

PARADISE IS CLOSING DOWN

by

Pieter-Dirk Uys

Characters

MOLLY

MOUSE

ANNA

WILLIAM

Paradise Is Closing Down was first performed at the Grahamstown Festival on 6 July 1977, directed by Pieter-Dirk Uys, with Val de Klerk (MOLLY), Christine Basson (ANNA), Melanie-Ann Sher (MOUSE) and William Meyer (YOUNG MAN, here called WILLIAM).

The play was rewritten in 1987 with changes.

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ACT ONE

The action takes place in Molly's kitchen in her cottage in Loader Street, Cape Town.

The style is glossy, yuppie-sophistication, with plants and brass and wood. Bright Colours. Money.

A sign above the fridge has an arrow pointing to a tin, and the following text:

SWEAR-WORDS R5
BLASPHEMY R10
THE TRUTH R100

A large kitchen table is the center of the action.

The time is 1976.

The kitchen is empty. The radio is on – an SABC news bulletin.

NEWSREADER: And later tonight on our weekly news survey we discuss in depth the current problems in Nicaragua, the Philippines, Northern Ireland and Lebanon, while we also have reports on the plight of the aborigines in Australia and the massacre of the Red Indians in the USA. On the home front we discuss the latest cricket match just ended in Cape Town, as well as the chances that our Miss South Africa has at this year's 'Miss Planet Earth' contest being held in Paraguay.

(MOLLY enters holding a make-up tray. She sits at the table.)

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

(She switches the radio off.)

MOLLY:

I'm so sick of politics I could go into lifelong quarantine.

'Everything about this country is politics,' he said. 'Sex. Homes. Colour. Even death is political, if you can do it in front of a camera in time for the Seven O'clock News in the US!'

(She starts to put on her make-up.)

I don't know why I married him in the first place. I'll never know. I didn't even get used to my new surname before it was all over.

'Politically incompatible: Stephen and Molly'. When in doubt, blame politics: shame, poor little eight-letter scapegoat! Forget that Stephen couldn't get his options up in bed. Oh God, can I forget: 'Hey, Molly, help me, talk dirty ...' OK, Stephen, poofy-shitty-poepie-drek ...

(Calls)

Mouse? You can imagine what Merle and Graham's decision did for his liberal conscience. He can't believe they're running away. Running Away? Rubbish, they made so many nice bucks from the system, now they can move into a mansion in Perth and blame our politics.

(Calls)

Mouse, are you dead? 'The writing's on the wall, Molly,' he said. What wall? He should be so lucky to find something so concrete around here. So OK, the rioting may be on the wall, but who's got the time to read? Give me something real like an earthquake or a

tidal wave and I'll also pack the Krugerrands and flee, but do I have to write 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 and starve? I told him: we're going out and we're going to have a fantastic night and would he please stop wasting my time with his advice and pay my alimony! Bloody cheapskate – 'the end of the world'. He's right, this is Cape Town. So what else is new?

(MOUSE enters. Her eyes are affected by the tear-gas she encountered earlier in the day. She is exactly as her name suggests: mouse-like.)

MOUSE: I can't find it.

MOLLY: You didn't look.

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

MOLLY: Don't rub your eyes ...

MOUSE: I used the eyedrops, Molly ...

MOLLY: Have you looked in all the cupboards?

MOUSE: Yes.

MOLLY: Look in the fridge.

MOUSE: For God's sake ...

MOLLY: And put that in the tin.

MOUSE: Why?

MOLLY: You said a swear-word. Tin!

MOUSE: Oh for God's sake, Molly!

MOLLY: That's double fine! Pay up – the ex-husband tells me Armageddon is just round the corner. Pay up: I want to live!

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

MOLLY: Then forgive me for laughing, but, frankly, the thought of plump, middle-aged morning shoppers stampeding down Adderley Street pursued by a bunch of schoolkids with big sticks is rather funny!

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

MOLLY: First taste of tear-gas and they pack their bags and get their visas – shame.

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

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

MOUSE: Well, I was terrified!

MOLLY: If you must stand around a massacre, watching ...

MOUSE: I was walking to the office. I had to take a tour around the Peninsula ...

MOLLY: Come on, you watched with excitement, just waiting for the blood and guts and dead kids so that you'd have something to tell at the next civil defence tea-party.

MOUSE: There was no massacre ...

MOLLY: How do you know, if you didn't stand around and watch? Look, take my advice: stay in bed till after the revolution, then you can get a nice job as a char or nanny to ten black brats on the Cape Flats!
(Pause.)
 Mousie, come here ...
(She wipes MOUSE's face with a tissue.)
 I never thought you could look worse than usual ...

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

MOLLY: So who did you take on your tour? I didn't think tourists came here any more.

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

MOLLY: Yes, that makes sense. Blow your nose.
(MOUSE does.)
 You'll live. Now, where is it? I had them on last night. The one was in the bathroom, the other shoe must be somewhere in the house. Look in the bathroom.

MOUSE: I looked there, for God's sake ...

MOLLY: 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 wash your mouth out with washing-up liquid!

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

MOLLY: And don't lecture me, Mouse. You're not my mother!
(She exits.)

MOUSE: I can't imagine what you do with them both. Molly?
(Then mutters)
 If you had a chandelier, you'd probably swing upside down with a rose in your bum!

(She gets the giggles.)

MOLLY: *(Off)* I heard that, you kinky bitch!

MOUSE: Don't you have other shoes?

MOLLY: *(Off)* Bet your arse!

MOUSE: You said 'arse'!

MOLLY: *(Off)* So did you!

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

MOLLY: *(Off)* You're a foul-mouthed virgin and I'll write to your poor mother!

MOUSE: My mother's dead ...

MOLLY: *(Off)* What?

MOUSE: Was there anything on the news about this morning's riot?
Molly?

MOLLY: *(Off)* I'm busy, Mouse; just play with yourself for a bit ...

(Pause.)

MOUSE: One hears about things like that, but you never expect to see it with your own eyes. They were all so young, the black kids and the young soldiers. All playing Cowboys and Indians. They seemed to be enjoying themselves. On a killing spree. I remember things happening in Rhodesia in the old days – 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 the children? They were laughing as they were being arrested. Some were bleeding. I really give up.

(MOLLY enters.)

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

MOUSE: It's not the same ...

MOLLY: It wasn't easy. When Stephan left me for that teenage tart with a broken arm ...

MOUSE: It was wrong that he beat you up.

MOLLY: Wrong? The teenage tart had the broken arm, because Stephen was the doctor, you twit! Which reminds me: he did hit me once ...

MOUSE: You told me.

MOLLY: I don't remember telling you.

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

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

MOUSE: Er ... your kitchen?

MOLLY: Look further!

MOUSE: I don't understand ...

MOLLY: Mouse, would I have had all this – a cottage, a sports car, alimony, the twins, a maid, a fashion consultancy, the twins, a home computer ...

MOUSE: The twins?

MOLLY: ... would I have had all this if I'd ever allowed myself to say 'give up'?

MOUSE: No, Molly, I don't suppose so.

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

MOUSE: Never give up.

MOLLY: You're not just a pretty face.

(Pause.)

MOUSE: Molly, I should go home and change.

MOLLY: Why?

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

MOLLY: Nonsense, you look fine.

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

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

MOUSE: I want to put on a nice dress.

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

MOUSE: Yes, I'll be the youngest.

MOLLY: Bitch.

MOUSE: The tin, the tin, the tin!

MOLLY: Oh, fuck off!

MOUSE: Washing-up liquid!

MOLLY: You're supposed to help me!

MOUSE: Don't shout at me, Molly ...

MOLLY: You know what a state I'm in! I always get rattled when I see that fink Stephen!

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

MOLLY: Bloody snotty-nosed bitch!
(She opens the fridge and takes out a cool drink. She sees a shoe in the fridge.)
Come and look here, Mouse ...
(MOUSE looks into the fridge.)
Look!

MOUSE: What?

(MOLLY takes out the shoe.)

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

MOUSE: Your shoe in the fridge?

MOLLY: He was happy to exploit the cheap 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 a guru and says, 'But Molly, this is no time for fun!' Men.

MOUSE: You mean Stephen?

MOLLY: I hate men, especially wholesome, brawny, good-looking bastards like Stephen. Screw, screw, screw, and when you eventually come – they go!

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

MOLLY: Why is it always fine when you go out with someone? But the moment you're married, the guerrilla war starts.

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

MOLLY: Freudian little thing. It's those neighbours with their priceless objects drilled into *my* wall. I just don't know what this street is coming to.

MOUSE: I see they've now got matching His and Hers Mercedes?

MOLLY: 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 Mrs Peters when she was living next door?

MOLLY: No, she was out on the Cape Flats. A relative or something. The best maid I've ever had is Mrs Peters. Or was. She's starting to get so cheeky nowadays. They're all getting whiter by the day.

MOUSE: What was it like living next door to them?

MOLLY: A damn sight more predictable than this *drek* lot – white rubbish. Two Mercedes?

MOUSE: Two convertibles.

MOLLY: It's the only thing you can take out of the country and sell overseas. They're probably also running.
(*Yells at wall*)
White trash!

MOUSE: The husband is with our travel agency.

MOLLY: God help this country!

MOUSE: Is that a prayer?

MOLLY: You can bet your arse!

MOUSE: And that's a fine!

MOLLY: 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 chaos – bombs, guns, death. But there was life! Did I tell you about my grandmother?

MOUSE: Yes, Molly. Poland. 1943.

MOLLY: It's like yesterday! The agony, the suffering! You kids just don't know how lucky you are – you with your Rhodesia and Anna with
her blacks. We had Hitler!

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

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

MOUSE: Have you bought a new dress for tonight?

MOLLY: All this is ridiculous tarding-up – for why? For what? For who!

MOUSE: It was all your idea!

MOLLY: Thanks, blame me again! Always my fault! Pour me some wine, Mouse. No, not in the fridge, that's the good stuff. Costs a bomb. Give me some rubbish with a touch of Perrier.
(*MOUSE makes the spritzer.*)
So? What are you going to wear?

MOUSE: I don't know ...

MOLLY: You don't know? We've planned this night for weeks and all we've talked about is how we're going to look and turn every man's head in town and suddenly you don't know what to wear? Don't let me down; the Boer's having a thing specially sent down from Johannesburg.

MOUSE: I must look in my wardrobe.

MOLLY: Welcome back, Laura Ashley. That Anna. All the money that relatives in the government can furnish and what does she do? A dreary radio job reading messages to the boys in the Army. 'And here's a message to Johnny who's just shot his third black child in the township. Your mummy sends love, Johnny, and the cat's had little kittens ...'

MOUSE: How can you say that ...

MOLLY: I'm not criticizing her; I mean she's my best friend. It just all came too easy too soon.

MOUSE: Anna's also been through her bit of hell.

MOLLY: Oh, really! What's that got to do with it? She lost her brother in the landmine explosion, I lost half my family in Poland. We've all suffered, but life must go on.

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

MOLLY: It wasn't a riot, it was just a skirmish among bored brats. God, who needs to be told these things by schoolchildren? Have we all become so impotent that the babies now lead the armies?

MOUSE: What does Mrs Peters say?

MOLLY: I know 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?

MOLLY: Don't you start on me, Mouse! Spare me your sarcasm, please ...

MOUSE: Sarcasm?

MOUSE: I'm as South African as you and I'm proud of it!

MOUSE: I was Rhodesian, remember.

MOLLY: Then why don't you go home?

MOUSE: Because now home is here.

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

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

MOLLY: What?

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

MOLLY: Touchy, touchy, you and the Boer. You both are very quick to point fingers, but when I gave you some reality, you both clamp up and make a biceps. I'm also here, and by God and the Boers this is where I intend to stay!

MOUSE: What happened to Mrs Peters, Molly? Is she OK?

MOLLY: Oh yes, I was telling you about the coloured family. So friendly. Not so quiet, but what the hell, that's one thing they had and that was a lust for life. All night! Noise, shouts, fun. I even went next door one Friday night to threaten them with police action if they didn't shut up, and I ended up in their humble kitchen, drinking wine 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?

MOLLY: Probably somewhere on the Cape Flats, rubbing sand out of their eyes, while we rub tear-gas out of ours, and where's the real life gone to? His and Hers Mercedes!
(The phone rings.)
I'm not home.

MOUSE: I don't think they heard you.

MOLLY: *(Bellows)* I'm not home!

MOUSE: Shan't I answer it?

MOLLY: Just because it rings?

(Mouse picks up the phone.)

MOUSE: Hello?

MOLLY: God, when I was the doctor's wife, the phone never stopped ringing ...

MOUSE: Who?

MOLLY: Stephen always went out on house calls, especially with kids who were sick. He was a good man.

MOUSE: Is she OK?

MOLLY: He was a pain in the arse as a husband and a self-centered bastard.

MOLLY: Don't you want to talk to Molly? Yes, the madam?

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

MOUSE: OK, I'll tell her.

MOLLY: It's a capitalist society: the people are moved out but the whorehouse stays!

MOUSE: Yes ... bye.

(She puts down the phone.)

MOLLY: What's the time?

MOUSE: Mrs Peters was hurt.

MOLLY: How do you know?

MOUSE: A neighbour just phoned. She was hurt in some unrest in the township ...

MOLLY: 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.

MOLLY: I'm so sick of these excuses. There's always some good reason for staying away. 'My old auntie has lost a leg', or 'There was a fire', or 'Flu'! What do I pay her good money for?

MOUSE: You pay her R200 a month.

MOLLY: For half-days and weekends off, *plus* all the food left over *and* my old clothes! It's a gift!

MOUSE: Yes, Molly. I'd better rush.

MOLLY: So rush! Rush! I've booked the table for 8.30. Anyway, if you can get yourself together in under an hour, you shouldn't be allowed out after six. Child! How do I look?

MOUSE: Fine.

MOLLY: Fine? Thanks for nothing!

MOUSE: No, really, Molly, you look wonderful.

MOLLY: Wonderful?

MOUSE: Outstanding.

MOLLY: Outstanding?

MOUSE: I swear to God!

MOLLY: Ten-rand fine!

(The phone rings again.)

MOUSE: Shall I answer it?

MOLLY: Whose phone is it?

(She picks it up.)

Yes? No, I'm busy. Who is it? Oh? Checking if I'm pregnant?

Wait, I can't talk here ... I'll take it in the bedroom.

(She puts down the phone. Picks up the mirror and looks at her face. As she exits, she shouts up)

I hate this face! I want another one! Do you hear? *I want another one!*

(She exits.)

We see MOUSE is dying to pick up the extension and listen, but she doesn't. She clears up dutifully. She lifts the tin and shakes it – it is empty, bar one coin, which rattles. MOUSE laughs. She looks to see if the coast is clear, then softly swears)

MOUSE: Fart. Piss. Shit!

(A knock on the kitchen door. She gets a terrible fright and drops the tin.)

Molly? Molly, I must go!

(Another knock.)

Yes, Who is it? Molly, there's someone at the kitchen door.

(She listens at the door.)

Who is it?

(No answer. She carefully puts on the chain and opens the door and peers out.)

Yes? Can I help you? Molly!

(She undoes the chain and opens the door. We see WILLIAM outside.)

You'd better come in, she won't be long ...

(Then MOUSE registers that he is coloured.)

Oh ... just wait, I'd better tie up the dog ...

(She pushes him out and closes the door.)

Molly! Vicious Alsatian! Come on ... er ... Rambo, box! Horrible vicious dog!

(Then she hears herself. Mutters)

What am I doing?

(She opens the door. WILLIAM comes in. He carries a plastic carrier-bag full of fruit and vegetables.)

Sorry ... yes, well ... Molly? Is this for Molly?

(She takes the carrier-bag from him. It is heavy.)

You must be from the corner shop ...

(Before he can react, she takes it across the kitchen and heaves it on the sideboard.)
What's in here?

WILLIAM: It's vegetables and fruit ...

MOUSE: I didn't know Molly ate sensibly.

(She looks into the bag.)

WILLIAM: You live here?

MOUSE: No, heavens. I live in the boarding-house two blocks down.
Number fourteen. Molly lives here. She's on the phone.
(Pause.)
Molly?

MOLLY: *(Off)* Leave me alone, I'm doing a figure transplant in here.

MOUSE: That's Molly. She's off the phone now. Maybe it was one of her
boyfriends. She has many boyfriends.
(Pause.)
Look, you are from the Corner shop?

WILLIAM: No.

MOUSE: Oh God, I'm sorry ... here.
(She picks up the bag and hands it back to him.)
I don't know where that other place is, but this is not it.

WILLIAM: You mean old Sarah's place?

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

WILLIAM: Oh?

(Pause. Then it dawns on her.)

MOUSE: Oh hell, are you here to see Molly?
(Calls)
Molly? Quick! Wednesday night's happened on Saturday!

WILLIAM: I used to live in this house.

MOUSE: Really? So you do know Molly? Molly! Surprise!

MOLLY: *(Off)* Bugger off!

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

MOUSE: But you said you lived here.

WILLIAM: When I was a kid.

(Pause.)

MOUSE: Oh.

WILLIAM: My family lived in this house since ... oh, forever. Till Molly and you whites were moved in.

MOUSE: No, I'm just passing through. Really.

WILLIAM: Passing through?

MOUSE: I lived in Salisbury ... now Harare. I work in a travel agent's. 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 you lived here?

WILLIAM: A little more primitive. No, I'm joking. Let me see ... I can't really remember. There was an open stove. This place always smelt of burning woodfire.

MOUSE: How romantic.

WILLIAM: Maybe. There was a wall there ...

MOUSE: Molly had the whole place redone. It won a prize in *Style* magazine: the Single Woman's Dreamhouse.

WILLIAM: The backyard looks nice.

MOUSE: Molly's patio. When Table Mountain is lit up for Christmas or some festive occasion you can see it from there.

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

MOUSE: Amazing.

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

MOUSE: Amazing! You know Mrs Peters?

WILLIAM: I was very small, you know. Me and my little brother. There was another brother, but they say he died of diphtheria when he was three.

MOUSE: I'm sorry.

WILLIAM: *Ja.* Is there still a little room next door?

MOUSE: Molly's dressing room. She's had a walk-in cupboard made for all her clothes and shoes and hats and things.

WILLIAM: My granny slept in there with all us kids and Auntie Vera. Granny's also dead.

MOLLY: You all slept in that room?

WILLIAM: Not at the same time. Auntie Vera worked nights at the hospital. Granny never slept. Maybe in the day, I can't remember.

MOUSE: Where do you all live now?

WILLIAM: From here we went to a place in town and then, when that house was also declared part of the white area, we settled out in Manenberg.

MOUSE: Oh, yes. Lovely name. Manenberg.

WILLIAM: Have you been out on the Cape Flats?

MOUSE: Only pass through it on the way to the airport, but I've been meaning to stop and look.

WILLIAM: You mean the coloured and the black townships aren't on your sightseeing tours? 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: Yes.
(Pause.)
So why are you here?

WILLIAM: I can't stay anyway. I was looking for Mrs Peters.

MOUSE: She's not here. She only does half-days and she's not stayed late during the riots. Molly says it's typical of them, but maybe she can't manage. She was hurt, they say.

WILLIAM: Who?

MOUSE: Someone phoned and said she was hurt in the township. Nothing serious, though.

WILLIAM: Oh good, so she will be back to do the floors tomorrow.

MOUSE: No, she doesn't come on Sunday.

WILLIAM: Of course. The day of rest. I thought Molly was Jewish?

MOUSE: Yes. She escaped from the Nazis.

WILLIAM: Funny.

MOUSE: Funny?

WILLIAM: Jews that escaped from the Nazis to live happily here under apartheid. Funny.

MOUSE: I don't understand ...

WILLIAM: There's a crack in the wall.

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

WILLIAM: Whoever Molly got in to do her Dreamhouse ripped her off. A bad job.

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

WILLIAM: *Ja*, before I move back here?

MOUSE: Oh, that's funny.

(Pause.)

MOLLY: *(Off)* Mouse! Are you talking to yourself? Is that Boer there? Anna, come and show me what you're wearing! Oh shit, why can't I have normal hair like everyone else!

WILLIAM: Sounds just like my old granny.

MOUSE: I'll tell Molly, she'll be delighted.

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

MOUSE: I was caught this morning in the tear-gas.

WILLIAM: How did it feel?

MOUSE: Terrible.

WILLIAM: You get used to it.

MOUSE: You'd better go.

WILLIAM: You going out tonight?

MOUSE: Celebrating.

WILLIAM: Birthday?

MOUSE: No. Molly's divorce is final, Anna's lost 4 kilos and I've saved the deposit on my air-ticket to London.

ANNA: *(Off)* Where's everyone?

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

WILLIAM: OK, but ...

(MOUSE goes to the door to the rest of the house. During this WILLIAM manages to get to a drawer in the sideboard and open it. MOUSE turns and sees him.)

MOUSE: What are you doing?

WILLIAM: Er ... checking the woodwork. Also a rip-off.

ANNA: *(Off)* I'm double-parked, hurry up!

MOUSE: Please go!

(She pushes him out of the kitchen door. He has left the carrier-bag behind.)

ANNA: *(Off)* Molly? Where are you? I don't want other Mercs reversing into mine, so come on!
(ANNA enters.)
Dear God, Mouse, you look like a refugee!

MOUSE: I must go home and change!

ANNA: What's Molly been saying again?

MOUSE: Eh?

ANNA: You've been crying again...

MOUSE: I was caught in the tear-gas, Anna, it was terrible. There were these children ...

ANNA: Like it?

(She twirls around, showing off her dress.)

MOUSE: It's lovely.

ANNA: I'm still not sure if it has the right effect.

MOUSE: I look at you and I want to kill myself.

ANNA: Good. It cost a fortune. I didn't feel like basic black with the working diamonds. Give me a drink. Jesus Christ, my mother gets on my nerves! How much in the tin?

MOUSE: A penny.

ANNA: Put me down on tick for the rest of the night. Molly?

MOUSE: You already owe the tin R220,000 and twenty cents!

ANNA: What cost me twenty cents?

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

ANNA: Don't tell me tonight's calorie-orgy is off?

MOUSE: Molly's having one of her 'nervous breakdowns'.

ANNA: Always when she washes her hair and it goes down the drain.

MOLLY: *(Off)* Who's there?

ANNA: Die Boere is hier! Come out with your eyes closed and your pants down!
(MOLLY shrieks with delight off.)
 Why are we doing this thing tonight?

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

ANNA: It's the high heels: they help.

MOUSE: How much did you pay for that outfit?

ANNA: Last month's alimony and Wednesday's horses. I feel silly dressed up like this.

MOUSE: You look lovely.

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

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

ANNA: Went out with those guys? Good God, my Neanderthal surfer with his knuckles trailing in the dust, your little traveling salesman who was prettier than you, and Molly forever chewing away at her pink-cheeked soldier-boy? And you don't think we looked like three lesbians? Even the guys looked like three lesbians! I'm not going.

MOUSE: It's been planned, Anna ...

ANNA: I've got that feeling. Red light flashing! Look, Mouse, I don't need anymore reasons to feel grim. Every time someone just looks at me, I ...
(She starts crying. MOUSE is shocked.)
 Pour me some rubbish ... thanks.
(She drinks.)

MOUSE: Is it something I said, Anna?

ANNA: Whatever happened to that pink-cheeked soldier-boy of Molly's? Don't tell me she had him for breakfast the next morning? Shame. Gone the way of all Molly's flesh. Brian.

MOUSE: Henry. He was killed.

(Pause.)

ANNA: He even looked like my brother. Anna's little pink-cheeked brother, also playing Clint Eastwood with the kaffirs!

MOUSE: No, Henry was killed in a car smash. He was on drugs or something. Molly says ...

ANNA: His things arrived back from Pretoria last week. His leather wallet with those snaps of me and Ma and the spaniel. I hid the stuff from Ma, but she found them. And today being what it is, she laid it all out like on the altar – his portrait from school, the certificate with his medal for bravery, the letter of condolence from the State President. Ma showed everyone with such pride. Some consolation prize.
(She blows her nose. MOUSE stares.)
You never knew my *boet*, hey?

MOUSE: No. Unfortunately.

ANNA: Why 'unfortunately'? You wouldn't've liked him. He was a rough boy: sports, chicks, drinks with his pals. Quite short. *Regte ou kortgat* ...

MOUSE: Anna, lets go and sit inside ...

ANNA: And yet he was so gentle with children and animals. Loved kids. Wanted kids of his own one day. That's a joke. He was blown up by a bomb set by kids, while hunting down kids. What the hell's happening to us?

(MOLLY enters dressed and ready.)

MOLLY: You cheap Afrikaans bitch! That's not a little number from down the road's boutique! That's an original from Paris France! Pooh! I don't like it! The colour's in agony, the cut's too old-fashioned. You're now too thin where it counts and still too fat it doesn't. Your hair looks terrible and you wear make-up like a man. Otherwise, it's a great improvement on the last week's leather jodhpurs. Right, start with the floors and work your way up! Oh, by the way, one of the twins told me this joke. 'How many white women does it take to change a light bulb?'

ANNA: Two. One to hold the diet Coke and the other to call the maid.

MOLLY: You've heard it?

ANNA: Two years ago. You're not still seeing those twins, are you?

MOUSE: They do everything together!

MOLLY: Mouse, are you still here?

MOUSE: I've been so busy! There was a guy here ...

MOLLY: I will not have my private life broadcast to the world! The table's booked for 8.30. Move your arse, Mouse!

MOUSE: OK, OK ... That's a fine!

ANNA: Let her wear something of yours, we don't have time ...

MOLLY: I don't lend out my clothes!

MOUSE: I'll be quick!

(She exits.)

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

ANNA: Don't tell me she's on her vegetarian crusade again. Well then, that does it! I will not go to an expensive steakhouse with a vegetarian and a Jew!

MOLLY: It's just pork we avoid, Anna, not meat or Afrikaners!

ANNA: But you eat bacon.

MOLLY: That's different!

ANNA: How come?

MOLLY: And Mouse, bring your own hairbrush! She always uses my things. Mouse?

ANNA: I'm parked in their driveway next door.

MOLLY: Fuck them. They've got a Mercedes sports car *each*.

ANNA: Yes, he told me. Mine's the very latest model.

MOLLY: What a pity you can't take it with you.

ANNA: You can.

MOLLY: Yes, to Australia or the USA. I meant to heaven.

ANNA: It's all becoming the same thing.

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

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

MOLLY: He phones up and, sweet as a choirboy, asks if he can come over and have a bath.

ANNA: Maybe if I had kids, one would plan with them in mind ...

MOLLY: A bath? I said, 'Listen, you unmentionable bastard, we are now divorced! It's over! Go piss in someone else's bathwater!'

ANNA: ... maybe, but I'm not prepared to start all over again somewhere else. And for what?

MOLLY: What?

ANNA: For what?

MOLLY: A bath!

ANNA: Hey?

MOLLY: I mean who the hell do they think I am? Some teenage divorcee painting for a reconciliation? Like hell: I've lived ! I've been through the armpit of life ten times over and I've learnt the hard way, my dear, and I don't need you or men or anyone!

ANNA: OK. Bye.

(She makes for the door. MOLLY stops her.)

MOLLY: No! You don't count!

ANNA: That's even worse!

MOLLY: You're on my side!

ANNA: And what gave you that comforting idea?

MOLLY: We sing the same tune, Anna, my dear, just the words are slightly different: me Stephen, you Helmut; me four years, you six; me the pill, you the miscarriage ...

ANNA: You and I couldn't be further apart ...

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

ANNA: Really.

MOLLY: Yes, really.

ANNA: No 'really', I'm sorry to shatter your illusions, but I had lunch with Helmut on Monday, because I still adore him and care about his new marriage to that flat-chested hypochondriac, while you enjoy

playing the victim of your own creation, sticking pins in the Stephen doll next to your, may I say, not-exactly-empty bed!

MOLLY: Then why are we celebrating?

ANNA: Certainly not because we don't need them. I think we're doing all this tonight, Molly ou meid, at great expense to salary and self-respect, because we don't have them. Six good tits between us and no man to share them with!

MOLLY: Speak for yourself! I'm fine!

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

(Pause.)

MOLLY: Don't think about it. Try and enjoy yourself for a change.

ANNA: I miss him terribly and I'm raw inside, Molly.

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

(She opens the fridge and looks for the pâté, listening.)

ANNA: He's a man. Or he was a man, and I love him and 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* movie star, because I'm numb inside and a bit of your salt might help me remember.
(The phone rings. ANNA picks it up.)
Hello, Solly's Kosher Butchery? No, it's not Molly, who's that?
John?
(Covers mouthpiece)
It's John.

MOLLY: *Mazel'tov.*

ANNA: Are you home?

MOLLY: No.

ANNA: She's not home.

MOLLY: John who?

ANNA: John who?
(To MOLLY)
Andrew's friend.

MOLLY: Oh.
(Pause.)
Andrew who?

ANNA: Andrew who?

MOLLY: Oh, give me that 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!

ANNA: Why did you do that?

MOLLY: What do they think this is? Old Sarah's Whorehouse Special Discount Offer? John who? Andrew who? *Se gat!*

ANNA: Listen, you pretend you can't even understand Afrikaans. So you don't have the right to use vivid phrases like *Se gat* because I know you don't even enjoy saying them. Rather lash out with your own Polack-Anglo-Saxon-Yiddish showstoppers!

MOLLY: Oh, touchy-touchy! You'd really make someone a wonderful friend. What happened to you today, besides the family horror story, which I must admit is a bit gruesome ...

ANNA: Then shut up!

MOLLY: 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 your little brother is dead. OK? I didn't create the situation that demanded his blood! It's not my fault!

ANNA: He died protecting your comforts.

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

ANNA: I didn't mean it was your fault ...

MOLLY: Fine. Then don't blame me for your pain, you uptight bitch! It's going to be a happy night tonight and we're all going to suffer our defeats gladly. Do you understand, Anna *ou boer*? A '*lekker* time'! So tuck away your open wound and smile. You're with someone whose also been there.
(*Pause.*)
Andrew? Andrew! Oh no, he's the guy with the boat! Did he leave a number?

ANNA: What?

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

ANNA: A John.

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

ANNA: Try going to church tomorrow.

MOLLY: I went yesterday!

(She looks through her phone book for the number.)

ANNA: Let's pick Mouse up on the way. Come on, Molly! Tomorrow will sort itself out.

MOLLY: I've been looking forward to that sail.

ANNA: You've also *kastig* been looking forward to tonight.

MOLLY: Tonight's nearly over; I want something nice to look forward to.
(Reads)
 A...A...Andrew? Here's Adrian, Avril...oh, she's emigrated, goodbye Avril.
(Scratches it out)
 Ackerman, Abe the chemist, Abe the broker, Abe the lawyer
 ... no Andrew!

ANNA: Hang around the yacht basin tomorrow, Molly, someone nice is bound to feel sorry for you.

MOLLY: That little bastard didn't even give me his surname. Anyway, who can afford a yacht at his age, rich little pig! Let me tell you, a nice long session in the Army would do him a lot of good. Teach him manners for one!

ANNA: Do we have to bring our own wine?

MOLLY: Of course, it's because educated brats like him try to dodge conscription and run and hide overseas that those who enjoy killing children have a free hand!

ANNA: Who can enjoy killing children?

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

ANNA: My brother was not killed for nothing.

MOLLY: Oh? So what's changed since his pointless death? Nothing has changed; in fact, it's got worse.

ANNA: Do you mean this morning?

MOLLY: The riot in town! And you're supposed to be part of the media?

ANNA: There were twenty-six people killed today.

MOLLY: No, no, darling, don't exaggerate ...

ANNA: I saw the original telex. I had to read the rewritten news bulletin.

MOLLY: So why aren't we being told?

ANNA: Told what? That we're fighting for our survival?

MOLLY: Your survival, 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.

ANNA: You're so right, Molly. As an unclaimed corpse you'll look half your age and have the best manicured nails in the morgue.

MOLLY: You're really at your best when you're in a corner.

ANNA: Some survival!

MOLLY: Frankly, *ou boer*, you lot deserve everything you get. You all need something radical to kick you out of your supremacist sleepwalk. And I think a little senseless death in the family is a fair beginning ... Ow!
(ANNA grabs MOLLY. There is a physical scuffle; it must look violent and shocking, nearly masculine. When it is suddenly over, a pause. Both gasp for breath. Eventually MOLLY speaks.)
 Jesus ... what was all that about ...?
(The phone rings.)
 I was only joking ... you mucked up my hair, you butch bitch ...

ANNA: I'm sorry ...

MOLLY: Oh, fuck off, will you, FUCK OFF !!!
(Pause. The phone rings again.)
 Well, answer the phone! If it's John or whatshisname, say I'm in the bath; take a number ... be nice to him ...

(ANNA picks up the phone.)

ANNA: Yes? Mouse? Hang on, speak slowly ... Are you all right? We can pick you up ... OK. Tell them to drop you here ...
(Puts down the phone.)
 That was Mouse. Her room was burgled.

MOLLY: What?

ANNA: She's on her way. The police will drop her here.

MOLLY: You see, you can't move without people invading your space, stealing all the useless rubbish you can't breathe without!

ANNA: Molly, no one's dead!

MOLLY: No? It's all so much easier now. Nothing can keep them out. No burglar-bars, no alarms, no guns ...

ANNA: She called the police ...

MOLLY: Youth is a burglar. Money ... beauty ... hope. All burglars, who creep in so quietly, you don't hear them till they laugh at you and leave you lying for dead ...

(Pause.)

ANNA: Did I hurt you?

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

ANNA: Mouse has done that.

MOLLY: Please! You know what Mouse is like: stand on her foot and she says 'I'm sorry'. I know a nice young constable in Simonstown.

ANNA: Which is now about as useful as a millionaire on the moon. Let's wait till she gets here.

MOLLY: But this is an important night! Things mustn't happen tonight! Not tonight!
(She dials.)
No little burglary is going to lose me that table. You know it's the 'in' place. Everyone tries to get a table ... Hello, Emilio darling? It's Molly. Hey? *Franco, amore mio* – Molly. Molly, you foreign fart, yes, Anna's friend! You know the old witch with the wart on her nose? Ah *si si*? What do you mean, 'si', you schmuck! Listen, Mussolini, I've got contacts in high places. '*Si, signorina*' you can bet your cannelloni! I'll have your work permit revoked, your restaurant declared black, your food branded non-kosher. You'll starve and I'll laugh: ha ha ha! Suddenly you remember me? No, I'm fine, considering the world ended ten minutes ago. Listen, Mario, I booked a special table near the window for three at 8.30. Keep it, we're on our way. I know it's your busy night, Mario, but I'm one of your best customers ... but ... but we won't be long ... I promise ...
(To ANNA, pleading)
The fucker won't keep our table ... what do I do?

(ANNA takes the phone and speaks in fluent Italian.)

ANNA: *Pronto, Luciano? Anna. Bene, grazie. Siamo un po' in ritardo nell'uscire.
Si, Molly 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!**
(She puts down the phone casually.)
They'll keep our table.

MOLLY: When did you learn to speak Italian?

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

* Hello, Luciano? Anna. Fine. We're having a bit of a delay in getting away. Yes, Molly's running around like an idiot as usual. Keep the table. For me? Luciano, you're an angel! Keep me some of your calamaris! Bye!

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

ANNA: You really still have the habit of bringing out the savages in the best people.

MOLLY: Only when you're around. Funny, other would call it a 'scintillating personality'. Don't rub it in ...

ANNA: I'm going to watch some TV. I need a Valium for my conscience.

MOLLY: No, Anna, don't leave me ... just sit. Please.
(ANNA sits. Light a cigarette. Pause.)
It's funny.

ANNA: Funny?

MOLLY: Oh yes, funny: me, 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. Beauty Queen of the Morgue? But I can't, knowing they're twenty and having to pretend in the dark under them that I am too.

ANNA: So fill the tomb with happy laughter, Miss Molly.

MOLLY: Then I pick up my little phone and speak for hours to my other savages, who don't even listen any more, because it's just Molly yakking away. And do you know what's really funny, Anna? I know it. I know they've just put the phone down next to the pot and the pipe and I know they're on their motorbikes on their way to the beach and so I don't stop yakking away for an hour, because it makes me feel better.

ANNA: The non-stop Molly Manure.

MOLLY: Is it that bad?

ANNA: Not if you don't listen.

MOLLY: I could demonstrate to you now. Pick up phone ... dial ... dial ... wait ... ring, ring, ring: 'Hello, someone, this is Molly!' *Help!!!*
(Pause.)
Too quick. They need at least an hour to register my name, recognize my voice: 'Molly? Molly who? Oh, *that* Molly – pass the coke ...'
(She looks at ANNA with a smile.)
Don't you think that's funny?

ANNA: Hysterically funny.

MOLLY: *Ja*, funny. Did I tell you about the pain I get here, over my heart?

ANNA: Your heart's on the other side.

MOLLY: No, I think it moved. Agony tore it loose from its moorings. I really think I'm going to die soon.

ANNA: Shall I phone and cancel the table?

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

ANNA: The echo of a noise.

(Pause.)

MOLLY: Is that what you think?

(MOUSE enters, fraught.)

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

ANNA: Who?

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

ANNA: If these damn streets were wider, there'd be no reason to park on the sidewalk. Oh shit!

(She exits.)

MOUSE: But it's night! Why do they do things like this at night?

MOLLY: Since when do the police give tickets?

MOUSE: No, traffic police came to me. The real police are too busy.
(She looks around and says sotto voce)
They say they had a complaint.

MOLLY: Bet you it came from those *drekkie* neighbours of mine. It's the woman. She once called the police because I had a party here and didn't invite her. I know what I'll do! I'll make her so terrified she'll be on the next plane to Perth!

(She starts dialing.)

MOUSE: You know the number?

MOLLY: That dishy Canadian hippy used to live there with that feather-brained actress with the fat arse, remember? No, before your time ... it's ringing ... come on, you fascists, answer!
(The woman answers; MOLLY whispers delightedly.)
It's her!
(MOLLY starts breathing heavily.)
Ahhhhhhhhh haaaaaaa ahhhhhhhhh ...
(Then stops, quite taken aback)
She laughed and hung up! The bitch! You know, I think it actually turned her on ... what's wrong with you now?

(MOUSE is laughing with suppressed hysteria.)

MOUSE: You're mad ... who's going to be frightened of that?

MOLLY: Don't make light of heavy breathers. They're a menace.

MOUSE: You should've said: ' We're going to put a burning tyre round your neck and have a barbecue with your brains!' *(She cries with laughter.)*

MOLLY: God, that's disgusting ...

(It just makes MOUSE laugh even more. She stumbles out hysterical and passes ANNA entering.)

ANNA: Is she sick?

MOLLY: Sick? That's an understatement!

ANNA: God, don't they have anything better to do!

MOLLY: What happened?

ANNA: I was nice to him.

MOLLY: Afrikaans cop?

ANNA: Of course. The best of them are.

MOLLY: Mouse! For heaven's sake, are we never going to get out of this place? *(ANNA pours wine.)*
Oh shit, look at my hair ... one would never believe I spent two hours at the hairdresser's this morning. Wonder if I should cut it? *(She fiddles with her hair.)*
What do you think? Short-short? Or maybe change the colour?

ANNA: Leave colour out of this, just for tonight.

MOLLY: And what's wrong with you now!

ANNA: I'm hungry!

MOLLY: I hate it when you go all uptight and Afrikaans and unreasonable.

ANNA: Unreasonable? I just want some food and wine – not a black eye, or a parking ticket, or to apologize because I exist!

MOLLY: You've already had enough wine.

ANNA: So what did Mouse say about the burglary?

MOLLY: 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 good friends are for.

ANNA: You'll make someone a wonderful friend, Molly.

MOLLY: And I'm sober. And you're fairly sober, for a change. So cool it on the booze tonight.

ANNA: I'm just sipping little bits to keep sane.

MOLLY: If you're tense, take Valium like a normal person. You 'sip' too much! You always get pissed and become loud and political and embarrassing.

ANNA: Oh, make a phone-call, Molly. I don't need the Ten Commandments from you.

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

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

(She opens the kitchen door and looks out.)

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

ANNA: Careful, I'll cry.

MOLLY: You'll have an accident one night in your big fast car, and you'll be dead, Anna, just because you're so full of cheap wine, you won't even notice your head come off!

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

MOLLY: Talk about it, damn it!

ANNA: Talk about what?

MOLLY: Don't be so cool and monumental!

ANNA: Talk about what?

MOLLY: Crack a bit, Anna, it's all in the family!

(Pause.)

ANNA: I don't want to talk about my love for ... God, who? Helmut? My brother?

MOLLY: Me?

ANNA: Loathing for you? Maybe. For me, definitely. Pick your card.

MOLLY: See, hairy round the gills, woof, woof, woof!

ANNA: I don't find any of this funny.

MOLLY: No, you Afrikaners have got 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 criticize you? One chosen people doesn't criticize another chosen people!
(Pause.)
I care, Anna. I worry. You lie to me.

ANNA: I tell you nothing.

MOLLY: Exactly. You all pretend nothing's wrong – nothing's wrong – nothing's wrong – nothing's wrong ...

ANNA: No sirens ... no shots ... no screams ... no nothing ...

(She listens to outside.)

MOLLY: You're lonely, I'm lonely. I don't lie, I rub it in! You're getting old, I'm getting old. I don't lie, I rub it out! I bitch about the cost and pay the price, but I don't lie! You're so desperate to be accepted, Anna, you'll soon just be that charmless bodiless voice on the radio, giving false truth to even more lies. You're a professional liar!

ANNA: Well, I'm an Afrikaner.

MOLLY: Once in our lives together ... we laughed a lot, you remember, Anna?

ANNA: Long ago.

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

ANNA: Did we?

MOLLY: Why don't we notice those things any more, Anna?

ANNA: Because those things aren't funny any more.

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

ANNA: It's all crazy ...

MOLLY: 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 grandmother always said in Poland: '*Mein Kind*, after the big laugh always comes a bigger tear!'

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

ANNA: Money? You didn't keep it in a bank?

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

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

MOUSE: The mattress ...

MOLLY: You should've hidden it in your underwear. No one would've looked there.

ANNA: Is your passport safe?

(MOUSE nods and holds it up. ANNA takes it from her and goes to the drawer in the sideboard where William went earlier. She opens it and puts the passport in. Stares into the drawer. MOLLY goes on regardless.)

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

ANNA: Molly, do you keep a gun?

MOLLY: What?

ANNA: A gun.

MOLLY: Next to my bed, why?
(ANNA shakes her head and closes the drawer slowly.)
My grandmother was an incredible person, let me tell you. Of course, 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 relatives have in turn been killed by everyone, and here I am. Molly. Molly Mashuga with, as her best friends, a Boer and a shikse. Where? The southern tip of nowhere. Why? Because it's heaven and it's mine and I love it! They took everything?

MOUSE: Hey? Oh yes: my shampoo, the suitcase, which was real leather, the alarm clock, those shoes I got last month ...

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

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

ANNA: What did the police say?

MOUSE: They suspect a coloured gang. They say that this afternoon the riot squads chased the whole lot of coloured rioters up into this area. It's all political, you know, Anna. If I'd been there, I'm sure they would've killed me.

MOLLY: Yes: put a tyre round your neck and barbecued your brains?

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

ANNA: Any tuppence-ha'penny crook can now throw a petrol-bomb at an old white lady and become an international hero.

MOUSE: The traffic cop said that it was political unrest and was I insured for riot cover.

MOLLY: Are you?

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

(MOLLY picks up the phone.)

MOLLY: What was that policeman's name, the one you spoke to?

MOUSE: He was a traffic cop.

MOLLY: No, you said the police spoke to you as well?

MOUSE: The traffic cop phoned the police, yes.

MOLLY: Where was he stationed?

MOUSE: I don't know.

MOLLY: What do you mean you don't know! Are you insured or aren't you insured?

MOUSE: I don't know.

MOLLY: You don't know. Didn't I say let my broker handle your affairs? Didn't I say give me your money to invest on an on-call basis at a good percentage?

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

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

ANNA: A debatable point.

MOLLY: And you stay out of this. What are you doing that's so constructive? Mouse, how did they get in?

MOUSE: I don't know ...

MOLLY: Ask a silly question ...
(She dials angrily.)
 I hate being forced to use my contacts, but I will, seeing as you haven't a clue how to sort this shit out. Dear God ...
 Hello Simonstown Police? Listen, my dear, can I speak to Constable Green? Yes, it's very important.
(Glares at MOUSE.)
 You don't know. If you live like a punk, this is what you should expect!

MOUSE: *(Sobs)* I'm not living like a punk ...

MOLLY: Shhhh. Hello darling, it's Molly. We've just had a terrible burglary down the road and, my dear, we know it's these coloured kids and they're all over this place and ... Oh. OK, I'll hang on.
(Pause.)
He told me to hang on. What's the time?

ANNA: We've lost the table.

MOLLY: For God's sake, Mouse, go into my dressing-room and find something decent to wear. You can't go dressed like a... a...

ANNA: A punk.

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

MOLLY: You're all making too much noise, I can't hear a word. Hello? Yes? I'm holding for Constable Green, he knows me as a friend ... of course it's urgent! All hell's broken loose up here! OK, OK, I'll wait.
(She sighs and waits.)
Mouse, there's a nice kaftan thing I got from those promotion crooks, who still owe me a fortune, by the way.
(Into phone)
Yes, I'm still here ... what's happening in Simonstown, for God's sake? The Russian invasion? Mouse, don't sit there like a Muppet, help me make this night a success. At the moment it's death. *Death!*
(Suddenly 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 were busy ... I know you're also busy ... but this girl has lost all her documents. A fortune in jewellery! Listen, you rude little man, what do I pay taxes for? Oh, but ... yes ... OK, OK, bye.
(She puts the phone down.)
He says they're busy. In Simonstown?

ANNA: Nice friends and contacts you have.

MOLLY: Constable Green has been transferred, OK?

MOUSE: Everyone's on permanent stand-by under the State of Emergency, the cop said. He said things are bad.

MOLLY: Jesus, Simonstown? What the hell could be happening there that's more important?

MOUSE: Molly? Anna? I'm sorry, I just can't face a party tonight ... really ...

ANNA: We quite understand Mousie ...

MOLLY: Rubbish! You're both being menstrual about tonight. Tonight has been booked for weeks.

MOUSE: But ...

MOLLY: Tonight is Christmas! Tonight is Easter! Tonight is the end of the world!

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

MOLLY: You're damn right! So get your arse in there and find yourself a suitable skin and smile!
(MOLLY pushes MOUSE out of the room.)
Some help you've been.

ANNA: But I'm a useless alcoholic, remember?

MOLLY: Don't tempt the devil ...
(A knock on the kitchen door.)
Now what the hell is this?
(Shouts)
No, thank you, I've already given!

(The kitchen door opens and WILLIAM appears tentatively.)

WILLIAM: Evening. You must be Molly?

MOLLY: Hey?

ANNA: O Anna, maak die ore toe!

WILLIAM: I've ... er ... I've come for my bag.

MOLLY: Anna, it's for you.

ANNA: Just whistle when you've finished!

(She jauntily exits with a wink at WILLIAM.)

MOLLY: Wait, Anna, damn it ... look, you've got the wrong house. Does this look like a brothel? Don't answer ...

WILLIAM: I wouldn't know the answer.

MOLLY: Oh? Quick too? What do you want? I'm on my way out.

WILLIAM: You don't remember me, then?

MOLLY: Should I?

WILLIAM: No, it was some years ago.

MOLLY: What was some years ago?

WILLIAM: I was here.

MOLLY: Ah well, since then I've had a few other boys in to fix the house. Plumbers, painters, carpenters, carpeters, TV men, hi-fi men, mechanics, electricians ...

WILLIAM: And a plasterer that ripped you off.
(He indicates the crack in the wall.)
 You hadn't done all this when I was here last. I've always wanted to come up and have a look, but I've never had the chance, you know.

MOLLY: Fancy that.

WILLIAM: Yes. Who's next door?

MOLLY: Pigs. Want a job there?

WILLIAM: Does the crack go through their side?

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

WILLIAM: You got a message from Mrs Peters?

MOLLY: Mrs Peters?

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

MOLLY: You're not looking for a job?

WILLIAM: On a Saturday night?

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

WILLIAM: Us coloureds you mean?

MOLLY: I have got nothing against coloureds! Some of my best friends ...

WILLIAM: Are blacks?

MOLLY: Some of my best friends have black friends. Well, if you're such an intimate friend of Mrs Peters, tell her I need her here on Monday morning.

WILLIAM: She gets up at four o'clock to be here at seven.

MOLLY: 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.

MOLLY: You seem to know a lot about my house.

WILLIAM: No. Not everything.
(Pause. He is very charming.)
 What's through there?

MOLLY: Various rooms.

WILLIAM: Including your bedroom?

MOLLY: Yes.

WILLIAM: Ah.

MOLLY: Where I sleep.

WILLIAM: Ah.

MOLLY: Very exotic, very seductive – no windows, teak coffin on crushed red velvet, you know, the very latest design. I keep a Coke bottle filled with the best blood at body temperature. Wonderful for hangovers!

WILLIAM: You're funny.

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

WILLIAM: You want to offer me a job?

MOLLY: Depends what you do best.
(Pause.)
And next time come to the front door. I am not ashamed of receiving coloureds.

WILLIAM: Gosh, thanks, hey.
(He goes to the door.)
Is this all the security you have on the door?
(He fingers the chain.)

MOLLY: Yes ...

WILLIAM: No good. OK, bye.

MOLLY: No, wait a minute ...

WILLIAM: Oh, by the way, thanks for keeping Rambo locked up.
(He exits smiling.)

MOLLY: Rambo? What the hell is going on here!
(ANNA enters.)

ANNA: What did he want?

MOLLY: My hand in marriage. I just had this chain put on last month!

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

MOLLY: Jesus Christ!

ANNA: What is it?

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

ANNA: Oh, come on!

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

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

MOLLY: That little bastard would have walked into my house and just helped himself to all my things! Like they've done to Mouse!

ANNA: Nonsense, we're all here.

MOLLY: So? He'd bang us on the head and rob and rape and plunder ...

ANNA: Wishful thinking.

MOLLY: Damn this country!

ANNA: You've got your gun, Molly ...

(She takes the gun out of the drawer and looks at it.)

MOLLY: Let me see that.

ANNA: It's loaded ... no, it's been used ... when did you shoot with it?

MOLLY: It's not mine.
(She takes it and 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.

ANNA: I can imagine. Why have the twins got guns, for goodness' sake?

MOLLY: Why does the sun rise?

ANNA: I'm not going to hang around to watch it.

MOLLY: Don't bellow, I heard you.

(She puts the gun back in the drawer.)

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

MOLLY: You don't feel like it?

ANNA: No, I'd much rather go home.

MOLLY: Really? You'd rather go home.

ANNA: Yes, frankly.

MOLLY: Yes, very frank. And Mouse?

ANNA: I think she should come and spend the weekend with me at home.

MOLLY: Oh, how cosy. And what about me?

ANNA: Hey?

MOLLY: Don't 'hey' me – hay is what horses eat! What about me?

ANNA: Molly ...

MOLLY: Right! Molly! Molly! Molly exists!

ANNA: OK, just not too late!

MOLLY: Molly exists!

ANNA: All right!

MOLLY: *Molly exists!*

ANNA: You've got lipstick on your teeth.

(MOLLY drops the dramatics.)

MOLLY: Oh shit. I'm so sick of all this camouflage. When will the world accept me, warts and all? Now where's that f..... unmentionable Mouse. **MOUSE!!!**

(MOUSE enters in a kaftan.)

MOUSE: I feel like an Arab.

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

ANNA: *(Laughs)* Good God, Mouse ...

MOLLY: I'm just getting my lipstick. Now, no one move. I have this terrible feeling you'll both run away and leave me to face it on my own. It's got to be a happy night! I can't do it on my own!

(She exits. MOUSE self-consciously sits.)

ANNA: You look amazing.

MOUSE: Really?

ANNA: Quite indescribable.

MOUSE: Thanks.

ANNA: They really took everything?

MOUSE: My writing-paper, my perfume, my spare pair of glasses ...

ANNA: You OK?

MOUSE: Oh yes. I'm not as attached to things as you and Molly.

ANNA: That only happens when you can afford it.
(She pours some more wine.)
Cheers.

(MOLLY enters, ready to go.)

MOLLY: Come on, come on, we're terribly late! Fridge closed, door locked, chain on ... fucking useless chain! Stove off, oven off, phone off ...
(Takes the phone off the hook)
Will you two bitches get out of here? We'll lose the table. Mouse, is the joint licensed?

MOUSE: I don't know.

MOLLY: You don't know. Who knows?

ANNA: No, it's not.

MOLLY: Bring the red wine.

ANNA: It's in my tummy.

MOLLY: All of it? Alcoholic bitch!

MOUSE: There's some white in the fridge.

MOLLY: It gives me pimples ...
(ANNA sighs dangerously.)
But don't worry, girls, I've found a cure. I shall wear a mask!
(Takes white wine out of the fridge.)
Now, have you done everything? Yes. I'll leave suicide for later.
Cheer up, my friends, the night is but a teenager!
(Picks up ANNA's glass.)
What's this waste?

ANNA: Dregs.

MOLLY: Very suitable. I drink to three of the nicest girls I know. *Lachaim!*
(She drains the glass and pulls her face.)
Ugh! And now let's go and kick the world up its arse!

(Blackout.)

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

Later that night.

ANNA and MOUSE, still dressed up, are sitting at the kitchen table.

ANNA is drinking wine.

ANNA: Is this her idea of a joke?

MOUSE: They say the road-blocks are for our own protection, Anna.

ANNA: So now one can't even move about one's own city?

MOUSE: I still think we would've got into that nice Indian place.

ANNA: What are people doing in expensive restaurants, feasting and boozing and having such a good time in the middle of a revolution?

MOUSE: She's going to blame me.

ANNA: It's disgusting.

MOUSE: I can't help being burgled.

ANNA: They seem to have been celebrating something.

MOUSE: It is Saturday night.

(ANNA looks around the kitchen.)

ANNA: Has anyone ever told Molly what a dump this is?

MOUSE: It won a prize.

ANNA: How much does she pay for the honour? R1,000 a month?

MOUSE: That's what you paid for that dress.

ANNA: No one was thrown out of this dress to make room for me!

MOUSE: I want to go home.

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

(MOLLY enters. She has changed into casual clothes.)

MOLLY: So we lost the table. It's not the end of the world. We'll just never go there again. Ever!

ANNA: I knew this would happen.

MOLLY: Oh, my clairvoyant friend! If you had any real clout you could've talked those police into letting us through the road-block and not wasting an hour breathing in exhaust-fumes!

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

MOLLY: Yes, yes, blame Molly 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 ...

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

ANNA: In my bag.

MOLLY: I'll get us some Chinese takeaways. We all love Chinese food, don't we?
(No reaction.)
Thought so. And you don't have to look so murderous, Anna *ou boer*. You're stuck with me, so make the best of an occasion. And don't either of you move! I'll be back before the blacks take over!

(She exits. Pause. ANNA pours more wine.)

ANNA: Want some?

MOUSE: No.

ANNA: What do you want?

MOUSE: I'm not thirsty.

ANNA: What do you want, Mouse!

MOUSE: You mean from life? A man. A child. Feeling safe. Like you.

ANNA: Oh no.

MOUSE: No?

ANNA: I want everything. Man-child-safety is just a consolation prize. I want everything.

MOUSE: At any cost.

ANNA: Yes.

MOUSE: I don't like you

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

MOUSE: Don't worry, I'm not.
(Giggles)
I've been robbed, not raped!

(ANNA ignores her little joke. The phone rings.)

ANNA: How come Molly's always alone if that phone never stops ringing. Maybe she's phoning herself from the corner phone-box just to impress us.

MOUSE: Shouldn't we answer it?

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

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

ANNA: Sorry.

(MOUSE answers the phone.)

MOUSE: Hello? 443 0809? No, she's not here. Yes, hold on, please. Anna, it's for you.

(ANNA takes the phone.)

ANNA: Suicides Unanimous? *O Mammie? Nee Mammie, ek is OK. Ek's nie dronk nie, Mama! Net ek en Molly en die Muis. Ons was by 'n steakhouse ... ag, dis 'n lang storie. Ek dog ons het dit al bespreek, Mammie. Dis my een aand af! Tannie Sybil is mos daar? Ja, ek weet dis sy verjaarsdag en ek behoort ook daar te wees, maar ek is nie daar nie; ek's hier. Asseblief Mama, los my uit.....*

(She puts down the phone.)

It's my brother's birthday today.

MOUSE: Oh.

ANNA: Yes.

MOUSE: I'm sorry.

ANNA: Why?

MOUSE: He's dead. Birthdays are different when you're dead.

ANNA: Are they? He can do nothing wrong now. Ever. He's safe and dead and always like the picture in the frame. While Anna stumbles through life black and blue and pathetically alive.
(Pause.)

I want nothing more than anyone else. Is that asking for so much? And when I drive around town after midnight, looking at all the young men and brown men and gay men ... any men ... I always end up driving home alone and I ask myself: 'Why Anna? What's wrong with you, Anna? Why don't you have someone to

love you, like everyone else?' That's all I want, Mousie. I want the impossible, the ordinary. We're not ordinary, you know? You and me and Molly? We're three of the last Great White Blind ... nothings! Here, now, with what's falling apart around us, so does it really matter if you pretend you're deaf as well? With your head up your own arse you can dance for a long time before you hear them laughing at you.

(She sings drunkenly and dances around the kitchen. She stops, regains her balance and takes out her cigarette.)

Matches.

(MOUSE hands her some matches.)

Hey where's that expensive Dunhill lighter I gave you for your birthday? Have you pawned it?

MOUSE: It was stolen with my jewellery box in which I kept special things. How can you think I would pawn it!

ANNA: You're supposed to use a lighter, Mouse.

MOUSE: I don't smoke.

ANNA: Oh. Hoe laat is dit?

MOUSE: Laat.

ANNA: So they even took that lighter? It cost a fortune!

MOUSE: I'm sorry, Anna.

ANNA: People shouldn't steal.

MOUSE: Maybe they needed my things more than I did.

ANNA: You're going to become a nun!

MOUSE: No. What really scares me is that someone can so easily get into my privacy without me knowing.

ANNA: Yes. Now go and telex Daddykins for a cheque.

MOUSE: That's not nice, Anna.

ANNA: But I'm not a 'Nice Anna'.

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

ANNA: Then you're a fool.

MOUSE: I don't think so.

(Pause.)

ANNA: I'm going.

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

ANNA: I'm sick of all this crap. I feel like a fool, sitting around here talking rubbish to you. Tell Molly our house was burnt down by terrorists or something.
(She gets up and sways to the door. Stops, confused)
 I better take the gun ...

MOUSE: Where are you going?

ANNA: I don't know ... maybe I've been invited to someone's house ... yes, I've just remembered. 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 man. 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.

ANNA: Where to?

MOUSE: Do you think I'm enjoying myself?

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

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

ANNA: I don't want to talk to you, Mouse.

MOUSE: Oh.

ANNA: 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 darling, a drain on the brain. And you're not even pretty. And about as sexy as a freeway roadsign. I'd rather talk to myself.

MOUSE: I don't believe you're saying all that to me...

ANNA: Or to one of the empty-headed studs I pick up at the discos. At least that 'Want a spin in my new Mercedes?' sometimes leads to something. I can't sleep with you. I can't love you.

MOUSE: You've never tried to love me.

ANNA: You're just not my type, little Mouse. Wild lesbian passion just doesn't happen among our master race. We're all as pure as the driven shit!

MOUSE: You've just had too much to drink and you are saying things you'll regret, Anna.

ANNA: Too late ...
(The phone rings again.)
 Can you believe it? Imagine if they have to bug Molly's phone, they'd never have time to go to the lavatory. Maybe that's a call

from Casualty. Some medic with Molly's Japanese pearl necklace between his fingers, still sticky with her blood. Next of kin's not home! *Gooi maar vir Molly weg!*

(She picks up the phone.)

Yes!

(Puts the phone down quickly)

Shit, my mother gets on my nerves! OK! OK! I'll stay here till the bitch gets back, all right! But what do I drink? What do I do?

MOUSE: Try dropping dead!

(MOUSE bursts into tears and exits. ANNA goes to the sideboard and opens the drawer in search of the gun. She empties the drawer on to the floor: no gun. We hear MOLLY's voice.)

MOLLY: *(Off)* Party! Party! Pull up your knickers, Mother's home! Enough noodles to kill us all!

(The phone rings. MOLLY enters.)

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

ANNA: Answer the phone yourself!

MOLLY: Oh me, oh my, but we are on good form tonight! What a joy to have around.

(She picks up the drawer and replaces the towels and puts it back into the sideboard.)

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 tragically monumental. Self-indulgent cow!

(She 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!

(Puts down the phone.)

Right, you like sweet-and-sour? I've got some spring rolls.

(In Chinese accent.)

Spling lolls? If you can't *do* it, you might as well *eat* it!

(Pause.)

God, you smell of death. And cheap wine!

ANNA: Your cheap wine!

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

ANNA: It smells like garbage.

MOLLY: Well it's not garbage, it's Chinese. Unless they also rate as rubbish in your all-white master-mind? Tell me, who do you lot like? You hate the Jews, the Catholics, the blacks, the yellows, the browns and the reds.

There's no one left. You've chased them all away and now you're alone in the cemetery, old Boer, so shut up and eat your chicken soup. Mouse!

(MOUSE enters in a dressing-gown.)

About time. I brought you some ...

(MOLLY sees her properly.)

And what the hell do you think you're wearing? This is a formal do!

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

MOLLY: An abortionist? Easy. Look in my phone book, under A. There's a lovely Mrs Meyer in Mowbray.

(MOUSE starts crying.)

Oh, for heavens sake.

ANNA: Jesus God!!!

(She exits furiously.)

MOLLY: And don't you blaspheme in my house. Fucking fascist! Now why is everyone behaving like pigs? It's not Christmas!

(She helps MOUSE to sit at the table.)

OK, Mousie, I'm sorry, I'm also tense. Come now, stop the tears. You'll rust the gold in your chain. What do you want? A pill? Do you have a headache? Mouse?

(She produces a 'medical kit' full of bottles.)

Here. A pill for each season. What's sore? The head? Take one of these ... no, these are for periods – oh, what the hell, same difference. Here's one for ... piles? You know what piles are, Mouse? I thought not. Gastroenteritis ... have you been sick? Oh shit, Mouse, I can smell it – you've been sick! Listen, you didn't vomit all over my bathroom, did you? Mrs Peters isn't coming in till Monday. Know what your problem is? You don't eat properly. Listen to me, I know. What do you expect when you always nibble at leaves like a rabbit – you get sick. If rabbits only ate ice-cream, they'd also get sick. It makes total sense! Here's a spring roll. Eat it. Go on, I won't stop yakking till I see you eat properly. Eat the fucking roll, Mouse! It's OK. No meat. I specially asked. There. Nice, hey? Hey? Want some sweet-and-sour ... no. Some of this? Ugh, what is this? Oh, the nice vegetarian thing I got specially for you. Specially! Now eat! You'll feel better.

(Pause.)

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

MOUSE: Sorry ...

MOLLY: '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 the perfect saint; I also need to explode.

(MOUSE can't help laughing at MOLLY.)

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

(ANNA enters quickly.)

Look who's back! Coming to apologize? I thought being an Afrikaner meant never having to say 'I'm sorry!'

(ANNA dials a phone number impatiently.)

ANNA: Is that the police? Lieutenant van Heerden! Yes, it's very important!

MOLLY: What do you need the police for?

ANNA: Hello, Jan? *My kar is gesteel ... Anna. Hier bo in Loaderstraat. Ja, Jan, ek weet dis Saterdagavond in die Kaap. Dis 'n nuwe Mercedes! Maar dis die riot squad se probleem!*¹

MOLLY: Anna, what's going on?

ANNA: *Nee, Jan, Kom nou! Of sal ek liewers direk vir my Oom bel? Goed.*²
(She puts the phone down.)

MOLLY: What was all that about?

ANNA: If you're that interested, learn the language!
(She exits. MOLLY follows her off.)

MOLLY: What about the riot squad? Is something happening? Anna!

(MOUSE is left alone in the kitchen. She waits for a moment, then checks that no one is looking. Then she digs into the sweet-and-sour pork with her fingers and eats with relish. WILLIAM enters from the house. He has been there all the time, having got in while they were out. When MOUSE sees him, she gets a shock.)

WILLIAM: Shhhh! Don't say a word!

MOUSE: Don't you say a word either!

WILLIAM: Why?

MOUSE: I'm eating meat! What's happening in the street?

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

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

(Pause. MOUSE gets nervous.)

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

MOUSE: Who?

¹ Hello Jan? My car has been stolen ... Anna. Up here in Loader Street. Yes, Jan, I know it's Saturday evening in the Cape. It's a new Mercedes! But it's the riot squad's problem!

² No, Jan, come now! Or shall I phone my uncle instead? Good.

WILLIAM: Mrs Peters is my mother.

MOUSE: Oh.

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

MOUSE: You were in the house?

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

(He holds up the bag containing the fruit and vegetables.)

MOUSE: Were you being chased by the police?

WILLIAM: Just a way of life. Here, don't leave this lying around.

(He hands her the passport. MOUSE looks at the drawer, then opens it. Gasps)

MOUSE: The gun! You took the gun!

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

(ANNA and MOLLY are heard returning.)

MOUSE: Here they come ... go away ... go!
(She pushes him to the kitchen door, but the safety chain is on and they can't open it.)
Oh God, they'll get the police if they find you here. Hide!

WILLIAM: I'll just tell them ...

MOUSE: Don't be crazy ... hide!

(She pushes him into the small pantry alcove so that he is hidden from the action area but in view of the audience. ANNA enters briskly, followed by MOLLY.)

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

ANNA: I'm not blaming you.

MOLLY: You make me feel it's all my fault!

ANNA: My fault for coming here tonight. Shit!

MOUSE: That's a ten-rand fine.
(They both look at her amazed. She points to the tin.)
You said a swear-word. Tin.

MOLLY: 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?

MOLLY: Who has a car like that anyway? The country's economy has gone down the drain and you lot get bigger cars every month. That's asking for trouble. We whites have become safe targets for blacks, Anna. These kids are like viruses. They'll get into anything they can.

MOUSE: Leave the coloureds out of this.

MOLLY: Hello. And whose side are you on?

MOUSE: I'm sure there's something nice on TV in the lounge ... come.

MOLLY: After what you went through this morning – nearly blinded by tear-gas, nearly blown to death by bombs, nearly massacred, now you take their side?

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

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

MOUSE: You stole this house from the coloureds.

MOLLY: Oh, don't start on that again! I don't make the laws around here. It's not my fault!

ANNA: Calm down, Molly! Jan said he'd be up here as soon as the pressure is off.

MOLLY: 1999?

MOUSE: Isn't that Jan van Heerden, your friend who took us mountain-climbing that weekend?

ANNA: You quite fancied him?

MOLLY: God! A few petrol-bombs and rioting schoolkids and they call it a revolution! Shame! You should've been in Poland in the ghetto in Warsaw!

ANNA: Well I wasn't.

MOLLY: Obviously. Now it's all cold!
(She picks at the food angrily. MOUSE is very aware of WILLIAM hiding and tries to prevent the others from going towards that area.)
 Where are the fucking plates?

MOUSE: I'll get them!

(She goes over to where WILLIAM is, leans across him and takes the plates one by one.)

ANNA: But tell us more, Molly.

MOLLY: About what?

ANNA: Your pre-natal Polish connection.

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

MOUSE: Getting the fucking plates ...

(She gets nervous, giggles and puts the plates on the table.)

ANNA: Then suffer a bit, Molly. Tell me about the horrors, the atrocities. Was your mother ever raped?

MOLLY: Hey?

ANNA: In the Warsaw ghetto? Raped: by ... what were they now?

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

MOLLY: 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.

(She throws one at ANNA who ducks, and it falls to the floor.)

MOUSE: Molly, are you going to start throwing food around again?

ANNA: And what about the inhuman suffering, Molly? The Warsaw ghetto overcrowded and stinking? People evicted from their homes and transported to camps of tin shacks and no water or warmth?

MOLLY: So you've read Leon Uris, big deal!

ANNA: No, I've driven our maid to her home a few times.

MOLLY: What are you getting at?

ANNA: Just making odious comparisons. Same tune, same drum; except here you're the one who says: 'But I swear I didn't know what was happening, I swear to God!'

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

MOUSE: I'm not hungry.

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

ANNA: *Ja!* Our national disease! Boredom! The symptoms are all the good things in life without the need to pay for them, in blood.

(She opens a new bottle of wine. Her attitude throughout this is casual.)

I think I also have the sickness. I keep on doing silly, desperate things, like spending time with you to forget, in case I wake up and see my real face reflected in the pools of blood at my feet. It's such 'fun', you see, playing dodge the tear-gas canisters at varsity, but getting safely home in time to watch the replay on TV. Some terminal cases get themselves locked up in detention, thank God, without trial, as an investment for that political asylum and accompanying highly paid international martyrdom And then there's us, dying pathetically of boredom. Life we shun because we've forgotten how to live it decently. Rather hide behind our armour – our money, our cars, our investments – because it's the only reality we're left with. The colour of our skin has become our sex and the trappings of superiority our appeal!

MOLLY: Welcome to the club, Anna!

ANNA: But the death-defying difference between me and you is that me and mine went through it all *here* and stuck to it and won 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*, Molly, if you can bear the smell. So, girls, welcome to the club!

MOLLY: You're drunk!

ANNA: But now that you've both grown rich and fat on the laws of my land, remember that because of me and mine, you two also have a soapbox to stand on, and without me and mine, where would you be? Back in a sandstorm behind barbed wire? And somehow I don't see you taking that last train to Manenberg with smiles on your faces. So cheers, *meide!* I drink to us and our orange, white and blue heaven. Let's enjoy it while it lasts: very quietly.
(She laughs and drinks.)

MOLLY: You are drunk!

(ANNA is about to start again, then stops. She puts her hand over her mouth and looks ill.)

MOUSE: I think she's going to be sick, Molly ...

MOLLY: Anna ...

(ANNA recovers and recites grandly, bottle in hand.)

ANNA: '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 little child with a bullet in his head and a stone in his hand
'While back in the Mother City round dinner and TV with wine and food and fashion we frightened angels of death beat our wings in time to requiem;

(MOLLY has heard this all before and sits patiently.)
‘But the sun is gone forever
‘And the birds will cry till they die in the dark
‘And the empty landscape ... and the empty landscape ...’

MOLLY: ‘And the empty landscape of shame and anger colours the soil
red and the sky black’!
OK, Anna! Wash your face!

(ANNA stands and sways. Stares at MOLLY. Moves her mouth soundlessly.)

MOUSE: Here it comes, Molly ...

(ANNA is going to be sick. MOLLY jumps up and turns ANNA towards the door.)

MOLLY: Not in here! Bathroom, Anna, BATHROOM!
(ANNA exits. She is sick off. MOLLY sits, furious.)
I won’t have her staying over here tonight in her state. She trots
out the chip on her shoulder and stands on her political soapbox
and talks utter crap!

MOUSE: It’s always over after the poem, Molly.

MOLLY: No, after the poem she starts on me! I don’t need that in my life.
Go on, take her home with you. The party’s over.

MOUSE: I don’t have space for her.

MOLLY: Then make space for her! She’s not staying here!

MOUSE: Can’t she take your car?

MOLLY: Nobody take my car. I’ve worked damn hard for my car and my
clothes and my security. I don’t have an Afrikaner background, or
a rich Daddy, or dead hero’s military pension. You can take that
sleeping-bag that whats-his-name left here. I don’t want it.

MOUSE: But Molly, I’ve no space ...

MOLLY: Then sleep in the same bed! She’s not that hard up to feel
pressed to make a pass at you!

MOUSE: Don’t be disgusting!

MOLLY: And put on some clothes! I hate snivelling losers sitting around
kitchens in borrowed dressing-gowns! Go on, get dressed! Don’t
say I don’t care about my friends. And pull yourself together,
Mouse, you’re supposed to be young and attractive. Get out!

MOUSE: But ...

(MOLLY pushes her out of the kitchen.)

MOLLY: Get out!
(Pause.)
Oh, I hate this place, I think I'll move.
(She sits. The silence overpowers her.
She picks up the phone and dials.)
Hello? Hello! Is that Freddie? This line is terrible ... hello,
Freddie? It's Molly! What? Damn ... Molly!
Oh, that's better ...terrible line, typical. Who's that? Jeremy? Do I
know you? Molly. You know me? Oh, has he? What did he say
about me? Listen, I'm over sixteen ...twenty-two, I swear to God!
What did Freddie say? OK, you don't have to tell me if you don't
want to. Where is the bastard? Oh ... oh yes, he told me – with
whats-her-name? Ivan? My God, has he gone gay? Hey? Gay!
Oh, never mind. No! Don't say I phoned!
(During this WILLIAM comes out of his hiding-place and edges
across the kitchen behind her, towards the door.)
Listen, Jeremy ... Jeremy ... that's a nice name. Hey? Jeremy! It's
a nice name. Ha, ha, flattery usually gets me everywhere. No,
nothing. Just sitting around. And you? Want to come around
Loader Street? Yes, come round and we'll ... hey? Did he tell you
that? Yes, I've got some here ... you want to come round for a
snortette? Oh. No. Oh. Ja, sure. No, no, it's not OK.
No, fuck off and enjoy yourself, you bastard!
(She slams the phone down. Pause.)
Oh no ... why do you do that ... why do you always do that!
(She turns and sees WILLIAM at the door.)
How the hell did you get in?

WILLIAM: I was here earlier ...

MOLLY: Anna!

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

MOLLY: 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.)

MOLLY: What do you want here?

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

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

WILLIAM: But we talked.

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

(Pause.)

WILLIAM: I left my bag of greens here.

MOLLY: What?

WILLIAM: These carrots and things.

MOLLY: Is that why you came back?

WILLIAM: I'm sorry.

MOLLY: 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 death? I might have been sleeping!

WILLIAM: I was around ...

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

WILLIAM: I was up the road.

MOLLY: Doing what?

WILLIAM: Old Sarah. I went to see her.

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

WILLIAM: For what?

MOLLY: Paying for it?

WILLIAM: Sarah is an old friend of my family.

MOLLY: Lovely friends your family has.

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

MOLLY: I see.

WILLIAM: Old Sarah's a good person.

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

WILLIAM: I'm here.

MOLLY: Yes. So you are.
(Pause.)
Well, so how do you like your old home? A bit better than you remember it?

WILLIAM: Very nice.

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

WILLIAM: Underfloor heating?

MOLLY: For winter.

WILLIAM: It doesn't get that cold.

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

WILLIAM: Sloppy plasterwork.

MOLLY: Oh, an architect?

WILLIAM: Not yet.

MOLLY: 'Not yet', excuse me. Are you at university?

WILLIAM: High school.

MOLLY: Aren't you a bit old for school?

WILLIAM: It takes longer for some of us.

MOLLY: You look quite bright to me.

WILLIAM: That's the problem.

(Pause.)

MOLLY: Mmmm. You got rabbits?

WILLIAM: Rabbits?

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

WILLIAM: We eat them.

MOLLY: Oh? And what else is in the bag?

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

MOLLY: Don't be cheeky, boy.

(Pause. MOLLY is being seductive. WILLIAM looks into the bag.)

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

MOLLY: ... and the dear little carrots.

WILLIAM: They're quite big.

MOLLY: Mmmm. A real bachelor-boy.

WILLIAM: I like it that way.

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

WILLIAM: No, I didn't ...

MOLLY: 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.

MOLLY: Want to see my jokes?

(ANNA enters, sobered up, with MOUSE in tow.)

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

MOLLY: Oh, bugger off!

ANNA: The carrots!

MOLLY: This is ... er ... 'Carlo'.

ANNA: Of course.

MOLLY: He brought me some vegetables.

ANNA: For tonight's meal, no doubt?

MOLLY: Yes, for tonight's meal.

MOUSE: Molly, I think ...

WILLIAM: It's OK.

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

ANNA: Carlo? I'm Anna.

WILLIAM: Anna.

ANNA: And that's Molly.

WILLIAM: Yes, I know.

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

ANNA: Nonsense, we're not going anywhere.

MOLLY: We're going out!

ANNA: Here, Carlo, have some wine.

MOLLY: We'll be late.

ANNA: For what? Carlo? Wine?

(Pause. WILLIAM looks at MOUSE, then at the others. Then he decides.)

WILLIAM: OK.

(ANNA pours him a glass of wine. WILLIAM sits, holding the bag against him.)

ANNA: Good. Here. Now what about some delicious sweet-and-sour pork to go with Molly's nice fresh carrots!
(She takes the bag from him. He holds on to it.)
Come now, boy, this is a civilized place. Coats, hats and bags stay at the door.

MOUSE: I'll hold it ...

(MOUSE takes the bag from WILLIAM slowly. He lets go.)

MOLLY: Anna, what do you think you're doing!

ANNA: You like cold Chinese takeaway, Carlo?

WILLIAM: It's OK.

ANNA: OK then, eat. This is Molly's kitchen. You can't ever go away hungry. Everyone always has a good meal here, especially our Molly.

MOLLY: Carlo has to go, Anna, please don't interfere!

ANNA: Oh no, where does Carlo have to go? Carlo? You see, Molly, the boy's hungry. The mouth is full. Don't expect a miracle, let it eat. It's so young and hungry. It needs its strength! Oh, I love watching young men eat. It's so sexy!

MOLLY: Christ, Anna!

ANNA: Tin, Molly!
(ANNA sits next to WILLIAM and patronizes him lovingly.)
Nice food? Gosh, I had a brother you know, Carlo, who used to eat us out of house and home, until he was killed. A loaf a day. You like bread? Shame, Molly's only got cake. My brother never put on weight, because he was healthy and strong, like you. I mean, take Molly. She sees a crust and blows up like a petrol-bomb, but my brother had a hard, flat stomach. Do you have a hard stomach?
(She slowly feels his stomach.)
Oh yes, a nice hard body. Molly, come and feel the boy's body. It's so hard.
(WILLIAM stares at her.)
Don't let me interrupt you, Carlo. Finish your last spoonful. Think of all the poor starving children. Mustn't waste...
(Then she empties the leftovers on Molly's plate on to WILLIAM's.)
There we are. Waste not, want more.

MOLLY: That's my plate!

ANNA: 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 coloured boy to me. Don't answer with your mouth full. You'll choke and die and Molly will kill herself! Yes, 'Carlo' sounds Italian. I like Italians. I also like coloureds. In theory, of course. Don't really count any among my friends, but Molly always says how lovely they are. She should know, treating her coloured maid like a piece of shit. Sit down, Molly, you'll wear down your heels. Now, Carlo, don't rush, there's lots of time.

MOLLY: What the hell do you think you're doing?

ANNA: I'm being nice. I can, you know, it's part of my Christian national education. I can look the angel of death in the face and be nice.
(She takes the spoon from WILLIAM, and while she sings a children's lullaby, she feeds him.)
'Siembamba Mama se kindjie
Siembamba Mama se kindjie
Draai sy nek om
Gooi hom in die sloot
Trap op sy kop dan is hy dood...'
(On the third mouthful he refuses to take it. Pause.)
The boy is finished. Take away his plate, Molly, and wash it nicely. We don't want to overburden poor Mrs Peters on Monday. Now, Carlo, how about a cigarette?

WILLIAM: Thanks.

ANNA: Give him a cigarette, Molly.

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

ANNA: You give him a cigarette, Mouse!

(MOUSE offers WILLIAM a box of filter cigarettes. He slowly takes one)

WILLIAM: Do you have plain?

ANNA: Do we have plain? Of course we have plain!
(She takes the cigarette, breaks off the filter and presents the 'plain' cigarette back to him.)
Give him a light, Molly.

WILLIAM: It's OK, I've got a light.

(He takes out a cheap plastic lighter.)

ANNA: Nice lighter.

WILLIAM: Oh?

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

MOUSE: What?

ANNA: The lighter. Let me see? What a coincidence, Mouse, just like the lighter I gave you.

MOUSE: No, mine was a Dunhill ...

ANNA: Don't be 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: Really?

ANNA: Till tonight, that is. She ... 'lost' it. Where did you get this lighter, Carlo?

WILLIAM: I bought it.

ANNA: Really? You bought it.

MOUSE: Anna, it's nothing like mine!

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

MOUSE: What the hell are you doing?

ANNA: I'm being nice.
(Pause.)
So, Carlo, tell me, do you drive?

MOUSE: Anna.....

WILLIAM: I don't have a licence.

ANNA: But you do drive?

WILLIAM: I can.

MOUSE: Molly, stop this!

MOLLY: Anna, this is getting boring!

ANNA: Shut up, Molly. Can you drive an automatic?

WILLIAM: My uncle has an automatic Chev.

ANNA: Really?

WILLIAM: I used to drive that when I was a kid.

ANNA: Good price for cars like that.

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

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

MOUSE: How can you accuse him of these things?

ANNA: But he's been accused and convicted. You said he's guilty!

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

MOUSE: You can prove nothing!

ANNA: Here's the proof! What's a coloured doing up here in a white area?

MOUSE: Why must you simplify everything?

ANNA: Simplify everything?

MOUSE: This was his home!

ANNA: Exactly. And what is happening out there? Affectionate homage to white rule? You were terrified!

MOUSE: Yes, but at last something is happening! Whatever it is, at least thank God it's started to happen!

(WILLIAM laughs.)

ANNA: Are you laughing at us?

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

ANNA: Funny?

WILLIAM: *Ja.*

ANNA: You think you can just laugh and it will all fall in your lap?

WILLIAM: I don't live around here any more.

ANNA: Then you'd better start working for the privilege, boy! Hey, boy!
(She nudges him, trying to provoke him.)
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: Anna, stop it!

ANNA: Here. Take! Help yourself ... go on ... take ... take!!!
(MOUSE is in the way. ANNA viciously pushes MOUSE at WILLIAM. He catches her and holds her. ANNA pulls out drawers from the sideboard and throws the contents on the floor – towels, cutlery, place-mats – saying as she does it)
Take ... take ... take ... take!
(Then she slowly sinks to the floor and hunches, sobbing. MOLLY stands horrified, staring at ANNA. Pause.)

WILLIAM: Pass me a glass of water, please ...

MOUSE: It's OK. I'm OK. Are you OK?

WILLIAM: *Ja.*

MOLLY: Anna?

(MOUSE goes to ANNA and helps her up gently)

ANNA: Mousie, I'm sorry ... I'm sorry ...

(ANNA looks at MOLLY and WILLIAM, then exits. After a moment MOLLY follows her.)

MOLLY: Anna?

(MOLLY exits.)

WILLIAM: What was all that about?

(MOUSE starts clearing up the mess, replacing drawers.)

MOUSE: I'm sorry about all this. Anna's very tense. Her brother was killed in the township.

WILLIAM: Oh.

MOUSE: And Molly still loves her ex-husband, but he's got another, younger wife.

WILLIAM: Oh.

MOUSE: And Anna's car was stolen.

WILLIAM: I see, so she thought it was me?

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

WILLIAM: It sounds like you've had a hell of a party!

(MOUSE shrugs and smiles.)

MOUSE: Saturday night.

MOLLY: *(Off)* Mouse?

WILLIAM: Is your friend all right?

MOUSE: Remorse. Very Afrikaans.

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

(MOUSE looks into 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, you know.

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

WILLIAM: I can handle women.

MOUSE: Oh.

MOLLY: *(Off)* Mouse, you'd better drive her home in my car.

MOUSE: I'll have to go.

(She puts the gun in the bag and hands the bag to him.)

WILLIAM: Can you drive all right?

MOUSE: I used to drive Land Rovers in Rhodesia. Do you want a lift?

WILLIAM: No thanks.

MOUSE: Your buses have stopped. I believe there's a lot of shooting 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 sister was shot by the police this morning. That's why I came to see my ma. That's why she left early. I've actually come to ask Molly to advance us some money on Ma's wages.

MOUSE: Oh my God, William ...

(She is overcome. Looks at him. MOLLY enters quickly.)

MOLLY: Mouse, come on, and stop that eternal sniveling! Anna's waiting in the car!

(She pushes MOUSE out of the room and calls after her.)

And for the tin's sake, drive carefully, we've had enough excitement for tonight. Phone me tomorrow after eleven. And Mouse? Don't take the freeway! Those damn kids are throwing stones at the cars!

(She sighs and sits.)

Jesus Christ!

WILLIAM: Tin.

MOLLY: Hey?

WILLIAM: You said a swear-word. Tin.

MOLLY: No, that wasn't a swear-word. And anyway, what do you mean, 'tin'? I don't even know you!

WILLIAM: Aren't I Carlo?

MOLLY: Are you?
(Pause. A siren passes outside.)
Ow ... I've got that pain here over my heart again ...

WILLIAM: Go and see a doctor.

MOLLY: I need to pay a specialist good money to hear that all I need is love and affection? I can get that from a vet.
(WILLIAM picks up some of the cutlery lying on the floor.)
Leave that. The maid will be in tomorrow.

WILLIAM: Sunday?

MOLLY: Whenever.
(He collects the plates from the table.)
Old habits die hard, hey? Careful of those plates. They're from Poland. Belonged to my grandmother. She was an incredible person.

WILLIAM: So was mine.

MOLLY: Well, at least we've got something in common.
(She looks at him keenly.)
So, aren't you just dying to see the rest of the house?

WILLIAM: It's very late.

MOLLY: Yes. Well then, let's start with my bedroom.
(She holds out her hand to him.)
Come on, 'Carlo'. And leave the carrots. They'll still be here tomorrow morning.
(He goes to her. She expects a kiss. He stops and looks at her.)
Be nice to me ...

(He walks out of the door. The front door slams. MOLLY stands alone.)

(Blackout.)

THE END