

THE PHOENIX AND ITS CHICKEN
ANDREAS FLOURAKIS

Translated by Alexi Kaye Campbell

2005, COPYRIGHT.
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

ANDREAS FLOURAKIS
E-mail: aflourakis@yahoo.gr

CHARACTERS

The Father
The Mother

(their friends:)
The Man
The Woman

Tina

The Doctor
The Nurse

SETTINGS

Hospital
Man's and woman's living room
Parents' home
Baths

1.

The **FATHER** and **MOTHER** are pacing nervously up and down the hospital corridor. **TINA** enters, immaculately dressed in a sharp business suit.

TINA There you are.
MOTHER At last.
FATHER What's the news?
TINA I'm assuming you're the parents.
MOTHER You know our boy?
TINA Not personally.
MOTHER Oh.
FATHER Are you a doctor?
TINA I'm a banker.
FATHER How can we help?
TINA I need to ask a few questions. Please answer with precision.
FATHER Is it a survey?
TINA Was he drunk?
MOTHER I beg your pardon?
TINA Your son. When they brought him here. Was he drunk?
FATHER I haven't a clue.
MOTHER They're not letting us see him.
TINA You didn't ask if he was drunk?
FATHER Well, we did but..
MOTHER They've been ignoring us.
TINA Leave it to me.

TINA opens her bag and takes out her filofax and a pen to jot down the parents' answers to her questions.

TINA Would you say he was a heavy drinker?
FATHER Well, he liked the occasional...
TINA Was he often drunk?
FATHER I wouldn't know.
TINA When was the last time he was plastered?
FATHER (to MOTHER) When was it?
MOTHER New Year's Eve I think. He and the boys.
TINA Is there a history of drug abuse?
MOTHER God forbid.
TINA Short-sightedness?
FATHER A slight blurring in the right eye, that's all.
TINA So he wore glasses then?
FATHER No.
TINA Why not?
MOTHER He just didn't.
TINA I'm assuming he had a license?

FATHER He's just a kid.
TINA Well, did he or didn't he?
FATHER What?
TINA Have a license?
FATHER I don't know.
TINA Brilliant.
MOTHER Are you the police?
TINA I'm a banker.
MOTHER Oh.
FATHER So why the questions?
TINA Insurance.
FATHER Whose insurance?
TINA Mine of course.
FATHER I don't understand.
TINA You will when you see the state of my car.
MOTHER Are you the one who did this to my boy?

The MOTHER is ready to pounce on her but the FATHER holds her back.

FATHER Wait.
TINA *He's* the one who crashed into *me*. The back of my car is a total write off. It's a good thing I was wearing my seat-belt.
FATHER Aren't you just happy to be alive?
TINA Wait till you hear what the damage is.
MOTHER My boy is at death's door and all you can talk about is money.
TINA The two things are completely unrelated.
FATHER So how much will you need to mend your bloody car?
TINA Hold on a minute and I'll tell you. **(Referring to the sums she's scribbled in her filofax)** A thousand for the fender, eight hundred and fifty for the doors - eight hundred and fifty for the paint job, a hundred for each of the tyres, a thousand for the trunk, a hundred for each head light. That's a total of four thousand three hundred. Plus VAT.

The FATHER lets the MOTHER loose.

FATHER Kill the bitch.

The MOTHER grabs TINA by the hair, they both start screaming.

2.

The house of the MOTHER and FATHER's bourgeois friends. They're sitting across the table from each other, eating dinner.

WOMAN At work today....
MAN I'm in court tomorrow.
WOMAN Guess who it ends up the boss is fucking?
MAN It's going to have to be an early start.
WOMAN Me.
MAN Dad talks shit.
WOMAN But we broke it off yesterday.
MAN Oh.
WOMAN You know you needn't be so afraid of him.
MAN Afraid of who?
WOMAN Your father.
MAN What makes you say that?
WOMAN You always do well in court.
MAN How long till the news?
WOMAN I'm tired. After all these years.
MAN What do you mean?
WOMAN At work. I want something to help the time go by, I don't know, I want..
MAN The remote. Where's the remote?
WOMAN I don't know
MAN Never mind.
WOMAN You make so much money; why do I need to work?
MAN You make so much money; why do I need to work?

The phone rings.

MAN If it's my dad, I'm not here.
WOMAN Still not here.
MAN Never here.

The MAN takes his plate and sits in front of the TV.

WOMAN (on the phone) There you are... where have you been? **(and then quietly to the MAN)** It's not him. **(on the phone)** The police station?.. Why? What happened?....Is he hurt? Don't worry, of course he'll come and get you out. That's what friends are for. Isn't it? **(to the MAN)** It's for you.
MAN What is it?
WOMAN Their son's been in a car accident. They got into a fight with some mad woman at the hospital, all hell broke loose, it made the local news, and now they're at the police station.
MAN Not again...
WOMAN Looks like it.
MAN Whose son? **(He takes the phone)** Hello...**(with forced concern)**...I'm sure he'll pull through...Where exactly are you?...I'll be right there. **(He puts the phone down).**

Man and Woman look at each other without talking.

WOMAN Can I come too?
MAN What for?
WOMAN You never take me anywhere.
MAN I don't follow you to work do I?
WOMAN Even I hate going there. I never want to go back. I want to find something else, something more..
MAN More significant?
WOMAN (desperate) Please, please, please.
MAN What?
WOMAN Please let me come. I'll be as quiet as a mouse, it'll be as if I'm not even there.
MAN I don't know.
WOMAN It'll be as if I'm not even there.
MAN I don't know.
WOMAN As if I'm not even there.

3.

The DOCTOR's consulting rooms at the hospital. Part of the room is curtained off. The DOCTOR and the NURSE are behind the curtain.

NURSE Just a little bit lower, yes, that's good, that's it, there.
DOCTOR There?
NURSE Just there.
DOCTOR Where are the parents?
NURSE Only his mother's here. She's in a right state.
DOCTOR Was she a passenger on his bike?
NURSE Judging from her appearance.
DOCTOR Don't move.
NURSE Are you finished?
DOCTOR Nearly there.
NURSE Yes, come. Come. Now!
DOCTOR There you go. I was holding back for you.

After a slight pause the DOCTOR and the NURSE emerge from behind the curtain in a slightly dishevelled state.

NURSE You took your time today.
DOCTOR Is that a problem?
NURSE The boy who was in the motorbike accident. His mother's waiting to see you.
DOCTOR Ah, yes, the boy.

The DOCTOR begins to rehearse what he's about to tell the boy's MOTHER.

DOCTOR It's a matter of time now.. Not many hours left, I'm afraid.... I'm in the unfortunate position of having to announce to you...How's that?

NURSE It'll do.

DOCTOR OK then, well off you go and don't forget, the boy's room is strictly out of bounds.

NURSE Even to his mother?

DOCTOR Especially to her. Send her in.

The NURSE exits and approaches TINA who is stroking some detached part of her car.

DOCTOR (to himself) Fucking job.

The NURSE comes back accompanied by TINA who looks a mess with a bruised eye and her hand in bandages. The NURSE exits.

DOCTOR. Please. Have a seat... I'm in the unfortunate position of having to announce to you...

TINA It's bad, isn't it?

DOCTOR Yes, and I'm in the unfortunate position of having to announce to you that the situation is even worse than appearances might initially suggest.

TINA Oh God, what's the damage? Tell me.

DOCTOR Damage?

TINA How much is this whole thing going to cost me?

DOCTOR With all due respect, there are more important issues at hand..

TINA Such as?

DOCTOR Well. But as I was saying, I'm in the unfortunate position of having to announce to you...

TINA I made the purchase with money from my mother's pension.

DOCTOR The purchase? You say you made the purchase?

TINA That's what I said.

DOCTOR Well I know times have changed but all the same... I find your terminology slightly offensive.

TINA What else should I call it?

DOCTOR So has it been long since you "made your purchase" as you put it?

TINA Years. I had another one before it. A Japanese one.

DOCTOR And what happened to that?

TINA Kicked the bucket.

DOCTOR What?

TINA Sucked it dry. Really got it to work for me. Years of abuse. It's understandable. Couldn't cope.

DOCTOR And they keep giving them to you? Just like that?

TINA They are replaceable for God's sake. If you've got the cash. Speaking of which... how much is the damage?
DOCTOR My marriage is on the rocks because my wife can't conceive... and you... you just sit there and... you're a... you're just a...
TINA I'm a what?
DOCTOR You're just a... you're just a...
TINA Go on, say it.
DOCTOR You're just a...

The DOCTOR, who is unable to control himself, slaps TINA across the head. TINA screams.

4.

The WOMAN arrives at the hospital. The NURSE has a deck of cards in front of her.

WOMAN I'm here about the boy who was in the motorbike accident.
NURSE Another one.
WOMAN I came to give blood.
NURSE (suddenly excited) Oh! You should have said. Is it just you or are there more coming?
WOMAN It might be some time before the others get here. There's some papers they need to sign before they're allowed to leave the police station..
NURSE The police station? Oh, well, doesn't matter if they're good or bad, just as long as they've got some blood in their veins. It's all that counts. We need blood.
WOMAN Anyway, for now they sent me along to give some of mine.
NURSE You're just in time. I've had enough of playing patience.
WOMAN It's always me who gets to do the dirty work. Not that I'm complaining. Gives you something to do; I'm bored stiff otherwise. I've been bored all day... I've been bored all week. At home I hide the clocks. Makes time pass faster.
NURSE Shall we?
WOMAN You know, I don't really want to give blood. Is it painful?
NURSE He was in a motorbike accident. What do you think?
WOMAN I've never given blood before.
NURSE Shame on you.
WOMAN Don't stain my dress. Blood stains.
NURSE Off we go.
WOMAN I faint at the sight of a needle.

The NURSE pushes the WOMAN into the surgery.

NURSE So close your eyes.

5.

The **FATHER**, the **MOTHER** and the **MAN** are in the hospital corridor. The **MOTHER** is holding a bag of apples. They all sit down. The **MOTHER** gives an apple each to the **FATHER** and the **MAN**. The **MAN** takes three knives out of his pocket, gives one each to the **FATHER** and the **MOTHER** and keeps one for himself. All three of them peel and eat their apples. The **DOCTOR** walks by.

FATHER Have an apple.
DOCTOR Thank you.
MAN I'm afraid we don't have a fourth knife.
MOTHER I'll peel it for you.
DOCTOR It's alright; I like the skin.

6.

At the hospital. **TINA** is still dishevelled with both eyes bruised and a bandage on her arm. The **NURSE** is wrapping another bandage around her ear.

TINA Do you mind if I ask you a few questions?
NURSE I'm busy.
TINA What's that supposed to mean?
NURSE It means I have work to do.
TINA Can't you work and talk at the same time?
NURSE It's your bloody ear. Go on then.
TINA It's about the boy.
NURSE You're not his mother.
TINA No, but he is the reason I'm here.
NURSE What's your blood type?
TINA O negative.
NURSE Great!

The **NURSE** starts jumping for joy.

TINA What's up with you?
NURSE Your blood type's very rare. How often do you give blood?
TINA Never.
NURSE Shame on you. Let's go.

TINA Go where?
NURSE You are going to give blood to save the boy, aren't you?
TINA What gave you that idea?
NURSE What?
TINA (she opens her filofax) I'm going to ask you a few questions. Please answer with precision.
NURSE Your blood can save a lot of people from dying.
TINA I couldn't care less.
NURSE One day you'll be the one who needs it.
TINA We'll cross that bridge when we get to it.
NURSE Your blood is O negative and you're telling me that you're not planning to give me any.
TINA That's what I said. No way.
NURSE No what?
TINA No way. Read my lips: N.O. No.
NURSE No?
TINA No.
NURSE You're just a... you're just a...
TINA Here we go again.
NURSE You're just a... you're just a...
TINA I don't think I'll stay for the next part.

TINA makes a move to go but the NURSE grabs her by the hair, tackles her to the floor and begins to kick her legs ferociously. TINA tries in vain to defend herself, all the while screaming for help.

7.

The DOCTOR's consulting rooms.

DOCTOR The situation is serious.
WOMAN How bad is it?
DOCTOR Broken hips, spine displacement, punctured lungs, fractured thigh bones, general abrasions, first degree burns on seventy percent of the skin surface.
WOMAN Teeth?
DOCTOR All gone.
WOMAN That sounds bad.
DOCTOR It is.
WOMAN How will he chew?
DOCTOR He won't.
WOMAN I see. Have you administered pain relief?
DOCTOR Naturally.
WOMAN Can't you finish him off?
DOCTOR It's illegal.

WOMAN There's bound to be exceptions.
DOCTOR We'll see.
WOMAN Perhaps your palm needs a little greasing.
DOCTOR Perhaps you need a little greasing.
WOMAN I prefer it without. Do you have children?
DOCTOR No.
WOMAN Neither do we.
DOCTOR It's a bit of an issue.
WOMAN Not much of an issue.
DOCTOR Which one of you is sterile?
WOMAN It's his father.
DOCTOR In our case, it's my wife who's got the problem.

The DOCTOR takes the woman by the hand and leads her behind the screen.

WOMAN All men say the same.
DOCTOR In our case, I promise you it's true.
WOMAN Then don't come inside me.
DOCTOR I have condoms.
WOMAN Who trusts condoms?
DOCTOR Doctors do.

8.

The NURSE is taking blood from the MOTHER. The FATHER has passed out.

MOTHER It's because they don't get periods. They're not used to it.
NURSE Possibly.
MOTHER Most men faint at the sight of blood.
NURSE John Hague was an exception.
MOTHER Who?
NURSE John Hague, the London vampire.
MOTHER Is that a book?
NURSE No, it's a true story. They hung him in 1969.
MOTHER Never heard of him.
NURSE One day he accidentally injured his right hand and the blood started flowing like a torrent.
MOTHER Did he faint?
NURSE He started to lick it.
MOTHER Did he like it?
NURSE He thought it was the real thing, life itself: warm, salty, sticky. It became a habit.

MOTHER He drank his own blood?

NURSE Mostly other peoples'. He butchered a dozen or so. The first time he sliced his victim's throat with a penknife. He tried to drink the blood but it was hard to control the flow of it, spraying and gushing all over the place as it was, so he didn't find it easy. He held his victim over the kitchen sink and tried to catch most of it with a glass but to no great effect.

MOTHER Then what?

NURSE Sucked it straight from the wound. Are you feeling all right?

MOTHER Could I get a glass of water?

The MOTHER faints. The FATHER comes to.

FATHER What's wrong with her?

NURSE (puzzled) She fainted.

FATHER Women. Show them a drop of blood...

9.

In the hospital corridor the MAN and WOMAN are eating chocolate bars and looking confused. TINA, who is still looking battered and bruised plus a bandaged leg has taken a pocket-sized mirror out of her handbag and is applying some make-up to minimize the damage.

TINA Are you visiting someone?

MAN The child of a friend of ours.

TINA Well it wouldn't be your own would it?

WOMAN I beg your pardon?

TINA Couples who don't have children look different. It's in the faces.

WOMAN What is?

MAN What about you?

TINA I'm not married if that's what you're asking but when I do get married the first thing I'll do is have a child. Children bring happiness. Are you happy yourselves? As if... how could you be? I mean just look at you.

WOMAN We are. Happy.

TINA You don't look it.

WOMAN You see that in our faces too, do you?

TINA Why not separate? Why put up with each other night after night? Look at her. Just take a look. How can you bear to have her near you? And you, yes you, how can you stand to have him in your bed?

WOMAN Stop it.

TINA It's just that you're scared of being on your own, isn't it? Don't be ashamed, everybody's frightened of being lonely.

MAN Don't listen to her, she's mad.
TINA But you're already lonely.
WOMAN Stop it. Just stop it. You're just a.. you're just a..
TINA A what?
WOMAN You're just a..
TINA I think I have to go now.

TINA makes a move to go but the **WOMAN** grabs her and begins to beat her. The **DOCTOR** walks by. **TINA** escapes the **WOMAN**'s grasp and runs towards him.

TINA Help me Doctor!

The **DOCTOR** slaps her and the **MAN** follows suit. **TINA** panics and runs to save herself.

WOMAN Good riddance to her.
DOCTOR If you'll excuse me, I have work to do.

The **DOCTOR** leaves.

WOMAN Now what?
MAN I don't know.
WOMAN Let's play the news-flash game.
MAN I'm bored.
WOMAN Please. Please play it with me.

Both of them suddenly hold make-believe microphones in their hands.

WOMAN Do you have a statement to make?
MAN My client found herself the victim in a premeditated act of aggression, there was no course left open to her other than to defend herself. The woman you have just seen on your television screens was not in fact injured in the least, just heavily made-up to make it appear so. Disguising herself as the tragic victim of countless accidents she roams hospital corridors preying on unsuspecting citizens. If you happen to see her please call your local police station immediately to report your sighting.....

There is a deafening noise.

MAN What's that?
WOMAN This is so much fun.

10.

The **DOCTOR'S** consulting rooms. **TINA** is splayed out on the floor in a semi-conscious state. The **DOCTOR** and the **NURSE** are eating potato-chips.

NURSE She was run over by an ambulance.
DOCTOR This woman is a walking accident.
NURSE What shall I do with her?
DOCTOR Wrap her up in bandages.
NURSE Won't you examine her?
DOCTOR Don't even want to look at her, let alone examine her.
NURSE She's a mess.

11.

In the hospital corridor. The **MAN** is sprawled out on one of the chairs taking a nap. The **WOMAN** and the **MOTHER** are sitting close by, smoking.

MOTHER ...In the mornings he'd walk around the house with nothing on and you know what boys are like at that age.
WOMAN Hard-ons and all that?
MOTHER I beg your pardon?
WOMAN Would he have an erection? They usually do first thing in the morning.
MOTHER I never really looked, but he might have had. I'd asked him a million times to wear his underwear on his way to the bathroom.
WOMAN Why?
MOTHER He never listened to me. Said he hated wearing briefs.
WOMAN Tight briefs make men sterile. I read that somewhere.

The Man blinks.

MOTHER I don't know but I did buy him a dozen pairs of white boxer shorts and left them just outside his door.
WOMAN Why didn't you take them into the bedroom?
MOTHER I'd never do that. Anyway it was all a waste of my time really.
WOMAN He never wore them.
MOTHER Oh no, he did wear them.
WOMAN Waste of your time.
MOTHER It's just that... you'll never guess what he did. He took out his camera, took a few pictures of his privates, made photocopies of them, took the photocopies to one of those shops, you know,

where they transfer your favourite snapshot onto a T-shirt or something and printed them on each of the pairs of boxers I'd bought him...

WOMAN How poetic.

MOTHER What?

WOMAN Was he erect? In the pictures?

MOTHER I don't know. How would I know? **(Confidentially)** I think in half of them he was.

12.

In the doctor's office

FATHER I would appreciate it if you made an exception.

DOCTOR Go on.

FATHER And allowed me to see my son. My wife wouldn't be able to cope but I need to see him.

DOCTOR Are you cheating on her?

FATHER ...?

DOCTOR Are you fucking around? You can tell me, I'm a doctor.

FATHER Em... no. Not often.

DOCTOR Hhmmm...

FATHER What?

The DOCTOR becomes pensive.

FATHER Is it serious?

DOCTOR When was the last time?

FATHER About a year ago.

DOCTOR Who with?

FATHER A colleague at work.

DOCTOR Any good?

FATHER She was all right.

DOCTOR But what?

FATHER I regretted it.

DOCTOR Why?

FATHER I don't know; I often regret things.

DOCTOR I enjoy a bit of variety myself.

FATHER You ought to take precautions.

DOCTOR Oh, I do.

FATHER Why...?

DOCTOR Why do I take precautions?

FATHER Why isn't your wife enough for you?

DOCTOR I enjoy a bit of variety.

FATHER Yes, naturally.

DOCTOR Isn't that natural?

FATHER Naturally.
DOCTOR Do you enjoy a bit of variety?
FATHER It's quality I appreciate.
DOCTOR And variety.
FATHER Naturally.
DOCTOR And experimentation?
FATHER It's all right.
DOCTOR Experimentation isn't a bad thing you know.
FATHER Why do you say that?
DOCTOR Otherwise things become a trifle tedious, don't they?
FATHER Naturally.
DOCTOR Would you ever have sex with a man?
FATHER NEVER.
DOCTOR Have you given it much thought?
FATHER I don't think I have.
DOCTOR Me neither.
FATHER Naturally.
DOCTOR Not even if it was the only way you could get to see your dying son?
FATHER Not even then.
DOCTOR Me neither.
FATHER Naturally.
DOCTOR Yes, naturally.
FATHER Now, will you let me see my boy?
DOCTOR Entry is strictly forbidden.
FATHER I'll get undressed.
DOCTOR God forbid.
FATHER Naturally.

13.

The NURSE and the MAN are chasing each other around the surgery.

MAN You brought me here under false pretences.
NURSE You'll get what you want once you've given me some of your blood.
MAN Anything? What are your conditions?
NURSE (slyly) Tell me what you want.

Breathless, they stop chasing each other around the room.

MAN Say for instance that there is someone I absolutely loathe, would you help me get rid of them?
NURSE Who is it?
MAN ...My father.
NURSE Your father.
MAN Yes, maybe.

NURSE Why?
MAN Let's say for the sake of it that he drives me up the fucking wall.
NURSE I understand.
MAN Do you really?
NURSE Yes, really.
MAN He's messing with my head.
NURSE Mine too.
MAN My father?
NURSE My husband.
MAN We could suffocate them.
NURSE Does he beat you?
MAN He's never satisfied.
NURSE Neither is mine.
MAN Does he belittle you?
NURSE Continuously.
MAN They're all the same.
NURSE That's what I always say but we can't live without them.
MAN You're depressing me.
NURSE Is he any good in bed at least?
MAN Is yours?
NURSE (bitterly) Dynamite.
MAN I don't know about mine.
NURSE Forgotten, have you?
MAN He used to take me to an amusement park near where we lived. It was winter and he'd hold me by the hand. He'd let me have a go in the bumper cars.
NURSE Would he get into the bumper-car with you?
MAN From time to time.
NURSE Then what?
MAN Then he'd laugh. I remember him laughing.
NURSE When was this?
MAN A long time ago. I think they're the only happy memories I have of him.
NURSE Did he die?
MAN No.
NURSE We're soft so people step all over us. It's our nature, you see.
MAN (half question) Our nature.

14.

The hospital. TINA is now completely covered in bandages from head to toe; only her eyes are visible. She can't talk and can only make incomprehensible sounds. The FATHER approaches her and sits down by her side. He is not wearing his trousers.

FATHER Are you in pain? I wasn't even sure that you were still alive.

TINA can't speak; she moans.

FATHER Don't excite yourself. The doctor's said you'll never get better. This may well be the last time we see each other.

TINA moans.

FATHER I don't know what to say; your mother's better at moments like this. I think...I think I loved you. **(Relieved)** There, I've said it. You know I'm not the sentimental type, it's just that the nurse grabbed hold of me and told me that even though it's not strictly allowed I should have a moment with you, talk to you, tell you that I love you and all that. I begged her to think of some other conversation topic but she insisted that the circumstances demand this kind of talk. She's a good broad.

TINA moans.

FATHER Your mother won't want to have another child. I'm not that bothered myself. Your cousins will get their hands on your grandparents' money... Do you know I always wanted a boy? But when you came along, I don't know what it was, I just became very sad.

TINA moans.

FATHER Next time we see each other I hope you can talk again 'cause this isn't much of a conversation. Can you still get hard at least?

The FATHER places his hand between TINA's legs. TINA continues to moan.

FATHER Can't even find the bloody thing- it's probably plastered on that cow's rear windshield. I don't know what else I can do for you. I can't even jerk you off -I thought that might have given you some relief... I know so little about you.

TINA moans.

FATHER What with all those bloody bandages I can't even stroke you properly, show a little affection. I really don't know what else to say. Good-bye son - that's all that's left I suppose- good-bye.

TINA moans.

FATHER Yes, I do too.

The **FATHER** kisses **TINA** on the forehead and in a state of deep emotion leaves the room.

15.

The **MOTHER** and the **MAN** are sitting in the hospital corridor, smoking. The **DOCTOR** approaches them.

DOCTOR I'm afraid since there isn't an easy way to say this I'm just going to have to say it any old way.

MOTHER That's it, he's dead.

DOCTOR No, that's not it.

MOTHER That's it, he's alive.

DOCTOR That is it but he won't be alive for long . However I am happy to announce that you are definitely the boys mother.

MOTHER Am I?

DOCTOR Beyond any reasonable doubt.

MOTHER Yes, I do remember giving birth.

DOCTOR However I am also in the unfortunate position of having to announce to you that your husband's not the father.

MOTHER Isn't he?

MAN Who is?

DOCTOR (to the MAN) You perhaps?

MAN We have no children.

DOCTOR We compared the blood you gave us to your son's blood and we've concluded that your husband is not the father.

MOTHER Now what?

DOCTOR I wanted you to be the first to know, so you would have time to prepare.

MOTHER Prepare?

The **DOCTOR** exits.

MOTHER What d' you think?

MAN I don't know.

MOTHER What should I do?

MAN How should I know?

MOTHER You're his friend, you know him well.

MAN Better than you?

MOTHER Mm.

MAN To be honest I feel as if I've only just met him.

MOTHER You've known each other for years.

MAN Are you sure? I know time flies but his face doesn't really ring a

bell.
MOTHER Should I tell him?
MAN I'd rather you didn't.
MOTHER It's just that he'll stop caring for it..
MAN Does he care?
MOTHER He'll stop caring for me.
MAN Does he?
MOTHER I'm his moppet.
MAN And you?
MOTHER What about me?
MAN Do you care for him?
MOTHER He's my little poppet.

16.

The **WOMAN** is eating potato chips. The **DOCTOR** walks by with a cup of coffee.

DOCTOR Salt and vinegar?
WOMAN Cheese and onion.
DOCTOR I prefer plain salted. May I?
WOMAN Help yourself.

The **DOCTOR** helps himself to some potato chips.

DOCTOR Would you like some coffee?
WOMAN Just a sip.

The **WOMAN** takes a sip from the **DOCTOR's** cup.

WOMAN (with disgust) There's no sugar in it.

17.

In the hospital. The **FATHER** and the **NURSE**.

FATHER That child is mine. D' you know how many sleepless nights I've had worrying about it?
NURSE How many?
FATHER D' you know how much money I've spent schooling, feeding, dressing it?
NURSE How much ?

FATHER (annoyed) I don't know the exact amount, but it's been a fortune.
NURSE Ask for it back, from his father.
FATHER I am his father.
NURSE No, you're not. I thought we'd established that. It's all there in the blood tests, crystal clear.
FATHER Fuck the blood tests. **(Depreciating)** Do you read tarot cards?
NURSE God, no. I play patience from time to time, that's about it.
FATHER Here?
NURSE My husband won't let me play at home.
FATHER Why not?
NURSE He says I shouldn't loaf about.
FATHER Why not?
NURSE There's always work to be done.
FATHER Is there?
NURSE That's what he says.
FATHER Then there probably is.
NURSE There might be, but he beats me anyway.
FATHER The child is mine. All mine.
NURSE I'm going to spank you.
FATHER Why?
NURSE You're talking like a child.
FATHER Leave me alone.
NURSE Come now.
FATHER (grudgingly) No.
NURSE Come. Come

The NURSE takes him in her arms and pulls him toward her breasts. At first he resists but then, gradually he allows her to cradle him.

18.

Still in the hospital.

DOCTOR Do you enjoy variety?
MAN I do.
DOCTOR Experimentation?
MAN Yes, naturally.
DOCTOR So far, so good. Have you ever been buggered?
MAN What?
DOCTOR Have you ever been rogered?
MAN (grabbing hold of the DOCTOR violently) What the fuck...
DOCTOR I'm so sorry. Forget I said anything.
MAN Alright.

The MAN lets go of the DOCTOR and lights a cigarette.

MAN I suppose in one way or another most fathers screw their children. It's the nature of being a parent.

DOCTOR How would I know?

MAN The cunt is still screwing me.

DOCTOR What about your mother?

MAN He screwed her too.

DOCTOR Well at least that's natural.

MAN You're a misogynist, are you? That's OK, it's nothing to be ashamed of. Anyway, it didn't stop there, he screwed the lot of us.

DOCTOR You need help.

MAN Yes, I feel as if I'm drowning in this sea. I've reached out my hand in the hope that someone will grab hold of it and save me.

DOCTOR Your hand?

MAN My hand.

DOCTOR I'll grab hold of it.

MAN Really?

DOCTOR Really. Take your clothes off.

MAN Will you examine me?

DOCTOR I'll do my duty.

19.

The NURSE and the WOMAN are secretly smoking in the hospital corridor.

WOMAN How is he?

NURSE Broken hips, spine displacement, punctured lungs, fractured thigh bones, general abrasions, first degree burns on seventy percent of the skin surface.

WOMAN What about his teeth?

NURSE They're strong. He didn't break a single one.

WOMAN How will he chew?

NURSE With his teeth.

WOMAN I see.

Small pause.

NURSE What?

WOMAN I don't know. I really need to find something, something more significant.

NURSE Money.

WOMAN I have enough of that already.

NURSE What then?

WOMAN Something to help time fly.

NURSE Travel?
WOMAN Been everywhere.
NURSE Shopping?
WOMAN Tried it.
NURSE A child?
WOMAN A child?
NURSE Time flies when you have a child.
WOMAN (Hesitantly) I'm sure.
NURSE They keep you on your toes.
WOMAN I have a job.
NURSE You won't have time enough to breathe.
WOMAN You think so?
NURSE I know so.
NURSE You could take this one.
WOMAN He's too old.
NURSE So much the better.
WOMAN He's got parents already.
NURSE They don't love him.
WOMAN He looks a mess.
NURSE That's true.
WOMAN Maternal instinct?
NURSE What about it?
WOMAN Do you stock it?
NURSE We only keep some for emergencies.

20.

The MAN has hid himself in TINA's room. He is not wearing his trousers. TINA is moaning. The MAN is eating some donuts.

MAN I know I'm always moaning but do you think its easy living with all this pressure. I'm just another burden to him. Whatever I do, he does better. No it won't do. I'm just waiting for him to die so that I can start living. How long can he go on for? What if it's another ten years? I can't stand him for another ten hours, never mind ten years.

TINA moans.

MAN You've obviously lost it.

TINA moans

MAN You can forget it.

TINA moans.

MAN No way.

TINA moans.

MAN Fuck load of help you are.

The MAN leaves the room in a pensive mood.

21.

The FATHER and MOTHER are back at their home.

MOTHER Mistakes happen.

FATHER They checked it three times.

MOTHER It's funny; when we got married I was practically a virgin.

FATHER Define practically.

MOTHER Maybe I caught it somewhere.

FATHER It's not a fungus. You don't just catch it.

MOTHER Don't you? Oh, I don't know. I can hardly remember what I had for dinner last night, how can I be expected to remember which of the many men...

FATHER The many men?

MOTHER Yes.

FATHER Is that all you have to say for yourself?

MOTHER Let's see now... when we got married - I mean before we were married, there was a substantial number of men who flirted with me..

FATHER And what exactly did this flirting consist of?

MOTHER No need to make this sound cheap...

FATHER Oh, I do apologize.

MOTHER But I can't seem to remember if it ever went any further. What time do the shops close?

FATHER Why?

MOTHER I need to buy some cocoa. It's finished.

FATHER You're not going anywhere until you tell me who the goddamn father is.

MOTHER Whose father?

FATHER The boy's.

MOTHER That reminds me: We ought to call the hospital to see how he's doing.

FATHER Who's the father?

MOTHER How do I know? Can you remember that far back?

FATHER You expect me to know about every man you've ever fucked?

MOTHER They were nothing more than innocent flirtations...

FATHER /Innocent?

MOTHER I could ask my mother but she's dead.

FATHER I shit on her grave.

MOTHER Shit... cocoa... I don't know anymore...It's all a bit of a fog...

The FATHER starts beating her violently. While he is doing this, the MOTHER keeps moaning the word "cocoa".

22.

The MAN, the WOMAN and the DOCTOR have made a complete mess of the DOCTOR'S consulting rooms. They are smoking, drinking, eating, playing cards, singing.

DOCTOR (interrupting the MAN and WOMAN who are singing) Don't you have a home to go to?

MAN I don't know, do we?

WOMAN We must live somewhere.

MAN What about you Doctor? Why are you still here?

DOCTOR It's my shift.

WOMAN Do you have a home?

DOCTOR I do and I don't.

MAN Meaning?

DOCTOR I do have a home but my wife will keep it; we're getting a divorce.

WOMAN Why does she get to keep it instead of you?

DOCTOR What would I do with it?

WOMAN Live in it.

DOCTOR All alone?

WOMAN And where will you sleep?

DOCTOR In the hospital; I'm on a continuous shift.

MAN God help the homeless.

WOMAN God help the patients.

MAN and WOMAN (looking at each other in agreement) One , two, three...**(They burst into song.)**

DOCTOR Quiet please, I have a headache.

MAN You need to see a Doctor.

The MAN and WOMAN laugh at their own joke.

WOMAN So why the divorce?

DOCTOR I haven't a clue.

WOMAN Was it your idea?

DOCTOR I don't remember. What about you two?

MAN Haven't given it much thought.

DOCTOR Do you love each other?

The MAN and WOMAN look at each other and burst into laughter.

23.

At the hospital. The **MOTHER** enters with a bruised eye.

MOTHER It's you...
NURSE Who did you expect?
MOTHER Can you sell me some cocoa?
NURSE We don't sell it.
MOTHER Have you run out?
NURSE We only carry blood.
MOTHER My son doesn't touch coffee.
NURSE That's rare.
MOTHER He has other vices.
NURSE He's not queer is he?
MOTHER He's in a coma.
NURSE Of course.
MOTHER And when he wakes up I must have some cocoa; it's the only thing he drinks in the morning.
NURSE First thing my boy does when he wakes up is reach for his cigarettes.
MOTHER How old is he?
NURSE Seven.
MOTHER It's dangerous.
NURSE I keep telling him.
MOTHER So?
NURSE I never did want a child; it was my husband who insisted on it.
MOTHER Mine was an accident.
NURSE It's a bloody pain.
MOTHER I must go. He'll wake up and I won't be there for him.
NURSE How much cocoa do you want?
MOTHER Just a few table-spoons.

The **NURSE** brings the **MOTHER** some cocoa.

NURSE I only keep it for emergencies; always comes in handy.
MOTHER You're telling me.
NURSE Hope he gets better.
MOTHER I better go, he'll have woken up..
NURSE Who?
MOTHER He'll be looking for me.
NURSE Does your husband beat you?
MOTHER Every so often.
NURSE I can see that. Mine beats me all the time.
MOTHER He thinks of you.

NURSE He wears me out.
MOTHER Doesn't really show on you though.
NURSE I wear make-up.

The MOTHER leaves.

NURSE She forgot the cocoa.

24.

The WOMAN enters TINA's room.

WOMAN I don't want to have a child just to save my marriage; I want a child for myself.

TINA moans.

WOMAN Even if my husband doesn't want one, I'll have it with someone else, and if I can't have one of my own then I'll adopt one, and if I can't adopt one I'll buy one and if I can't find one to buy I'll fall into despair, I'll eat cakes and get fat and moan all day long, until I find a more effective solution ..anything but settle for a dog. I've never liked animals, I can't stand the way they piss all over the place, they gnaw and bite at the furniture, they die early, they cover the bed sheets in hairs. If they gave me a dog I'd want it embalmed. Have you any idea why they used to embalm people in ancient times and turn them into mummies? It's because they thought that if the body remained unravaged then the soul would too.

TINA moans.

WOMAN Would you like to be embalmed? If you decide to go for it, I'll have you. I'll have you propped up in my bed-room, right next to my bed. I won't touch your gauzes; I'll be very careful, I'll just hang you on the wall. If that's what you want.

25.

The FATHER and the MAN are taking care of their teeth with dental floss, in the hospital corridor.

FATHER Have you ever been in love?
MAN What makes you ask that?

FATHER You can tell me, I'm a doctor.
MAN Are you?
FATHER Alright, I'm not, but have you ever been in love?
MAN No.
FATHER Never?
MAN I've never been lucky enough...
FATHER Don't make excuses. I haven't either.
MAN I thought I was the only one.
FATHER You know what I think?
MAN That love is a hoax?
FATHER No, I do think it exists. But that it only happens rarely.
MAN (Cheerfully) You think so?
FATHER Most people are like us.
MAN There's still time.
FATHER Same amount of time we have left to win the lottery.
MAN I never play.
FATHER I do but I hardly ever check the winning numbers. Winning is impossible.
MAN Then why play?
FATHER I don't know, just for that one in a million chance, I suppose.

26.

Mother and Doctor at the hospital.

DOCTOR Why are you crying?
MOTHER I'm hungry.
DOCTOR Hush now, let us go for Chinese, shall we? You do like Chinese, don't you? There, I'll buy you dinner.

27.

In the corridor. The WOMAN is taking a nap and having sweet dreams. The NURSE is pacing up and down in a state, talking to herself, practicing what she will say to Tina.

NURSE Right, first things first: the hands- let's start with his hands: I want them off, severed at the wrists so that he can't beat me anymore - I can just about bear the pain but not the bruises, everyone keeps asking me about them, it's embarrassing. The legs are next- I want him crippled, with stumps for legs so that he can't kick me with them anymore and then I can wear short skirts like all the other

women... and I know I might be pushing my luck but I wouldn't mind having his manhood reinvigorated if you know what I mean so that he can see to me a bit more often. I want to be his land for ploughing you see, the beast's piece of land, nothing else, I want to be his bitch, I want to hear him shake and tremble and moan as he goes in and out, in and out of me, melting, oozing with pleasure, suffering, giving himself to me in a semi-conscious state, falling into me, squashing me with his fat whale belly, conquered by me, empty, happy that he's come inside me and made his faithful little bitch well up with her own juices, happy that he's made his cow groan, squeal with pleasure, and then, just as his dick is starting to wrinkle up like a dried up prune in the condom inside me I'll stand unconquered and with all my strength I'll shout: " fuck me harder big boy, fuck me harder donkey man! "

The WOMAN wakes up.

WOMAN What?

28.

The DOCTOR is having sex with the MOTHER.

MOTHER A bit lower; yes, that's it.

There is a pause.

DOCTOR You're not saying much. Aren't you enjoying this position?

MOTHER It's wonderful.

DOCTOR There are a few others we could try. Even though, as the Chinese say, there are in fact no more than thirty basic positions.

MOTHER Thirty?

DOCTOR The first four are world famous: the intimate union, the tight wrap, the innards on display and the unicorn's horn.

MOTHER Oh yes, everyone's heard of those ones.

DOCTOR Then there's the reeds near the altar, the bisected cicada, the trembling anemone, the mandarin duck..

MOTHER I had one of those at a Chinese place once ...or was that Peking duck? Yes it was Peking, Peking- or was it crispy aromatic?

DOCTOR If you prefer we could have a go at the coiled dragon, the wild horse galloping or the phoenix holding the chicken. Although this last one may be a bit too ambitious for us.

MOTHER Why's that?

DOCTOR In order to do the phoenix holding the chicken properly you need a tall, obese woman and a short, bony man.

MOTHER I could fatten up a bit.
DOCTOR Don't worry. I'll have a look at the book to see if there's something a bit less demanding.
MOTHER (Desperate) Whose is it?
DOCTOR The book?
MOTHER My child.
DOCTOR It's yours.
MOTHER But who's the father?
DOCTOR It's not me.

The MOTHER suddenly becomes quite emotional.

DOCTOR Oh, don't cry.
MOTHER If only my mother were alive.
DOCTOR You miss her?
MOTHER In situations like this she would have been helpful.
DOCTOR I miss my mother too.
MOTHER She would have remembered who the father was.
DOCTOR She was the only woman who ever truly loved me.
MOTHER Had you consummated?
DOCTOR Times were different then.
MOTHER You've lost your erection.
DOCTOR It's what happens when I get emotional.
MOTHER It's for the best.
DOCTOR Why?
MOTHER I wasn't in the mood.
DOCTOR Neither was I.

29.

The MAN and WOMAN at the hospital.

WOMAN Why don't we go home?
MAN You want to go?
WOMAN I can't make my mind up. Our friends need us here. They're having a rough time.
MAN We could watch the news.
WOMAN Where?
MAN At home.
WOMAN Not again?
MAN I should prepare for court.
WOMAN Do you want to?
MAN No.
WOMAN What are you going to do?
MAN I'll ask for the trial to be postponed.
WOMAN I won't go to work either.

MAN My dad will hit the roof.
WOMAN I won't even bother telling them.
MAN You should, shouldn't you?
WOMAN Let them fire me. I'm sick of the treadmill.
MAN What will you do?
WOMAN I'll find another job.
MAN It's not easy. All jobs become boring sooner or later.
WOMAN I don't care.
MAN You'll be unemployed.
WOMAN You mean I'll be a failure.
MAN Out of work at your age.
WOMAN I'll miss the boat.
MAN You'll be calm.
WOMAN Will you leave me?
MAN I can't support you forever.
WOMAN I understand. I'll call in sick.
MAN Hmm.
WOMAN What about you?
MAN Me too.
WOMAN What will you tell them?
MAN What do you suggest?
WOMAN Call in sick
MAN I'll still get ass chewed... That makes us equal.
WOMAN Equal.

30.

The MOTHER enters TINA's room with a cup of steaming cocoa. Tina moans now and then while the mother is speaking.

MOTHER Rise and shine, I've brought your cocoa... It's time to get up sweetheart, no more snoozing. You'll be late for school again. I know it's nice and snug under the covers but you really ought to get up now. It's gone eight o'clock. Come on, up you get. It's the same story every morning. Come on, I've got jobs to do... If I've told you once I've told you a million times: no more late nights. Where were you wandering in the early hours? What time did you get back? Must have been dawn, I didn't even hear you come in and thank God neither did your father, otherwise we wouldn't have heard the last of it. Up you get, drink your cocoa 'cause it will get cold and taste rotten... What d' you want for dinner tonight? Are you going to come home for a bite? Your father doesn't get home till late and I don't enjoy eating on my own. It doesn't matter if you're late, I'll still wait up for you. After all, I've waited all these years, a little more won't make a difference. Some

said you must have been snatched away, others said you must have been in an accident. We spent four whole years drifting from hospital to hospital looking for our child. But I knew in my heart we'd find it one day, I just knew it. Your father doubted it but I always had faith, always. And now here we are, just like old times. Come on sweetheart, rise and shine. It's eight o'clock already. Up you get.

The MOTHER tries to get her son out of bed, pushing and pulling; TINA moans and gasps in pain.

MOTHER Every morning it's the same old story.

31.

The FATHER and the WOMAN are kissing.

WOMAN That's enough
FATHER I thought you wanted to.
WOMAN Me?
FATHER Yes.
WOMAN You're upset, it's understandable.
FATHER What about you?
WOMAN I hardly ever get upset.
FATHER Did you feel anything when I kissed you?
WOMAN I felt your lips, your tongue...
FATHER Nothing else?
WOMAN No.
FATHER Me neither. My wife and I rarely kiss. We make love but we rarely kiss. There are times when I feel that I'm too embarrassed to kiss her.
WOMAN Your wife?
FATHER It's as if kissing is too personal, perhaps even dangerous. As if when we kiss...
WOMAN Does your wife feel the same way?
FATHER It's likely.
WOMAN Why not pretend? Pretending's not hard.
FATHER I don't know
WOMAN It's like faking an orgasm. Not that you men would know anything about that. There's visual proof of you pleasure.
FATHER Just because we come doesn't mean we enjoy it.

32.

The **DOCTOR** and **NURSE** enter **TINA**'s room.

DOCTOR Give me a hand.

They turn **TINA** over which causes **TINA** much discomfort. The **NURSE** starts tearing away **TINA**'s bandages with a penknife while the **DOCTOR** climbs onto her bed.

TINA moans.

NURSE A little bit lower.

DOCTOR Fuck off, I'll do it my way.

NURSE Oh, God, yes, that's it.

DOCTOR I said fuck off.

The **NURSE** draws the curtain around **Tina** and the **DOCTOR** and sits down to have a cigarette. From behind the curtains we can hear...

DOCTOR I'll give everything back to you- that's what I said to her. I wish I could give back to you the years we've spent together- turn the clock back so that you could return to that place where I first laid eyes on you for you to carry on living your life. If only we could go back to that cafe; then I'd walk you home but I'd say my good-byes at the door, I wouldn't follow you upstairs. I'd kiss you for the first and last time and then I'd leave. And you wouldn't ask for a divorce. It would be pointless.

TINA moans

DOCTOR Just think of all our tax benefits, think of all the plusses. You'll say those things don't matter. Believe me, it all matters in the end... What's the point of a divorce sweetheart? If you want your own flat that's fine, I have no problem with that; if you want to sleep around that's also fine by me. But what's the point of a divorce?...

The **NURSE** goes behind the curtain.

DOCTOR Is it time yet?

NURSE Yes. In thirty seconds. Should I scream now? Haaa...

DOCTOR Don't move...

NURSE (looking at her watch) Yes. Yes. Now! Ready?

DOCTOR I was holding back.

The nurse draws the curtain open.

NURSE She went all quiet. Not a squeak.
DOCTOR She must have passed out. It's the excitement.
NURSE Should I apply new bandages?
DOCTOR Definitely.
NURSE Or we could just flip her over. That way no-one will notice.

33.

The WOMAN's dream: She is suspended in the air, floating around in the hospital. TINA takes her by the hand and leads her towards the exit.

34.

All are congregated around TINA's bed. TINA is moaning.

DOCTOR (to the NURSE) Take the bandages off her mouth.
MAN Is it absolutely necessary?

THE NURSE unwraps the bandages which have covered TINA'S mouth.

TINA gasps

DOCTOR Why are you making such a fuss?
TINA There's something...
MAN What is it?
TINA It's about the accident.
FATHER Who cares about the accident?
TINA Please, listen to me.
WOMAN What? What about the accident? We're not interested.
MAN Let bygones be bygones.
MOTHER I am. Interested.
FATHER Let sleeping dogs lie.
MOTHER (to TINA) You caused it, didn't you?
MAN I was onto you from the start.
TINA No, I don't think I did.
NURSE Explain yourself?
TINA I don't know how the car came to be damaged, I don't know where or how the accident happened, I had left it outside my house and then I found the whole mess.
DOCTOR Didn't the boy crash into the back of your car with his motorbike?
TINA I've never even seen their son.
NURSE Then how do you know about the accident?

TINA I don't. When they told me how much I'd have to pay to have my car repairs I just made my way to the hospital in the hope that there'd have been some sort of accident. Sure enough there was; I asked the receptionist a few questions and found out all the details about the accident their son was involved in.

FATHER You were going to take me to the cleaners.

MOTHER I'm going to pull the hairs off your bloody head, one by one.

NURSE It's too late - I shaved it all off this morning.

TINA Can you find it in yourselves to forgive me? Please say you can. I need to be forgiven.

MOTHER You've got a bloody nerve

TINA I have another confession to make

DOCTOR Hurry up then, we haven't got all day.

TINA I feel... how can I put this? I feel love for you. For all of you. Do you know what love feels like? Do you? I suppose you must do. As for me, I've never felt anything like it before. Wrapped up in bandages, unable to talk, unable to make the terrible pain go away; for the first time in my life I felt overwhelmed by love

NURSE Why?

TINA And that love that I felt- that I feel-is for all of you... That love...

MAN Stop saying that word you're annoying me.

TINA Nobody ever opened themselves up to me like you all did. Now I trust you. You all showed me who you really are and you're all real people. Flesh and blood. Full of tenderness and ...love.

The NURSE bandages TINA's mouth up again.

MOTHER Sweet woman.

DOCTOR She's gone up in my estimation.

FATHER The price of car repairs has gone through the roof lately; she's got a point.

MAN Anyone in her position would have done the same.

35.

They all come out of TINA's room. Their faces, hands, and clothes are covered in blood.

36.

In the hospital corridor, the **NURSE** is chatting to the **FATHER** and the **MAN** while all three are greedily devouring chunks of meat from the **NURSE**'s lunch-box. All three of them are still covered in blood.

NURSE That's nothing compared to the ancient Mexicans.
MAN What about them?
NURSE Have you any idea of the terrible things the first conquerors discovered when they got there? The very altars were dripping and pungent with the stench of rotting corpses. The steps leading up to the temples were drenched with the blood of the freshly slaughtered.
FATHER Didn't people slip on them?
NURSE They were extra careful.
MAN Why were the steps full of blood?
NURSE They began their massacres at dawn every morning, tearing apart the breasts of their victims, ripping out their hearts, and those amongst them who were considered devout followers would cut the flesh of the corpses off in big strips while it was still warm and then eat them ravenously. They would grab hold of some poor bastards, skin them alive, and wear their flesh as over-coats.
MAN They must have reeked.
NURSE The stench would be so bad you couldn't go within a mile of them.
FATHER (about the meat) Very tasty.
NURSE I'm glad you like it.
MAN And all this really happened?
NURSE Absolutely.
FATHER Human beings are savages.
MAN We're beasts.

37.

The **MOTHER** and the **WOMAN** are in the hospital corridor, covered in blood. The **WOMAN** takes a yogurt out of her bag, sprinkles some sugar onto it and starts eating it.

WOMAN I am on a diet. Fancy some?
MOTHER I dreamt of him.
WOMAN Your son? What was he doing?
MOTHER Kissing me.
WOMAN Was it a good kiss?
MOTHER It was good.
WOMAN Then what?

- MOTHER** I don't know, he disappeared into the distance. I think he came to me so that I could remember him.
- WOMAN** Had you forgotten him?
- MOTHER** I can't picture his face anymore; all I see is the bandages.
- WOMAN** It's true.
- MOTHER** I went home and looked for old photographs of him. I only found a few from when he was a child. I don't remember his face; I don't remember him at all.
- WOMAN** I understand.
- MOTHER** Do you? Remember him?
- WOMAN** God forbid that I should forget.
- MOTHER** What did he look like?
- WOMAN (Confidently)** He was five foot eight inches tall with dark brown eyes, short black hair and pale skin. He had a small mole by his navel, straight teeth, a lovely smile, nice genitals, a smooth chest; he was thin, his ribs protruded slightly. He was always dressed in a black jacket, sneakers and a pair of jeans - he was your typical student.
- MOTHER** I know. He liked his cocoa in the morning.
- WOMAN** He was a good boy.
- MOTHER** He had a soft spot for me.
- WOMAN** He would, wouldn't he? But who was the father? You can tell me; I'm your friend. Who was it?

The DOCTOR enters.

- WOMAN** Is he dead?
- DOCTOR** Yes.
- MOTHER** Who?
- DOCTOR** Your child. A few minutes ago he exhaled his last and shuffled off this mortal coil.
- MOTHER** Meaning what exactly?
- DOCTOR** He's dead.
- MOTHER** My child?
- DOCTOR** Yes.
- MOTHER** My child is dead.
- WOMAN** I heard it the first time.
- MOTHER (in a state of shock)** My child, my only son, my angel, my sweet baby, flesh of my flesh, blood of my blood, my pride and joy, my bright and shining boy.

The MOTHER faints from excessive emotion.

- WOMAN** She had a soft spot for him. She made him cocoa every morning.

38.

A Turkish bath like space with the sound of trickling water and the atmosphere thick with warm steam vapours. The men are all sitting on the right hand side, the women are on the left: the NURSE and the WOMAN are comforting the distraught MOTHER. They all take off their bloodied clothes and wash them vigorously to get rid of the stains. Then they meticulously wash their bodies and wear white bath-robos. They lay out their clothes to dry and sit down facing the audience to smoke a cigarette. None of them speak a word; they just sit in the steam.

39.

The DOCTOR's office. The DOCTOR and the FATHER. FATHER is picking his teeth with a tooth-pick.

FATHER Maybe I should get a divorce.
 DOCTOR Because of the bastard son she burdened you with? Well, at least he's history now.
 FATHER True. The minute I found out he wasn't mine something inside me twisted slightly, if you know what I mean.
 DOCTOR Doesn't it drive you mad not knowing who the real father is?

The NURSE enters.

DOCTOR Are you off?
 NURSE My shift is over.
 DOCTOR Can't you stay a little longer?
 NURSE My husband and child are waiting for me.
 DOCTOR So you're in a hurry.
 NURSE You know, my husband is a little..
 DOCTOR Rough? I know. But I'm sure you can take it.

The DOCTOR picks up a ruler and slams it hard onto the desk.

NURSE In front of the gentleman?
 DOCTOR The gentleman is a friend. More than a friend- he's like a brother to me. And he's just lost his boy.
 NURSE My condolences.
 FATHER I wasn't the father.

The DOCTOR bends the NURSE over, stands behind her, lifts up her skirt and strikes her buttock with the ruler. The FATHER makes a move to go.

DOCTOR You needn't go.
FATHER It's not that, it's just that my wife is waiting for me.
DOCTOR You're sure the wife is yours at least?
FATHER One day I might find out she never was.

FATHER leaves.

DOCTOR So what do we have today?
NURSE An attempted suicide, a car accident, and a fire.
DOCTOR A fire?
NURSE Some man's house went up in flames while he was sleeping. I've bandaged him up.
DOCTOR Good.
NURSE He's in a critical condition. His wife and two daughters are waiting.
DOCTOR What age are they?
NURSE Eight and eleven.
DOCTOR Brilliant and don't forget the man's room is strictly out of bounds.
NURSE Even to his daughters
DOCTOR Especially to them

The DOCTOR draws the curtain open.

DOCTOR After you

The nurse follows him.

NURSE A little bit lower... yes, that's it, that's good. Do you mind me pointing something out?
DOCTOR What?
NURSE You're not wearing a condom.
DOCTOR There's nothing wrong with me.
NURSE I know that. But just be careful.
DOCTOR Doesn't make any difference.
NURSE How do you mean?
DOCTOR God, you're stupid. I'm fucking sterile.

40.

The FATHER and MOTHER are lying in bed.

MOTHER Are you asleep?
FATHER No.
MOTHER Do you want to talk?
FATHER It's four in the morning and we have a funeral to go to.
MOTHER I can't sleep.

FATHER Try.
MOTHER I'm in a bit of a state... Did it upset you?
FATHER You could have told me yourself that the child wasn't mine; that was no way for me to find out.
MOTHER You seemed quite calm.
FATHER I would have found out sooner or later. Whose was he?
MOTHER I don't know. I'm sorry. How do you feel?
FATHER As if I have cancer.
MOTHER Come on, let's play the cancer game.
FATHER I can't be bothered.
MOTHER Please.
FATHER No.
MOTHER Please, please.
FATHER Go on then

The FATHER lies in the MOTHER's arms.

MOTHER You've got a week left.
FATHER Is it definite?
MOTHER Yes.
FATHER Will it hurt?
MOTHER Yes.
FATHER Have you asked?
MOTHER I asked the doctor. Your hair will fall out as well.
FATHER Not much of it there to begin with.
MOTHER We should visit our lawyer.
FATHER Already?
MOTHER To finalise things.
FATHER Finalise things. Have you anything else to say to me?
MOTHER No. Have you?
FATHER No.
MOTHER I don't love you.
FATHER Neither do I, but you've been a good wife.
MOTHER And mother.
FATHER And mother.
MOTHER How will I manage?
FATHER You always have.
MOTHER How long will I have to wait for the life insurance to come through?
FATHER I don't know. When will you put me in the hospital?
MOTHER Now that you know the worst, it could be as soon as tomorrow.
FATHER It's too soon. I have things to arrange.
MOTHER What about the beginning of next week?
FATHER That'll do.
MOTHER I need to get used to things, bit by bit.
FATHER I understand.
MOTHER Have you ever seen someone choke on their own blood?

FATHER No. Have you?
MOTHER No.
FATHER I can imagine what it's like.
MOTHER Tell me.
FATHER I'll be lying down, I'll have to cough, there'll be a tickle in my throat, some piece of phlegm will be obstructing it, I'll ask you for a tissue..
MOTHER If I'm by your side.
FATHER Otherwise I'll ask the nurse.
MOTHER Then what?
FATHER Then the phlegm will come out and with it some blood, a little to begin with but that's only the beginning, later I'll be vomiting my guts out.
MOTHER That's disgusting.
FATHER That would be the last thing on your mind.
MOTHER You're right, I'm sorry.
FATHER Stop apologising.
MOTHER I never want to go through anything like that.
FATHER Who does?
MOTHER Maybe you can avoid it.
FATHER Maybe.
MOTHER I'm depressed.
FATHER Give us a hug.
MOTHER Will you remember me?
FATHER When?
MOTHER Afterwards.
FATHER If I can. Will you?
MOTHER I won't forget you, or our boy.
FATHER Let's get some sleep.
MOTHER Don't cry.
FATHER Let me, I like it.
MOTHER Come, let's have a laugh.
FATHER We'll wake the child.
MOTHER It doesn't matter.

They begin to laugh, awkwardly to begin with, then gradually the laughter becomes louder, heartier.

41.

At the MAN and WOMAN's house after the funeral. The MOTHER and FATHER and the MAN and WOMAN enter; the MOTHER and FATHER are supporting the MAN whom they help lay down on the sofa.

MOTHER Would you like a glass of water?

WOMAN He's not usually like this at funerals, I don't know what's come over him. **(To the MAN)** You made quite a scene.
MAN Leave me alone.

The MOTHER gives him a glass of water.

WOMAN (to the FATHER) I'm so sorry.
FATHER Don't be silly. It's nothing.
WOMAN Well, you have just buried your only child.

The MAN sobs uncontrollably.

WOMAN Try to control it.
MOTHER Never mind him. It doesn't matter anyway.
WOMAN The way he's going on you would have thought the boy was his.
MAN (crying) He was. He was mine.
WOMAN Look, I know he was like a son to us but everyone at the funeral was so busy looking at you having hysterics, they completely ignored his real father.
MAN I *am* his real father.
MOTHER You are?
MAN Yes, it's me.
WOMAN You're asking my husband if he fathered your son?
FATHER It's a long story.
MOTHER I don't remember having a thing with you.
MAN We didn't.
WOMAN (to the FATHER) Wasn't the boy yours?
FATHER Officially.
WOMAN Oh.
MAN He is mine.
FATHER He was, you mean.

The MAN cries hysterically.

MOTHER Am I definitely the mother?
FATHER What do you think?
MOTHER Let's see. Yes, it was me, but I can't remember you at all.
MAN It was at a party, we were drunk.
MOTHER Did you rape me?
MAN You were making a hell of a lot of noise.
FATHER In that case, it can't have been her.
MAN Why not?
FATHER (despising) She never makes a noise.
MOTHER Maybe I was in pain.
WOMAN There's something bothering me too and I need to get it off my chest.

Everybody ignores the **WOMAN** and they keep doing so for the rest of the scene.

MOTHER (to the MAN) Are you sure it was me?

MAN I think so.

MOTHER It's a shame I can't remember.

WOMAN I have something to say too.

FATHER Phew.

MOTHER What?

FATHER That's a weight off my shoulders.

MOTHER Why?

FATHER I know who the poor bastard's father is.

MOTHER I'm glad it's you- I've always liked you.

MAN Thank you.

FATHER Scotch anyone?

WOMAN I have something important to tell you, why won't you listen?

MOTHER We could order a pizza, all I've eaten all day are those canapés at the wake.

FATHER You had cake, too.

MAN The cake was good. Where did you get it?

MOTHER (to the FATHER) Food police, are you?

MAN Where did you get it?

The FATHER gives them both a glass of scotch, and has one himself.

WOMAN Listen to me, it's worth it, I promise you.

MOTHER Shall we have some music?

FATHER Maybe it's not the done thing.

MOTHER Why not?

FATHER You're right. After all, it's not my child that snuffed it.

The MAN bursts into tears again.

MOTHER Did you have to remind him?

WOMAN Right, if you don't listen to what I have to say I'm going to get up and walk out.

The MAN continues to cry.

MOTHER Don't be sad, we can always have another.

MAN Can we?

WOMAN (grabbing hold of a knife) I'll stick this in my throat, I'll kill myself here, right now, here in front of you.

MAN When can we have it?

MOTHER Whenever you want. **(To the FATHER)** Any objections?

FATHER Won't be the first time.

WOMAN Listen to me, it's good news what I'm going to say.

FATHER Why don't you do it right now, get it over and done with?
MOTHER You two can go into the next room.
FATHER I'd like to watch.
MOTHER (to the MAN) What do you say?
MAN Let's get it over and done with.
WOMAN I swear to God I'll jump out of the window.

The MAN hurriedly begins undressing the MOTHER.

FATHER Shall I get the video camera?
MAN Not a bad idea.
WOMAN I'll set fire to the fucking house. I'll burn you alive.
FATHER I'll order the pizza first, shall I?
WOMAN I'll kill the fucking lot of you.
MOTHER Good idea, I'm hungry.
WOMAN I'll piss on the floor you cunts, I'll fucking take a shit right here.
MAN I'm not that hungry.
WOMAN P'LL... P'LL... P'LL...
FATHER It's on us.
MAN We'll go Dutch.
FATHER I won't hear of it. The funeral was on us, this is on us too.

The Man is angry because they have been interrupted. The FATHER goes to the phone and orders the pizza.

FATHER Let's have some music.

The MOTHER walks to the stereo and turns on the music. The WOMAN is in an hysterical state.

WOMAN I'm pregnant!

They clink their glasses in a toast.

WOMAN I'm pregnant.

The MAN, the FATHER and the MOTHER all get up for a dance, the WOMAN who has exhausted herself has lost her voice and is mouthing the words "I'm pregnant". The other three begin to dance around her as she lies collapsed on the floor; they dance around her menacingly.

—