. The doctor said I should leave here by the time the leaves fall.
(Smiles and holds out her hand)
Come, let's go and break more rules.

(They exit together.)

SCENE THREE

(Round the massage table.

Santie lies on the table with her gown on. She lies on her back. She speaks to the invisible masseur: Mrs. Greenwood.)

SANTIE: I'm sorry I'm late. I was in the bath. Is this where it all happens? All the massages?

Oh.

One of my friends knows someone who also does massages. They were raided by the police and this person was found in the cubicle with a man who she was massaging. You know. They were all arrested. But the man turned out to be an important person – someone on the City Council, so all charges were dropped. But I don't know this person personally, I mean. I just heard the story.

(Pause)

You know, I thought maybe you'd be a man and I was not sure what to do if you were. Although I don't suppose one must even think about things like that. I mean, this is all just hygiene. Like PT?

Oh.

(She turns on her stomach)

Like this?

Oh ... sorry. Of course. Stupid of me. I mean a massage is for the skin, not satin ... hang on.

(She takes off her gown, has on her bra and panties. Shyly she lies down.)

Hey? Oh sorry.

(Undoes her bra at the back but keeps it on)

No, I'm quite comfy thanks.

(She starts movements as if she's being massaged)

Is that baby oil or something?

No, it's nice and smooth. It's very nice. Makes you quite sleepy hey?

No, I got that when I was small. I was pushed against some barbed wire. You can't see the scar when I wear a bra. No, of course I wear a bra. I must've been about seven. I had to have stitches and everything.

No, we were just playing one Sunday, I think it was ... The township near Graaff-Reinett. My family all comes from there. Karoo-farmers all! There were those rough kids next door to my Grannie's house – my Grannie was dead already a year. The move killed her, they say. The move, from the town. My Grannie lived in the house where they say the school principal now lives. It was photographed in Panorama once. I still got the pictures.

Yes, beautiful high ceilings. Airy rooms. Long stoep that wound round the house. Grannie lived there till she was old. Then she was told to move; Group Area's Act.

Yes, I'm sure you've heard of it.

No, she wasn't sick. Oh, I can't remember all the things. My ma won't talk about it, she says let bygones be bygones.

But my Grannie had beautiful things, you know, old things. Well, a big stinkwood table that seated ten people ... eh ... a very beautiful hatstand in the hallway with a mirror full of designs ... let me see ... oh yes, the old organ in the sittingroom. The church got that.

Yes, they still play on it sometimes for weddings. The white weddings. We used to love watching white weddings. Yes. Anyway ...

(She's asked to remove her bra)

No, it's OK, really, I mean if it's OK with you. Oh good.

(She keeps it on)

No, as I was saying, Grannie had to move into this council house in the township.

Oh, you know, two rooms, no hot water, no lights, no toilet. You know in those days ...

Yes, they said it wouldn't be long before she had all that, but she died before it happened. The stinkwood table didn't fit in the new house, not anywhere. Nor her cupboards with all the doors or sofas or things. Just some small pieces of furniture. Not even her bed that my ma was born in.

The white people made her offers of storage for her stuff and Grannie was pleased – you know, till she had place to put it in her own house, somehow ...

Yes. Anyway, she died and we don't know whose got all her stuff. I mean, you can't knock at a white man's door and say: "please can I have my Grannie's priceless antiques back, thank you for storing them", can you?

No.

No, we still live in that house.

Actually I'm married, so it's just now my ma and sisters. There's a small tree now and we're used to the dust and the neighbours. I'm a nurse.

Yes. General nursing. The neighbour's girl is a ... a gogodancer or something fancy like that. Oh, it doesn't really matter. You get used to it if you don't know a high ceiling like my Grannie had or a

stinkwood table, you know. My husband and me have got a nice house. Even a spare room. When he comes back, we'll get my ma to come down for a bit. Do her back good to rest.

No, my husband is on the Border doing his duty.

Didn't you know?

Yes, there's lots of Coloureds up there. There's no colourbar in desperation.

(She laughs wryly)

No, how can you say that! Why should I be bitter? Look at me now – I'm happy.

(Pause)

But I must say, every time when I pass that house in Graaff-Reinett with the high ceilings and big windows and wooden floors. And I think of my Grannie crying by candlelight for her lost life, I can't help but hate. Just a little

SCENE FOUR

(Midday. Harsh sunlight. Round the pool, Manie is setting umbrellas carefully.)

INTERCOM: Calling Dr Prinsloo. To reception please, Dr Prinsloo. We would also like to remind patients of the special Yoga Class starting at 2:00 in the Gymnasium.

MANIE: Don't make me laugh. Yoga? Don't give them yoga, give the poor bastards yogurt, shame! All that money and not even a peanut in the house. My ma was right, bless her: what the tummy is full of, the hips show like flags! True Mammie my dear, true!
(Killer enters. He is a sexy young stud)
Hell, the spirits have sure been listening to someone's prayers around here. Afternoon Sir.
(No reaction)
My name is Manie, sir. I am at your service any time of the day between seven and seven.
I place your bets on the tote, buy you a bottle of the good Lord's own five-year-old medicine, or any other tonic that the doctors didn't order: cigars, cigarettes, chocolates, biltong, boerebeskuit, droëwors and the May edition of Playboy magazine.
I can get you into any room in this establishment for the cuddlement of the occupant if that is your fancy, sir, and all this and more, for only a token donation to the MSD Fund.
(Pause)
The MSD Fund! Manie's Drink Fund? That's me then. Manie.

KILLER: Fuck off man.

MANIE: *(After a speechless moment)* You heard what the man said ...

(He exits.)

(Killer looks into the pool. Spits. Looks up at the sun then around. Sits in a chair to tan, then takes off his jacket. Takes great care with his smart new clothes. Sits. Lights a cigarette, looks at his watch and takes off his shoes.

Keeps on socks. Sits back and smokes.

Santie arrives from her massage with a big bag, settles herself down on a chair near him. Killer watches her. She smiles at him.)

SANTIE: Hallo.
(She goes through the whole process of taking off her gown and rubbing sun-oil on her body. Killer watches perplexed.)
Pity there's no water, I could do with a swim. I suppose one could go for a cold shower if it gets too hot. I had a lovely cold shower after my sauna. My, but it's hot in there. My hair immediately went into a friz.
(She lies back. He is aware of her race. She looks up)
Have you just arrived?
(He nods)
Don't worry, it's not so bad. I was also quite nervous in the beginning for what they would do, but I've had a massage and a sauna and really I feel fantastic. I haven't had the you-know-what yet, but I'll cross that bridge when I come to it.
(Giggles)
Are you here to lose weight?
(Killer gets up and slowly takes all his clothes off down to his scants. He has a magnificent body and shows it to her with a casual arrogance. Then he sits again, having made his point)
No ... you don't need to lose weight.
(She is embarrassed)
It's very beautiful here. The surroundings. Have you been here before?
(No reaction)
This is my first time.

INTERCOM: Mrs. Steyn, urgently to reception please, Mrs Steyn.

SANTIE: *(horrified)* Oh my God, why urgent ... my husband ... excuse me ...

(She exits quickly, leaving her things behind.)

Killer follows her off with his gaze. Shakes his head and gets up slowly. Walks over to her things and peers down at them, looks around in case he's being watched, then looks into her bag carefully. Finds nothing. Glances at her book and smirks. Picks up her suntan lotion and slowly, sexily rubs it over himself lavishly.

Grace enters quickly and bumbles across to him.)

GRACE: Hi. My God, I'll never get everything done in time. I'm late for my facial and it's nearly lunchtime andJesus-God-Killer-what-are-you-doing-here!
Oh my God, put on your clothes, you're half-naked!
What are you doing here half-naked for God's sake!
(Looks around panicky)
They see everything here; they watch from the windows, you must get dressed. Guests aren't allowed to swim. You can't sit around in your underpants, oh my God, you're so beautiful, you're like a well-crumbed schnitzel in my reach!
(She pants with nerves)
I don't know what to say ... you remembered our anniversary – it was 10 days ago but never mind ... oh my darling, you remembered ...
(She embraces him lovingly. Slides her hands over his body and kissed him all over the face cooing)
My darling! I missed you so ... oh sis you're as slippery as a fish ... ugh! Oh no, look at my beautiful gown, all oily ... oh my God, Killer, you can't stand around half-naked ... come to my room quickly, before anyone sees ... oh my heart beating like a drum. Feel. Feel. You can actually feel it hey? I've lost six kilos in a week, I said I would. I swear I'll lose ten more. I want to be right for you, my baby. Come ... oh, shit ... my facial ... oh fuck the facial ... here, I'll help you carry your clothes ... Jesus where you get these clothes?

KILLER: *(A nasty tone)* Don't touch my clothes.

GRACE: You'll get oil all over them. Expensive gear ... did you use my Credit Card?

KILLER: Just leave the clothes.

GRACE: OK, OK, but you can't sit around like that, Killer, I'll get too embarrassed ... please Killer ...

KILLER: *(with charm)* You look thin, hey Gracie?

GRACE: Really?
(She twirls around; nearly falls)
Hell, I get so drunk in my head. I get nothing to eat here; I'm bloody starving; I've got brain damage. Where am I thin? Hey? Tell me where?

KILLER: In your face.

GRACE: And?

KILLER: All over. I can see. You've got a figure again.

GRACE: Figure like a trigger?

KILLER: And a bum like a drum. *(Laughs loudly)*

GRACE: Shhh, don't swear so loudly, they'll hear.
(He walks to her swaggeringly, kisses her on the cheek. Presses himself against her sexily.)

KILLER: I brought you a present.
(She is aware of him; giggles)

GRACE: No Killer, true's God you'll have me thrown out of here and then where will we be? So why didn't you come on our anniversary? Oh never mind ...
(Kisses him passionately, then cutely in baby talk)
So? What you bling Glacie? A present?

KILLER: Talk properly man, you sound like my grandmother, after she had a stroke.

GRACE: Thanks, you really makes me feel young and healthy ... I'm sorry, schnukkles, I'm so nervy someone will catch you here like that.
(He struts around, she giggles)
No sis man, Killer, listen ... listen, at least tuck it away properly, so it looks like a bathing costume. Please man, don't spoil everything.

KILLER: What am I spoiling? There's just you and me. Who cares what hangs out.

GRACE: They'll see!

KILLER: Who'll see? Some coloured chick who reckons she's the queen of Sheba? Let her see, nothing new to her I can bet.

GRACE: That's Mrs. Steyn you're talking about. They say she's very nice.

KILLER: Bet you didn't reckon they allow them in here, hey? I bet you would've gone somewhere else – you vote for the government.

GRACE: Ag, that was last time; things have changed. Look, I don't mind mixing with decent people, Killer. I've told you this before. As long as people behave, I'm quite happy to share. OK. Now ...
(*She sits and wipes her hands on Santie's towel*) .
Do tell me? Did you miss me?

KILLER: I wrote you letters, didn't I?

GRACE: Oh? No wait, I don't think I got them ... it's that damn receptionist with her snotty smile ... wait till I ...
(*She gets up to go in*)

KILLER: Oh well, the post's so bad nowadays ...

GRACE: How many letters? What did you write?

KILLER: You know then ... missing you ... things are OK at home. The car's OK. Oh yes, I dented it against the other one ...

GRACE: (*Sharply*) What? Dented which car?

KILLER: The Alpha ...

GRACE: What!

KILLER: I'm joking.

GRACE: The Alpha cost me R14,000, you damn baboon!

KILLER: Hey, listen Gracie man, I said I was joking – the Alpha's OK. Everything's OK. I was joking. And don't call me a baboon, alright?

GRACE: Don't make jokes like that. Shock makes me fat.

KILLER: OK, just don't call me names. OK?

GRACE: OK
(*Pause*)
What else did you write in all your letters.

KILLER: Can't remember. Listen, when do you inmates graze around here?

GRACE: Graze is the word! Just now. First tell me: are Dinky and Flora OK?

KILLER: Bark all the damn day and night.

GRACE: They miss their mother, shame.

KILLER: I told the gardenboy to bugger off. That black's ripping you off, Gracie man.

GRACE: But what about my garden?

KILLER: I've got a buddy, he knows gardens. He's OK.

GRACE: A buddy?

KILLER: You said I could invite buddies if I felt lonely.

GRACE: What buddies?

KILLER: You don't know them. Some guys from Army days.

GRACE: Girls?

KILLER: Gangbangs all night long every night ja!

GRACE: Ja, sexy bastard.

KILLER: I said, don't call me names! First 'baboon' and now 'bastard'!

GRACE: Sorry. Sorry.
(*sighs*)
Pity there's no water, you could swim a bit.

KILLER: That coloured girl says there's a cold shower near here.

GRACE: There's a nice shower in my room. Come Killer, let's go to my room?

KILLER: Cross your legs, Grace, I know what you want, but show some breeding man! Everything in good time. Didn't you know to keep the best for last, hey? Didn't they teach you that at school?

GRACE: I can't remember what happened last year.
(*Laughs*)
You must be starving! Hang on, I'll arrange a nice salad for you. And some bread and baked potato.
Shame, you must eat, you're still growing.
(*He bucks his groin at her; she shrieks*)
Someone will see, Killer!

(*Santie enters slowly with a telegram.*)

SANTIE: Hallo Mrs. Lipschitz.

GRACE: Who's dead?

SANTIE: No, just a telegram saying hallo. From my husband. I thought it was bad news. Telegrams always are.

KILLER: Hey 'Mrs' Lipschitz, she thinks you're my ma!

GRACE: Shhh man. So how was your massage?

SANTIE: Very nice, thank you, and yours?

GRACE: Mine's after the "banquet"; helps get down the roast turkey and Yorkshire pudding.

SANTIE: Truly?

GRACE: Wishful thinking.

(*Killer is oiling himself pointedly with Santie's oil.*)

SANTIE: Oh, you've got my oil.

GRACE: Hey? Killer man!

SANTIE: No, it's OK. I thought I'd lost it. Please use it.

GRACE: No come on, Killer, it's hers!

KILLER: I'm busy.

GRACE: *(Hisses)* Give the maid her oil, man!
(looks Santie up and down)
For God's sake ...
(She exits)

SANTIE: Did I say anything?

KILLER: It's what you look like that kills her.

SANTIE: Oh, does she object to me being here then?

KILLER: Touchy hey?

SANTIE: Your laws don't reach me here, you know.

KILLER: Touchy hey?

SANTIE: Wouldn't you be?

KILLER: Your figure.

SANTIE: What?

KILLER: Any old fat lady would hate you for your figure. You're a beautiful chick. She isn't.

SANTIE: Oh. I'm sorry, I thought ...

KILLER: Like I said: touchy. Can I use your towel?

SANTIE: Yes.

KILLER: And you?

SANTIE: I'll just sit a bit ...

(He lies down on her towel. She sits. A moment of emptiness. Then Elaine and Conrad enter.)

ELAINE: I'll get you some lunch, then you must go.

CONRAD: I'm not hungry.

ELAINE: Take off something, you must be boiling.

(She passes Killer and exits. He whistles.)

KILLER: Jeez, now that's living proof that this place works.

CONRAD: That's my wife, if you don't mind.

KILLER: No, I don't mind. Just hurts me to see all those bones sticking out.

CONRAD: She's been ill.

KILLER: What's wrong with her?

CONRAD: Not all the patients here are as healthy as you.

KILLER: I don't see why not. Nothing to stop you from being healthy, you know. It's the only choice you're really left with in the end: you can be healthy or you can't be healthy – no-one can decide that for you. That and life or death: only you can choose.

CONRAD: Quite a pocket philosopher, it seems.

KILLER: It's the way I see things, that's all. Want a cigarette?

CONRAD: They don't like people to smoke. It's unhealthy.

KILLER: They can get stuffed. Want a smoke ... eh ... Mrs. Steyn?

SANTIE: I don't.

(Grace enters with a tray.)

GRACE: Well, don't snap your vertebrae, Sir Gallahad. This inhuman effort can only add to my monumental weightloss. Here Killer man, take the damn plate from me, I can't bend down ...

(Killer takes the plate; pulls a face.)

KILLER: What's this slop!

CONRAD: Nothing to stop you from being healthy, you know.

GRACE: Be nice to the food! I'd give my fortune for just a bit of that, I swear!

KILLER: What've you got?

GRACE: Apple – again! Yuk!

SANTIE: But you're losing weight, so don't worry.

GRACE: I'm starving to death. Oh ... let me smell your lettuce-leaf, Killer.

KILLER: Kinky. Want to sniff my carrot?

GRACE: The potato ... the bread ... oh my God, why am I fat fat fat fat! I want to be thin!

CONRAD: Then eat your apple.

GRACE: I want to be thin and eat the potato!

(Elaine enters with a plate for Conrad. Sees Killer for the first time and stops in horrified recognition. He doesn't respond at all.)

ELAINE: Here Conrad ...

GRACE: Where's your food?

ELAINE: I'm not hungry ...
(She stares at Killer)
Really ...

GRACE: You'll blow away in the wind. Killer give her a piece of bread, seeing that they're so selfish with their damn cake.

ELAINE: Killer?

GRACE: He's got a real name but nobody cares. Hey, Killer, this is Elaine.
(To Elaine)
That's him. My Killer Joubert!

ELAINE: Oh ...

KILLER: *(waves)* Yis.

ELAINE: Yis ...
(She looks disturbed; sits near Conrad)

(Pause)

SANTIE: Well, I'll get my food.

ELAINE: Oh ... I'm sorry ...

SANTIE: No, it's OK. Good for me to learn the routine. It's OK.

(She exits)

CONRAD: Have some of my salad, Elaine.
(She shakes her head; stares at Killer eating)
It's very good.

GRACE: Oh my God, I could die! Offer me the salad! I'd do anything for some salad!

KILLER: Want some of mine?

GRACE: Just a teeny-weeny bit, my baby. A bit of the stuff there with a piece of that and a bite of this ...

ELAINE: Grace, don't. You know what happens when you cheat.

GRACE: I blow up like a balloon, I know. Get behind me, Satan!

KILLER: Calling me names agai?

GRACE: Calling a spade a spade.

KILLER: So how much will you pay for this? Hey? Smell ... mmm ... nice hey ...

GRACE: Oh no, go away ...

ELAINE: Don't tease her ...

KILLER: You want this? How much?

GRACE: I'll give you ten rand.

KILLER: Not worth it. I'll eat it instead. Mmmmm.... nice.

GRACE: Twenty rand!

KILLER: So give it!

GRACE: My money's locked up in the safe! For God's sake man, I'll give you a cheque!

KILLER: We've got witnesses.

(Santie enters.)

SANTIE: I've also got an apple, shame.

KILLER: Mrs. Steyn, you're a witness. OK? Gone to the thin lady in the fat suit for R20!
(He gives the food to Grace and she eats)

GRACE: For what I've just received I'm truly platzing – mazeltov! Phew ... I'm exhausted.

KILLER: Want more?

ELAINE: That's enough now.

KILLER: Some bread?

GRACE: I'm busy with my delicious apple ...

KILLER: Smell the grain ... sniff ...

GRACE: R50!

KILLER: R100!

GRACE: R60!

KILLER: R110!

GRACE: Please ... OK OK, one hundred!

KILLER: Sold to the lady with the slavering jaws.
(He throws it at her; she catches the bread and devours)

ELAINE: Grace! That's enough!

(Killer laughs and pours the rest of his food into the empty pool. Grace wails and peers down at it.)

GRACE: Oh, no ... you've killed it ...

KILLER: R130 you owe me Gracie. Shame, now you'll have to stay here for another week. All because you were greedy.

(Grace is crying. Santie goes to her gently.)

SANTIE: You won't pick up weight Mrs. Lipschitz, not after a little piece of bread like that.

KILLER: All the things that money can buy and still greedy. Makes you think, hey.

CONRAD: Let's go to your room and pack your things, Elaine.

INTERCOM: Mrs. Lipschitz, come for your message please, Mrs. Lipschitz.

(Grace gets up and walks off sniffing, helped by Santie.)

KILLER: *(calls)* Hey, Gracie? Don't cross the cheque, make it cash!

(Gracie and Santie exit: Killer struts around the pool, watched by Elaine).

INTERCOM: We would like to draw your attention to the fact that smoking is not permitted round the pool. Thank you for your cooperation.

KILLER: You're welcome.

CONRAD: *(sighs)* Elaine?

ELAINE: Yes ... yes, you go and sort things out.

*(Conrad exits shaking his head.
Killer comes towards Elaine with a smile.)*

KILLER: You're too thin.

ELAINE: Smart-arse!

KILLER: Hey, don't call me names, Lady.

ELAINE: Don't call me 'lady', smart-arse, I've got a name.

KILLER: Me too.

ELAINE: Yes, I can read.
(She points to the tattoo on his upper arm)
And don't you have an anchor tattooed somewhere?

KILLER: How do you know? Did Gracie tell you? Where is that fat old bitch?

ELAINE: Losing weight for you.

KILLER: Thanks for nothing. When I think of her, I want to hurl.

ELAINE: Small price to pay, I'm sure.

KILLER: You really don't fancy me, hey!

ELAINE: You don't remember me.

KILLER: From where? I've never come here before. I need some money ...

ELAINE: Oh, I gave you money. That wasn't the problem, like buying a kiss at the school fair. It was being with someone that counted, someone beautiful who could become a memory to be relived when everything else stopped mattering.

KILLER: What the hell are you talking about?

ELAINE: We met a few months ago. I drove past you and then I stopped and reversed and opened the door and gave you a lift. And we went to a hotel and you made love to me. You said I was beautiful. You said I was 'quite a chick'.

(Pause. He remembers her.)

KILLER: You were. What happened to you?

ELAINE: I've been sick.

KILLER: I didn't know you were married.

ELAINE: I didn't tell you. Were you already with Grace then?

KILLER: Yes.
(He looks at her amazed)
I would never have thought ...

ELAINE: I often try and remember all the details of your body ... of his body.
(Traces in the air with her finger)
The scar ... the little anchor ... I think time has added little lies to the dream – I vary it from time to time. And here you are, in hot flesh and cold blood, probably the last person in the world that I need in my life right now. Don't look at me like that
(She turns his head away from her)
My husband thought I'd left him for another man. And in all the time I've been pretending, there's only been that one night. C.O.D.
(She turns him to her and softly kisses him on his mouth.)

SCENE FIVE

(On the massage-table, Grace is lying face-down being massaged. She reads from a recipebook with feeling.)

GRACE: "Select a loin of pork and have the butcher trim the ribs and form it into a crown. Scrape the flesh from the bones between the ribs as far as the lean meat and trim off. Shape each piece in a semi-circle with ribs outside, and sew the pieces together to form a crown. Cover the tip of each rib bone with a cube of salt pork or a square of bacon around the lower part of the crown. Rub the meat well with mixed salt, pepper and flour ..."
(She licks her lips)
Mmmm "Fill the center of the crown with cranberry stuffing or apple stuffing and roast in a moderate oven allowing 30 to 35 minutes to the pound. Remove the cubes of pork or potato from the rib bones before serving and replace with paper frills. Garnish the platter with glazed apples and potatoes Duchesse ..."
(Sighs)
Oh sis. Got any bubblegum?
Oh. So where do you people eat?
Oh, same as us? Shame. So ... eh ... you don't bring lunchboxes with ham sandwiches and schmaltz on rye or things like that? No, I didn't think so.
(Pause. She sighs)
I've got a very high IQ, you wouldn't say so, hey?
Tactful. Never mind, as long as I keep fooling myself, that's all that matters.
Hey, have you heard the one about the blind man? Hey? This blind man's been sitting in the street for 60 years begging – becoming a landmark.
"A rand for the blind," he'd say, "a rand ..."
Inflation. Penny for the guy? Forget. He didn't only talk like a Jew, he thought like a Boer. Anyway, one day he says to this person who'd dropped five cents in his hand –
"Listen, rich man, do me a favour. I've been blind for 60 years. Tell me vot do I look like? Do I look like Schteve McQueen, like John Travolta who sounds like a nice Jewish boy? Vot do I look like?"
The answer comes back through a cleared throat:
"Ja well OK, to start with – you're black ..."
(She screams with laughter)
Damn good hey? I can never tell jokes. True's God, even I don't get them sometimes, they're so true to real life. They hurt sometimes. I told you he came to visit me, hey?
Mmmm, fantastic man. So clever sometimes, I can't believe there's so much in one head.
I don't have plans for marriage, do me a favour. For the birds!
Kids? God forbid.
No, I like kids. It's just ... maybe later, there's time. You see, Killer still has ambitions. I want him to keep an open mind when he works.
(She sighs and winces)
Ow man, that's too hard!
That's better ... you got kids?
Really?
You lie – six! Don't they drive you crazy?
They'd drive me round the bend. If a man's a full – time job, what do you do when you still got kids? Divide yourself into A and B? Mind you, I'm the right size for an equal split.
Grace. God, what mother has the foresight to call her girlie Grace. There should be a law against it – Grace Ernestine Lipshitz! It's so terrible I nearly envy Adolf Hitler or the Engelbert Humperdincks, shame.
(Closes her eyes)
Mmmm, that's nice. You know, as soon as I've got my body right, I'm going to have my hair dyed sort-of off-blonde and I might have my nose done again. They say it's good to respray a car every now and then. They say it breaks the monotony of looking at the same old thing every morning when you open the garage.
(She begins to cry softly, hiding it carefully)
Hey? No ... I've got something in my eye ... must be dust or something. Of course this place is clean! What do you think I pay all the money for? My health? That's enough now, it's starting to irritate me. How much more time have I got? Do my feet then ...
(Pause. Then she giggles)
Ticklish ... mmm ... he's been having friends round while I've been here, little bastard. Baboon. Bugger. They're all the same: bastards, baboons and buggers, the other killers in my life. Charm the

pettycoat off you and then make off with the petty cash. Oh well, I suppose that's what money's for – to give those that got it, that what they don't.

(She gives a huge yawn)

It's all too much for a white woman: no eating, no drinking, no smoking and on an empty stomach who can have sex? God, you might as well just order a coffin and lie in it.

Oh yes? When you order yours, Mrs. Greenwood, get me one too. But I want cream with mine!

(Smiles and closes her eyes).

SCENE SIX

(Afternoon, round the empty pool.)

INTERCOM: Manie. To reception, urgently please.

(Santie and Conrad enter from opposite sides. Conrad carries a suitcase.)

SANTIE: Have you seen Manie? The Coloured cleaner?

CONRAD: No. Have you seen Elaine?
(Santie shakes her head)
Would she be having treatment do you think?

SANTIE: I don't know ... maybe he's cleaning the Gym.

*(She exits.
Conrad looks around and sighs.)*

CONRAD: What am I doing here ...

(He exits)

INTERCOM: Manie? You are required urgently at reception.

(Killer enters.)

KILLER: Who's this Manie? A doctor?
(He looks off at Elaine)
So don't talk to me, see if I care, I'm used to it.
(He does his own question/answer routine)
Who's this Manie? A doctor? No, man don't be such a clot, Manie is a nurse. Oh a nurse! Ja. A sexy nurse? Of course, how could I be so thick. Thick!
And who is that thin lady standing catching a quick smoke behind the shrub?
Oh that lady? That's Elaine and she's a bit crazy.
A bit crazy? Ja, careful, you might be thick, but when a lady pulls you behind the garagewall and tries to get you going, careful.
(Pause. Elaine enters smoking)
OK I'm sorry, I can't just do it like that *(snaps fingers)* and I'm not into kneetrembles.
(looks around)
Anyway I'm not so keen on getting onto a job with a husband in the area. There are rules you know.

ELAINE: Alright I'm sorry, I made a mistake. Don't be so shocked, I'm sure it's not the first time that the goods have been returned unopened.

KILLER: Why don't you just throw stones at me? You might improve your aim with practice and draw some blood. It will at least give you some colour on your lips. You look half-dead, if you'll excuse my straightforwardness.

ELAINE: But you're wrong: I'm not half-dead – I'm three-quarters dead. When the autumn leaves fall, like in that song, they should cover me completely, because that's as long as I've got. How's that for straightforwardness. No, don't make it worse by being honest too. I know what you see – an old woman still pretending to be Elaine Greer. My hair fell out after they gave me the chemotherapy treatment. Oh yes, I had that with all the other terrifying things that have no ordinary names like cat or dog or disprin; they poisoned me to cure me, to stop from rotting away. You only rot when you're dead and I'm already rotting, so I must not be dug out of this grave by anyone. My son must remember me for what I was like, not this.

KILLER: So you're not just on a diet ...

ELAINE: And it's not catching, I can promise you.

KILLER: Doesn't he know?

ELAINE: He thinks it was a nervous breakdown. Partly true.

KILLER: Are you going to tell him?

ELAINE: No. I used to play tennis, you know. Quite well too. Now I also can't play the piano any longer. My concentration is going. Manie reads to me. He's my friend. He doesn't know what I looked like before I came here. He's seen so many radical changes over short periods of time, that he won't notice me suddenly wither up and vanish – people pay good money to be able to do that. They help me here, not only to do the necessary bodily functions that keep me going like an old motorcar on blocks, but they also don't make me feel like a loser. I suppose it's because they're used to that noble breed of human. I'm encouraged to believe that life is hard and dying easy, and so I don't miss the energy that was Elaine Greer. I enjoy the gossip and making the fat ones cry when I read them recipes over their lettuce and hot water.
(*She laughs*).
You see, Killer, it's only here that I'm still one of the strong ones. All I can manage to eat are the bits and pieces the fat ones starve on. I'm Headgirl of Greenacres.

INTERCOM: We would like to remind patients that the movie being shown in the lounge this evening will be 'Some Like it Hot' starring Marilyn Monroe. 8:00 in the Lounge. Thank you.

KILLER: Why are you telling me your secrets?

ELAINE: Because I want you to help me.

KILLER: I'm not a doctor or a priest.

ELAINE: You're a man.

KILLER: What must I do?

ELAINE: We must help my husband leave and forget me. You see, I love my son more than anything in the world – more than my life.

KILLER: More than your husband?

ELAINE: He is my life.

(*Santie enters.*)

SANTIE: Hallo. Have you people seen Manie anywhere?

ELAINE: They've called for him a few times. I think maybe he's gone out for me.

SANTIE: Oh, because ...
(*She stops, not wanting to talk in front of Killer*)
Never mind.
(*She exits quickly*)

ELAINE: She's so young and healthy ...

KILLER: So why's she here?

ELAINE: (*shrugs*) Does one need a reason for everything? Does there have to be a reason why I kissed you? Why I wanted sex from you under these circumstances? Subjecting you to semi-necrophelia?
(*She laughs*)
Never mind. I haven't kissed a strange man since last year's New Years Eve and then he, drunk sod, thought I was his wife till I bit his lip and sobered him up. Then when my lips touched yours and your well-stocked groin grinded into my thighs, I knew I had chosen well and that I at least was safe from any fantasy you might develop.

KILLER: What are you talking about?

ELAINE: Killer's Fantasy: Lady needs love; I got lot to give. Let me hold her, love her, make her happy if never well and into the sunset we'll limp and she'll die in my arms and they'll make the movie and call it Elaine's Story. You're none of that, thank God. Penny in the slot and pull the handle.

KILLER: Just a minute ...

ELAINE: My penny's in. I promise you. I'll make it worth your while.

KILLER: Here he comes. Pretend we've been talking ... (He is flustered) .

(Conrad enters)

CONRAD: Don't play games with me Elaine. I've got to get back to pick up the kid.

ELAINE: You'll never guess what we've been doing.

CONRAD: There's one shoe I can't find.

ELAINE: We've been talking, me and the Killer and we're not such strangers after all.

KILLER: Well ...

ELAINE: He made a pass at me.

KILLER: He says he can't find a shoe of yours.

ELAINE: And he kissed me.

CONRAD: I put all those medicines in a box. Some bottles don't have labels. Aren't you going over the top with all the pills, Elaine?

ELAINE: We had a kneetremble behind the garage, didn't we Killer?

KILLER: Maybe they're vitamin pills, you know? They're OK.

CONRAD: All pills give me the creeps.

ELAINE: And then a space ship landed and the spirits of darkness danced out on the edge of a rainbow with bones in their hair and autumn in the smiles.

CONRAD: Just check the room for anything I might have missed, Elaine.

ELAINE: And death turned out to be my friend after all.

(Santie enters breathlessly.)

SANTIE: Help me please, she's fallen ...

(She exits followed by Conrad)

KILLER: What are you trying to do!

ELAINE: I don't know ...

SANTIE: *(off)* Hey you, help here man!

(Killer exits.)

ELAINE: *(s.v.)* I don't know what to do!

(They enter helping Grace who is obviously in pain.)

GRACE: Oh my God, I think I've broken my hip.

KILLER: You can bounce off your hip. Lean against me ...

CONRAD: I'll call a doctor.

KILLER: She'll be OK.

CONRAD: She might have hurt herself.

KILLER: Serve her right. Getting pissed in the middle of the day.

SANTIE: How? From where?

GRACE: *(pissed)* How dare you say that!

KILLER: If whiffs could spell, you'd have in big letters above your head the word: B-R-A-N-D-Y!

GRACE: Rubbish. I don't ever drink!

KILLER: Tell that to the Department of National Security. Move those goodies off the chair.

(They place the wincing Grace on the chair.)

GRACE: Something's definitely broken; I can feel it sticking into me.
(Killer puts his hand down her kaftan; she giggles)
 Sis Killer, don't be so medical! Killer! For God's sake ...
(He brings her a slab of chocolate out, then one or two other bits of food. Grace laughs weakly)
 My lover the magician. We could open a shop and make a fortune.

ELAINE: Now where did you get those!

GRACE: I found them!

SANTIE: Found all this? Round here? Where!

GRACE: Never you mind, get back to your ironing! Someone planted them on me, I swear, someone who wants me placed in a compromising position ... ahhhh Killer ...

(Killer has dived into her kaftan again and produces a small bottle of brandy.)

KILLER: And this? Nail polish-remover?

ELAINE: It's gone beyond a joke, you know Grace. It's just not funny any more!

GRACE: I found this in a dustbin.

ELAINE: They're trying to help you get healthy and you do everything in your power to cheat.

GRACE: If I got a rand for every time I succeeded I'd buy the place and turn it into a junk food take-a-way!

INTERCOM: Mrs. Steyn, to reception please, Mrs. Steyn.

SANTIE: Oh hell, time for my "fat farm-fart". I'll see you ...
(She exits)

GRACE: That I appreciate. I don't have much of a feel for imagery but swear to God that I appreciate.
(Calls)
 Sis!
(Sighs)
 Oh what's a fart between friends.

ELAINE: *(laughs)* You'll live, Grace.

KILLER: Some people have all the luck.
(Then realizes what he said, gives Elaine a look. They glance at Conrad who looks bored)
 Ja, well, no, OK, fine ... there's a saying: rubbish never rots.

GRACE: Same to you with nobs on, you bastard ... OK OK no names! You ... Thing!
Oh leave me alone, all you suddenly-concerned vampires! I fell! So big deal!
Eve fell; Lucretia Borgia fell; Josephine Bonaparte, Eva Peron – we all fell. And who are the ones who didn't fall? Mrs. Thingie and Princess Whatsit and Dora Drek? R100 for the first who remembers and hangers-on don't qualify.

KILLER: I'm not playing.

GRACE: You bet you're not playing. Your little overdraft is hurting what's not decent to mention in proper company, present squatters excluded. Give me my bottle!
(*She takes it from him angrily*)
Jeez! I lay on the meatrack and thought about my life: my life! With its pros and cons and both those refer to you, my dear Killer. Or it's "dear Mrs. Lipschitz, we're a struggling theatre group (multi-racial also) and we need money" to "Dear Madame/Sir/Miss, do you... realize that ten thousand innocent animals die each year because of ..."
Fuck the animals and the arts! What about me? Me: Grace Ernestine Lipschitz, virgin of this parish is struggling also and is an innocent dying each year a little, laugh by laugh.
I'm surrounded by priceless art objects and all the studs bump against them and say: "oh shit shame, my old lady's also got one from OK Bazaars!"
(*She swigs*)
What am I doing this for: the Guinness Book of Records? For you? The one-armed bandit with BBBIIIGGG appetite!

ELAINE: Penny in the slot and pull the handle.

GRACE: And don't you start with your fancy words. I saw through you a long time ago, Miss Magnificent, Miss Morbid, you with your terrible secret and offensive skin-and-bone! Plait your hair for heaven and leave me to live my life!

CONRAD: We've got to go, Elaine. I don't want to be late for the boy.

GRACE: Is he still here? I thought you two were getting divorced or something.

CONRAD: No.

ELAINE: Did you know that Killer and I knew each other quite ... eh ... well some time ago?

KILLER: Christ, you don't waste time ...

ELAINE: When I was deciding whether to stay the loving clone called wife, we met and that was the beginning of the end, Conrad. Yes, in more ways than one.

CONRAD: This ... thing?

KILLER: Watch it!

ELAINE: It was new, it was exciting. I didn't know he was yours Grace. I should say I'm sorry.
(*Grace swigs from the bottle.*)

GRACE: Oh, nothing new, nothing even borrowed and I don't believe you my dear, I know very little that's blue. Killer the boring: wet kiss, hot hands, hurt, pinch, press, rip the expensive knickers, on the floor, more push more press more breath, pant, sweat, words: Gina, Joan, Johnnie, fantasy, schoolgirls, I'm near, I'm near ... more fantasy, clench the fists, own image in mirror, ego ego I'm there!

KILLER: Shut up Gracie, you're talking rubbish.

GRACE: I'm there, oh Stevie, oh Harry, oh Gracie! Hell Gracie I was carried away, that was good man!
(*Laughs*)
Behold Killer the Umpteenth, last of a long line of ... (*makes a raspberry*) ... farts!

KILLER: Then find someone else to write your sloppy letters to – make photocopies and send them around: dear to-whom-it-may-turn-on, I'm lonely, I'm rich, pic and cheque included, I need your love, I need your love ...

CONRAD: I find all this unnecessary.

KILLER: Then go for a walk! Hey Gracie, I need you love ...

ELAINE: Don't be cruel to her ...

(Killer grabs Elaine round the waist in a dance.)

KILLER: So who's working for who? Come Mrs. Greer, I need your love, baby, it's true, I love you ...

(He twirls her dangerously near to the edge of the pool.)

ELAINE: *(gasps)* That's enough ... please ...

KILLER: Open your whatever and let me in, oh oh oh, I need your love ...

ELAINE: *(screams)* Please!!!!

(Conrad stops them and pulls Elaine from Killer angrily.)

CONRAD: Keep your hands off my wife. Can't you see she's ill!

KILLER: Can't you see she's ill! *(laughs)* Well, nervous breakdown or not, your wife's got a lover!

GRACE: Hey? Who's got a lover?

KILLER: She. Mrs. Wife.

GRACE: You?

KILLER: Very funny.

GRACE: Out of her price-range I'd say.

CONRAD: Get away from the side of the pool, Elaine.

KILLER: *(mimicks)* Get away from the side of the pool, Elaine.

CONRAD: I think we can go now.

KILLER: I think we can go now.

CONRAD: Look, I'm not impressed by you.

KILLER: Look, I'm not impressed by you.

(Pause.)

GRACE: Stop being silly. Who's got a lover? I can't hear when I'm hungry.

ELAINE: *(quietly)* I've got a lover.

GRACE: I never saw anyone.

ELAINE: You were eating at the time.

CONRAD: I'm her lover.

KILLER: I'm her lover.

CONRAD: Stop being silly.

KILLER: Stop being silly.

ELAINE: You're my husband Conrad.

CONRAD: And your lover.

KILLER: And your lover.

ELAINE: You see, my husband can't take a hint.

GRACE: That's a special gift.

ELAINE: He's a doctor at the hospital where they treated me.

KILLER: For the nervous breakdown.

GRACE: I didn't know you were a doctor?

ELAINE: No, not Conrad, the next one.

CONRAD: What am I supposed to say to all this?

ELAINE: Go away. I'll ring you sometime.

GRACE: No, hang on, shit, I've been reading novels to keep my mind off sweeties and suddenly you come out with a Real Life Drama! Give me more meat, more juice, more flavour! I can't taste just bones! Tell me more about the stuffing!

KILLER: Jeez, they starve them into madness here!

ELAINE: I left my husband the bookworm. Via the one-armed bandit, I met another man: the doctor. I think I might go and live with him when I get out of here.

KILLER: In the Autumn?

ELAINE: Yes. He can make me well.

(She and Killer look at each other.)

CONRAD: *(tightly)* Elaine, can we talk in private?

KILLER: Elaine, can we talk in private?

(Conrad lashes out and catches Killer by surprise. Killer falls stunned.)

GRACE: *(screams)* For God's sake, I hate this sort of thing!

(Killer on his back and Conrad confront each other. Moment of tension. Then Elaine goes to Killer and helps him up.)

ELAINE: Boys will be boys. *(To Conrad)* Well done.

CONRAD: What are you trying so hard to tell me.

ELAINE: Go home.

(Manie enters breathlessly.)

MANIE: Afternoon, Miss Elaine, I got them.
(He waves some photos)

GRACE: Listen, where's my Fair Lady! You were supposed to get me a bloody Fair Lady, not a Car magazine. God, from where do I know about cars!

MANIE: What is this now, Miss Lipschitz?

GRACE: I got cashew nuts, gin and tonic, lemon, matches, kakky Car magazine and cigars!

MANIE: That was for Mr. Harrison.

GRACE: Do I look like Mr. Harrison?

MANIE: Must I answer that?

GRACE: Where's my Kentucky Fried? My yogurt? Christ I had to dig around old Levine's dirt bin to find a bottle of angels sweat. Really, what do I pay you for!

CONRAD: There's some chicken in my wife's room.

ELAINE: (*pointedly*) In my room.

(*Manie looks at Conrad and gets the hint*)

MANIE: Ah, Mr. Greer. I see. (*Puts the photos away*) Just not my day in many a way!

GRACE: I don't know why I pay you!

KILLER: She says so to all the men.

(*Grace turns on him.*)

GRACE: Listen, why are you so horrible to me, hey? We don't even know these people so why do you make fun of me in front of them! Suddenly I'm not good enough, hey? Until you need me to buy you another expensive suit and silk shirt and smart shoes?

INTERCOM: Manie, to reception please. Urgently.

ELAINE: They've been calling you all afternoon.

MANIE: I was supposed to be on duty. Now I've seen my chips ...

GRACE: Foul your own front doorstep and then still have the chutzpah to knock and ask for air-freshener.

KILLER: It's a joke, Grace, I'll explain later ...

GRACE: Joke!

MANIE: ... By the way, the apple of your eye won the under-8 big race. (*he winks at her*) Captured in glowing polaroidal-colour!

(*Santie enters dressed to leave.*)

SANTIE: There you are. Everyone's been looking for you.

MANIE: On my way.

SANTIE: Sorry to hear.

MANIE: People lose their jobs all the time, nothing new.

SANTIE: No, man, about your family ...

MANIE: Oh no man, my family's not allowed up here. They must stay at home. Hells bells with chocolate nobs on ...

(*He exits quickly*)

GRACE: (*to Killer*) And you didn't even bring me a chocolate, bastard.

SANTIE: Doesn't he know then?

ELAINE: About what?

SANTIE: His family. They say they've been looking for him all afternoon with the news.

CONRAD: His family?

SANTIE: In the tremor last night. The houses collapsed. His family was in one of them.

ELAINE: Oh my God ...

GRACE: Speak up, man, I can't hear. What's happened?

CONRAD: Some houses collapsed during the earth tremor.

GRACE: Where?

SANTIE: In the Coloured Township.

GRACE: My God! You mean where the old cottages are?

SANTIE: No, the new location. The concrete houses. Five years old and they collapse.

GRACE: Oh thank God it's not the beautiful old houses. I was actually thinking of buying one or two and doing them up. That will keep me in this vicinity in case I want to shed a kilo or a lover. And anyway, I'm mad about the old high ceilings, the wooden floors and the antiques.
(*She gets up*)
God, it's time to get ready for supper. Listen, they're showing a movie later on. Something with Marilyn Monroe. About food. You coming?

KILLER: I must be going, it's late.

GRACE: Never too late. There's time.

KILLER: I've got an appointment, Gracie.

GRACE: I know; you can rub my back.

KILLER: I don't want to rub your back.

GRACE: Then you can rub my front, slowly. And we'll keep the light on this time. I want to watch your face when you make love to me, Killer. Every expression I want to enjoy. I like to see my boys happy in their work. Say goodbye nicely to the people.

(*She exits laughing.*)

KILLER: Jesus ...

ELAINE: You ask for it. It's your own fault. Well go on, run ... she left the cage open, Killer, run.

KILLER: I'm here in her car.

ELAINE: He'll give you a lift, won't you, Conrad?

KILLER: What will I do?

ELAINE: Cash your cheque, play tennis, the piano, leave the spirits of darkness to their own stench. Go.
(*Killer hands her the keys to Grace's car. Looks to where Grace exited. Winks at Elaine and gives the thumbs up. Exits quickly.*)
Bye.

CONRAD: You really know how to use me, Elaine. Like always.

ELAINE: Like always.
(*She smiles to hide coming tears*)
Kiss my son for me. But of course, fathers don't kiss sons anymore. Tell him that you were at his races and saw him win. Take him on a fishing boat one day; go mountain climbing, to the circus, to a Wimpy Bar. Be his friend.

CONRAD: I'm his father; I can't be more than that.

ELAINE: Try
(She kisses him gently)
Drive carefully and don't believe everything that delinquent tells you. Go quickly ...
(She pushes him away gently. He exits slowly. She covers her face with her hands for a moment, then looks up tearfully).
I didn't think it would be that easy.
(She is crying) .

SANTIE: To send a man away? They never think about it like that. They think they're going on ahead and you'll catch up, sometime.

ELAINE: As someone said: where would the men be without us women.

SANTIE: Where?

ELAINE: In the Garden of Eden eating strawberries.

(She breaks down and Santie holds her in her arms. Pause.)

ELAINE: I'm sorry ... oh
(She has pain)

SANTIE: Are you alright?

ELAINE: Nothing that can't be endured. I'd better find Manie. See you at dinner over your lettuce leaf.

SANTIE: I'm leaving.

ELAINE: You haven't given it too much of a chance.

SANTIE: I said I'd give the medics a hand down in the village. There are many homeless, not just a few kids hurt. It's quite bad. So I'll just say so-long, OK.

ELAINE: Why did no-one tell us about the children?

SANTIE: We're not supposed to worry here. We're supposed to rest and get healthy.

INTERCOM: Attention please: the fourth race in the Golden Spur Handicap will start in five minutes live on TV in the Lounge. Thank you.

ELAINE: Mrs. Steyn, for what it's worth ...
(She holds up the carkeys)
Can I come with you?

(Santie looks at her for a moment, undecided - then holds out her hand. Elaine takes her hand and they exit.)

SCENE SEVEN

(The massage room.

Manie enters with his cleaning equipment, smoking.)

MANIE: Business is bad. I suppose the silly time is over.
(He takes out of his box a small bunch of flowers. Looks at them for a moment, then puts them down.)
Shame.
(Starts cleaning)

(Elaine enters).

MANIE: Yis, Miss Elaine? Been grooving again all night? Only joking. I been thinking about you.

ELAINE: I didn't know you had a little daughter, Manie.

MANIE: Ja, she's eleven.

ELAINE: I talked to her and said I was your friend.

(Manie hands her the posy of flowers.)

MANIE: Ja, my wife sends this for you. Says thank you for making our child important at the hospital.
(She takes them gently)
It's a helluvah mess down there. I'm glad things are slowing down up here, so I can give a hand with getting roofs back on and things.

ELAINE: You people need help. I was wondering ...

MANIE: Ai, Miss Elaine, does it take the earth trembulation to show where the ruins are? You know what people is like, drivers in cars – they drive like hell till they see a traffic cop or an accident. Then they slow down and think.
Oh by the way, here are the Polaroid snaps. Your champion athlete.
(Hands her the pictures)
Came out nice hey?
(Points)
Standing here with his teacher. She's pretty.

(Elaine smiles and nods)

ELAINE: They look happy together.

MANIE: Ja. OK Miss Elaine, I've got to clear the pool before they come and fix it.

ELAINE: Did we leave a terrible mess yesterday?

MANIE: No hell, it's the leaves..
(He recites grandly)
"Summer's over,
Coffins close,
The Fat Farm sighs and starts to doze,
Till next time what the sun will shine,
And Life
And Hell will be so fine".

(He exits and leaves Elaine smiling.)

END