

**Gundogdu Gencer**



**C'MON, KILL ME  
SWEETIE**

**a comedy in two acts**



# **C'MON, KILL ME SWEETIE**

**a comedy in two acts by:**

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**translated by**

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Can not be performed without the written permission of the playwright

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## CHARACTERS

**SIYEN:** A woman of 68, but looks older. She's had a stroke and drags her left foot. She has difficulty using her left hand. Frail but likeable, cheerful and energetic. She frequently puts on make-up.

**DIHA:** - SIYEN's neighbour. They both live in the same block of units, in flats next to each other. 72 years old and, like SIYEN, frail. Shrunk with age, with a hunched back. Optimistic with a ready smile and full of hope.

**GAS MAN:** 65-70 years old. Tired, sickly, suffering from sciatica pains, thin, small, pessimistic, unshaven, with one of the lenses of his glasses broken, carrying an old brief-case.

## (ACT ONE)

(A ROOM IN A SMALL FLAT ON THE GROUND FLOOR OF A BLOCK OF UNITS IN THE OUTER SUBURBS OF A BIG CITY. TO THE RIGHT, THE STREET ENTRANCE EXTENDS INTO THE ROOM, DIVIDING THE ROOM INTO TWO. ON THE RIGHT, IN THE WALL FACING THIS AREA IS THE DOOR TO THE ROOM. THERE IS A TABLE AND CHAIRS NEAR AND TO THE LEFT OF THE DOOR. A TELEPHONE TABLE NEXT TO THE TABLE. ABOVE THE TABLE HANGS THE FRAMED PORTRAIT OF A VERY PRETTY WOMAN.)

(THE LEFT SIDE OF THE STAGE IS AN ALCOVE FACING THE STREET. THE WINDOW IS IN THE WALL OPPOSITE THE ALCOVE. IT IS A GROUND FLOOR FLAT WITH THE FLOOR BELOW STREET LEVEL, WITH THE WINDOW FAIRLY HIGH UP. BELOW THE WINDOW IS A DIVAN THAT CAN BE CONVERTED INTO A BED. OVER THE DIVAN HANGS THE OIL PORTRAIT OF SİYEN'S DEAD HUSBAND, THE GENERAL. NEXT TO THE DIVAN, OPPOSITE, IS AN OLD FASHIONED, CHEAP WARDROBE. ON THE LEFT WALL IS A MIRROR AND DRESSING TABLE. AGAINST THE RIGHT WALL IS AN OLD FASHIONED CHEST OF DRAWERS, ALSO USED AS A BUFFET, WITH A RADIO ON IT AND AN UMBRELLA AGAINST IT. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THE FURNITURE HAS BEEN CHEAPLY BOUGHT AND HAVE NO SENSE OF HARMONY. MORNING.)

**SİYEN: :** (HUMMING A SONG, SHE PUTS ON MAKE-UP IN FRONT OF THE MIRROR FOR A WHILE. GETS UP. GOES TO THE LEFT WALL, DRAGGING HER FOOT. SHE BANGS ON THE WALL AND CALLS OUT) Mrs. DİHA! DİHAaa! (STOPS. BANGS ON THE WALL AND CALLS OUT AGAIN) DİHAaa! DİHAaa... (TO HERSELF) I wonder if she's gone shopping. How could she, without letting me know? I won't even go to the kitchen without telling her. (TURNS AND WATCHES HERSELF IN THE MIRROR, DANCES, SINGING. SUDDENLY HER EYES STOP AT HER HUSBAND'S PICTURE. AFTER LOOKING AT IT FOR A WHILE, SHE STARTS A FIGHT) Why did you have to die so early? Eh? Why so

early? **(RAISING HER VOICE GRADUALLY)** For twenty three years you've never considered what this poor woman had to do by herself. You deserted me when I was so young... A widow... **(AS IF THE GENERAL IN THE PICTURE HAS SAID SOMETHING THAT SHE DID NOT UNDERSTAND)** What? What was that? Your pension? **(LAUGHS MOCKINGLY)** Money is not all that a woman needs. And stop boasting "I left you a widow's pension, a general's widow pension" all the time. As if the pension amounted to anything. You call that money? See how I exist in this damp basement? Do you call this living? **(AS IF THE GENERAL HAS SAID SOMETHING)** What? So I am a general's wife. Huh! **(SUDDENLY GETTING SENTIMENTAL)** I wish you were alive and were a corporal, even a private... And we were flat broke...

**DİHA:** **(BANGS ON THE WALL FROM THE OTHER SIDE)** Mrs. Siyen! Siyeeen!...

**SIYEN:** I'm here. Where were you? I've been knocking on the wall for ages, I couldn't make you hear.

**DİHA:** I was in the bathroom. I mustn't have heard. What are you up to?

**SIYEN:** Nothing.

**DİHA:** What do you mean, nothing? You've been shouting for I don't know how long. I could hear you from the kitchen.

**SIYEN:** Why do I ever shout? I'm having a fight of course.

**DİHA:** With yourself?

**SIYEN:** I haven't gone crazy yet...

**DİHA:** I beg your pardon?

**SIYEN:** I said, I haven't gone crazy yet.

**DİHA:** Who are you fighting then?

**SIYEN:** Whom? Come and see for yourself.

**DİHA:** Geez I'm curious, I'll be there in a minute.

**SIYEN:** All right, all right... **(TO HER HUSBAND'S PICTURE)** See how you've embarrassed me in front of the neighbour. You keep provoking me and making me shout... **(THE DOOR BELL)** Why did you have to annoy me so much? Coming, Mrs. DİHA... **(GOES OUT, COMES BACK WITH DİHA)**

**DİHA:** Geez, what happened, I'm dying to know, quick, tell me.

**SIYEN:** What do you think? We had a fight again.

**DİHA:** Who with, c'mon tell me.

**SIYEN:** Whom do you think? **(POINTING TO THE GENERAL'S PICTURE)** Is there anyone else in the house? With this one again!

**DİHA:** Not on your anniversary! And there I was in the kitchen, cooking to celebrate your anniversary.

**SIYEN:** I'm fed up, sick of it. Always fighting, every day.

**DİHA:** Loneliness must be going to your head. **(WITH A SMILE)** Fighting with a picture?

**SIYEN:** Why not? He *is* my husband, isn't he? It's not my fault he is dead. As he is not here in person, all I can do is fight with his picture.

**DİHA:** It's not any fun, fighting by yourself. When he can't say anything to you, or do anything to you...

**SIYEN:** He has done all he could to me, hasn't he? What else? No sensible husband, who loves his wife would die and leave his forty five year old wife behind.

**DİHA:** What could the poor man do? Haven't you said he died in the war? He sacrificed himself for his country...

**SIYEN:** **(MOCKINGLY)** Oh, yes, in the war...

**DİHA:** Oh what heroics he must have created... How did he die? Was he shot?

**SIYEN:** Shot? You must be joking! Apparently he drowned swimming in some lake.

**DİHA:** I thought you said he died in the war?

**SIYEN:** Yes, yes, the war... It was a very hot day during the war. He was so hot, he plunged into a lake. **(TO THE GENERAL'S PICTURE)** You don't know how to swim and you go in some lake...

**DİHA:** Don't get all worked up. Whatever's happened happened.

**SIYEN:** But I've been a widow for twenty three years. Only I know how much I've suffered by myself. Do you think it's easy spending twenty three years looking at the picture of a husband who's drowned in a lake?

**DİHA:** What about me? At least you have money.

**SIYEN:** *I* have money? We've been neighbours for fifteen years. You know everything about me. Money! What money?

**DİHA:** I mean, compared to me... I mean you are better off.

**SIYEN:** If I didn't get the occasional help from my son, I couldn't even pay the rent for this basement.

**DİHA:** I haven't even got that, have I? It was just fortunate that I inherited that small flat in the city from my father, which I rent out. I just manage to pay the rent for this basement and get by.

**SIYEN:** I inherited nothing from my husband.

**DİHA:** Nothing? Nothing? You have the deceased general's widow's pension, haven't you?

**SIYEN:** An old general... What they pay as the widow's pension is so little...

**DİHA:** I have nothing left from my husband... At least your husband was a general. And you! You are a martyred general's wife! What about me? The wife of a grade five clerk...

**SIYEN:** At least your husband was young...

**DİHA:** Young!... Young or old, the same difference, after he's dead. He died at a young age.

**SIYEN:** All the same, a young husband is different.

**DİHA:** We were only married for three months. And you shouldn't even count one month of that.

**SIYEN:** Why is that?

**DİHA:** He was on night duty every third day. Two months out of three... That's how long our marriage lasted. But you...

**SİYEN: (INTERRUPTS)** And how short it was for me... I was eighteen when we got married, and was widowed at forty five. So... our marriage lasted twenty seven years... only...

**DİHA:** At least you had a son.

**SİYEN:** Didn't you have any?

**DİHA:** We didn't have the time...

**SİYEN:** Because of night duty?

**DİHA:** Of course not, but when he died in a traffic accident...

**SİYEN:** How long now, since he died?

**DİHA:** Today exactly twenty seven years, two months, one week and three days.

**SİYEN: (WITH A SIGH)** It'll be twenty three years in four and a half months and five days since mine died.

**DİHA:** But he hasn't been out of my mind for one day.

**SİYEN:** Mine neither... Not even for one hour. It's easier said than done. Twenty three years...  
**(SHOWS HER OWN PICTURE ON THE WALL)** See how I looked then, and how I look now...

**DİHA:** Oh, nothing's wrong with you, you still look pretty...

**SİYEN:** It was in the first days of my marriage... I was eighteen when I had this picture taken... And now, sixty eight.

**DİHA:** You were an eighteen year old beauty then, now a sixty eight year old beauty.

**SİYEN: (DELIGHTED)** D'you mean that? **(TO THE GENERAL'S PICTURE)** You hear that?...  
**(WITH A SIGH)** I've allowed no other man into my life, since he died.

**DİHA:** Me neither, you know that...

**SİYEN:** But me... I never even had any boyfriends apart from him.



**DİHA:** As if *I* have boyfriends...

**SIYEN:** No, no you don't... On the other hand... at least you correspond with men.

**DİHA:** Oh, what are you saying... I never!...

**SIYEN:** You receive all those letters, don't you? All the love letters you keep reading to me...

**DİHA:** D'you call that corresponding? It's one thing to receive letters, quite something else to correspond... True, I receive plenty of letters from men, but I never respond to any... I received one only yesterday.

**SIYEN: (CURIIOUS)** What, another love letter?

**DİHA: (AS IF SHE DOESN'T CARE)** A love letter, naturally, what else?

**SIYEN: (WITH ENVY AND LONGING)** How wonderful! You're such a lucky woman DİHA... I've never, but never received a love letter to this day... **(LOOKING AT THE GENERAL'S PICTURE)** Even *he* never sent me any love letters.

**DİHA:** I don't know why, I get them all the time... **(BOASTING)** But I spurn all of them.

**SIYEN:** But why? I don't understand.

**DİHA:** There's nothing to understand. They are not serious. All they want is to have a bit of fun.

**SIYEN:** What, all of them?

**DİHA:** I can't say all... Some come up with serious propositions.

**SIYEN:** So?

**DİHA: (COY)** But those are not suited to me. Some are not as I want, some are below my station, and some are not my type...

**SIYEN:** What luck... So you received another letter yesterday?...

**DİHA:** Yes. You know I receive one or two love letters every week.

**SIYEN:** And all from different men?...

**DİHA:** Naturally... It would be unbearable from just one man. Love means variety.

**SIYEN:** C'mon, read it...

**DİHA:** (SHE IS DYING TO READ THE LETTER, BUT ACTS COY AS SHE WANTS SIYEN TO INSIST AS USUAL) Oh, now is not the time...

**SIYEN:** Please, read it for me.

**DİHA:** You always insist like this... What's the use of reading? It's just a love letter...

**SIYEN:** You had one from a retired professor the other day. What a passionate letter that was...

**DİHA:** (LIKE A LITTLE GIRL) Oh, him? Huh, I spurned him.

**SIYEN:** But why?

**DİHA:** He was a doddering old man... Too old... What would I do with a senile old fogey?

**SIYEN:** He was younger than you, if I remember correctly...

**DİHA:** What rot! (ANGRY) No man is younger than the woman he intends to marry.

**SIYEN:** Why did you spurn the tailor then? Because he was too young?

**DİHA:** Of course not. He had no social standing.

**SIYEN:** What about the captain? What a beautiful letter his was!

**DİHA:** Oh, no, I'd never have a captain for a husband. A husband belongs at his wife's side. He at sea, me at home, I'd never want a marriage like that...

**SIYEN:** Come on, read me the new letter.

**DİHA:** (COY) All right, but not now.

**SIYEN:** No, no, no, read it now...

**DİHA:** I don't have it on me... I'll read it when you come to my place.

**SIYEN:** I refuse to believe that. You always say you don't have it on you, then take it out of your bosom. Come on, take it out and read it.

**DİHA:** Oh, well, all right then. **(TAKES A LETTER WITHOUT AN ENVELOPE OUT OF HER BOSOM, PUTS ON HER GLASSES AND LOOKS AT THE LETTER)** No, that's not the one... That's a different one...

**SIYEN:** Which one's that?

**DİHA:** This is an old one.

**SIYEN:** Read that one, too, please...

**DİHA: (READS)** *My perfect angel!*

**SIYEN:** Who is he calling his "perfect angel"?

**DİHA:** Me, of course. Who else?

**SIYEN:** Read on...

**DİHA: (READS)** *My perfect angel! With a strong expectation that you will consider this servant of yours worthy of your forgiveness for starting my letter with this address, I gather my courage to express my most sincere feelings for you at this junction.*

**SIYEN:** What elegance, what an elegant style, just like in novels...

**DİHA:** *O, joy of my soul! With the sudden realisation that the future direction of my life was to change course irrevocably, I shall not refrain from confessing that, that night I had written on that page of my diary corresponding to the day I saw you: "Fate has cast its net"*

**SIYEN:** Oh, what a sensitive soul. What else? What else has he written?

**DİHA:** Huh, this is nothing. You'd faint if you heard the other one.

**SIYEN:** Come on, read.

**DİHA: (TAKES ANOTHER LETTER OUT OF HER BOSOM AND READS)** *My dearest, dearest Mrs. DİHA! Feeling not one day older than twenty, following you all the way to your home with the youthful euphoria of that age and finding out your address and your delightful name from your neighbours and acquaintances, at the conclusion of a long night spent sleepless thinking of you, I have decided to listen to the voice of my heart and write you this letter.*

**SIYEN:** Oh, how romantic! I am sixty eight years of age, but I've never received a letter like this from a man.

**DİHA: (ANGRY)** For God's sake, stop saying "I am sixty eight years of age, sixty eight years of age" all the time! I know, everyone has heard, everyone knows, there is no one left who doesn't know you are sixty eight years old...

**SIYEN:** Why should I hide my age?

**DİHA:** No one's saying you should. But you don't have to advertise it to all and sundry! Let alone our neighbourhood, there isn't one shop-keeper in the suburb who doesn't know your age. Even when you buy half a pound of cheese, you somehow find an excuse to tell your age...

**SIYEN:** I don't hide my age like some I know.

**DİHA:** What do you mean? Are you saying I hide my age?

**SIYEN:** No, I never said that.

**DİHA:** Take me. I may be seventy, but...

**SIYEN: (INTERRUPTS)** Seventy! Ha ha! **(LAUGHS)**

**DİHA:** What is it? Why do you laugh?

**SIYEN:** Nothing...

**DİHA:** Come on, out with it...

**SIYEN:** You are seventy three, aren't you? I even saw your birth certificate. Seventy three.

**DİHA:** Never you mind the birth certificate. My father changed my year of birth by three years so that I could marry younger.

**SIYEN:** You wrote sixty nine on your election card. The birth certificate says seventy three. Just now you said seventy. You tell everyone a different age.

**DİHA:** Some difference! You! You tell everyone your age, for no reason, out of the blue, before you even say hello. Look, a woman never tells her age except in situations where she has to, like a court and the like.

**SIYEN:** What can I do? I look older than my age. No one believes I am sixty eight, that's why I tell them. After my stroke four years ago, I look ten years older.

**DİHA:** Of course you don't.

**SIYEN:** When I tell them I am sixty eight, they don't believe me, they mock and ridicule me. I feel so humiliated.

**DİHA:** You shouldn't. You look much younger than your age.

**SIYEN: (PLEASED AND CURIOUS)** Really? How much younger?

**DİHA:** I said much younger... Nearly younger than me, especially when you put your face on...

**SIYEN:** But you well know that I am sixty eight years of age.

**DİHA:** Of course, dear... We are celebrating your fiftieth anniversary and as you were married at eighteen, you must be sixty eight...

**SIYEN:** How peculiar... We never celebrated it during our marriage. But I have been having anniversaries for the last twenty three years... **(LOOKING AT THE GENERAL'S PICTURE)** That's why we were fighting just then... Why did you have to die so early?

**DİHA:** Let's have a booze-up tonight... Oh, I nearly forgot to tell you... I'm cooking such lovely dishes for our feast tonight... **(SUDDENLY REMEMBERING SOMETHING, JUMPS)** Oh! My god!

**SIYEN:** What's wrong?

**DİHA:** What am I going to do! **(GOES TOWARDS THE DOOR)**

**SIYEN:** What's the matter, dear?

**DİHA:** I was cooking dinner. When I heard your fight, I ran here and left the saucepan on the stove.

**SIYEN:** Oh dear, oh dear... **(CALLS AFTER HER EVEN BEFORE SHE LEAVES)** Come back straight away..

**DİHA: (FROM OUTSIDE)** I'll just go and check the meal.

**(SİYEN TURNS ON THE RADIO. A LIVELY SONG ON THE RADIO. SHE SITS AT THE DRESSING TABLE AND PUTS ON MAKE-UP. THERE IS A BANG ON THE WALL. SHE TURNS THE RADIO DOWN TO HEAR IT)**

**DİHA: (FROM OUTSIDE) SİYEN! Mrs. Siyeeen!...**

**SİYEN:** How is the meal? Burnt, is it?

**DİHA: (FROM BEHIND THE WALL) I was just in time. It's singed a bit, but not burnt...**

**SİYEN:** Come back, then...

**DİHA: (FROM BEHIND THE WALL) I have a few chores, I'll come back when I'm finished.**

**SİYEN:** I am waiting. Don't you be late...

**(TURNS UP THE VOLUME. THE SONG ON THE RADIO GETS LIVELIER. AS SİYEN STARTS SINGING ALONG AND DANCING, DRAGGING HER FOOT, THE MUSIC ABRUPTLY STOPS. THE RADIO ANNOUNCER IS HEARD. SİYEN LISTENS, STANDING, GETTING MORE AND MORE EXCITED AND FRIGHTENED.)**

**RADIO ANNOUNCER:** *Dear listeners! We've just received news that the psychotic killer who has been murdering women in the disguise of a gas company representative, has committed another murder in the early hours of the morning today, escaping without a trace. As all the murders are committed exactly in the same manner, it is almost certain that we are faced with a serial killer. The psychotic killer seems to enter the houses of women who live alone or who happen to be by themselves at the time, with the excuse of checking their gas stove or their gas meters. He threatens the women with a gun, rapes and subsequently strangles them. This morning's murder brings the total number of women killed in this way to nine. Only two women have so far managed to escape the psychotic killer. According to their description, the murderer is a young man about thirty years old, tall, dark with black hair, broad shoulders and green eyes. He appears likeable and has a deep voice. An identikit picture, developed from the descriptions of eye-witnesses has been published in today's daily papers. We now continue with our music broadcast.*

**(MUSIC STARTS AGAIN. SİYEN IS IN FEAR. SHE TURNS OFF THE RADIO. WHEN THE DOOR BELL RINGS SUDDENLY, SHE TAKES A FEW STEPS TOWARDS THE DOOR, FIRST WITH FEAR, THEN WITH HOPE, STOPS AND**

**GOES TO THE DOOR AGAIN. THE DOOR BELL RINGS AGAIN. SHE GOES TO THE MIRROR AND QUICKLY PUTS POWDER ON HER FACE AND NECK. SHE PUTS ON LIPSTICK. THE DOOR BELL RINGS AGAIN. SHE LOOKS AT HERSELF IN THE MIRROR, THEN EXITS QUICKLY. DİHA COMES IN, FOLLOWED BY SİYEN. DİHA HAS A NEWSPAPER IN HER HAND.)**

**SIYEN: (DISAPPOINTED)** Oh, it's you! Oh, well...

**DİHA:** Were you expecting someone else?

**SIYEN:** No...

**DİHA:** You look as if you were...

**SIYEN:** I just thought it was...

**DİHA:** Who?

**SIYEN:** No one... The newspaper boy...

**DİHA:** Hasn't yours come yet?

**SIYEN:** No, he hasn't...

**DİHA:** So, you haven't seen it yet... **(OPENS AND SHOWS THE NEWSPAPER)** Look what we're faced with... They've got the monster's picture in the paper...

**SIYEN: (ENVIIOUS)** It was on the radio just then. It said he enters the houses of women who live alone.

**DİHA: (TRYING TO CONCEAL HER EAGERNESS)** D'you think he might come to ours?...

**SIYEN: (EAGER)** God forbid...

**DİHA:** What if he comes here?

**SIYEN:** What would we do?... **(TAKES THE NEWSPAPER AND LOOKS AT THE PICTURE CAREFULLY)** He is rather handsome...

**DİHA:** And so young...

**SIYEN:** Poor thing...

**DİHA:** What a pity...

**SİYEN:** I really feel sorry for him. What did you say he does to the women?

**DİHA:** It's been in the papers for days. Haven't you read it?

**SİYEN:** I read yesterday's...

**DİHA:** If there is no one else at home, apparently he says he is the gas man.

**SİYEN:** Then?...

**DİHA:** He says he is from the gas company to check the gas oven. If there is no oven, he says he's here to check the gas meter.

**SİYEN: (CURIOUS)** And then?

**DİHA:** Then he enters...

**SİYEN:** And?

**DİHA:** When he finds out there is nobody else at home... He... you know what... he rapes the woman...

**SİYEN: (AS IF SHE'S HEARD GOOD NEWS)** You don't say!

**DİHA:** But afterwards he strangles them...

**SİYEN:** Oh, that is bad...

**DİHA:** Silly man! All right, you do what you do, but why strangle them afterwards? Isn't that a pity?

**SİYEN:** I honestly don't believe it.

**DİHA:** What don't you believe?

**SİYEN:** That he strangles them... Why should he?

**DİHA:** But he does, he does...

**SİYEN:** Don't believe the papers.

**DİHA:** Why would the police be after him if he doesn't?



**SIYEN:** Perhaps he does, but I bet they would have deserved it. Who knows how much those women have resisted, what awful things they would have done to the poor man.

**DİHA:** Yes, probably... Then of course, the poor man has no choice but to strangle them.

**SIYEN:** What else can a man do?

**DİHA:** You never know who is more to blame, the victim or the killer? And of course we women can be quite contrary, too.

**SIYEN:** Perhaps he gets frightened that they would go to the police and strangles them out of fright.

**DİHA:** Dob him in? How mean... How could anyone dob him in? I'd never tell anyone if something like that happened...

**SIYEN:** Not even me?

**DİHA:** You're different, I'd tell you...

**SIYEN:** I am so scared... **(WITH FAKED FEAR, MORE WITH EAGERNESS)** What if he comes to my place?

**DİHA: (FAKED)** I am very scared, too. The moment I read it in the paper, I rushed here. I just couldn't stay at home by myself.

**SIYEN: (EAGER)** What if he comes?

**DİHA:** What do we do?

**SIYEN:** Nothing... What can we do?... The best thing... **(STOPS ABRUPTLY)**

**DİHA:** Yes? Why did you stop? You think the best thing...

**SIYEN:** The best thing is not to...

**DİHA:** Not to what?

**SIYEN:** One doesn't upset a snake when he's at the water-hole. The best thing is not to do anything, just let him do what he wants...

**DİHA:** I guess so... Let him do what he likes... He's not going to eat us...

**SİYEN:** To survive...

**DİHA:** If he comes...

**SİYEN:** You never know, he might...

**DİHA:** Why shouldn't he?

**SİYEN:** C'mon, sit down dear, so we can figure out what we're going to do.

**DİHA:** **(SITS DOWN)** It'd be awful...

**SİYEN:** If he doesn't come?

**DİHA:** That, too...

**SİYEN:** Yes, yes, we have no choice but be nice to him. Then he won't kill us.

**DİHA:** The papers don't say it. I wonder why he kills them. What does he want from the women?

**SİYEN:** **(COQUETTISH)** Oh, come on, what do you think? It's obvious, isn't it?

**DİHA:** It's like a distant memory... It's been so long...

**SİYEN:** What has?

**DİHA:** It's been twenty seven years. I've forgotten everything...

**SİYEN:** One thinks one has, but...

**DİHA:** There are some who commit suicide out of nostalgia. It's an awful illness. But they say once someone suffering from nostalgia arrives at the country she misses, it is cured in five minutes...

**SİYEN:** I don't understand.

**DİHA:** I mean, you are right, everything would come back to you... **(TAKES THE NEWSPAPER, LOOKING AT THE MURDERER'S PICTURE, SIGHS)** He is tall and handsome, too. My husband was short, I mean for me... This one is dark, my husband was blonde. My husband's eyes were blue...

**SÍYEN: (LOOKS AT THE GENERAL'S PICTURE WITH YEARNING)** Mine was very big. And he was a very hard general. He never shouted, just coughed. But he coughed so hard. Anyone who heard his cough would cower. If he coughed in the barracks, all the troops would tremble with fear. That's why they nicknamed him "General Ahem". It's been twenty three years, I still hear him cough some nights. So you can see, *how* he coughed.

**DÍHA:** Whether my husband used to cough or not, I can't remember now. But he was short, blonde and chubby, like an angel with an appetite...

**SÍYEN:** It feels as if... As if one day... But more so in the evening... During those dark-skinned dusk hours... that he will cough behind this door... The door will open (**LOOKING AT THE GENERAL'S PICTURE**) and he'll enter... (**SHE GETS UP, TAKES THE GENERAL'S UNIFORM FROM THE WARDROBE AND PUTS IT IN THE CENTRE OF THE ROOM. THE GENERAL'S JACKET AND JODHPURS WITH RED STRIPS HANG ON THE HANGER**) He will come in and stand in front of me... (**TAKES OUT THE GENERAL'S HAT AND BOOTS FROM THE WARDROBE, TOO. SHE PUTS THE HAT ON THE JACKET AND THE BOOTS UNDER THE JODHPURS. THE CLOTHES ON THE HANGER LOOK LIKE A GENERAL, STANDING**) he'll just cough from there... (**PATS THE EPAULETS, KISSES THE BUTTONS OF THE JACKET, LEANS HER HEAD AGAINST THE JACKET. COQUETTISHLY**) C'mon my general, c'mon sweetie... (**PUTS THE SLEEVES OF THE JACKET OVER HER SHOULDERS AS IF THE GENERAL'S EMBRACING HER**) C'mon hug your little bunny rabbit, c'mon sweetie...

(**DÍHA, EMBARRASSED OF THE SPECTACLE, FIRST COVERS HER FACE WITH HER HANDS, THEN TURNS HER HEAD TO THE WALL, THEN UNABLE TO OVERCOME HER CURIOSITY, STARTS WATCHING FROM BETWEEN HER FINGERS**)

**SÍYEN: (COQUETTISHLY)** Come on... Kiss your little bunny rabbit, kiss me... Take me in your arms... Come on...

**DÍHA: (STILL IN THE SAME POSITION)** Shush!

**SÍYEN:** What?

**DÍHA:** I'd better go, if you're going to... you know what...

**SÍYEN:** Oh, no, you're not a stranger...

**DÍHA:** No, but... Nevertheless... Maybe the general would feel embarrassed...

**SÍYEN:** What's there to be embarrassed about?... **(PUTS DOWN THE GENERAL'S CLOTHES. SITS DOWN.)** Why hide it from you? Some nights, when I am depressed with loneliness, I sleep with him.

**DÍHA:** Really! Boots and all?

**SÍYEN:** His boots, his clothes, everything... I've never had another man in my life.

**DÍHA:** Well, you are older...

**SÍYEN:** Really! I wouldn't be considered old, would I?

**DÍHA:** No... I didn't mean that. I mean, as years pass, we grow, our age goes up...

**SÍYEN:** My heart is young...

**DÍHA:** Mine, too...

**SÍYEN:** He would hold me so tight in his arms... So tight...

**DÍHA:** Do you miss him?

**SÍYEN:** So much... **(WITH YEARNING)** Is it possible not to?

**DÍHA:** **(WITH A SIGH)** I always remained faithful to my husband's memory, too.

**SÍYEN:** Yes, but one can't live an entire life just with memories.

**DÍHA:** Yes... life goes on.

**SÍYEN:** Any other men?

**DÍHA:** No, I've never had any other men in my life.

**SÍYEN:** Yes, I know, then of course you got old...

**DÍHA:** Who, me? There are so many men running after me. You know about the love letters they keep sending me. But I always...

**SIYEN: (INTERRUPTS)** Spurn them, I know.

**DİHA:** Of course I do...

**SIYEN: (LITTLE GIRLISH)** I have a lot of men after me, too, but I never respond to any of them.

**DİHA:** Of course, I flirted, but...

**SIYEN:** Flirting's different... I flirted a lot too. I remember one... **(STOPS SUDDENLY HEARING THE DOOR BELL. BOTH WOMEN RUSH ABOUT THE ROOM IN A FLURRY THINKING IT'S THE GAS MAN AT THE DOOR. THEY ARE DISORIENTED.)**  
My God! What if it's him?... I should have tidied up... **(THEY START TIDYING UP AS IF PREPARING FOR A VERY IMPORTANT VISITOR.)**

**DİHA:** D'you think it's him?

**SIYEN:** He's come, d'you think?

**DİHA:** Maybe he has. He must have... Can I borrow your lipstick?

**SIYEN:** He shouldn't see the two of us here, he may shy away.

**DİHA: (PUTTING ON MAKE-UP IN FRONT OF THE MIRROR)** And not strangle us, d'you think? Why should he shy away?

**SIYEN:** Men are generally more shy for some reason... **(TERSE)** I'll put on some make-up too, if you don't mind.

**DİHA:** If you think he'll shy away, I'll wait in the corridor, or maybe the kitchen...

**SIYEN: (WRIGGLING)** Oh, don't be silly... That just won't do...

**DİHA:** D'you think he'll strangle us?

**SIYEN:** He's supposed to... Let's not open the door.

**DİHA: (ANGRILY)** It's because I'm here that you're not opening the door. You would, if I weren't...

**SIYEN:** I am so frightened...

**DİHA:** Of course you are! Look at *me*, I'm trembling all over. **(THE DOOR BELL RINGS)** Go on, open the door... Don't leave him waiting, it's bad manners.

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**SİYEN:** But you are here...

**DİHA:** I'll hide here when he comes in. Then I'll just sneak out.

**SİYEN: (LITTLE GIRLISH)** My heart's fluttering like a little bird...

**DİHA:** If it's him, bang on the wall. I'll hear it. I'll open the window straight away and shout "Help!"

**SİYEN:** Shush! Don't you dare shout... You'll scare him away...

**DİHA:** How am I supposed to find out then? I'll run here as soon as you bang on the wall.

**SİYEN:** All right, all right... But don't come running here straight away when I bang on the wall. Wait a while.

**DİHA:** All right. But don't let him get away before I come, just keep talking to him.

**SİYEN:** Perhaps he'll never go away, perhaps he'll stay here... **(DOOR BELL)**

**DİHA:** Go on, open the door.

**(BOTH WOMEN GO NEAR THE DOOR)**

**SİYEN: (FEARFULLY)** Who is it?

**VOICE: (FROM OUTSIDE)** Papers! Today's papers!

**DİHA: (DISAPPOINTED)** Damn! It's only the paper man!

**(SİYEN GOES OUT, LEAVING THE DOOR OPEN.)**

**SİYEN:** Phew, I thought my heart was going to stop.

**(DİHA QUICKLY GOES TO THE GENERAL'S UNIFORM ON THE HANGER. LIKE SİYEN, SHE PATS THE EPAULETS, KISSES THE BUTTONS AND LEANS HER HEAD AGAINST THE JACKET. SHE IS TOTALLY ABSORBED. WHEN SİYEN ENTERS WITH THE NEWSPAPER IN HER HAND, SHE SEES DİHA IN THAT POSITION. FOR A SHORT WHILE, SHE WATCHES HER SILENTLY AND JEALOUSLY, THEN COUGHS DELIBERATELY. SHE LEAVES THE NEWSPAPER ON THE CHAIR. DİHA IS CAUGHT RED-HANDED, JUMPS UP.)**

**SİYEN:** I would have never expected this of you.

**DİHA: (GUILTY)** What is it, what's the matter...

**SİYEN:** You have a cheek to ask. Shame on you...

**DİHA:** What have I done?

**SİYEN:** What more could you do? You're the one who gets all those love letters. Isn't that enough for you? What greed!

**DİHA:** What are you saying? What slander! Huh! You, jealous woman! I'm leaving.

**SİYEN:** Don't you get superior with me! Go, see if I care!

**DİHA:** I'll be crippled if I set foot in your house again.

**SİYEN:** Don't you come to my house, ever again. I don't want you here!

**DİHA:** As if I was dying to... Rot in your house by yourself and go mad for all I care. You can hug that moth-ridden general uniform of yours and go to bed with his boots...

**SİYEN:** Wouldn't you die for them...

**DİHA:** Ha ha ha!... It's all there for me to take, but I don't want to... I'm leaving.

**SİYEN:** Go on, what are you waiting for? **(DİHA EXITS. THE DOOR IS HEARD TO SLAM SHUT. SİYEN GOES TO THE GENERAL'S CLOTHES, LOOKS WITH ANGER. TO THE GENERAL'S CLOTHES)** You can't wait for it, can you? **(KEEPS TALKING AS SHE PUTS THE CLOTHES, HAT AND BOOTS AWAY.)** Some people never change. You would be ninety five now, if you were alive. Dirty old man! You still have eyes for other women... **(LOOKING AT THE GENERAL'S PICTURE)** Aren't you ashamed of yourself? I hurt my friend of so many years because of you. And I have nobody else... **(GOES TO THE WALL, STARTS BANGING. CALLS OUT.)** DİHAa!... DİHAaa!... Mrs. DİHAaa! I can't hear you... **(PUTTING HER EAR AGAINST THE WALL)** I know you are there, I can hear you walking, I know you are there, I swear you are... Don't try that on me, you can't just pretend you are not home and fool me. **(IMPLORES)** DİHA!... DİHA!... As if I said anything to hurt you... Come on, come back please... If I broke your heart, I didn't mean to... I apologise. Come back, I won't ever do it

again. I know it wasn't your fault, was it now... It's all his fault, that ninety five year old general husband of mine... He never had his fill of women... He was the same when he was alive. I couldn't make any maid last. He would pinch the poor girls behind doors. Come back, can't you hear me... Don't feign, I know you're there, you can hear me... **(THREATENS)** Listen here, if you don't come back, I'll never come to your place again, you'll stifle there by yourself... Who else do we have apart from each other, DİHA... **(SUDDENLY ANGRY)** Enough's enough, come on! **(PRETENDS TO FAINT)** Oh my God, I'm feeling faint... You just stay there, I'll die here by myself... Oooo!... I'm going to pass out... Help!... I'm passing out, DİHA, can't you hear me? Quickly... I'm dying... Oooo... **(ABRUPTLY GOES BACK TO NORMAL AND PUTS HER EAR AGAINST THE WALL)**

**DİHA: (FROM BEHIND THE WALL)** Hold it. Hold it, I'm coming... Have you really passed out?

**SİYEN:** I'm going... Ooo, My God... Heeelp!

**DİHA: (FROM BEHIND THE WALL)** Look, if this is another one of those fake spells like all the rest, I'll never set foot in your house again.

**SİYEN:** I swear it's not... I'm fainting for real this time...

**DİHA: (FROM BEHIND THE WALL)** Don't! Don't you dare faint!... Wait for me. Whatever's happened to you?

**(SİYEN PUTS A BOTTLE OF EAU DE COLOGNE, A BOTTLE OF MEDICINE, AND A GLASS OF WATER BESIDE THE DIVAN, THEN LIES ON THE DIVAN. THE DOOR BELL RINGS. SHE GOES TO OPEN THE DOOR. BOTH WOMEN ENTER. SİYEN LIES ON THE DIVAN, WHINING. SHE PUTS EAU DE COLOGNE ON HER FACE AND WRISTS.)**

**SİYEN:** I don't know...

**DİHA:** Were you upset about something?

**SİYEN:** No, my dear. What's there to get upset about?

**DİHA:** We've been next door neighbours for fifteen years, why should we get cross with each other?...



**SIYEN:** But I wasn't cross, dear... You know well that I only took this flat because you were next door. I moved into this damp basement so that I could be next to you. Then, of course, we ended up being friends for life.

**DİHA:** If I don't see you for one day, or hear your voice, I feel as if I have something missing.

**SIYEN:** Would I move into this damned damp dump, if you weren't here!

**DİHA:** It is damp, all right, but it's at street level... Neither of us could climb stairs. We couldn't live on higher levels.

**SIYEN:** **(GETS UP)** With all the excitement, I forgot to look at the paper. **(LOOKS AT THE MURDERER'S PICTURE IN THE PAPER.)** Oh!

**DİHA:** What?

**SIYEN:** What resemblance... Just so much like my husband in his youth... Put a general's uniform on him, and he'd be my husband...

**DİHA:** **(LOOKING AT THE MURDERER'S PICTURE)** How odd! He looks like mine, too. My husband, exactly! Well, I'd better go now. He might come to my place... He might knock on the door and leave if I'm not home. It would be embarrassing...

**SIYEN:** Why embarrassing?

**DİHA:** He might think I'm too frightened to open the door...

**SIYEN:** What if he does come? What will you do? Bang on the wall, won't you? I'll ring the police straight away.

**DİHA:** No, not straight away...

**SIYEN:** No, not straight away... I'm so scared...

**DİHA:** What if you have no time to bang on the wall? They say he's a monster, he might strangle you the first thing...

**SIYEN:** **(GIVES DİHA THE KEY SHE TAKES FROM THE TABLE)** Here, take my spare key. If I scream, run here right away... Keep an ear on the wall.

**DİHA:** You, too... **(TAKES THE NEWSPAPER FROM SİYEN'S HAND AND LOOKS.)** Did you read the news?

**SİYEN:** Which one?

**DİHA: (READS)** *Yesterday, a taxi driver abducted a young woman passenger, drove her to the park and raped her.*

**SİYEN:** Don't believe it...

**DİHA:** It's here, in black and white... There've been so many! Taxi drivers abducting woman passengers...

**SİYEN:** No, they don't... Lies, newspaper hype... They victimise poor taxi drivers. I've taken taxis so many times at night, by myself and went to faraway places. They've never done anything to me. No abduction.

**DİHA:** Too true... I've tried so many times, too. They never do. Our taxi drivers are really so upright.

**SİYEN: (GOES TO THE DRESSING TABLE AND WHILE SHE PUTS ON MAKE-UP)** A bit too much, I say... A taxi driver...

**DİHA:** What?

**SİYEN:** Should behave like a taxi driver...

**DİHA:** You are very keen on make-up, aren't you?

**SİYEN:** I always have been, it's my nature... But not so much on going out.

**DİHA:** You couldn't, of course, in your state...

**SİYEN:** I would, if I wanted to... But I don't feel like it. I never did, you should know. Even before my stroke four years ago. You know I didn't.

**DİHA:** No, you didn't. But you've always kept painting yourself.

**SİYEN:** I come from a large family, and a big house. And we've always had piles of visitors, as if we didn't have enough people in the house. Everyday felt like a wedding party. Always cheerful, always a flurry, noise, commotion... We never noticed how days passed. After I married, I lived with my husband's family. And that was even more crowded, more noisy,

more cheerful. That house was my whole life. We all dressed up, put on make-up, jewels, sang and laughed together. Then, after my husband died, I was left by myself and I've never got used to it. It feels as if all that commotion is just waiting in the wings... That's why I still put on make-up as I did, still laugh and be cheerful. For me it's yesterday and tomorrow, all wrapped up in hope...

**DÍHA:** So you should, Mrs. SÍYEN... I am exactly like you. I was never very keen on sulking and complaining about being lonely.

**SÍYEN:** I keep living in this room as if I'm in a crowd.

**DÍHA:** And I always feel as if I am going to have a repeat of those gay old days. That's why I savour every minute.

**SÍYEN:** Why do you tell me I paint myself too much, then?

**DÍHA:** All the same. It's not proper at your age.

**SÍYEN:** What rot! It is really now that we need it most.

**DÍHA:** Perhaps you are right. Especially for widows like us, eh? But I've never taken to make-up that much...

**SÍYEN:** *You've* never taken to it? It's not because you don't like it, is it? It's because of your penny-pinching. I've never ever seen you buy a lipstick or nail polish.

**DÍHA:** It's not penny-pinching. You know, I have no money... **(NEXT TO SÍYEN WHO IS PUTTING ON MAKE-UP)** But I use red wrapping paper for my lips and cheeks, and burnt hazelnut shells as eye-liner.

**SÍYEN:** You say you're not keen on make-up but every time you're here, you always borrow lipstick, eye-liner, powder, nail polish, everything.

**DÍHA: (OFFENDED)** I won't, from now on, if that's the way you feel.

**SÍYEN:** No, sweetie, I didn't mean that... Just that you've said you're not keen on make-up...

**DÍHA:** Show me one woman who isn't! Especially at our age, as you say...

**SİYEN: (SIGHS)** Especially if she's widowed... **(LOOKING AT HER OWN PICTURE ON THE WALL)** No make-up will do any good... Have one look at this picture, and the way I look now...

**DİHA:** Ooo, nothing's wrong, you're still pretty.

**SİYEN:** Not like before. Nowhere as much as before...

**DİHA: (LOOKING AT SİYEN'S PICTURE)** No, still the same... You haven't changed one bit... Believe me, exactly the same... Well, I'd better go now. You can't guess what I've cooked to celebrate your anniversary tonight...

**SİYEN:** You're too kind... Let's get properly sloshed...

**DİHA:** He might come, too!...

**SİYEN:** The gas man?... Wouldn't it be terrific if he did?... Now's the time... Don't forget to bang on the wall, if he comes to your place...

**DİHA:** You, too... I've got your spare key, I'll come running.

**(DİHA EXITS. SİYEN TURNS ON THE RADIO. AS SHE SWAYS AND DANCES TO THE LIVELY MUSIC ON THE RADIO, DRAGGING HER FOOT, THE DOOR BELL RINGS. SHE STOPS IMMEDIATELY. SHE IS TORN BETWEEN FEAR AND HOPE. SHE GOES TO THE DOOR, COMES BACK. AS SHE GOES TO THE DRESSING TABLE TO QUICKLY FRESHEN UP, THE DOOR BELL RINGS AGAIN. SHE APPROACHES THE DOOR CAUTIOUSLY. CALLS OUT WITH A RAISED VOICE.)**

**SİYEN: (CALLS OUT)** Who is it?

**GAS MAN: (A TIRED SNIFFLING VOICE FROM OUTSIDE)** *It's the gas man...*

**SİYEN: (SHAKEN, SHE PUTS ONE HAND ON HER HEART, THE OTHER ON HER HEAD. SHE NEARLY FALLS, LEANS ON THE WALL. SHE CAN NOT BELIEVE HER EARS AND ASKS AGAIN)** Who is that?

**GAS MAN: (FROM OUTSIDE)** The gas man...

**SİYEN:** Who?... Who did you say?...

**GAS MAN:** The gas man... The gas man...

**(SIYEN GOES TO THE WALL IN FEAR, TO CALL OUT FOR DİHA. JUST WHEN SHE WAS ABOUT TO BANG ON THE WALL, SHE CHANGES HER MIND. HER EYES LIGHT UP, SHE SMILES. AS SHE FRESHENS UP IN FRONT OF THE MIRROR, THE DOOR BELL RINGS AGAIN. SHE QUICKLY EXITS TO OPEN THE DOOR, DRAGGING HER FOOT.)**

**(CURTAIN)**

## (ACT TWO)

**(SAME LOCATION. FROM WHERE IT WAS LEFT OFF AT THE END OF THE FIRST ACT)**

**SIYEN: (FROM OUTSIDE)** Come in please, come in... Do come in, please.

**GAS MAN: (AS HE ENTERS)** I... I just wanted to... I mean... I don't wish to... Just to have a look... I don't want to disturb you... **(SIYEN HAS FORCED THE GAS MAN IN AS IF SHE'S BEEN PUSHING HIM)** I'm here to check your gas oven, your gas meter, Madam...

**SIYEN: (AFTER SHE EXAMINES HIM FOR A WHILE WITH DISAPPOINTMENT)** So!

**GAS MAN:** So!

**SIYEN:** So it's you!

**GAS MAN:** Yes, it's me. **(SIYEN MIMICS SURPRISE)** Why are you so surprised?

**SIYEN:** I mean, you are that gas man, are you?

**GAS MAN:** I told you I am, madam... What's there to be so surprised about?

**SIYEN:** I don't know... All of a sudden, I... No, no, I'm not surprised... Why should I be surprised?... You can't judge a book by its cover, can you?

**GAS MAN:** Naturally...

**SIYEN:** How can I explain...

**GAS MAN:** This is not the kitchen...

**SIYEN:** The kitchen? Why the kitchen? Is it always in the kitchen that you...

**GAS MAN: (INTERRUPTS)** Madam, your gas oven...

**SIYEN: (FORCING HIM TO SIT DOWN)** Sure, sure... Make yourself comfortable... **(SHE TAKES A FEW STEPS IN FRONT OF HIM, TO SHOW HIM A PLACE TO SIT,**

**THEN STOPS. AS HE TAKES A FEW SHAKY STEPS, HE BUMPS INTO SİYEN FROM BEHIND. SİYEN THINKS HE IS ABOUT TO ATTACK HER, JUMPS BACK, HER HANDS AGAINST THE WALL, SCREAMS. THE GAS MAN IS EVEN MORE FRIGHTENED BY HER SCREAM AND JUMPS THE OTHER WAY. AS THE TWO LOOK AT EACH OTHER IN FEAR, DİHA'S VOICE IS HEARD.)**

**DİHA: (FROM BEHIND THE WALL)** Mrs. SİYEN!... What happened? I heard you scream...

**SİYEN: (TO THE GAS MAN WHO IS EVEN MORE FRIGHTENED NOW)** Shush! **(TO DİHA)** Me? Did you say *I* screamed?... Yes, of course... I just thought of the days bygone... I must have sighed...

**DİHA: (FROM BEHIND THE WALL)** He hasn't come, has he?

**SİYEN: (PANICS)** No, no... **(WITH HER EYES ON THE GAS MAN)** No one's come... He hasn't. Why should he come here, anyway? Why would he choose my place in the entire city?

**DİHA: (FROM BEHIND THE WALL)** Very well, then... Just call me if anything happens, won't you?

**SİYEN: Sure, sure... (SİYEN'S LOOKING AT THE GAS MAN WITH A SMILE. THE GAS MAN, FRIGHTENED, HAS HIS EYES ON THE DOOR. HE LOOKS AT SİYEN, THEN THE DOOR. HE MAKES A FEW ATTEMPTS TO RUN OUT OF THE DOOR, BUT IS STOPPED EACH TIME BY SİYEN'S MOVEMENTS. SİYEN, TRYING TO CONCEAL HER FEAR WITH AN ATTEMPT TO SMILE)** Are you really him?

**GAS MAN:** Who's him?

**SİYEN:** You know... Him... The gas man...

**GAS MAN:** I told you madam, of course it's me... I'll show you my ID if you don't believe me.

**SİYEN:** Well... So it is you. Well, if it's you, what can one do, let it be... **(SHE LOOKS HIM OVER FROM TOP TO TOE)**

**GAS MAN: (HE LOOKS HIMSELF OVER, CHECKS TO SEE IF HIS FLY'S OPEN, COWERS)** Is something the matter? **(COUGHS)**

**SIYEN:** Nothing... I always imagined you to be taller...

**GAS MAN:** Why? Being tall is not required to be a gas man.

**SIYEN:** And also... I am sorry but I thought you were younger.

**GAS MAN:** To be a gas man... **(COUGHS)**

**SIYEN: (NERVOUSLY INTERRUPTS)** Of course, a gas man doesn't have to be young perhaps, but...

**GAS MAN:** No, no... One must be young for this kind of job...

**SIYEN:** Of course, mustn't one?...

**GAS MAN:** One must have strength and staying power.

**SIYEN:** Naturally... But how do you manage?

**GAS MAN: (TALKS THROUGH HIS COUGHING)** Oh, well... I muddle through, madam... Being used to it helps, too...

**SIYEN:** Have you ever...

**GAS MAN: (INTERRUPTS)** No, never. I never leave a job unfinished. But, to tell you the truth, I get quite tired these days, I'm not like I used to be...

**SIYEN:** What a shame!...

**GAS MAN:** My superiors are very pleased with me.

**SIYEN: (VERY SURPRISED)** Your superiors? You mean you have superiors, too?

**GAS MAN:** Of course, one always does! They've all been pleased with my work...

**SIYEN:** God give you strength, it can't be easy...

**GAS MAN:** Yes, it requires strength... All day long, summer and winter, wandering the streets, going into homes, climbing up stairs...



**SIYEN:** But this is the street level, no stairs...

**GAS MAN:** It's always been like this... I am really an old gas man. I retired four years ago.

**SIYEN: (SURPRISED)** So the job has retirement benefits, too, does it?

**GAS MAN:** Of course... I have superannuation. My superiors were so pleased with my work that they re-employed me in the same job after I retired...

**SIYEN:** The same job?...

**GAS MAN:** Yes... What can one do? I get so little from superannuation... I still have to do the same job at my age.

**SIYEN: (DISGUSTED)** You mean you do it for money?

**GAS MAN:** Of course, madam, what do you think? It's a tiresome job, I know, unpleasant, unrelenting... Do you think I should do it for free, for the love of it?

**SIYEN: (WITH GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT)** What a pity... A professional...

**GAS MAN:** The same job all these years, I'm sick of it, but what can one do?

**SIYEN:** All this time, murdering... **(STOPS ABRUPTLY.)**

**GAS MAN: (HASN'T UNDERSTOOD)** Beg yours?

**SIYEN:** Nothing... All this time, I said.

**GAS MAN:** Yes, yes, all this time... I told you, I am experienced... **(A PROLONGED COUGH)**

**SIYEN:** Sit down, sit down please. Why are you standing up?

**GAS MAN:** Thank you. I have to go to many more places yet... Where's your gas oven? Let me have a look and I'll be on my way... **(COUGHS)**

**SIYEN: (LIKE A LITTLE GIRL)** Oh, I can't possibly let you... You've only just arrived... You're coughing, too... Sit down and rest a little...

**GAS MAN:** I am grateful... **(SITS DOWN)** I am really so tired. Let me catch my breath... Where's the kitchen?

**SIYEN:** Isn't it more comfortable here?

**GAS MAN:** Yes, comfortable, yes...

**SIYEN: (BRINGING A THIN CUSHION FROM THE DIVAN)** I'll put this behind you, so you can relax.

**GAS MAN:** Thank you... **(EVERY TIME HE MOVES, HE SIGHS WITH PAIN LIKE A TIRED AND SICK MAN.)**

**SIYEN:** What's the matter? Aren't you feeling well?

**GAS MAN:** Sciatica... I've been suffering from it for years. My feet, my knees are all aching again...

**SIYEN:** I'm so sorry... I hope you feel better... Even in the condition you're in...

**GAS MAN:** Yes... **(COUGHS)** Even in this condition, I always complete the job without fail... **(LOOKS FOR HIS CIGARETTES IN HIS POCKETS.)**

**SIYEN:** Have you lost something?

**GAS MAN: (STILL SEARCHING)** Oh, damn it... Where did I put it... I must have left it somewhere...

**SIYEN:** Cigarettes?

**GAS MAN:** Yes, yes, I must have left my cigarettes somewhere... **(GETS UP.)** Let me go and...

**SIYEN:** No, no, no need... Cigarettes, right? Right... Cigarettes... I'll find some for you... **(SEARCHING THE ROOM FRANTICALLY NOT TO LET THE GAS MAN GO)** Cigarettes... You sit down, sit down... **(TALKS AS SHE SEARCHES CUPBOARDS AND DRAWERS)** I'll find your cigarettes... In a jiffy... I know, I've put them away somewhere, but where?... I know what craving's like... I never smoked, but the general did... The general smoked a pipe, though. Right, of course... The general's pipe...

**GAS MAN:** Let me just go and...

**SIYEN:** Oh, don't be daft... As if I'd let you... You can't go without even smoking a pipe! **(SHE FINDS THE PIPE AND THE PIPE TOBACCO AT THE BOTTOM OF THE WARDROBE)** There! That's where I'd put it... The general's pipe... Here, there's tobacco too.

**GAS MAN: (WITH FEAR)** Did you say the general's?

**SIYEN:** Yes, the general's... Go on, take it... Don't be afraid, he's not one of the new ones, go on...

**GAS MAN:** All the same, no. I don't want it... Thank you, no...

**SIYEN:** But he's dead. He's been dead for ages... Go on, smoke it...

**GAS MAN:** But I can't... I've never smoked a pipe before...

**SIYEN:** Tobacco, pipe, the same difference! Go on, stuff it in the pipe, go on.

**GAS MAN:** Phew!... This tobacco's gone all thingy... Mouldy or something...

**SIYEN:** It's so damp here, even I've gone a bit thingy...

**GAS MAN:** It's dry... The tobacco's all dry...

**(THE GAS MAN FILLS THE PIPE WITH SIYEN'S HELP. SIYEN BRINGS MATCHES AND LIGHTS THE PIPE. THE GAS MAN KEEPS COUGHING AS IF HE'S GOING TO CHOKE WITH SMOKE. HE COUGHS SO MUCH THAT HIS BRIEFCASE AND THE PIPE ARE SCATTERED. HE NEARLY FALLS OVER, TOO, BUT SIYEN STEADIES HIM. SIYEN, WORRIED, BRINGS A GLASS OF WATER.)**

**SIYEN:** Go on, have some.

**GAS MAN: (HE THINKS IT'S THE PIPE)** No, I won't!... I won't!...

**SIYEN:** It's only water... Go on, drink it! **(HE DRINKS IT)** Whatever happened to you... Was the tobacco too strong?

**GAS MAN:** Strong? Strong, you say madam? It's been transformed into gun powder, gun powder... That was no tobacco, that was mouldy gun powder...

**SIYEN:** It was as strong as gun powder, eh?... The general was, too... Stronger than gun powder...

**GAS MAN:** Well, I'll check your gas oven and be on my way now...

**SIYEN:** Ooo... What's the hurry? You haven't even... Yet... **(LAUGHS UNNECESSARILY)** Go on, sit down... **(THE GAS MAN COUGHS)** You are sick, too. How can I possibly let you go in this state... No one with any conscience would...

**GAS MAN:** You see, sciatica... **(HE COUGHS.)**

**SIYEN:** Not only sciatica, you're coughing, too... I'll fetch you some cough syrup...

**(SHE TAKES OUT A BOTTLE OF COUGH SYRUP, A SPOON AND A GLASS OF WATER. THE GAS MAN GETS UP SLOWLY, AND REACHES OUT SLOWLY FOR THE MEDICINE. SIYEN THINKS HE IS ABOUT TO STRANGLE HER AND JUMPS BACK WITH A SCREAM.)**

**GAS MAN: (FRIGHTENED)** What's the matter with you? Screaming at the drop of a hat?

**SIYEN:** Nothing, nothing... Suddenly I thought...

**GAS MAN: (DRINKS A SPOONFUL OF MEDICINE FOLLOWED BY A GLASS OF WATER.)** Thank you so much. You're so very kind, madam...

**SIYEN:** My pleasure...

**GAS MAN:** I'll go now, if you allow me, after I have a look at your gas oven...

**SIYEN:** But you're yet to... Aren't you going to? The weather's so... This weather's a killer for sciatica... It's pouring outside, so heavy... You can leave when the rain stops.

**GAS MAN:** Rain? What rain? There's no rain, it's bright, sunny.

**SIYEN:** It is, is it? You think it is. It may be bright now, but it'll start raining before long, cats and dogs... I know about these things... **(THE GAS MAN COUGHS)** No, I can't possibly let you go with that cough... Isn't there any charity left in this world... Right, right, I'll make you some linden tea...

**GAS MAN: (GETS UP)** I'm running late...

**SIYEN:** Oh, there's a hole in your shoe... It probably lets in water, poor thing.

**GAS MAN:** It lets in water, lets in dirt... I've had that hole for so long.

**SIYEN:** I'll give you boots. You can wear them in the snow and in the rain. You'll be warm...

**GAS MAN:** Ah, you're so kind... If only all the women were as kind hearted as you...

**SIYEN:** Then you wouldn't stran... **(STOPS ABRUPTLY, SHUTS HER MOUTH WITH HER HAND AND QUICKLY TAKES OUT THE GENERAL'S BOOTS FROM THE WARDROBE.)** Here... See!... Old, but brand new...

**GAS MAN:** Beg yours?

**SIYEN:** I mean, they've been there a long time, but they're still new, brand sparkling new...

**GAS MAN:** These boots?

**SIYEN:** Yours. Go on, put them on...

**GAS MAN: (JOYOUS)** Mine? You don't say!...

**SIYEN:** Yes, put them on. They used to belong to the general.

**GAS MAN: (HE'S UPSET AND FRIGHTENED AT THE MENTION OF THE GENERAL.)**  
What? His excellency the general? I'm not worthy... I can't possibly! **(WITH GREAT FEAR)** The boots of his excellency, the general... Impossible...

**SIYEN:** Come on, put them on. I'm giving them to you. Wear them...

**GAS MAN: (CONFUSED WITH FEAR)** The general excellency's boots... I can't wear them! The boot excellency's general... Can't be done! Excellent boots generally... Impossible...

**SIYEN:** There's nothing to be scared of...

**GAS MAN:** But you said he is like gun powder just then... Generals frighten me... I'm... **(GIVES UP TRYING TO EXPLAIN)** I'm just scared...

**SIYEN:** I am giving these boots to you.

**GAS MAN:** What if the general sees me wearing them?

**SIYEN:** The general's dead...

**GAS MAN:** I don't care, he'd see them... Someone else will see and recognise them...

**SIYEN:** The general's been dead a long time... Twenty three years...

**GAS MAN:** I am scared...

**SIYEN:** Don't be! Go on, wear them!...

**GAS MAN: (TURNS HIS BACK AND TAKES OFF HIS OLD SHOES)** They don't look like twenty three year old boots, really, they're brand new... **(HE WEARS ONE BOOT AND TUCKS HIS TROUSER LEG IN IT. HE HAS HIS SOCK ON THE OTHER FOOT.)**

**SIYEN:** I know they are. That's because I've been cleaning, brushing and polishing them every week for twenty three years. That's why they look brand new. How do they fit?

**GAS MAN:** A little...

**SIYEN:** Tight?

**GAS MAN:** No, no, not tight... Just that they're big... And they're so tough...

**SIYEN:** Of course they are... The general was tough, too...

**GAS MAN: (AGAIN WITH FEAR)** Leave off the general, his tobacco's tough, his boots are tough, he is tough... They do hurt my feet!...

**SIYEN:** They're tough... I mean... They're... They must have dried up just sitting there. They'll soften and get comfortable with time...

**GAS MAN: (WEARING THE OTHER BOOT)** Yes, yes, the boots will soften a bit, my feet will soften a bit, they'll get used to each other... Thank you very much. **(THE BOOTS LOOK TOO BIG FOR HIM)** Perhaps they are a little big, but...

**SIYEN:** No, no... They're not big, just the right size... They are exactly your size...

**GAS MAN: (STRUTTING)** Boots always suit me.

**SIYEN:** Did you use to wear boots?

**GAS MAN:** No, I meant if I did. If I had worn boots, they would have. I don't know how to thank you, madam... Well, if you would allow me now, I would like to check your gas oven and...

**SIYEN: (IN A FLURRY TO STOP THE GAS MAN FROM LEAVING AND AS IF SHE'S JUST THOUGHT OF IT)** Right, that's it... Breakfast... Of course, breakfast it is... I

haven't had breakfast either. We'll have it together. Ah, I won't take no for an answer, you'd break my heart... No trouble at all, why should it be any trouble, everything's already in the kitchen, the tea's been brewing, too... I'll bring them over in a jiffy.

**(SİYEN GOES OUT, DRAGGING HER FOOT. THE GAS MAN QUICKLY TAKES HIS OLD SHOES OFF THE FLOOR AND STUFFS THEM IN HIS BRIEFCASE. HIS EYES ON HIS BOOTS, AND HANDS BEHIND HIS BACK, HE WALKS STRUTTING, POSTURES, PUFFS UP. HE LOOKS AT HIMSELF IN THE MIRROR AND WHISTLES CHEERFULLY. SİYEN ENTERS WITH BREAKFAST FOR TWO ON A TRAY.)**

There we are... Everything's ready. **(PUTS THE TRAY ON THE TABLE)** Go on. Go on, help yourself... **(SIDLES UP TO HIM)** Don't break my heart, now... Go on, have a bite...

**(THE GAS MAN SHYLY GOES TO THE TABLE AND SITS DOWN. SİYEN POURS THE TEA AND SITS ACROSS FROM HIM. A NOISE IS HEARD FROM OUTSIDE. THE FRONT DOOR IS UNLOCKED WITH A KEY AND THE DOOR CREAKS OPEN. NOISY FOOTSTEPS. BOTH HAVE PRICKED THEIR EARS. THE GAS MAN IS VERY FRIGHTENED.)**

My God!

**GAS MAN: (TREMBLING WITH FEAR)** Is it... Is that the excellency of the boot general? **(TRIES TO TAKE THE BOOTS OFF, IN A PANIC, BUT CAN'T. AS HE STRUGGLES)** I didn't ask for them... I never asked for boots... You made me... The general of the excellent boots... What's going to happen now?

**DİHA: (FROM OUTSIDE)** Mrs Siyeeen... Mrs. SİYEN!...

**SİYEN: (QUICKLY LOCKS THE DOOR TO THE ROOM WITH THE KEY ON IT AND WHISPERS)** Quick, get under that divan, quick! Go on, hide... **(WHILE DİHA TRIES TO OPEN THE DOOR FROM THE OUTSIDE, SİYEN HAS BEEN PUSHING THE GAS MAN UNDER THE DIVAN.)**

**GAS MAN: (WHISPERING FEARFULLY)** Has the general come?

**SİYEN: (WHISPERS)** What general?... Get under that divan, I said.

**DİHA:** (AS SHE FIDDLES TO OPEN THE DOOR) SİYEN... Open the door, will you?...

**GAS MAN:** Why should I, madam? Please, let me go, let me...

**SİYEN:** Shush!... I forgot to mention it to you. I am a woman who lives by herself. This is my neighbour at the door, and if she sees you here... That woman's such a gossip... (AS SHE CALLS OUT TO DİHA, SHE IS ALSO FORCING THE CONFUSED GAS MAN UNDER THE DIVAN.) Wait on, wait on Mrs. DİHA... Just a minute!... I'm coming... (TO THE GAS MAN) Go on, go on... (THE GAS MAN HIDES UNDER THE DIVAN, ALTHOUGH THE BOOTS STICK OUT.)

**DİHA:** (FROM OUTSIDE) What happened dear? It wasn't, was it?... Has he come? Is he inside? Oh, my God!... He hasn't already strangled you, has he?... Why didn't you let me know? Tell me how he strangles... God, I'm dying of curiosity...

**SİYEN:** (CALLS OUT) It's nothing, nothing's happened... I'm coming...

(SİYEN OPENS THE DOOR, DİHA ENTERS.)

**DİHA:** (RUSHES IN AS IF TRYING TO CATCH SOMEONE. TALKS WHILST EXAMINING THE FLAT) Oh, I was so terrified... I was so scared when I heard a scream coming from here... Twice, too...

**SİYEN:** I told you nothing's happened...

**DİHA:** You mean nothing's happened? Hasn't he come yet? Wow, that second cry was something... When I heard that second scream, I said that's it, he's come, he's strangling my poor dear SİYEN, I said to myself... Wasn't it fortuitous that I had your spare key...

**SİYEN:** (ANGRY AND IRONIC) Yes, fortuitous, wasn't it...

**DİHA:** I put my ear to the wall for a while, but... You can't imagine how I ran... Then, when I found the door locked... (AS SHE DOESN'T BELIEVE SİYEN, SHE TALKS WITH SUSPICION, STILL LOOKING AROUND) But if the man hasn't come, if he hasn't strangled you, why did you lock the door?

**SİYEN:** Why?... I... Yes, I was changing my underwear... It is, after all, my fiftieth anniversary, isn't it... Well, I locked the door, of course... Just in case someone... (THE TELEPHONE BELL RINGS, SİYEN ANSWERS.) Hello... Yes... Oh, is that you? (TO DİHA, WITH



**HAND OVER THE MOUTHPIECE)** My son... **(TO THE TELEPHONE)** I am fine, darling, thank you. How are you? It's so good of you to call... You know, it is a special day today... What's so special? I was telling you, why don't you listen. Today is the fiftieth anniversary of my marriage to your father... Yes! **(AS DÍHA IS STILL SEARCHING AROUND THE ROOM, SÍYEN, WHILST TALKING ON THE TELEPHONE, TRIES TO BLOCK DÍHA'S WAY AND STOP HER FROM GOING TOWARDS THE DIVAN.)** Who? Who did you say? The gas man? Yes, he's here... **(REALISES HER GAFFE AND TRIES TO CHANGE THE SUBJECT.)** Did you say the gas man? Why ever should he be here? Here, in this town, that's what I meant. It's in all the papers. What for? No, no... Yes, a killer... **(CONFRONTS DÍHA AS MUCH AS THE TELEPHONE CORD STRETCHES)** Yes, yes, a strangler... Why should he come to my place, don't be silly... Not in my house... Don't you worry darling. Of course it's locked. Sure, sure, I'll bolt it, too... The front door? Yes, it's got a deadlock *and* a bolt. Yes, and a chain as well... Don't worry! The radio? Right now, is it?... Yes, I'll turn it on... Thank you. Goodbye darling... **(HANGS UP)** There's news on the radio again...

**DÍHA: (TURNS ON THE RADIO)** About the gas man?

**SÍYEN:** Oh, don't turn it on, I'm sick of this gas man story...

**RADIO ANNOUNCER:** *Dear listeners! Here's an official announcement: We wish to bring to public notice the following facts: In spite of the fact that the exact identity of the murderer who has been committing murder after murder, targeting women who live alone in our city in the last two weeks is still not known, the police are following all possible leads. The monster who has so far killed ten women, seems to enter women's homes pretending to be the gas man who has come to check their gas oven or gas meter, and if the women are by themselves, reportedly rapes and then strangles them.* **(AT THIS POINT, AS THE RADIO ANNOUNCER TALKS, THE GAS MAN WHO IS UNDER THE DIVAN, HAS NOW REALISED THE SITUATION AND STICKS HIS HEAD OUT WITH FEAR AND TRIES TO CATCH AN OPPORTUNITY TO RUN OUT OF THE DOOR. WHEN SÍYEN SEES THE GAS MAN'S HEAD STICKING OUT FROM UNDER THE DIVAN, SHE TRIES TO BLOCK DÍHA'S WAY WHILST PUSHING HIS HEAD IN WITH HER FOOT A FEW TIMES. THE GAS MAN IS LEFT WITH NO OPTION BUT WITHDRAW.)** *It is strongly advised that women should avoid being alone in their homes, and that those who have to live alone should lock their*

*front doors, use bolts and chains if they can and definitely not allow gas men in, if they are by themselves. (MUSIC STARTS ON THE RADIO, DİHA SWITCHES IT OFF.)*

**DİHA:** I see boots under the divan.

**SIYEN:** My poor departed husband's... The general's boots...

**DİHA:** So, he hasn't come... The gas man...

**SIYEN:** I told you he hasn't... What about you?

**DİHA:** No, he hasn't... He keeps strangling the women, eh, as the radio was saying...

**SIYEN:** As a woman yourself, you well know that there are so many women in this world who deserve to be strangled. Isn't that so, dear?

**DİHA:** Yes, sure... There are women and there are women, of course. There are women who should be strangled, and women who shouldn't...

**SIYEN:** (AS SHE CHECKS UNDER THE DIVAN) If you just go along quietly, why would the man strangle you? He has a heart too, he has a conscience too... It looks like you dropped everything to rush to my help.

**DİHA:** Yes, I did...

**SIYEN:** Why don't you go back home now, finish what you have to do and come back later... I'll just tidy up in the meantime... Then...

**DİHA:** We'll celebrate your anniversary. I'll be on my way then... (AS SHE GOES OUT, SHE SEES THE BREAKFAST TRAY ON THE TABLE, SET FOR TWO, WITH BOTH CUPS FULL AND STOPS WITH SUSPICION.) What's this I see, breakfast for two, with both tea cups full? Were you expecting some one?

**SIYEN:** Ah, expecting? Me? (IMMEDIATELY) But, of course, oh my memory's failing me, I was just about to invite you to breakfast, you walked in... Look, I'd even poured your tea... C'mon, sit down, have some breakfast before you go...

**DİHA:** (SITS DOWN) I haven't had breakfast yet...

**SIYEN:** The tea hasn't got cold, has it?

**DİHA:** (AS SHE TAKES THE CUP) No, no, fine...

(THEY TALK AS THEY EAT BREAKFAST.)

**SİYEN:** I feel as flighty as a little bird today. I don't know why, but I feel so much joy, so much joy...

**DİHA:** Why? It's obvious why. You're just about to celebrate your fiftieth wedding anniversary, that's why...

**SİYEN:** (AS SHE LOOKS AT THE GENERAL'S PICTURE) How did I put up for fifty years...

**DİHA:** Your marriage didn't last for fifty years...

**SİYEN:** Don't be daft, of course it did. The general died, but our fights never did. We've been fighting every day for fifty years...

**DİHA:** That's why you're as light as a little bird...

**SİYEN:** (AS SHE LOOKS AT HER OWN PICTURE) How peculiar... I still feel as if I am the age I was in that picture, all of eighteen.

**DİHA:** Believe me, I feel the same... It's as if I'm twenty one.

**SİYEN:** Well, you would be twenty three...

**DİHA:** Why's that?

**SİYEN:** You are five years older than me. So, if I'm eighteen...

**DİHA:** Twenty one, twenty three... I'm young inside...

**SİYEN:** We are young inside... What about outside? When I look at my picture...

**DİHA:** (AS SHE LOOKS AT SİYEN'S PICTURE) Yes? You haven't changed one bit... You are as you were... The same eyes, the same eye-brows... The mouth, the nose...

**SİYEN:** Don't I know it.

**DİHA:** Show the picture to anyone you like, they'd know right away it's your picture... Beauty lasts forever... (AS IF SHE'S JUST REMEMBERED) Oh, I nearly forgot, after I left here...

**SİYEN:** (MOCKINGLY) The postman came again?

**DİHA:** Yes, how did you guess?

**SIYEN: (MOCKINGLY)** The same as usual...

**DİHA: (CAUGHT OUT)** What do you mean?

**SIYEN:** Whenever you mention that I still look like my old picture... **(STOPS.)**

**DİHA: (ANGRY)** Go on, say it!

**SIYEN:** The postman delivers you a letter, a love letter... You dig into your bosom for it... It's not a bosom, it's a mailbox... And you read the love letter... And of course you've spurned him.

**(IMPERSONATING DİHA)** "I've spurned him."

**DİHA:** You mean you don't believe me?

**SIYEN:** Believe what?

**DİHA:** That I spurn them... **(SIYEN LETS OUT A LONG LAUGH AS IF SHE'S HEARD SOMETHING VERY FUNNY.)** What? What are you laughing about?

**SIYEN:** Oh, come off it, nobody sends you love letters, there are no letters the postman brings. What's there to spurn? All those love letters are in the book. I've read them at least a hundred times... Don't you think I know that you copy them from the book "Love Letters" and mail them to yourself? But I didn't want to confront you...

**DİHA: (GETS UP IN ANGER)** No, no, it's not true!

**SIYEN:** I'm lying, am I? Right... **(SHE TAKES OUT A BOOK FROM THE CHEST OF DRAWERS, LEAFS THROUGH AND READS.)** There!... Love letters... Page forty five... "*A sample love letter recommended for a refined lady you may have met at a party: My perfect angel! With a strong expectation that you will consider this servant of yours worthy of your forgiveness for starting my letter with this address, I gather my courage to express my most sincere feelings for you at this junction.*"

**DİHA: (SHOUTS)** Stop it!

**SIYEN: (KEEPS LAUGHING LOUDLY)** There's more... Page hundred and eighty four... "*A sample love letter recommended for a woman whom you may have seen at the cinema or public transport, and fallen in love with at first sight: O, joy of my soul! With the*

*sudden realisation that the future direction of my life was to change course irrevocably, I shall not refrain from confessing that, that night I had written on that page of my diary corresponding to the day I saw you: "Fate has cast its net".*

**DÍHA: (SHOUTS)** Shut up! **(AS TEARS ROLL DOWN HER EYES SÍYEN KEEPS LAUGHING. THEY REMAIN LIKE THIS FOR A WHILE.)** So what? So bloody what?... Don't I know that this picture is not your picture? **(POINTING TO THE PICTURE ON THE WALL)** Is this picture yours?

**SÍYEN: (HER LAUGHTER FREEZES)** Of course it is. Whose do you think?

**DÍHA: (WITH LOUD LAUGHTER)** Come to my place and I'll show you whose picture... Piya Töpi, the film star, it's her picture. She was quite something in her day...

**SÍYEN: (SHOUTS)** You're lying, you're lying... It's mine...

**DÍHA: (LAUGHING LOUDLY)** I have piles of old cinema magazines... I saw it when I was looking at some fifty year old ones. She was a very famous star... There, the same pose, the same picture... You've cut it out from the magazine, framed it, glazed it, and hung it there... You go and look at it with that pathetic look and swoon: "Oh, my lost youth". Did you ever think I believed you?

**SÍYEN: (SHOUTS)** Shut up!...

**DÍHA:** I always knew, but I pretended I didn't so as not to embarrass you...

**SÍYEN:** Enough!...

**DÍHA: (VICIOUSLY)** So... Put that in your pipe and smoke it...

**SÍYEN:** Get out of here at once...

**DÍHA:** I am, I am, don't you worry... And I am not coming back... I am not coming back even if you faint for real, instead of faking it... Even if the gas man comes, I'm not. Let him come and strangle you...

**SÍYEN:** Let him if he wants to, you mind your own business...

**DÍHA: (AS SHE GOES OUT)** If he does come, don't forget to bang on the wall...

**(DİHA EXITS. SİYEN CRIES, SLOUCHED. AS THE GAS MAN TRIES TO GET FROM UNDER THE DIVAN, HIS TROUSERS FALL TO HIS HIPS. HE GETS UP, TIDIES HIMSELF UP AND GOES TO SİYEN, WHO IS STILL CRYING.)**

**GAS MAN: (TENTATIVELY)** Madam, lady... Dear lady... No need to worry... Please don't cry... I think that woman is unfair... She hasn't told the truth... I know a lot about photographs. People always ask me if a picture looks like its owner or not... This picture... This picture is your picture... Such resemblance... I swear by it... **(SITS ON THE CHAIR. AS HE TRIES TO TAKE OFF THE BOOTS)** Well, I... I must get going madam... **(COUGHS, WHINES AND SIGHS.)**

**SİYEN: (RAISES HER HEAD STILL WITH TEARS IN HER EYES)** But why? Why do you have to go? I haven't offered you anything yet...

**GAS MAN:** How can I possibly stay, madam? I heard what the radio said just then...

**SİYEN:** Is this the first you've heard the news?

**GAS MAN:** Yes, I've only just heard it...

**SİYEN:** But it was on the radio all week, a few times every day... It's in the papers, too.

**GAS MAN:** It may be pitiful, but I don't own a radio... And I don't buy newspapers... I didn't hear it from anyone either. **(THE BOOTS ARE OFF. HE STANDS UP IN HIS SOCKS.)** Well, I'll be on my way... I'll check your gas meter some other time... **(COUGHS)**

**SİYEN: (BLOCKS HIS WAY)** I can't possibly let you go in this condition... How can I, in the freezing cold?...

**GAS MAN:** Madam, it's warm...

**SİYEN:** Exactly, in this blazing heat... Just a minute, just a minute... **(TAKES OUT THE HANGER WITH THE GENERAL'S CLOTHES FROM THE WARDROBE.)** Go on, wear these... **(NOT TAKING ANY NOTICE OF THE GAS MAN'S RESISTANCE, SHE STRIPS OFF HIS OLD JACKET.)** This is a general's uniform, but because it is an old model, it's not against the law for you to wear it... Go on, put it on... **(PUTS THE GENERAL'S UNIFORM ON THE GAS MAN.)** I'll give you a civilian overcoat to go with it, if you like. **(SHE TAKES THE GENERAL'S JODHPURS WITH THE RED STRIPS FROM THE HANGER.)** Come on then, put this on, too... **(HANDS OUT**

**THE JODHPURS.)** C'mon, wear it, wear it... These are all yours now... **(THE GAS MAN TURNS HIS BACK TO SIYEN. HE TRIES TO PUT THE JODHPURS ON WITHOUT TAKING OFF HIS TROUSERS.)** *No*, not like that... You have to take off the other pair first, go on, take them off... **(SHE TURNS HER BACK TO THE GAS MAN.)** C'mon dear, don't be shy... Don't be shy, take it easy... They'll keep your legs warm, help with your sciatica...

**(THE GAS MAN, ONE EYE ON SIYEN, TO MAKE SURE SHE'S NOT WATCHING, TAKES OFF HIS OLD TROUSERS AND PUTS ON THE GENERAL'S JODHPURS.)**

**GAS MAN:** They're on...

**SIYEN:** And now the boots... **(AS THE GAS MAN PUTS ON THE BOOTS)** *There...* How is that? Stand there and let me have a look... **(THE GAS MAN LOOKS LIKE A DWARF IN THE OVERSIZED CLOTHES. THE SLEEVES OF THE JACKET COVER HIS HANDS AND THE JACKET LOOKS LIKE AN OVERCOAT.)** I don't believe it, it's just right for you... How it fits... Couldn't fit better if it was tailor-made. And it suits you so much, too...

**GAS MAN:** It suits me?

**SIYEN:** And how!... **(THE GAS MAN COUGHS VIOLENTLY AND CONTINUOUSLY.)** Exactly like my husband, exactly... Such resemblance... Especially when you cough... The general himself... Sit down, sit down there... **(THE GAS MAN SITS DOWN, WHINING.)** I'll bring you some cough syrup... **(SHE TAKES THE WINE BOTTLE FROM THE TOP OF THE CHEST OF DRAWERS, REMOVES THE LABEL AND HIDES IT WITHOUT LETTING HIM SEE IT. SHE PUTS THE BOTTLE ON THE TABLE AND BRINGS TWO GLASSES.)** *There* we are... Here's the sciatica syrup... **(FILLS BOTH GLASSES WITH WINE)**

**GAS MAN:** Sciatica syrup? Didn't you say cough syrup just then?

**SIYEN:** Did I say that? This syrup is both for coughs and for sciatica, it's good for everything... I suffer from sciatica, too, we'll drink tête-à-tête...

**GAS MAN:** I have a head-ache too, madam, I must have got a cold...

**SIYEN:** This is good for that, too... **(RAISES HER GLASS)** *Let's drink...* **(THE GAS MAN HAS DRUNK HALF OF THE WINE IN HIS GLASS.)** No, no, no, all of it... Bottoms up. If you don't drink it all, it won't have any effect... **(THEY BOTH DRINK UP. SIYEN RE-FILLS THE GLASSES.)** Pipe?

**GAS MAN:** Well, why not? **(SIYEN GIVES HIM THE PIPE.)**

**SIYEN:** **(AS SHE LIGHTS THE PIPE)** You look so much like him now, like a real general...

**GAS MAN:** **(HE STANDS UP, ROCKS UP AND DOWN AND POSTURES WITH LEGS APART)** Real general, eh?

**SIYEN:** **(RAISES HER GLASS)** Oh, come on now, we must drink so that...

**GAS MAN:** **(SITS DOWN)** I feel a bit giddy but...

**SIYEN:** Of course, the medicine's taking effect... Bottoms up...

**(THEY DRINK. SIYEN RE-FILLS THE GLASSES.)**

**GAS MAN:** Excuse I, whose actually are these clothes?

**SIYEN:** What clothes?

**GAS MAN:** What I'm wearing...

**SIYEN:** **(SHE IS GETTING DRUNK. SHE LAUGHS.)** As they seem to be on you, they've got to be yours...

**GAS MAN:** They've got to be. But to whom did they belong previously?

**SIYEN:** My husband...

**GAS MAN:** You're married? **(SIYEN SIGHS DEEPLY)** What a pity...

**SIYEN:** Yes... It's been twenty three years since my husband died. I've been alone all this time... Alone, you understand... I said I've been alone... I mean I live in this flat by myself...

**GAS MAN:** I understand, yes...

**SIYEN:** You don't seem to understand...



**GAS MAN:** I do, I do...

**SIYEN:** I'm glad that you do... Alone in this flat... Nobody ever comes here, don't be afraid... Nothing to be shy about... And also... What was I saying?... Ah, yes, I can't have children... Right?...  
**(RAISES HER GLASS)** C'mon... Let's drink... **(THE GAS MAN RAISES HIS GLASS, TOO. BOTH DRINK UP.)** I see you there, sitting across the table like my husband. You look eminently like him... You really should have been a general...

**GAS MAN: (HE IS DRUNK. HE GETS UP AND GOES TO THE MIRROR, STAGGERING. AS HE WATCHES HIMSELF IN THE MIRROR)** I could have... I have generalness in me... It's in my blood, generalness... **(TOTTERS)** I don't know if you've noticed from the way I walk... **(HE WALKS WITH HARD GOOSE STEPS)** Look, look, I walk in a generally way...

**SIYEN: (CLAPS)** Bravo!... Of course I've noticed... At first sight I said this man has a general in him, he's only missing the clothes... What was your rank in the army?

**GAS MAN:** They didn't let me into the army...

**SIYEN:** Oh... Why?

**GAS MAN:** All because of envy... They were so envious, they declared me medically unfit... All I wanted was just a little time as a general, one week, one lousy week...

**SIYEN:** What for?

**GAS MAN:** Oh!... Oh!... One lousy week... I would have conquered the north, the south, east and west... They didn't let me but...

**SIYEN:** Not to worry, you've conquered my heart...

**GAS MAN:** More important, that...

**SIYEN:** Ah, what was I saying?... Oh, right... I live in this flat by myself and no one ever comes here... And my husband died twenty three years ago...

**GAS MAN:** Yes, yes, I know, I know you can't have children, too... But...

**SIYEN:** What? Are you married?

**GAS MAN:** Yes... I have such a god-awful wife... And she is so jealous, too... **(LAUGHS)** I don't know why she gets jealous over me... What have I got left to be jealous about?

**SIYEN:** Oh, you can't say that, you're too modest... You're being unfair on yourself... **(SHE FILLS THE GLASSES.)** Let's drink...

**GAS MAN:** Let's drink...

**(THEY RAISE THEIR GLASSES, TOAST AND DRINK)**

**SIYEN:** How are you feeling now?

**GAS MAN:** Wonderful... The medicine's done me a lot of good... **(COUGHS)** True, I still cough, but it's different, not like before at all...

**SIYEN:** I can tell... Ah, what was I saying... There is a woman next door, but she's got a hearing problem, can't hear a cannon... You shouldn't feel held back!...

**GAS MAN: (BRAGGING)** Who could hold me back, who I ask you... Anyone would try at their peril...

**(THEY ARE BOTH VERY DRUNK.)**

**SIYEN:** You were saying your wife...

**GAS MAN:** Leave off my wife... When I remember her... **(LOOKS AT THE WINE BOTTLE)** We're out of medicine...

**SIYEN:** We've got lots, lots more... **(BRINGS ANOTHER BOTTLE OF WINE AND POURS.)** So...

**GAS MAN:** So what?

**SIYEN:** You must like your wife...

**GAS MAN:** Like what?

**SIYEN:** A lot?

**GAS MAN:** How should I know?

**SIYEN:** In the same room?

**GAS MAN:** What, in the same room?

**SIYEN:** Sleep?

**GAS MAN:** Sure...

**SIYEN: (SAD AND JEALOUS)** You're telling me you sleep in the same room?...

**GAS MAN:** Where else can we, madam? Our shack has just the one room and a loo... We both sleep in that same room until one of us conks it...

**SIYEN: (JEALOUSLY)** In the same bed?

**GAS MAN:** Yes...

**SIYEN: (TEARFUL WITH OVERWHELMING JEALOUSY)** Yes, he says, yes...

**GAS MAN:** What else can I say, madam, all we have is one room and one bed... Leave off my wife... When anyone mentions my wife... Flip... I fly off the handle... Come on, we must drink...

**SIYEN:** Let us drink... **(THEY RAISE THEIR GLASSES AND TOAST)** To your health!

**GAS MAN:** To your health... Bottoms up!...

**SIYEN:** In the homes you visit... I wonder what women... *(She stops herself)*

**GAS MAN:** Women? What about women?

**SIYEN:** What women you must have come across...

**GAS MAN:** Women? I never even look at them...

**SIYEN: (FLIRTATIOUS)** Fibber! Go on, pull the other one. I can see it in your eyes, that you're a womaniser... The way you look...

**GAS MAN: (BURSTS OUT LAUGHING)** I have myopia...

**SIYEN:** I only had to have one look... Ah, you male of the species...

**GAS MAN: (LAUGHS)** Ah, we males...

**SİYEN:** You'd just leave us women for dead, you would, you would. God knows how many women you have so far...

**GAS MAN: (LAUGHING, HAVING FUN)** Ooo, I've lost count, so many, so many...  
**(LAUGHTER TURNS TO COUGHING. HE KEEPS COUGHING AS IF HE'S GOING TO CHOKE.)** My back... My back's out...

**SİYEN:** Oh, poor thing... Your back's stiff, is it... You've got a chill, that's why... **(GETS UP, URGENTLY)** I'll cup your back right away... I used to cup the general, too, when he had a chill... **(SHE HOLDS THE GAS MAN BY THE HAND AND HELPS HIM UP. THEY ARE BOTH DRUNK. THEY SWAGGER. AT ONE POINT THEY HOLD EACH OTHER AS IF DANCING. SIYEN MAKES HIM SIT ON THE DIVAN.)**  
Take off your clothes...

**GAS MAN:** Beg yours?

**SİYEN:** Take them off, I'll bring the cupping glasses...

**GAS MAN:** Take them off?

**SİYEN:** Sure... Not with your clothes on...

**GAS MAN:** Not with clothes, eh?

**SİYEN:** Take them off, take them off... **(HALF FORCING HIM)** All of them, go on...

**GAS MAN: (GIGGLING)** Oh, no... Don't touch me, please... I'll do it myself... Madam, don't, please... I am very ticklish, please...

**(SIYEN TAKES OFF THE GAS MAN'S JACKET AND SHIRT AND MAKES HIM LIE DOWN ON THE DIVAN, FACE DOWN. AT THIS POINT, SOUND OF THE DOOR BEING UNLOCKED, CREAKING OPEN, OTHER NOISES AND FOOTSTEPS ARE HEARD FROM OUTSIDE.)**

**SİYEN:** Don't you dare move a finger... **(HE COVERS THE GAS MAN WITH THE BED SPREAD, AND PUTS CUSHIONS ON HIM.)** That woman's coming again... Don't you move... **(AS SIYEN GOES TO THE DOOR TO LOCK IT, DIHA ENTERS SUDDENLY.)**

**DIHA:** Has he come?

**SİYEN:** Who?

**DİHA:** What do you mean who? Him, of course...

**SİYEN:** Nothing coming or going...

**DİHA:** I heard laughter...

**SİYEN:** Oh, that... I was laughing by myself, just remembering the old days...

**DİHA:** But I heard a male voice.

**SİYEN:** Don't be silly, you must be hearing things... Just a minute... Didn't you say you'd never set foot here ever again?...

**DİHA:** I just couldn't bear to leave you here alone by yourself... If we don't support each other...

**(THE GAS MAN, FEELING UNCOMFORTABLE UNDER THE BED SPREAD, MOVES AND COUGHS. TO COVER UP, SIYEN STARTS COUGHING, LAUGHING AT THE SAME TIME. SHE TURNS ON THE RADIO. SHE IS IN A BIT OF A PANIC. THERE IS MUSIC ON THE RADIO. DİHA SEES THE WINE GLASSES.)**

Well, well, well, you were having wine, were you?

**SİYEN: (DRUNK)** Yes, I was. Any objections?

**DİHA:** Weren't we going to drink together, to celebrate your fiftieth anniversary?

**SİYEN:** I started celebrating early...

**DİHA:** There are two glasses and wine in both of them... Were you drinking wine from two glasses?

**SİYEN:** Yes... It's not as if you are a stranger to loneliness...

**DİHA: (SUSPICIOUS)** Oh, I don't know...

**SİYEN:** One is mine, the other's the general's glass... **(SHE ACTS IT OUT)** I sit here and be  
SİYEN... I raise my glass... "To your health, general". **(SHE SITS IN THE OPPOSITE  
CHAIR, RAISES HER GLASS. WITH THE DEEP VOICE OF THE GENERAL)**  
"To your health, my darling"... So, there... Loneliness is madness... Don't you ever play

games like this?... **(DİHA GOES TO THE DIVAN AS SİYEN IS PLAYING HER GAME. SİYEN JUMPS UP, BUT BECAUSE SHE CAN'T MOVE QUICKLY ENOUGH BECAUSE OF HER CONDITION, CAN'T STOP DİHA FROM SITTING. SHE SHOUTS.)** Not there, not there!... Don't sit there!... Stop!...(WITH A GLASS IN EACH HAND, TOASTS)

**(DİHA SITS ON THE DIVAN. THE GAS MAN, WITH THE WEIGHT ON HIM, JUMPS UP WITH FRIGHT.)**

**DİHA: (SHOUTS WITH FEAR)** What is this? Oh, my God, what do I see here?...

**SİYEN:** What is it, what do you see?

**DİHA:** A stark naked man...

**SİYEN:** No, stark naked he's not... Naked from the waist up, well clad from the waist down... **(TO THE GAS MAN)** Show her so she'll see, show her from your waist down...

**DİHA:** Who is this man, SİYEN?

**SİYEN:** General...

**(THE GAS MAN PUTS ON THE GENERAL'S JACKET TO COVER HIMSELF UP.)**

**DİHA:** Who are you?

**GAS MAN: (STAMMERS)** The ga... ga... gas... The gas general...

**SİYEN:** Didn't I tell you?

**DİHA:** Well... So it was him! **(TO THE GAS MAN)** So you've finally come? **(TO SİYEN)** You said he was a general?

**SİYEN:** Of course he is... The gas general...

**DİHA: (PICKS UP THE NEWSPAPER AND SITS IN THE CHAIR. SHE COMPARES THE PICTURE IN THE PAPER WITH THE GAS MAN.)** You really look like him.

**GAS MAN:** Him? Him, who?

**DİHA:** The gas man...

**GAS MAN:** Surely, madam... I've been a gas man for forty eight years. Who would I look like except myself? The Prime Minister? Whoever sees me, can figure out instantly that I am a gas man, even when I am naked...

**DÍHA:** I'll go and tell... Now, right away... **(GETS UP TO GO.)**

**SÍYEN: (BLOCKS HER WAY)** You can't do such a thing, DÍHA... It doesn't become you.

**DÍHA:** You said he wasn't here. I'm going to tell...

**SÍYEN:** We had agreed to be nice and soft, do anything he wants, hadn't we?

**DÍHA:** But you were going to call me, too...

**SÍYEN:** I was going to, I was, but I didn't have time...

**DÍHA:** What if he strangled you?... Aren't you scared?

**SÍYEN:** Let him strangle me if he wants... We're all going to die, aren't we? Does it matter which way we die?

**DÍHA:** That's true, all right... Well, this way is even better... Let him strangle...

**SÍYEN:** Good on you, DÍHA... Now that we three are all together... **(TO THE GAS MAN)** Please don't get embarrassed... Mrs. DÍHA is my neighbour...

**DÍHA:** Not only neighbours, but bosom friends, too...

**SÍYEN:** Of course, we are... Let us drink. Let me fetch you a glass... **(BRINGS ANOTHER GLASS AND FILLS THEM ALL UP.)** Oh, we've run out of wine.

**DÍHA:** Shall I go and get some?

**SÍYEN:** Let's finish this first...

**DÍHA: (RAISES HER GLASS)** To your health...

**GAS MAN:** To your health...

**SÍYEN:** To your health...

**GAS MAN:** Bottoms up...

**DİHA:** It'll hit us hard...

**SİYEN:** I don't care... Let it hit... We've already gulped down two whole bottles...

**GAS MAN:** Let's all get hit... This stuff is good for sciatica, good for coughs and for headaches...

**SİYEN:** Everything...

**(THEY TOAST AND DRINK.)**

**DİHA:** I'll go and get the food. You can't guess the dishes I've cooked for you... **(EXITS.)**

**SİYEN:** I'm so ashamed, really, I must apologise to you...

**GAS MAN:** Why must you?

**SİYEN:** Because of that woman...

**GAS MAN:** She doesn't look like a bad sort...

**SİYEN: (JEALOUS)** What do you mean she's not a bad sort?...

**GAS MAN:** Well, I mean...

**SİYEN:** You men are all alike... I knew the instant I saw you what a ladies' man you are...

**GAS MAN: (HE LIKES BEING CALLED "A LADIES' MAN" VERY MUCH. HE LAUGHS LOUDLY.)** Me? I am a ladies' man... Me? Ladies' man... **(TRIES TO POUR WINE INTO HIS GLASS.)**

**SİYEN:** We've run out. DİHA's bringing some more...

**GAS MAN:** Ladies' man... You, naughty, naughty ladies' man... That's me, all right... Ladies' man...

**(WHILE THE GAS MAN IS LAUGHING, DİHA ENTERS WITH A STRING BAG CONTAINING SAUCEPANS AND TWO BOTTLES OF WINE. SİYEN GETS CONCERNED ABOUT THE GAS MAN LAUGHING.)**

**DİHA: (PUTS THE BAG DOWN. WORRIED)** Did anything happen?

**SİYEN:** No, nothing's happened...

**DİHA: (WHISPERS)** Was he strangling you while I was gone?...



**SIYEN:** I couldn't accuse him...

**DİHA:** But he was naked when I first came... **(TO THE GAS MAN)** What were you doing on the divan just then? You were naked...

**(SIYEN PUTS THE FOOD FROM THE STRING BAG AND PLATES ON THE TABLE.)**

**GAS MAN:** We? What was it we were doing? **(TO SIYEN)** Really, what were we doing just then, eh?...

**DİHA:** You were naked...

**GAS MAN:** Yes, we were naked...

**SIYEN:** No, only you were naked...

**GAS MAN:** True, true, only I were naked... **(THEY ALL LAUGH.)** Oh, yes, I remember now... I had a stiff back... And this dear lady, thanks be to her, was going to cup my back...

**DİHA:** Did you, did you?

**SIYEN:** We didn't have a chance, did we? Just when we were about to, you arrived...

**DİHA:** Good, then... I know very well how to cup...

**SIYEN: (POURS WINE INTO THE GLASSES)** To your health...

**DİHA:** To the fiftieth anniversary...

**GAS MAN:** Let us drink, drink, drink...

**(THEY TOAST AND DRINK.)**

**DİHA:** I know you from somewhere, but I can't figure out where...

**GAS MAN:** I don't know, really... I do go in and out of houses because of the job I do... Maybe... I've come to your house, too.

**DİHA:** No, no, not like that... I know you closely, intimately even... But I can't, for the life of me, remember how we've met... You're not drinking... **(POURS WINE INTO THE GLASSES.)**

**GAS MAN:** Thank you... We should drink... I've never drunk so much in my life... The sciatica pains have disappeared...

**SIYEN:** To your health...

**DIHA:** To all of us...

**(THEY ALL DRINK.)**

**SIYEN:** How are you feeling now?

**GAS MAN:** Fit as a fiddle...

**DIHA:** And it's all coming back to me now... Right, I've got it, I remember where I know you from. Do you know who you are?

**GAS MAN:** Nooo... You tell me.

**DIHA:** I kept saying to myself, I know you, I know you from somewhere, but where... You look like my husband...

**SIYEN:** What rubbish!

**DIHA:** But he does...

**SIYEN:** Didn't you tell me your husband was tall?

**DIHA:** He fits the bill... **(POURS WINE INTO HER OWN GLASS AND DRINKS.)** Go on, get up... **(THE GAS MAN STANDS UP, STRUTS AROUND.)** There, he *is* tall...

**SIYEN:** How tall are you?

**GAS MAN:** **(SWAYING)** Well... I don't know... Seven feet, eight feet... **(RISES ON HIS TOES.)**

**SIYEN:** Didn't you tell me your husband was blond?

**DIHA:** Right again... He *is* blond...

**SIYEN:** Tell me dear, are you blond?

**GAS MAN:** Well... It all depends on your point of view...

**SIYEN:** Didn't you say he was fat?

**DİHA:** (ANGRY) I don't care, he does, he does...

**SİYEN:** It's really the general he looks like... Look at the general's picture, see how much he looks like him...

**GAS MAN:** Yes... I always look like a general... All generals look like me.

**DİHA:** Wasn't your husband big?

**SİYEN:** He's the smaller version of my husband...

**DİHA:** You said he was tall...

**SİYEN:** His shorter version... **(SHE POURS WINE INTO HER OWN AND THE GAS MAN'S GLASS. SHE STANDS UP AND GIVE ONE OF THE GLASSES TO THE GAS MAN. THEY TOAST AND DRINK, STANDING UP.)** Everything about him is the same... Only he is blond...

**DİHA:** **(JEALOUS, GETS UP, GOES TO THEM.)** *You* were doing some cupping just then, weren't you? Let me show you how cupping's done... **(TO SİYEN)** Where are the cupping glasses?

**SİYEN:** There!

**DİHA:** Some cotton and iodine... **(SİYEN BRING THEM FROM THE CHEST OF DRAWERS.)**  
All right... Lie down now... Go on then, lie down!...

**GAS MAN:** But I'm feeling fine... Really fine... Fit as a fiddle...

**DİHA:** Lie on the divan, will you?

**SİYEN:** Let's get his jacket off first... **(SİYEN STRIPS OFF HIS JACKET. DİHA PUSHES THE GAS MAN WHO IS NOW NAKED FROM THE WAIST UP, DOWN TO THE DIVAN, FACE DOWN.)**

**DİHA:** You put some iodine where I'm going to put the cups...

**GAS MAN:** **(HE GETS TICKLISH AS SİYEN PUTS IODINE ON HIS BARE SKIN, AND GIGGLES.)** Stop... Let me go... I'm ticklish... Please don't... **(HE STRUGGLES FROM WHERE HE IS LYING.)** Leave me alone... **(SİYEN AND DİHA START**

**LAUGHING WITH HIM.) Stop, please, I'm going to faint... (EACH WOMAN TAKES OFF ONE OF HIS BOOTS.) Ooo, please... I'm dying... Don't tickle, please... (AS THEY TRY TO TAKE HIS JODHPURS OFF, THE GAS MAN STRUGGLES AND KEEPS LAUGHING AS IF HE IS ABOUT TO CHOKE.) All right, all right... Let me get it off myself... Heee... I'll take it off... (DĪHA GOES, FILLS UP THE WINE GLASSES AND BRINGS THEM OVER. THE GAS MAN HAS TEARS IN HIS EYES FROM ALL THE LAUGHING. SĪYEN LEANS HIS BACK AGAINST A CUSHION. DĪHA GIVES HIM THE WINE GLASS.)**

**SĪYEN:** Let us drink...

**DĪHA:** Drink... Drink to this day... **(VOLUPTUOUSLY TICKLES THE GAS MAN TO EXCITE HIM.)** Go on now, about time... **(THE GAS MAN, TICKLED WHILE HE WAS DRINKING THE WINE, SPURTS OUT THE WINE.)**

**GAS MAN:** Please don't, please, I'm dying...

**SĪYEN:** About time you strangled... Come on, strangle me, sweetie...

**DĪHA:** Kill me... It's time to kill now...

**SĪYEN: (DISAPPOINTED)** Liar!... And he says he is the gas man...

**GAS MAN: (CAN'T STOP LAUGHING)** I swear I am the gas man...

**SĪYEN:** As if I'd believe that... You'd have strangled me long ago, if you were really the gas man.

**GAS MAN:** Ooo, I'm going to choke, stop... I'm finished... Please, mercy... Whatever you say...

**(THE CUPS FALL ON THE FLOOR. NOW BOTH WOMEN ARE ACTIVELY TICKLING THE GAS MAN. THE GAS MAN ROLLS ON THE FLOOR, LAUGHING. SĪYEN AND DĪHA LIE ON THE FLOOR, BESIDE HIM AND KEEP TICKLING HIM.)**

**DĪHA:** C'mon then, c'mon... Strangle just a bit...

**SĪYEN:** C'mon, kill me sweetie, c'mon, kill me...

**(AS ALL THREE WRIGGLE ON THE FLOOR, THE GAS MAN SUDDENLY BECOMES SILENT AND COLLAPSES.)**

**DİHA:** C'mon sweetheart... Strangle me, will you...

**SIYEN:** When are you going to? Kill me, kill me, sweetie... **(SHE IS TAKEN ABACK THAT THE GAS MAN IN NOT TICKLISH ANY MORE. SHE LEANS OVER HIM, PUTS HER HEAD AGAINST HIS CHEST, LIFTS UP HER HEAD AND LOOKS AT DİHA.)**

**DİHA:** **(TAKES HIS PULSE.)** Oh!

**(SILENCE)**

**SIYEN:** He is dead!...

**(CURTAIN)**

**Gündođdu Gencer**

**C'MON, KILL ME SWEETIE**



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