

Gundogdu Gencer



SEVEN
WOMEN

a play in three acts



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A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

by

Gün GENCER

Can not be performed without the written permission of the playwright

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CAST: 7 WOMEN

(ALTHOUGH THE PLAY IS WRITTEN IN THE PROPER CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER, IF IT'S PERFORMED, PRODUCING IT IN THE REVERSE ORDER, THAT IS, STARTING WITH ACT THREE AND FINISHING WITH ACT ONE, SHOULD BE SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED.)

ACT ONE

-the root-

(ACT ONE TAKES PLACE IN A TIME WHEN THE USE OF `TO BE' AND `TO DO' AS AUXILIARY VERBS WAS NOT YET INVENTED. THEREFORE THE DIALOGUE MIGHT SOUND A BIT STACCATO, LIKE BROKEN ENGLISH. THIS MUST BE OVERCOME AND THE ACTORS' DELIVERY SHOULD BE AS IF THE VERB `TO BE' IS THERE, AND FLUENT AND EVERYDAYISH. THESE PEOPLE MAY BE IGNORANT, BUT THEY'RE NOT STUPID.)

ACT ONE SCENE ONE

(1.WOMAN -NINA MINA- IN HER THIRTIES, 2.WOMAN -UBA UBA- IN HER TWENTIES)

NINA MINA: Young Uba Uba, my tummy swelleth again.

UBA UBA: Perhaps another little one coming. I drink holy water, no little ones. You drink holy water?

NINA MINA: That holy water shit. I drink it always. My tummy still swelleth.

UBA UBA: My tummy not swelleth.

NINA MINA: I get thirsty every time I fuck Muga Muga. I go down to holy water, drink. My tummy swelleth still.

UBA UBA: I not want to fuck Muga Muga. His dong too big.

NINA MINA: The others all dead. Bison run them over. If you not fuck Muga Muga, you not fuck.

UBA UBA: I think I go away. There men over thar hills.

NINA MINA: They have holy water in that country? **(NO REPLY)** Take this skin. Put holy water in it.

UBA UBA: I afraid to go out. I hear wolves.

NINA MINA: Full moon. Full moon, wolves howl.

UBA UBA: At sunrise I go. Give me skin.

NINA MINA: You take skin at sunrise. Full moon... **(GETS ROMANTIC)** Full moon last time I fucked Muga Muga. **(POINTS OUT FOUR FINGERS)** That many full moons before. **(A CHILD'S CRY)** Little one, little one... I go, collect fruit at sunrise. Little one hungry. Maybe Muga Muga bring me dead animal. I eat meat, give meat to little one. Here little one, here my tit... Come on, come on... **(ROCKS THE BABY AND STARTS SINGING A LULLABY.)**

UBA UBA: Why we have little ones? Why men not have little ones?

NINA MINA: You young womans... You not know nothing. Huh! The same with bison. You ignoramus. If men had little ones, how would they come out? That why we have little ones and men not have little ones.

UBA UBA: It not fair. They go hunt, have fun. We sit here, feed the little ones.

NINA MINA: The world not fair. Big animal kill little animal. Fast animal kill slow animal. Open your eyes. You young, you not know nothing. You must learn. World not fair.

UBA UBA: I feel cold.

NINA MINA: Come here, get under this hide. You can suck my other tit.

UBA UBA: You good. You warm.

ACT ONE SCENE TWO

NINA MINA: Good here. Plenty men. But not as good as Muga Muga.

UBA UBA: He not back. Maybe dead. Have other men. Plenty men.

NINA MINA: They small. I miss my Muga Muga. He big.

UBA UBA: They think maybe you not like men. You never fuck any.
Perhaps you too old.

NINA MINA: I not too old. I miss my Muga Muga. And they all small. This
nation no good.

UBA UBA: (GRUNTS)

NINA MINA: The little one has a big dong too, like Muga Muga. And he got
a mole on his bum. Just like Muga Muga.

UBA UBA: Maybe moon give you a new Muga Muga. **(LAUGHS)**

NINA MINA: I crinkled. Perhaps I die before I can fuck the little one.

UBA UBA: The young ones want woman not crinkled.

NINA MINA: The world not fair.

UBA UBA: (LAUGHS)

NINA MINA: Full moon up above when I last fucked Muga Muga.

UBA UBA: Full moon up above when you bore the little one, too. And he
look like Muga Muga. Good omen.

NINA MINA: So many moons passed. One full moon, I fuck Muga Muga,
(Holds up ten fingers) so many full moons after, I bear little Muga
Muga Muga.

UBA UBA: Ah, nice. You call little one Muga Muga Muga?

NINA MINA: Yes. I miss my Muga Muga.

UBA UBA: He a man. All mans have fun. Womans in cave, womans gather
fruit, womans gather seeds, womans suckle little ones, womans
cook. It not fair.

NINA MINA: Bison trample mans. Snake bite mans. Mans have it hard.

UBA UBA: They stupid. If I hunt bison, I not get trampled. Mans show off.
The ones with little donges show off more.

NINA MINA: My Muga Muga had a big one.

UBA UBA: You old woman. No more Muga Muga. He gone, he dead.

NINA MINA: I wait.

UBA UBA: He not come back. **(SHE HOLDS UP TEN FINGERS THRICE)**
So many moons passed. He not come back. Maybe he find
another woman not so crinkly.

NINA MINA: I wait for little Muga Muga Muga become big.

UBA UBA: You old. You die before the little one big man.

NINA MINA: Maybe. But I want no other man.

UBA UBA: Other men not want you. You old woman.

NINA MINA: **(GETS ALL ROMANTIC)** Full moon up above. Wolves howling,
owls hooting, holy stream like lizard's back.

UBA UBA: You romantic old hag. **(SHE HUGS NINA MINA)**

NINA MINA: **(KISSES UBA UBA ON THE MOUTH)**

ACT ONE SCENE THREE

(**NINA MINA** is much older now, Uba Uba in her thirties)

UBA UBA: See, your tummy not swelleth. Holy water good for you.

NINA MINA: You drink holy water always. Your tummy swelleth (**SHE HOLDS UP SEVEN FINGERS**) so many times.

UBA UBA: Maybe holy water here not very good.

NINA MINA: It good I have little Muga Muga Muga. I glad holy water not good, so I have little Muga Muga Muga.

UBA UBA: He bigger now.

NINA MINA: Still not big enough.

UBA UBA: He strong.

NINA MINA: He still child.

UBA UBA: Want more holy water?

NINA MINA: I think... Holy water not stop tummy swelling.

UBA UBA: You old woman. You go cuckoo. You drink holy water, your tummy not swelleth.

NINA MINA: You drink holy water, your tummy swelleth (**HOLDS OUT SEVEN FINGERS**) this many times.

UBA UBA: You cuckoo. (**HOLDS OUT SIX FINGERS**) This many times.

NINA MINA: (**LOOKS AT HER SEVEN FINGERS, FOLDS ONE BACK**)
Smart ass!

UBA UBA: Old hag! Cuckoo!

NINA MINA: Why I drink holy water, no little ones, you drink holy water,
(SIX FINGERS) this many little ones?

UBA UBA: **(SMART)** Why some trees give fruit, some trees not give fruit?

NINA MINA: The sun, the moon, the stars...

UBA UBA: Some woman like fruit trees, some woman like weeds.

NINA MINA: I think...

UBA UBA: Old womans cuckoo! They know nothing!

NINA MINA: You had your last little one last moon. How many moons since
you fucked Figa Figa?

UBA UBA: I fuck him all the time, silly old woman! You forget. You dream
your Muga Muga. You not fuck no more. You stupid!

NINA MINA: I think... You think I silly old woman, but I think... **(LONG
PAUSE. CONSIDERS.)** You fuck, your tummy swelleth...

UBA UBA: **(LETS OUT AN INCREDULOUS LAUGH)** You cuckoo, cuckoo!

NINA MINA: Last fuck I have with Muga Muga. Full moon... **(HOLDS OUT
TEN FINGERS)** That many moons after, I have little Muga Muga
Muga. Then I fuck nobody, no tummy swelling, no little ones...

UBA UBA: You stupid old woman. You old cuckoo!

NINA MINA: You fuck all the time you have **(HOLDS OUT SEVEN FINGERS
FIRST, THEN REALISING HER MISTAKE, MAKES IT SIX)** that
many little ones.

UBA UBA: **(GOTCHA)** Why little ones, little woman ones have no tummy
swelling? They fuck too.

NINA MINA: They not ripe yet.

UBA UBA: You think...

NINA MINA: Yes. I think...

UBA UBA: Nobody think...

NINA MINA: I think...

UBA UBA: Everyone stupid?

NINA MINA: Well...

UBA UBA: My mama wise. She never thinked...

NINA MINA: Old ones believe in holy water...

UBA UBA: You old one...

NINA MINA: I think...

UBA UBA: I know...

NINA MINA: You try. Fuck nobody, see if your tummy swelleth...

UBA UBA: But I like fucking...

NINA MINA: You like **(HOLDS UP TEN FINGERS)** so many little ones?

UBA UBA: No. I feed them, I...

NINA MINA: Try for **(HOLDS UP TEN FINGERS)** this many moons. I reckon you fuck, this many months after, you have little one.

UBA UBA: Mans have fun. All mans' fault...

NINA MINA: I think...

UBA UBA: I stop fucking for **(HOLDS UP TEN FINGERS)** this many months. Will you cuddle me?

NINA MINA: Come here. **(CUDDLES UBA UBA WITH AFFECTION.)**

ACT ONE SCENE FOUR

NINA MINA: See? I right. No fuck, no little ones.

UBA UBA: Not holy water?

NINA MINA: Not holy water.

UBA UBA: We tell other womans.

NINA MINA: No. No good. If we tell them no fuck, they think we cuckoo.

UBA UBA: This wonderful.

NINA MINA: We tell other womans, all mans' fault. You fuck mans, you have little ones. So mans must look after little ones.

UBA UBA: **(BURSTS OUT INTO LAUGHTER)** Mans can't look after little ones. Their tits dry.

NINA MINA: No, no, no... Mans must bring food, light fires, look after little ones when womans go look for seeds and fruit...

UBA UBA: Mans not do that.

NINA MINA: **(CUNNINGLY)** They not do that, they get no fuck.

UBA UBA: But I like to fuck.

NINA MINA: I like too. Maybe Muga Muga dead. I miss fucking. Little dong better than no dong.

UBA UBA: I do, too. It's been **(HOLDS OUT TEN FINGERS)** this many moons. And I don't like big dongs anyway.

(BOTH DRIFT AWAY, DREAMING. THEN...)

UBA UBA: We tell other womans?

NINA MINA: You tell them. They think I old, I no like they fuck, that why I tell them no fuck. You tell.

UBA UBA: Mans will be angry.

NINA MINA: I angry too. Our mamas, mamas of our mamas all stupid. They think we have little ones like tree give fruit.

UBA UBA: You genius.

NINA MINA: (SMILES SELF SATISFIEDLY.)

UBA UBA: I go tell womans.

NINA MINA: No. Wait. Men go hunt at sun tomorrow. Then we tell.

UBA UBA: You smart.

NINA MINA: (SMILES.)

ACT ONE SCENE FIVE

(NINA MINA WOUNDED AND BLEEDING. UBA UBA CUDDLING, NURSING AND ROCKING HER. 3.WOMAN -WANA WANA-, IN HER TWENTIES, STANDS OVER THREATENINGLY.)

UBA UBA: Nina Mina, no die, please. Nina Mina. My little one.

WANA WANA: (AGRESSIVELY) She bad. She die. You leave her or you die too.

UBA UBA: Stupid woman. She think. You no think. She no say no fuck, she say, you fuck, you have little ones, all mans' fault, so mans look after little one.

WANA WANA: You say no fuck.

UBA UBA: Argh! These primitive people! You no think. You stupid.

WANA WANA: I no stupid.

UBA UBA: You all stupid. Beat up poor Nina Mina.

WANA WANA: We no stupid. You say no fuck. We smart, we know this old woman say it. She crinkly. Mans no fuck her. So she wants no woman fucking. We know you no say it. We no beat you up, we beat her up. We smart.

UBA UBA: You like mans having fun, you doing all work?

WANA WANA: I no stupid.

UBA UBA: Right. You want mans work, you go have fun?

WANA WANA: I no stupid.

UBA UBA: Right. What I say, you fuck, you have little ones. All mans fault. You tell mans. You no look after little ones, you no fuck. Little ones your fault.

WANA WANA: Holy water...

UBA UBA: You have little ones?

WANA WANA: Yes.

UBA UBA: You drink holy water?

WANA WANA: Yes.

(A PAUSE WHILE THE MESSAGE REGISTERS WITH THE 3.WOMAN)

WANA WANA: How we make mans look after little ones?

UBA UBA: You say, no look after, no fuck.

WANA WANA: (FLIPS) You say no fuck.

UBA UBA: Argh! I no say that to you. You say that to mans.

WANA WANA: I like fucking.

UBA UBA: I like it, too. But we say to mans: "No look after little ones, no fuck". Mans like fucking too.

WANA WANA: (TRYING TO UNDERSTAND) Yes...

(NINA MINA MOANS.)

UBA UBA: Oh, my poor little one. **(ROCKS HER.)**

WANA WANA: But then mans go and fuck other womans.

UBA UBA: We all say the same thing.

WANA WANA: Then mans go away to other nation.

UBA UBA: They no talk proper like we. And they thin. Mans no like them.

WANA WANA: (STARTS ENJOYING THE IDEA) We go into lake, dance like mans, hunt, sing, paint?

UBA UBA: And they look after little ones.

WANA WANA: You think?

UBA UBA: Yes. **(NINA MINA IS MOTIONLESS)** Little one, little crinkly one. She dead. **(STARTS WAILING)**

WANA WANA: I go talk to other womans.

ACT ONE SCENE SIX

(UBA UBA IS WOUNDED AND BLEEDING, WANA WANA IS NURSING AND ROCKING HER. 4.WOMAN, A YOUNG GIRL, TRIES TO HELP, BUT DOESN'T KNOW QUITE WHAT TO DO.)

WANA WANA: Uba Uba, no die! Uba Uba! All womans love you.

4.WOMAN: **(HELPS WANA WANA. THE TWO OF THEM MAKE UBA UBA MORE COMFORTABLE)** Mans more strong than womans.

WANA WANA: Mans hunt, mans run. If we run, if we hunt, we strong like mans.

4.WOMAN: You smart Wana Wana. We run, we hunt, we get strong **(HOLDS UP TEN FINGERS NUMEROUS TIMES)** so many moons after. Now they more strong. They beat us up. Poor Uba Uba.

WANA WANA: Listen. Yes. They more strong now. We say no fuck, they grab our hair, drag us and fuck.

4.WOMAN: Yes.

WANA WANA: What we do?

4.WOMAN: What we do?

WANA WANA: You like fucking?

4.WOMAN: Yes.

WANA WANA: I like fucking, too. So when mans grab our hair, drag us and fuck us, you like it?

4.WOMAN: Yes!

WANA WANA: No!

4.WOMAN: Yes!

WANA WANA: Stupid woman! You say no! You cross your legs. **(SHE DEMONSTRATES)** You not move. You say no like fucking.

4.WOMAN: I like fucking.

WANA WANA: You say you no like fucking. You no like fucking, you cross your legs, you no move, men no like this fucking. Then man look and say: "Last moon you like fucking, this moon you no like fucking. How come?" You say: "You no love me. If you love me, you look after little one. The little one your little one." He say: "I love you. I look after little one." You open your legs, move, have good fuck. If he no say this, you do nothing, and the whole thing fucked. Right?

4.WOMAN: You very smart, Wana Wana.

WANA WANA: Uba Uba smart. She tell me.

(UBA UBA STIRS)

WANA WANA: Uba Uba!

UBA UBA: Nina Mina! **(DIES.)**

ACT ONE SCENE SEVEN

(4.WOMAN HAS A LONG VINE TIED TIGHTLY AROUND HER ANKLES WHICH EXTENDS OFF-STAGE.)

4.WOMAN: You smart ass, Wana Wana! All your fault!

WANA WANA: Why you whinge? Mans work now.

4.WOMAN: My Sogu Sogu say: "You no fuck other mans"

WANA WANA: You like mans, you fuck mans. Stuff Sogu Sogu.

4.WOMAN: He say: "If little ones my fault, I look after little ones. If you fuck other mans, little ones their fault, I no look after them."

WANA WANA: (THIS WAS UNEXPECTED.) Oh.

4.WOMAN: So, he say, no fuck no other mans. You like eat banana?

WANA WANA: Yes?

4.WOMAN: You like eat only banana **(HOLDS UP ALL TEN FINGERS)** this many moons?

WANA WANA: Yes?

4.WOMAN: (GETS A BIT FRUSTRATED AND HOLDS UP ALL TEN FINGERS SEVERAL TIMES.) You like eat only banana this many moons?

WANA WANA: (FINALLY GETS THE POINT.) No.

4.WOMAN: Sogu Sogu good, fucking Sogu Sogu good. But I want other mans, too.

WANA WANA: I, too.

4.WOMAN: What we do?

WANA WANA: I no know.

4.WOMAN: Sogu Sogu put this. **(POINTS TO THE VINE AROUND HER ANKLES.)** I no like it.

WANA WANA: (CONSPIRATORIALY) When he go , hunt?

4.WOMAN: If all mans go, I stay. If one man stay, I go with Sogu Sogu.

WANA WANA: No good.

4.WOMAN: He say he **(SAYING A NEWLY ACQUIRED WORD)** jealous.

WANA WANA: (FIRST TIME SHE'S HEARD THE WORD.) Jealous? What mean jealous?

4.WOMAN: He say gods make mans and gods make mans jealous. It mean, I fuck other mans, he feel sad, he feel angry.

WANA WANA: He bad, he very bad. **(PAUSE)** I see your Sogu Sogu with Kuza Kuza.

4.WOMAN: She very little.

WANA WANA: Right.

4.WOMAN: She not open yet.

WANA WANA: All womans stop your Sogu Sogu, no worry. We say she not ripe yet.

4.WOMAN: Maybe I say I jealous, too. But Sogu Sogu say, only mans jealous.

WANA WANA: Bad. **(INDIGNANT)** We jealous, too.

4.WOMAN: He say, mans can fuck all womans. If they have little ones, mans look after little ones. But if womans fuck all mans, who look after little ones? He say, you mama, I papa.

WANA WANA: (ANOTHER NEW WORD) Papa?

4.WOMAN: He say every little one must have one papa and papa look after little one.

WANA WANA: What we do?

4.WOMAN: I no know. I want other mans.

WANA WANA: They all same. Your Sogu Sogu fuck good?

4.WOMAN: I like it.

WANA WANA: No whinge, then.

4.WOMAN: But you know what mans say now?

WANA WANA: What?

4.WOMAN: If one man fuck a woman, other mans no fuck that woman. They say woman must be unopened before.

WANA WANA: What?

4.WOMAN: Why he go after little Kuza Kuza you think?

WANA WANA: Why?

4.WOMAN: She not open yet. He even say Gods say this. Mans must only fuck woman not open yet.

WANA WANA: Gods! We be bugged!

ACT TWO

-the brute-

(IT IS NOT NECESSARY FOR THE SAME ACTORS TO PLAY THE SAME PARTS. IN OTHER WORDS, THE ACTOR PLAYING 2.WOMAN IN THE FIRST ACT CAN EASILY PLAY 4.WOMAN IN THE SECOND ACT. OR A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT SET OF ACTORS CAN BE USED FOR EACH ACT.)

ACT TWO SCENE ONE

(1.WOMAN -DIANA- IN HER LATE TEENS, 2.WOMAN IN HER EARLY TWENTIES)

2.WOMAN: You'll be in trouble if father sees me here.

DIANA: I don't care. I'm not going to talk to the boys, am I? You are my only sister.

2.WOMAN: Not according to father. He disowned me, you know.

DIANA: Why did you have to do it? I didn't want you to go away. I didn't want you to be unhappy.

2.WOMAN: I am not unhappy.

DIANA: It is not right.

2.WOMAN: What?

DIANA: You know it's not.

2.WOMAN: What?

DIANA: What you do. Father's devastated.

2.WOMAN: I know. He wanted me to marry and end up like mum.

DIANA: Nothing's wrong with mum.

2.WOMAN: No. A slave. To one man and half a dozen children.

DIANA: Is that what you think I'll be? A slave?

2.WOMAN: You do what you want. I can't tell you what to do.

DIANA: Isn't this the way of the world? We marry, have children, look after the husband, raise the children?

2.WOMAN: That's what father says.

DIANA: Isn't it?

2.WOMAN: That's what the priest says.

DIANA: You don't believe it.

2.WOMAN: Look Diana, I love you, you're my sister. I want you to be happy.

DIANA: I will be.

2.WOMAN: Good.

DIANA: You don't think I will be?

2.WOMAN: (KEEPS QUIET.)

DIANA: (GETS IRRITATED.) Tell me then!

2.WOMAN: (KEEPS QUIET.)

DIANA: (GETS ANGRY.) What do you want me to do? Sleep with men for my keep? (PAUSE) Like you do?

2.WOMAN: That's exactly what you're planning to do. Not only sleep with him, but wash his clothes, do his ironing, clean his house, raise his children, too.

DIANA: That's marriage. We'll be married before God.

2.WOMAN: So that makes it acceptable? Being a slave to one man, promising to be a slave to one man, before God? At least I can say no, if it's a man I don't like, or if I don't enjoy it with him.

DIANA: Enjoy it? God, sister, father was right, you have turned into a whore. Don't you know, every time you enjoy it, you must go and

confess? Conjugal... **(LOOKS FOR THE RIGHT WORD.)**
intimacies are for procreation. Don't you know that?

2.WOMAN: Shut your eyes and think of the fatherland. You think that makes a man happy? That's why men come to Fig Lane, to me and my sisters there.

DIANA: Good. So you've found your sisters, then. Forget about this little sister. **(STARTS SOBBING)**

2.WOMAN: (TRIES TO CONSOLE HER.) Diana... I am sorry... I didn't mean it. Jason's a nice boy. I'm sure he'll be a good husband to you, a good provider, and faithful. I'm sure you'll be happy.

DIANA: Shush! I'm not marrying Jason. You promised. No one knows about Jason. Please. Not a word to anyone. You promised.

2.WOMAN: What happened? Did you break up?

DIANA: No. He, Adam, came and asked father for my hand.

2.WOMAN: Who's Adam?

DIANA: And father accepted.

(SILENCE)

Do you go to confession?

(SILENCE)

2.WOMAN: I wish I could come to your wedding.

DIANA: Oh, sister... I am scared.

2.WOMAN: It'll be fine, little sister. **(STROKES DIANA'S HAIR)** You'll be fine.

ACT TWO SCENE TWO

(DIANA, NOW IN HER LATE TWENTIES, LOOKS HAGGARD AND BADLY BRUISED. 3.WOMAN, IN HER MID THIRTIES)

3.WOMAN: (DRESSES DIANA'S SCRATCHES) Here, love. It ain't as bad as it looks.

DIANA: Thanks. I don't know what I'd do without you.

3.WOMAN: We're all in the same boat love. In a way I'm glad the men are at the pub, drinking, so we can talk.

DIANA: I don't mind him drinking. After spending all day in the mine... But I do my best. It isn't easy with three children, you know.

3.WOMAN: I know, love. **(ATTENDS TO DIANA'S INJURIES WITH AFFECTION)** I put the children to sleep before mine comes home, so they don't annoy him.

DIANA: Yours are older.

3.WOMAN: I used to get a thrashing when they were young, too, love, don't blame yourself. It is the way of the world.

DIANA: We haven't brought those children from our parents' homes, you know. They are their children, too.

3.WOMAN: I'd still rather have our lot, love. It's like hell in those mines.

DIANA: You know what he said to me? He said: "One of these days I'll end up trapped in that mine, and all because of you and your three children. And you can't bloody keep my supper warm." My three children!

3.WOMAN: I know, love. They don't mean it, really. They're good men. Your Adam, too. It just gets to them sometimes.

DIANA: My three children!

3.WOMAN: He doesn't get drunk very often, does he, your Adam?

DIANA: No, not often. He blames me and my three children for that, too.
He says he could afford to go to the pub every day, before he got married.

3.WOMAN: It wasn't a shotgun marriage?

DIANA: No. **(PAUSE)** I wasn't even allowed near him, before we got married, especially not after my sister... I was only seventeen, you know.

3.WOMAN: I was eighteen.

DIANA: It isn't fair. I didn't sleep a wink last night, the little one has whooping cough.

3.WOMAN: My youngest will be four this year. I'm thinking of getting a job...

DIANA: A job?

3.WOMAN: In the city. As a domestic.

DIANA: You're not moving to the city?

3.WOMAN: It's not decided yet. But, we'll be better off, I know.

DIANA: The children?

3.WOMAN: The older ones can take care of the younger ones now.

DIANA: Your youngest will be four...

3.WOMAN: Yes.

DIANA: I remember when he was born. He was so cute. **(PAUSE)** Any more on the way?

3.WOMAN: Six is enough. Well, the four that survived...

DIANA: I say three's enough, but God's will...

3.WOMAN: You're in trouble if you leave it to God, love.

DIANA: The priest told me all about the rhythm method...

3.WOMAN: That's rubbish. It never works. After my last one, I got some rubber for mine.

DIANA: Rubber?

3.WOMAN: You know, you slip it on...

DIANA: I know what a rubber is. But that's a sin...

3.WOMAN: I confess every time we use it.

DIANA: Adam would never...

3.WOMAN: Mine wouldn't, either. But I said, look mate, six is it. You either put it on, or you sleep on the floor.

DIANA: Adam would never...

3.WOMAN: It's much better now. We have it every night... Well, more or less. We hardly had it once a month before.

DIANA: Every night! Don't you hurt?

3.WOMAN: Take your time, love, enjoy it...

DIANA: Enjoy! Well, I never...

ACT TWO SCENE THREE

(DIANA IN HER THIRTIES, LOOKS LIKE FIFTY. THEY'RE TALKING OVER A CUP OF TEA.)

DIANA: I won't go to the city. I've seen the factories, I've seen the houses they live in. No way.

4.WOMAN: He was lucky this time. But every day there's an accident in the mine. I'm going.

DIANA: You won't have anyone to talk to.

4.WOMAN: There are doctors there. They look after the children.

DIANA: Children...

4.WOMAN: It's not only you, Diana, all of us have lost at least one child. In the city...

DIANA: Doctors...

3.WOMAN: They're saying the mines are unsafe. They're scrimping on maintenance, they say...

DIANA: Adam's careful.

4.WOMAN: The others aren't?

DIANA: It's a big move, going to the city. I'm too old for that. I have my chooks, my vegetable garden... I have all my friends here.

4.WOMAN: It's bloody dangerous. Everyone knows it.

DIANA: I know...

4.WOMAN: If something happened...

DIANA: My boy will be thirteen this year, he can start work...

4.WOMAN: So you have considered...

DIANA: One has to...

4.WOMAN: He is a lovely boy.

DIANA: Yes.

4.WOMAN: Some of those killed in the accident last month were twelve, thirteen.

DIANA: You say the factories pay more.

4.WOMAN: And they have work for women, too. Between you, you could be getting three times as much, what with both of you working.

DIANA: I don't need very much now. The children are old enough to take care of themselves.

4.WOMAN: Clean houses, doctors, schools...

DIANA: After I said I'm not going, Adam gave up the idea. Now he won't move.

4.WOMAN: Yes, he is a bit like that, ain't he? How're you getting on, by the way? I mean the drink and the beating up and all that?

DIANA: He's drinking more. But no more beating any more. Not since the last miscarriage I had.

4.WOMAN: I thought you were a goner. That was bad.

DIANA: I know, but it saved me. I can't fall pregnant any more. So, you know...

4.WOMAN: Wouldn't that be a relief?

DIANA: I wish that was twenty years ago. We're both too old for that sort of thing now.

4.WOMAN: Come on...

DIANA: I can't send the children out to play any more, they start sniggering.

4.WOMAN: Children...

DIANA: I'm always very quiet, but they can still tell, you know. Adam's a bit noisy.

4.WOMAN: The children could have their own room in the city.

DIANA: Who pays for the houses?

4.WOMAN: You do, but with both people working, you can afford it.

DIANA: You'd pay for everything, even for eggs and bread...

4.WOMAN: But you could afford it...

DIANA: Nobody to talk to...

4.WOMAN: Half the village is there now.

DIANA: They wouldn't have the time.

4.WOMAN: Of course they would. Come on, talk to Adam, see what he says.

DIANA: I feel old.

4.WOMAN: Rubbish. You're strong.

DIANA: You're definitely going, then?

4.WOMAN: Yes.

DIANA: I'm going to miss you.

4.WOMAN: Oh, Diana!

(THEY EMBRACE AND STROKE EACH OTHERS' HAIR, WEEPING.)

ACT TWO SCENE FOUR

(DIANA IS CRYING UNCONTROLLABLY. 5.WOMAN IS TRYING TO CONSOLE HER.)

DIANA: Stupid me! Stupid me!

5.WOMAN: No, Diana, no, please, it's not you. Your Adam always had a wandering eye.

DIANA: It's me. I've grown old, I've grown fat...

5.WOMAN: You're worth ten of those young girls, love. Men are like this, it's not you... Come on...

DIANA: At his age!

5.WOMAN: They're all bastards. You work your fingers to the bone, lie under them, raise the children, just when you are going to relax a bit...

DIANA: We should have gone to the city when everyone else did.

5.WOMAN: It's worse there, believe me. So many men have left...

DIANA: There ought to be a law against it, they should be strung up...

5.WOMAN: By their dicks...

(THEY LAUGH)

DIANA: There should be some gin in the cupboard...

5.WOMAN: Sure, love. **(STARTS POURING DRINKS FOR DIANA AND HERSELF.)**

DIANA: Nineteen years... nineteen bloody years... Now this... What the hell am I going to do? What the fuck?...

5.WOMAN: You have your children...

DIANA: That little trollop... I knew it... I knew it...

5.WOMAN: Look at it this way, love... No more black eyes... No more being crushed and bruised, eh? Cheer up! To freedom! **(RAISES HER GLASS, URGES DIANA TO DO THE SAME.)** Cheers!

DIANA: Didn't even have the guts to tell me to my face.

5.WOMAN: How did you find out?

DIANA: He didn't come home the other night. I was worried sick. I thought, shit, the mine's collapsed. I wish it had. I went to the mine. They told me there. Kevin there... He's a nice bloke... He couldn't even look me in the eye. He said, I thought you knew love... Knew what? He'd been at it since Christmas.

5.WOMAN: It was the nurse?

DIANA: Some nurse!

5.WOMAN: They've gone to the city, have they?

DIANA: May the whole city collapse on them. May the black death strike them both! They'd been planning it all along. Everyone knew about it, except stupid old me. Every time she came from the city, they'd disappear for a while. And I thought he was in the pub, drinking.

5.WOMAN: It's better this way love, you're still young, you're strong, you can build things up. Your oldest...

DIANA: Jason...

5.WOMAN: Jason's... What?

DIANA: Eighteen this year.

5.WOMAN: He's not in the mine?

DIANA: No. My Jason's smart, you know, he's got brains. He wants to study, make something of himself.

5.WOMAN: Good on him. **(PAUSE)** I hope you don't mind my asking, love. We are like sisters, you know, all the miner's wives. How are you going to make ends meet?

DIANA: I can't, how can I? There's no work here for me. I thought...

5.WOMAN: Yes?

DIANA: Maybe it would be better in the city. Funny, isn't it? Adam wanted to go to the city years ago, I said no. Now he's there and I'll be going too... Fate... God moves on mysterious ways... I just wish he'd move somewhere else...

5.WOMAN: We'll all miss you.

DIANA: I'll miss you, too. But it is better this way. Jason can study, too.

5.WOMAN: What about Emily?

DIANA: I don't know...

5.WOMAN: How's she going at school?

DIANA: All right... Well, it'll be better for her too, in the city...

5.WOMAN: She is pretty...

DIANA: Yes.

5.WOMAN: Marry a nice city boy, eh? Live in comfort, running water, inside loo, the lot...

DIANA: I hope... **(SHE STARTS SOBBING. 5.WOMAN COMFORTS HER.)**

ACT TWO SCENE FIVE

(DIANA IS OLDER NOW)

DIANA: I still can't believe it. It's been... What, three months...

6.WOMAN: You've still got your Emily.

DIANA: My Jason, my beautiful, smart boy...

6.WOMAN: He was a hero, you should be proud... They've even given a medal, you've shown me... For his heroic deeds beyond the call of duty, this medal is awarded post... **(SEARCHES FOR THE WORD)** post-humourously...

DIANA: I didn't want him to be a hero, I didn't want him to die. I tried to stop him, you know...

6.WOMAN: He was **(SEARCHES FOR THE WORD)** scripted, wasn't he? Like all of them were...

DIANA: I told him I'd hide him. No one could ever find him. Wars don't go on for very long. I said when it's over, you could come out, go back to school, get a job...

6.WOMAN: We all feel like that, don't we? Mothers. But who's going to defend the country? There's always been wars, love, and men die...

DIANA: He said, he couldn't show his face if I did that. Hiding under my mother's skirt, he said.

6.WOMAN: My husband died in the last war, you know... I was deva... **(SEARCHES FOR THE WORD)** deviated, cried for months... At least you gave Jason a proper burial, didn't you love. They didn't even know where mine was killed. I said, where am I going to visit, what grave? They said, the monument to the unknown soldier,

place your flowers there, if you want. Unknown? Unknown? He wasn't unknown, I said, he was my husband.

DIANA: He'd still be alive if he hid under his mother's skirt.

6.WOMAN: I go to the monument sometimes, though. After all, what does it matter where his body is. Dust to dust... It's all dust, doesn't matter which way the wind blows the dust, eh, does it? I'm sure he's still watching over me. I talk to him, there, at the monument...

DIANA: He could have made something of himself...

6.WOMAN: Not that he was anything special, but he was my husband, he was a hard worker...

DIANA: He used to say, don't you worry mum, once I finish my studies, I'll be earning piles of money, you won't ever have to work again, you'll be the queen mother of my house. I'd work, sweep the streets, I'd do anything, if you were...

6.WOMAN: I had to look after myself, didn't I? It wasn't easy... But time heals everything...

DIANA: What am I going to do? I had dreams... Dreams of my son, my Jason looking after me, his mum, in her old age...

6.WOMAN: Not for us, love. Dreams are not for us? What can we dream of, anyway? Only about things we know. And what do we know? The rich man's dreams are rich, too. I thank God every time I wake up without having a nightmare...

DIANA: It is a nightmare. First, Adam gone, now Jason...

6.WOMAN: You've got your Emily...

DIANA: I don't know what she'll come to. She's already looking down on me. She hides me from her friends. Mum, from the village, a miner's deserted wife... Can you blame her?

6.WOMAN: It's only a stage, love, I'm sure. She'll... **(SEARCHES FOR THE WORD)** depreciate you one day, mark my word...

DIANA: I want to see her marry before I die.

6.WOMAN: Of course, love, you will.

ACT TWO SCENE SIX

(DIANA, TIRED, SAD AND DISHEVELLED, WITH A BASKETFUL OF WASHING ON THE FLOOR)

7.WOMAN: You must confront her. You can't let her get away with this. After all you've done for her. What cheek!

DIANA: It's her happiness that counts. I've got one foot in the grave anyway. I don't want to spoil her chances.

7.WOMAN: What's she ashamed of, huh? What's she ashamed of? You've worked all your life, raised them single-handedly.

DIANA: As long as she's happy.

7.WOMAN: A girl treats her mother like this, she doesn't deserve to be happy.

DIANA: She's fine.

7.WOMAN: That's the problem with you, you've let everyone to walk all over you, all your life. She is your daughter, for God's sake.

DIANA: She is my daughter.

7.WOMAN: So what are you going to do?

DIANA: Nothing. Just disappear.

7.WOMAN: How dare she tell them you're dead?

DIANA: Not far off the mark.

7.WOMAN: That's not the point. She'll be a mother one day. She'll get her comeuppance. I'll go and talk to her.

DIANA: (SUDDENLY VERY STRONG AND FIRM) Don't you dare!

7.WOMAN: Only trying to help.

DIANA: This is her only chance...

7.WOMAN: By declaring her mother dead?

DIANA: Chris... Christopher is a nice boy, she'll be happy...

7.WOMAN: Was it his idea, then?

DIANA: He's trying to make it in the company. It's not easy. He's got the brains, but his parents came from the village, too. I knew them. Both dead, now.

7.WOMAN: Lucky for them.

DIANA: He likes and respects me.

7.WOMAN: So, he wouldn't?...

DIANA: They're trying to figure out if he's worth giving a chance... I mean, a proper chance, to really make it big... That's why they're trying to find out about the families. Do you think they really care about the parents? They just want to find out what sort of people the parents are. Can you imagine them giving poor Chris a chance if they met his mother-in-law, Diana, the washerwoman?

7.WOMAN: That's how you raised them, it's nothing to be ashamed of.

DIANA: I know that, you know that and I'm sure Emily and Chris know that, too. But, they have to play by the rules. If Chris is going to end up a partner in the company, I can't be seen. It's as simple as that.

7.WOMAN: Will she come and see you?

DIANA: I'm sure... She... Once she has children, it won't be easy... They live at the other end of town...

7.WOMAN: Yes, the posh end...

DIANA: I know they can't really afford it there. But that's part of the whole thing, too.

7.WOMAN: Pretending... Fake...

DIANA: That's the way, Emily tells me.

7.WOMAN: Do you have any other family?

DIANA: You, my friends, you are my family.

7.WOMAN: Sorry, I went over the top a bit.

DIANA: That's all right, give me hand with the washing, will you? It gets so heavy when the clothes are wet. I don't have the strength any more.

ACT TWO SCENE SEVEN

(DIANA, NOW AN OLD WOMAN, IS IN TATTERS, SELLING VIOLETS)

DIANA: Violets, violets, for your sweetheart, violets... What have I done, Mother Mary, what have I done?... Where have I gone wrong? Violets... What was my sin?... I've always been good, I've always

done what you told me... Everything I've done, I've done for our Lord... For your sweetheart, one bunch for two, three bunches for five... Damn it, you whore!... Sweet Jesus, take me, I've had enough! Violets! A little joy for your loved one, a bundle of joy... Violets... Fresh... Go to hell! I was a good little girl, damn it, I have looked after my younger sisters, I cleaned and I cooked. You know the grocer's son was after me, but no! You know I haven't. Violets sir? I've been faithful to Adam, I bore his children. I never enjoyed it once, I promise. Oh Mother Mary! No roses, sir. No sir, violets, beautiful violets, joy for your sweetheart.... I've been obedient even when he beat me black and blue, you know that... I turned the other cheek, just like sweet Jesus... Oh Mary, Mary, Mary... Why? I know God moves in mysterious ways, but... Violets Madam? Yes. Two? Thank you Madam, three bunches for five... No, two, certainly Madam, God bless you Madam... Couldn't you spare my first born, my Jason, my dear, I can still feel his hair in my hands, his little hands... Violets? A little joy... Bugger you! I've given you the other one. He was only a babe, only two... War, they said, My Jason... The enemy... I didn't know them... I didn't have enemies, I was a good little woman, oh Mary... Except... That little whore... My only enemy was that whore, that trollop that my Adam... Beautiful violets... Yes violets, one for two... They are fresh... Fresh and lovely... Suit yourself, you scrooge! You toff! He was killed defending the country, they said, he's a war hero, they said... My country was the little house in the village... I had six chooks when the going was good... A pig, too, years ago. A sow... The damned thing died on me. After all the care, the feed. She looked at me with those sorrowful, sowish eyes and just died... My vegetables... Violets, Sir, joy for your beloved? Would Madam like... **(SHE'S SHOVED TO THE GROUND)** I only... I only wanted to live as you wanted me... Oh mother, oh Mother Mary... I was a good wife, a good mother. What have I done to deserve this? Do I have a place in heaven? Will they let me in? Will you let me in, Mother? I don't know where I'm going to sleep tonight, and it's

cold. I might try behind the warehouse. I have my spot there. If it's not taken. One's got to be quick... And there are all sorts... I hate the city... So many rough, filthy people here... **(KICKS A CAT)** Piss off, you mongrel, you lousy, mangy cat! Look at that, you'd think I owe him something. It is, I bet. I bet it's a he, a tomcat. Where's your mate, eh? On the prowl eh? Piss off! Piss off! **(KICKS THE CAT AGAIN)** It's starting to rain. If I could get into restaurants... More people buy flowers in restaurants. But they won't let me, not the way I look. An old hag, dirty... Cold... I was pretty once. Adam wanted me then. The grocer's son, too. His name was Jason. I was pretty. I think I was in love with him. I must 've been. Although it was nothing more than looks... Furtive, secretive, blushing looks... I look at myself now... **(TAKES SHELTER FROM THE RAIN.)** Violets... Fresh... Beautiful violets... Joy... **(IT GETS DARKER AND THE SOUND OF RAIN INCREASES DROWNING HER VOICE. SOON SHE AND HER VOICE DISAPPEAR.)** Our Mother, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name... Our Mother... Mother... Mother Mary... Our Lady... Our Mother...

ACT THREE

-the fruit-

(EACH OF THE SEVEN SCENES IN THIS ACT MUST BE PLAYED BY DIFFERENT ACTORS. THE NUMBERS DO NOT NECESSARILY RELATE TO THE NUMBERS IN THE PREVIOUS ACTS. FOR INSTANCE, 3.WOMAN IN THIS ACT DOES NOT HAVE TO BE PLAYED BY THE ACTOR WHO PLAYED THE 3.WOMAN IN THE FIRST OR SECOND ACTS.)

ACT THREE SCENE ONE

1.WOMAN: I really don't believe we are made equal. You'll probably think this is a whiff conventional and an old hat, but I really believe we are complementary, men and women. Take us, Tony and I. He is the breadwinner. I can hear you say, here we go. It's not like you think. I could have been the breadwinner. I had the choice, I had the education. But I said, we want a family, and I want to look after my kids myself. So it was my decision. I don't believe in throwing something away just because someone has labelled it conventional. Yes, my marriage, my life is conventional. So what? It is what I want and I'm not going to budge just because some hairy-legged feminist wants it. I know what I want, and I'll be damned if I allow some ideology stand in the way of my getting it. I'm not aggressive. I think the best way to get a man's back up is what those feminists do, well.. some of them. That is to confront the men, to attack them, to demand things of them... The message you are sending when you do that is that you are equals, that you're fair game like a male. And that puts them in the automatic mode. It's like Pavlov's dogs. It doesn't matter if you're the wife, or the long-searched-for, wonderful lover, the love of his life, the moment you do that, you're the adversary. We've raised them, us mothers, we mothers have raised them so that they have to compete, they have to overcome adversity, they have to win. So you immediately become the one they must overcome, defeat, blast, bring to your knees. Is that what you want? It's not what I want. I want peace. I value peace. So does Tony. We have a peaceful relationship. I've never raised my voice talking to him. Never. You might find that passive, submissive, I don't care. It works. He knows I'm strong, but he also knows I'm not in competition with him. God, they have enough of that out there, the last thing we should do is

heap more of the same stuff on them. I am secure in myself, I am secure in the knowledge that he loves me. He doesn't have to say it, it is in everything he does. A lot of women expect a lot of words. Well, I don't. He doesn't have to tell me, he shows me. Mowing the lawn, fixing the toaster are all part of this love. Things that I want, I never tell him or demand from him. I make sure he knows I would like to have it and leave it at that. Sooner or later, he comes up with it. The new car, for instance. My old bomb was really beyond repair and I made sure he knew which car I really wanted. About six months later, I got my new car, the right model, the right colour. It is that sort of rapport that's really needed and that's really missing from most marriages. We've been married twelve years now. It's not passionate like it was in the beginning. Naturally. Tony was never the virile stud, but I've always made him believe he was God's gift to women, well, at least this woman. We hardly make love any more. But the companionship... The family. He might be sitting there, sipping his beer, watching the telly, knowing I'm never going to nag him about it as some women do. And I do my embroidery. It's blissful. Poor Tony. He usually nods off before the game's finished. He is a bit tired these days, you know, with the second job, and all that. But he knows I appreciate him. He may not be God's gift to women, but he's all I've got. I don't want to end up a lonely old woman in some dump of a nursing home. We've got plans. There's this property about three hundred kilometres north. It's close to the beach and lovely and warm... I'd love to retire there. It will be good for Tony's back, too. He's put it out at work years ago and never really totally recovered. Lying in the sun is the best cure for him. And he can do that when we retire. But we must make plans. He knows it. So the last time... Three, four months ago, I suggested we drive north, and... We stumbled upon this new development. It's gorgeous. Tony hadn't seen me that excited in yonks. So, it's part of our plan now. I organised the meeting with the bank manager. They have this new arrangement. You know, the value of your house goes up, and your

equity increases... You can actually borrow on the basis of that increased equity. You just add it to your mortgage payments. Tony thought that was a good way of putting the deposit on the north coast property. He was really proud that he thought of it.

ACT THREE SCENE TWO

2.WOMAN: It's all about power, all about control. The rest is bullshit. Marriage is a power struggle, any relationship is. So I've decided very early on I wasn't going to be the doormat. There are no draws in relationships, you either win or lose. I believe in, what you might call, serial monogamy. No one-night stands... I haven't always been like this. I was, at one stage, what you might loosely call promiscuous. But not now, not these days, especially with the AIDS stuff around... Power, that's what I was talking about. It is a well known fact that the penis is the man's power symbol. In at least one language the word for penis and the word for weapon are the same. They don't even try to hide it... No, I don't mean it like that... You'd think I was after flashers... No... What I mean is they don't even hide the fact that they use it to beat you into submission. No way. I said no way, very early on in the piece. No man's going to give me orgasm. I won't let them. I do like screwing men, don't get me wrong. But I make sure that I do my own work, so the man knows it's not his magic wand that's done the trick, it's little old me, and my nimble fingers. You don't think I'm crass, do you? There's a lot to be said about being open and honest, I believe. Well, I'm not going to say it all, and take up your precious time. Well, I'm not promiscuous, if that's what you think. I don't hop into bed with any prick I see. I have my standards. Funny how men get it wrong. Not all, but most of them. They think being good-looking and having a big prick is what we want in men.

We keep telling them, don't we? Do they listen? Does any man ever listen? Two things for me. I don't want to generalise, but I think it applies to most women. You decide for yourselves. See if that's what you want in men, too. One is that they must have power. Not strength, not brawn. We're not still out hunting bison, are we? The man must have power, success. And success these days has very little to do with muscles. The poor dears are still living in the stone age. God, they are slow. I'd rather screw Henry Kissinger or Rupert Murdoch than some unemployed hunk. I know it's been said before, but it's true. Power is the greatest aphrodisiac. I don't know about you, but for me it means security. Knowing that the man has been successful out there, in the urban jungle. He might have a pot belly or a bald head, but knowing that he's been successful makes his testosterone flow. And my oestrogen. The second, of course, is that they should listen. I mean, properly listen. Not just nod between newspaper articles and say 'yes darling', but take notice of what you say. After all, what women had to say has been undervalued for so long, it's about time we do our bit to change this. Trivial, some men say. Trivial! Talking about human relations, human feelings, especially female ones... Trivial! My foot! It's just another ploy by men to bring you down to their level, to push you down. They even make some women believe that they are trivial. Not this baby here. No way. He must listen. And talk, too. Better if they have a deep voice. It resonates inside me, a deep voice, it builds this fortress of security around me. It's wonderful. Not just any kind of talk, though, not footy or party politics, but about things that really matter. There you have it, that's my recipe. Take it or leave it. It's about time we women learnt about power. No more of this submissive female rubbish. It may or may not suit you, but I've got it all worked out. A powerful man with a deep voice, who knows how to listen, a good screw when I want it, crowned by my self-provided orgasm. Wouldn't be bad if there was a candlelight dinner with good wine and some romantic music in the background. Why

not? Children? I'd love to have children, well, at least one... But the biological clock is ticking, isn't it? And it's not easy to find a man, a powerful man who listens and talks in this resonant deep voice, who won't try to own the children. It's only women who really own children, you know. Just because they contribute a speck of sperm, they claim the right to the children which you carry inside you, suckle, nourish... Typical... Bloody typical! No way! I had Richard... He was nice... It went on for quite a few years... He was... He was married, which suited me... Knowing that I had the power to finish his marriage off if and when I wanted to... He loved me, I think... He used to say he really admired my independence. Huh! Then he tried to destroy that independence. He wanted to divorce his wife, marry me and have kids... The whole caboodle... I was thinking, I must admit, I was seriously considering it. Then... His business failed... **(PAUSE)** I left him.

ACT THREE SCENE THREE

3.WOMAN: I love children. You might call me the maternal type, I don't mind. I love everything about them. Not only their pink little toes, but everything. Changing nappies... Not the most glamorous work in the world, is it? I can't say I like it, but I don't mind. Really. I'm with my second husband now. His first wife is dead. I never knew her, but I think she was one of those career types. Children were just a bit of a hindrance, a complication for her. She wanted to make it in the big wide world. These are Peter's words. Of course I'll never know for sure. But I know the type. Hard women. Not fit to be mothers. I don't know why they have children. Anyway, one musn't speak ill of the dead. She was only thirty two when she died, apparently. Car crash, on the way to a business conference. Peter was left with three young kids. It must have been hard. He's

not the type... But he managed somehow. I met him two years after his wife's death. It wasn't love at first sight, nothing like that. God, I'm too old for that. But it was, sort of, instant liking... Anyway, we started going out. If you call that going out. I had my two kids living with me, too. So the outings were with five kids. Most of the time. Sometimes Peter's mother would mind them, but that was after she got to know me, and that was probably a good nine, ten months later. She's nice, Peter's mother. We get along well. It's a Catholic family. Peter is the youngest of five. The baby of the family. And he is. He is such a darling, such a baby. So, there we were, with five kids, picnics, McDonalds parties, the lot. I loved it. Peter's so sensitive. He could see it was no hassle for me. To be brutally honest, it's not easy for a man with two young kids to find a woman who will accept and love them as her own. I know that, and I'm not denying that this had something to do with Peter wanting to marry me. But I'm not unattractive either. I know that too. I'm no Elle McPherson, but who wants Elle McPherson as a mother, eh? I think Peter's mother was sort of relieved when she saw me. I don't think she ever liked his first wife. Sensible woman, Peter's mother, the salt of the earth type. She sensed, I'm sure that she could trust Peter to me. I know what a hard thing it is, to be able to trust your little baby to someone else. But she knew, and I knew she knew. We got on like a house on fire, the two of us, since then. I am... I won't say happy so much as... contented. I am expecting... This will be our child. I really believe in the family. My first husband didn't... He used to say... Would you believe it, that I smothered him... And the kids... He found one like Elle McPherson, and I said good riddance... I mean it... I wasn't bitter at all. Not the typical reaction of a woman facing the challenge of the young bimbo, eh? Honestly, I didn't. I was pleased in a way. He never appreciated me like Peter does. He values me, Peter that is. He wouldn't set a foot without asking me. He knows I only think what's best for him... And the kids, of course... Once we have our own child, it will even be better. I can

sense it. Call it women's intuition, or whatever... I just know it. Peter's so good with the kids. He doesn't differentiate at all between my two and his three. It's one big, happy family. I love it... It's like... I don't know how to put it... I'm not so good with words... It's like home-baked cake on a cold winter afternoon. It's... Satisfying. You should see Peter playing with the kids. He's no sportsman, the way he bats... He'd never done it before, and took it up only when my oldest decided on cricket. It was so lovely of Peter. I know a man like him will never make it big in the public service. He is in the public service... The State... He's just too nice. The whole world's gone topsy turvy. Being nice is now a disqualification... I know it. But I like him the way he is... He's no great intellect, or a great stud... I know that. And he knows that I know that. And he appreciates it all the more that I, sort of love him, cuddle him, knowing he's no big deal... What more can a man ask for? He knows it. We are one big, happy family. He is getting into the dangerous age now, though. I've been reading about it... Mid-life crisis. But my Peter will never leave me. He needs me. As for me... Of course it's good to know that you're needed. I don't know what he'd do without me. So, I have no worries... No worries at all. He won't go chasing after some young bimbo... He may not be very smart, my Peter, but he knows it. I can tell. He does everything to please me. Little darling. We never have any rows, never. Well... There's been one recently. I told you he's no great sportsman... Six months ago, he said to me, out of the blue, that he'd take up boxing. Really, at his age! I let out a laugh at first. That wasn't nice. We did have a row... Well a baby one... Anyway, we talked about it. He wanted my blessing. Of course, in the end, I said yes. So every Tuesday and Thursday night, he goes to his boxing practice... Well... It's better than him going after some little bimbo, isn't it? Sorry, I have to rush. I have the roast in the oven.

ACT THREE SCENE FOUR

4.WOMAN: I don't have to tell you anything, it's none of your business. I bet it's Peta who's put you up to this. She always goes on about coming out of the closet. Closet, my foot! She's living in the dark ages, the bitch! No one's in the closet any more, I told her. Straight. She wouldn't listen, would she? All right, I can't afford a Ducati, let alone a Harley Davidson, but I don't have to lick Joanie's arse to get my bum on the seat of a 500cc, do I? I think it stinks. I mean, women like Joanie... She's the sort of old-timer, and I know it wasn't easy in her days, and yes, she's done a lot for the cause, promote the sisters when the public service was still full of insipid little Catholic do-gooders. But, I think she's been totally colonised. Sad, in a way. A legend in her own way... Someone like Joanie stooping to handing out favours to her favourite sisters... I mean, how low can you go? Almost like a man. I don't know if it's true, and I wouldn't put it past Peta to make the whole thing up, but Joanie apparently had a failed love affair, that's how she ended up... With a man! Yes, old mama Joanie... That would explain a lot, wouldn't it? Heart-broken, straight into the loving arms of the first affectionate female around... Really! She's gone a bit funny in her old age. I mean, talk about sexual harassment... I keep away from Joanie. She's more like a man. And I don't mean butch... But the way she ogles... Not just me... Even Gail, who was as straight as they come... She was all right, though, Gail... I was waiting for her to change camps and join the club, but the poor thing just couldn't stand Joanie's constant ogling. She just had to leave. Now, what kind of a name does this give to lesbians? It's just so shitty. I even threatened to go and confront Joanie, but Sam stopped me. She's sensible, Sam. She said: "you know you can't win with Joanie, she'll make out that you'd fallen for Gail, she'll make out that you were jealous, and that will forever remain the official story". Sam was right. No, no, not that I'd fallen for Gail, not that, but that Joanie would be so malicious. She can be, and

as the Department head, she's got the power. So I dropped it. But I do keep away from her, except strictly officially. She's sensed it, of course, and that's the death knell. Forget about the promotion. So who gets the promotion? Bloody Bobby! The half-wit. You know what Bobby's favourite sport is? Bobby the booby... In the pub, in the Deer's Antler, Saturday nights, there's this really great band, all dykes... Great stuff... So the whole gang is there most of the time. Bobby too... So, after half a dozen straight vodkas, she gets into the poofster's circle, flaunting her big boobs. To test them, she says. Most of them just humour her. But every now and then, one of them gets a bit excited. I mean, he could be bi, couldn't he? No, Bobby's after purity, ideological purity... She leads him on, as you've never seen it, they disappear. Then, on Monday, she tells the story... After all the toing and froing, how she just froze in her tracks, giving the clear message that this was a definite case of an organised let-down. She just lies stiff and lectures the poor guy about gay and lesbian politics, how straight men have screwed everything up, the materialism, the wars, he's a disgrace and so on... After half a dozen straight vodkas. Really! So it's her who gets the promotion. Even Sam was a bit pissed off, and Sam is really very laid back, very tolerant. I couldn't be with anyone who isn't. She is. She puts up with me, my jealousy, my fits of anger, my bitching on... I think it helps, all that. It never gets boring. I'd hate Sam to be bored by me. You must keep the spark, so I never let it get too comfortable. Complacency is the death knell, you know. The affection between us is just... great. You can never equal the affection between two women. Nice and soft. No power games... Men have no idea about the erotic... They think it's a Beethoven symphony... Da-da-da-daaam... Is that the third or the fifth? Anyway... What I mean is more like Mozart, no, Chopin... or Tchaikovsky in his better moods. He was a poofster, wasn't he? Between us, all this alliance with the poofsters bugs me a bit. Here we are, in the forefront of putting men in their place, refusing them entry into the inner sanctums of womanhood, and there are these

poofers volunteering for it. Serves them right. Let them bugger each other. We are thinking of adopting, you know, Sam and I. Although we do have a bit of a disagreement. I definitely and categorically refuse to have a boy, Sam says it doesn't matter. I mean, it's ridiculous, pour all that love and affection on the child for years only for it to grow up to be a man. Paulie... She works in Family Affairs. I had a quiet word with her, she understands. I think what will happen is that this lovely baby girl will suddenly become available... I wonder how much that Harley Davidson cost?

ACT THREE SCENE FIVE

5.WOMAN: I just love men. So I volunteered to come and talk to you. I said someone should put the other point of view. Not every woman is like that, you know. Some of us are normal. I just love sex. For me everything else is what you do in between having sex, everything else is an interlude, an interruption. I couldn't do it for money, though. It would become work. And I hate work. We are not made to work, I've always said. Work is not good for your body, not to mention what it does to your soul. I have a lot of respect for prostitutes, they're about the only honest people around, I think. And the poor men... We make them what they are, you know. They want sex. But can they just come out and say it? No. We think they're crass if they do. We make them jump through every hoop imaginable, we make them say they love us, send us flowers, remember our birthdays so that they can then have sex with us. Then we make them marry us. The poor dears had to marry us even before they could have sex. At least that has

changed. What hasn't changed though, is that we keep demanding the same price. The flowers, the cards, the gift, what have you. It's like saying to them: "Look, it is not what I want. It is what you want, and if you pay me the right price, I'll let you have it." That's why I have a lot of respect for prostitutes. They're open about it, up front. We treat them like little boys, we force them into play-acting, pretending... Then, a few years later, the passion dies out, and they start giving us what we always say we want. We do, don't we? We do say what we want is friendship and affection. And that's what they start giving us, and we bash them over the head, the poor dears. We say, you don't find me attractive any more, who was that little blonde I saw you talking to, the whole crappy bit. That's why I said, cut the crap. No. To myself. I said, cut the crap, you like sex, you want it, go for it. It doesn't really matter what else is attached to the dick. I say I love you for your dick, not for your intelligence, personality or status. Some of them find this a bit difficult to take, I must say. So I don't say it as openly as this. Why should they find it offensive? Isn't their dick as much part of them as their fifteen inch biceps, or their brains? I think we've intimidated them all for so long, the poor dears, they don't know whether they should be coming or going. They are a bit perplexed when they realise there are really no strings attached. I don't want their commitment, I don't want to sit down and have hours long deep and meaningful talks with them. All those brainy women who talk non-stop... They're the women who can't put their mouths to better use. What's wrong with giving pleasure to a man, for Chrissakes? We don't need them to support us these days, we don't need to hook them... Life should be just one long series of orgasms. Well, other things in between, too, like eating and sleeping, listening to music, reading a good book... But take the sex away, none of the others is a good enough substitute, is it? I guess I still believe in the "Make love, not war" bit. Except, as grandma Tina says, "what's love got to do with it?" But we've confused them, the poor dears, and we still keep confusing them.

See, their brains are not as well developed as ours, doesn't have as many connections. There was this guy, Kevin, a really good find, so good in bed... Well not just in bed... We'd have it off any time, anywhere. For hours. I thought he liked it. I know. I know he liked it. A man can't lie, his dick would give him away. So by all the available evidence, he loved it. I did, too. It was good. We had it, on and off, for about three years. Then he started to change. Started giving me the jealous lover bit. Of course I was seeing other men. Seeing? Funny saying `seeing', isn't it? Or `sleeping with'? I don't want to see or sleep with them, I want a good fuck. Anyway, it started getting sour. It was sad, really. I'd grown quite fond of him. He was a `clerk of works' or a `working clerk', something like that. Never really asked properly. He was more like Clark Kent for me. I couldn't care less what he did when we were not together. But he says: "You don't care about me. You don't even know what I do for a living. I feel used. I feel like a sex object". Used! Sex object! I blew my top. And then I really blew it. I called him Gavin. Just a slip. Happens to the best of us. What does it matter, really, Kevin or Gavin? But that was it. That was it. We had Operation Desert Storm. He was the storm, I was deserted. It is sad, thinking back. We've screwed them up so much that when we give them what we've always complained was the only thing they were really after, they can't take it! I'll be off now. Going to the gym. I hate it. But the old birth certificate is yellowing a bit, and I'm getting a bit of a spread around the edges. I must keep it up.

ACT THREE SCENE SIX

6.WOMAN: They're the fascists. The men, of course. Anyone who studied a bit of history can vouch for it. What was Ghenghis Khan, you tell

me, or Attila the Hun? No question. Or Hitler or Mussolini or Franco, Salazar, Stalin, Pol Pot? Little men, arrogant little pricks, raping and pillaging and telling everyone else what to do. It's in every man. No question. They all have it. Some hide it better than others, that's all. God is a male. No question. A female god would not have created such destructive vermin. History is male history, it's the history of males, their wars, their killing, their brutality, just to prove they are something. Then they go about boasting, making heroes of themselves. On top of all that they develop all these theories to put women down. After all they've done! Freud the male talks about penis envy. He would, wouldn't he? Penis envy! What rot, what unadulterated and utter rot! If anything, it's the womb envy in operation here. Blind Freddie can see it. Womb envy. Do you hear about this anywhere, do you read about it in the text-books? No, because the agenda is still controlled by men. Nothing's changed. They can't bear children, they are barren by definition. So what do they do? They destroy. All that art and stuff is to compensate for real creativity. Everyone knows that, no question. Marx, although he was a bastard too... Did you ever read about his wife and family? What a bastard! But anyway, he was right about one thing. Whoever controls the means of production has the real power, real control. But he got the other bit wrong, maybe he was busy screwing his sister-in-law when he wrote it, who knows? It's not the machines, as Herr Marx asserted. It's not the machines that are the means of production, it's women. So they try to control women. Give the gentlest, the most refined looking male half a chance, they'd try to control you. It's in their genes. Every man is a potential killer, a potential rapist. Look at all those incest cases. No I... I'm not speaking out of personal experience... No... No first-hand knowledge of it, no. But it's everywhere. You only have to look at all those women whose lives are destroyed by fathers, uncles, friendly neighbours. Ordinary man, the foot soldiers. The men who turned on the gas in Auschwitz were nice, civilised family men, weren't they? No

question. They went home and listened to Mozart or... Wagner. Wagner! Goebbels, Goering, Mengele... You could add to the list ad infinitum. It makes me so angry. The concentration camps, the beastliness, the Spanish civil war... The things they did in Spain... Talking of Spain... This tourist goes to Spain. Being in Spain, she has to see a bull-fight. She watches it, then goes to a restaurant nearby, asks the waiter for their specialties. The waiter consults the cook and says: "We do have this exclusive dish, would Senorita like to try it?" She says yes. After about ten minutes, the dish arrives. Two big balls with wonderfully sauteed vegetables. She gets stuck into it. It's lovely. She asks the waiter what it is. He says, well... you know the bull that was killed... what do you think happens to it? We don't throw it away... This is the most delicious part of the bull... She says, oh well, it was delicious... So the next few days, she skips the bull-fight and goes straight to the restaurant and has her favourite dish. This day, the dish arrives... Two balls on the plate, but they're very small. She questions the waiter. The waiter says: "Well, Senorita, it's not always the matador who wins". **(STARTS LAUGHING. THE LAUGHTER IS INORDINATELY LOUD AND GOES ON FOR AN EMBARRASSINGLY LONG TIME.)** Cut them off I say, cut their fucking balls off!

ACT THREE SCENE SEVEN

7.WOMAN: I don't know what all these people get so excited about. It is a purely physiological function. The mechanics of it doesn't interest me in the slightest. It is the male version of sexuality that we had to put up with all this time, all these years, centuries... And it's messy. It's like spilling your food all over you all the time. That is the problem these days. There's no sense of propriety, that's what.

And with the male of the species involved, there's never any likelihood that there ever will be. Proper I mean, and clean. They are messy creatures. I can't wait until they perfect cloning, so that we won't have to... Huh! They could, of course, with all the technology these days. That's what I'm waiting for. Of course I want to be a mother. A woman must. But not the way it is. I don't need men to look after me, or my child. I'm perfectly capable, thank you. That's why we have the welfare state. We can afford it. So why haven't they perfected cloning? Why haven't they? Why do you think? Just stop and think. Who are they? Let's start with that. Who are all those scientists who have been supposedly working on cloning? **(PAUSE)** Male! That's who they are. And even a mere male has enough brains not to put himself out of business, make himself redundant. It is all part of the same conspiracy. The very same conspiracy that gives us skyscrapers and runny meat pies. What's the connection I can see you ask. Not any of my women audience, though. They know. By God, do they know. I must admit not all the males are in this conspiracy. Some are just too dumb for it. But they have rat cunning enough to know which side their bread is buttered, so they keep mum. Yes... What was I saying? Meat pies, runny meat pies and skyscrapers. With the technology these days, do you think they can't manufacture meat pies that don't run? Of course they can. Why don't they? Good, you've started thinking. I'll tell you why. Have you ever watched a man eating a meat pie? Have you? Closely? You'd feel violated. I do. How many women eat meat pies? Not many, I'll tell you. Because women, by nature, are neat, they're clean, not messy. There wasn't anything out of place in our house when I was a child. Nothing. Everything in its proper place. I keep my place spotless. Why should I let a meat pie eating male mess it up, eh? No way. They look you in the eye, and bite into the meat pie, like... Disgusting. You must have. The skyscrapers are the obvious ones, the phallic symbol of the twentieth century, everyone knows about them. They're deceptive, too. The nice, clean, neat

lines, bright, clean... Inside they're a mess... They're just not female... It's hard to explain... My idea of a female building would be a comfortable one. Not erect like the dreams of an impotent old architect, but horizontal, comfortable... And clean. The same clean, neat, tidy lines like a skyscraper, only flat. And as clean inside as it is on the outside. The glass windows spotless. The floors... You could eat off the floors... Just like in my place. You haven't seen my place. Well, you're not likely to, are you? Not many people have. My girl friend... No, no, I'm not a lesbian. I'm not. I'd tell you if I were. There's nothing wrong with it, I just am not. Some of them can be as bad as men... As messy... And do they gossip... I've seen some really bitchy ones, believe me. All the trivia they go on about, so petty, so... messy. I play tennis, and swim. I ride a push-bike. It's lovely. In the breeze. Beats sex any time... I have a good collection of records, CDs. Come home, have a shower, make myself a cup of tea, put some music on, lovely... Really... No... No I don't. I don't... feel lonely... Honestly...

Gundogdu Gencer

SEVEN WOMAN

