

Gundogdu Gencer



LOSS

A Trilogy of Television Plays



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by

Gün GENCER

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FIRST PLAY
HMAS STYLIANOS

(Based on a story by Sait FAİK)

CHARACTERS:

BOY: 10-11 years old

GRANDPA: Stylianos Hrisopoulos, in his late sixties

JOE: In his forties

YOUNG GIRL: 12-13 Years old

A GROUP OF CHILDREN: 12-14 Years old

SCENE 1 EXTERIOR - DAY

(THE ROCKY END OF A BEACH. NOBODY AROUND. A FISHING LINE LEADS TO THE HAND OF THE BOY, HIS HANDS ARE CLEAN BUT ROUGH, HOLDING THE LINE. THERE IS A BITE, THE LINE IS DRAWN TIGHT. NO FISH. THE HANDS PUT ON THE BAIT AGAIN, SKILFULLY. THE BAIT IS A PIECE OF BREAD, CHEWED AND MADE INTO A BALL. ANOTHER WAIT.

CAR SOUNDS APPROACHING, THEN GOING AWAY. THERE IS ANOTHER BITE. THE BOY TAKES IT IN. IT'S A CATCH. HE IS VERY CAREFUL. THE HANDS HOLD THE FISH EXPERTLY AND TAKE GREAT CARE TAKING THE HOOK OUT. THERE IS AN OBVIOUS EFFORT NOT TO HURT THE FISH UNNECESSARILY.

THE FISH IS THROWN INTO THE BASKET. HE REACHES FOR A MOUTH ORGAN AND STARTS PLAYING A CHEERFUL TUNE. THE TUNE IS SLOWLY OVERWHELMED BY THE APPROACHING SOUND OF A CAR AND A POP SONG. THE CAR IS AN ORDINARY STATION WAGON WITH A LOT OF CHILDREN PACKED IN THE BACK, HAMBURGERS, HANDS AND MOUTHS SMUDGED WITH SAUCE.)

THE BOY: (WAVING AT THE CAR) See youse next summer!

(THE CAR MOVES AWAY. NO RESPONSE FROM THE CHILDREN IN THE CAR. THEY ARE STILL EATING. THE CAR DISAPPEARS. DUST.)

SCENE 2 INTERIOR - NIGHT

(THE BOY TAKES A PLAIN PLATE OUT OF THE SINK AND PLACES IT ON ANOTHER, DIFFERENT LOOKING PLATE BESIDE THE SINK, HE TURNS AND LOOKS AT GRANDPA. THE PLACE IS A ONE-ROOM FIBRO SHACK. A TABLE AND TWO CHAIRS, WITH WILDFLOWERS IN A BIG SHELL ON THE TABLE. IN ONE CORNER IS A LOG BENCH FIXED TO THE WALL WITH A FEW TOOLS ON IT. GRANDPA IS PERCHED ON A STOOL, MENDING HIS NETS, THE BOY FILLS THE KETTLE, PUTS TEA IN THE TEAPOT, PLACES THE KETTLE ON THE STOVE WITH THE TEAPOT ON TOP, LIGHTS THE STOVE.)

THE BOY: It was delicious Grandpa.

(GRANDPA NODS, HE IS TOO INVOLVED IN WHAT HE IS DOING TO ANSWER. HIS SILHOUETTE SEEN IN FRONT OF A GAS LAMP IS THAT OF A HEAVY-SET MAN HUNCHED OVER THE NETS.

THE BOY GOES BACK TO THE DISHES, HE IS STILL WEARING THE SAME SHORTS, T-SHIRT AND IS STILL BAREFOOT, HUMMING THE MELODY HE WAS PLAYING ON THE MOUTH ORGAN EARLIER THAT DAY. THERE IS A KITCHEN COUNTER BESIDE THE SINK WITH AN LP GAS TUBE AND A TWO ELEMENT STOVE.

GRANDPA FINISHES HIS JOB AND TURNS AROUND. HISFACE IS AS COULD BE EXPECTED FROM SUCH A BODY, STRONG, HEAVILY LINED AND SUNBURNT.)

GRANDPA: If it's not going to taste good, I throw it back into the sea.

THE BOY: Yes, Grandpa.

GRANDPA: Yes?

THE BOY: I do the same.

(GRANDPA NODS APPROVINGLY, GETS UP, COMES BESIDE THE BOY AND STARTS DRYING THE DISHES. HE OPENS THE WINDOW. THERE IS A PHOTOGRAPH ON THE WALL. IT IS A FAMILY PHOTOGRAPH AT A WEDDING, THE NEWLY-MARRIED COUPLE WITH GRANDPA NEXT TO THE BRIDEGROOM, WHO LOOKS A LOT LIKE HIM, AND GRANDMA, A HOMELY WOMAN, NEXT TO THE BRIDE. THE BOY LEAVES THE DRYING TO GRANDPA, GOES TO A DRAWER IN A WALL CABINET, TAKES OUT A PIPE, THEN A TOBACCO POUCH. HE SITS ON ONE OF THE TWO BEDS AND FILLS THE PIPE WITH GREAT CARE. THE WATER IS BOILING NOW. THE BOY GOES TO THE KETTLE, POURS SOME BOILING WATER INTO THE TEAPOT, TURNS THE HEAT DOWN AND PLACES THE TEAPOT ON THE KETTLE AGAIN.)

GRANDPA HAS FINISHED HIS DRYING. HE MOVES TOWARDS THE CORNER WHERE HIS WORK BENCH IS. THE BOY'S EYES FOLLOW HIM. HALFWAY, GRANDPA SUDDENLY TURNS HIS HEAD BACK AND CATCHES THE BOY LOOKING. THE BOY LOOKS GUILTY AT FIRST, THEN GRANDPA PUTS ON A DRAMATICALLY THREATENING AND VICIOUS FACE. THE BOY BURSTS OUT LAUGHING. AFTER A PAUSE, GRANDPA DOES, TOO. THEN HE PUTS ON A MORE GENUINELY SERIOUS FACE AS IF EXPECTING THE BOY TO DO SOMETHING. THE BOY GETS THE MESSAGE AND TURNS AROUND HALF-HEARTEDLY.)

GRANDPA: No peeking,

THE BOY: I'm not.

GRANDPA: I can see you.

(GRANDPA REACHES DOWN AND GETS OUT A SUPER SIZED PEACH AND PREPARES FOR A PRESENTATION. THE BOY NOW TURNS AND SEES IT. IT IS OBVIOUSLY HIS FAVOURITE FRUIT.)

THE BOY: You're the bestest grandpa.

GRANDPA: That is wrong. There is no such word,

THE BOY: Yes, there is.

GRANDPA: Don't argue with a peach tree, No, not really. I'm only Stylianos Hrisopoulos impersonating a peach tree. (HE POSES AS A TREE, THE BOY GIGGLES.) Go and wash it.

(THE BOY GOES AND WASHES THE PEACH QUICKLY, AND STARTS EATING IT STRAIGHT AWAY.)

THE BOY: Wanna bite?

GRANDPA: You know I don't like peaches. I only bear them.

THE BOY: (WITH DISBELIEF) Yes Grandpa.

(THE BOY FINISHES EATING THE PEACH. HE POURS SOME TEA INTO TWO SLENDER TEA-GLASSES FROM THE TEAPOT, TOPS THEM UP WITH BOILING WATER FROM THE KETTLE. IN THE MEANTIME, GRANDPA HAS BEEN LIGHTING HIS PIPE. THE BOY BRINGS THE GLASSES. GRANDPA INSPECTS THE GLASSES AND THE SPOONS. THE BOY IS TENSE. THE INSPECTION IS THOROUGH, BUT THE BOY PASSES. GRANDPA PUTS HALF A TEASPOONFUL OF SUGAR IN EACH GLASS. THE BOY IS ENCOURAGED BY THE OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION.)

THE BOY: Finish the story Grandpa.

GRANDPA: What story?

THE BOY: Y'know, the one with the two-headed monster. Y'know the one bigger than Joe's boat. The one with the shimmering orangy purple scales...

GRANDPA: Not tonight. I don't feel like it.

THE BOY: Please.

(GRANDPA LOOKS AT HIM SCOLDINGLY FOR INSISTING.)

THE BOY: OK.

GRANDPA: I have a better idea.

THE BOY: (AFTER TRYING TO GUESS) I give up.

(GRANDPA REACHES UNDER THE BED. THE BOY REALISES WHAT IS IN STORE, CHEERS WITH EXCITEMENT.)

GRANDPA: I won't give you more than two games handicap. **(TAKES OUT A BACKGAMMON SET.)**

THE BOY: I don't want no handicaps.

GRANDPA: Any!

THE BOY: Any handicaps.

GRANDPA: (LAUGHING LOUDLY) What do I get when I win?

THE BOY: (IT'S HIS TURN TO LAUGH NOW) If!

GRANDPA: All right then. if and when I win.

THE BOY: Game of five?

GRANDPA: Game of five it is.

THE BOY: (AS HE SETS THE PIECES) I'll scrape the boat.

GRANDPA: It's a deal. It needed a good scraping. You can do it tomorrow afternoon.

THE BOY: And?

GRANDPA: And what? Oh. Oh well, in the unlikely event of you winning, I'll get you that pocket knife.

THE BOY: The one with the fork.

GRANDPA: Right, if you win.

(THE GAME STARTS. TIME PASSES. IT'S STILL GOING ON. GRANDPA IS LOSING AND LOOKS EXTREMELY SERIOUS. THE BOY IS DELIGHTED AND IS LAUGHING.)

GRANDPA: Shut up!

(THE BOY DOESN'T. WE OBSERVE THE PAIR FROM AN EVER-INCREASING DISTANCE. THE BOY GIGGLES AND GRANDPA IS GRUMPY.)

-TIME LAPSE OF 5 MONTHS-

SCENE 3 EXTERIOR - DAY

(AS IN SCENE 1, ONLY 5 MONTHS LATER. LATE SPRING. THE BOY IS ON THE ROCKS. IN HIS HANDS IS THE POCKET KNIFE WITH THE FORK, AND A BIG PIECE OF WOOD. HE IS CARVING THE WOOD. IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE ANYTHING YET. HE KEEPS STARING AT THE HORIZON EVERY NOW AND THEN. FINALLY HE SEES A SMALL SPECK. IT IS GRANDPA'S BOAT. HE SCURRIES RACK INTO THE TREES HIGH UP, CLIMBS A TREE AND HIDES THE WOOD CAREFULLY, HE RUNS RACK, ASSUMES THE SAME POSE, GETS HIS LINE OUT, PUTS ON THE BAIT AND THROWS THE LINE.)

SCENE 4 EXTERIOR DAY

[GRANDPA'S BOAT IS RACK. IT IS FULL OF FISH, THE BOY LOOKS DELIGHTED, GRANDPA LOOKS PROUD.]

GRANDPA: Joe hasn't come yet, has he?

THE BOY: No, Grandpa.

GRANDPA: You didn't miss him?

THE BOY: (INDIGNANT) No!

GRANDPA: He should be bringing your books today.

THE BOY: Do I have to?

GRANDPA: Yes. **(STARTS PUTTING THE FISH IN A BUCKET)** If you don't want to spend the rest of your life fishing.

THE BOY: (PUTTING THE FISH INTO THE BUCKET) But I do, Grandpa.

GRANDPA: Shut up!

SCENE 5 EXTERIOR - DAY

(THE BOY IS CARVING THE WOOD. IT HAS NOW STARTED LOOKING MORE AND MORE LIKE A BIG BOAT.)

SCENE 6 INTERIOR - NIGHT

(THE BOY IS AT THE TABLE, STUDYING. GRANDPA IS SMOKING HIS PIPE, SIPPING HIS TEA AND OCCASIONALLY CORRECTING THE BOY'S WORK, THEY ARE SEEN THROUGH THE RAIN AND THE CLOSED WINDOW.)

SCENE 7 INTERIOR - DAYBREAK

(GEANDPA PUTS HIS HEAVY RAINCOAT ON AND TAKES HIS MENDED NETS FROM THE BENCH. IT IS RAINING VERY HEAVILY OUTSIDE. THE BOY OPENS THE DOOR TO LET HIM OUT, WATCHES HIM GO OUT, TAKE THE BOAT TO SEA AND ROW AWAY. GRANDPA IS SEEN THROUGH THE BOY'S EYES.)

SCENE 8 EXTERIOR - DAY

(HEAVY RAIN. THE BOY RUNS TO THE TREE, GETS THE HALF-FINISHED BOAT WRAPPED IN HEAVY PLASTIC AND RUNS BACK HOME, SOAKING WET.)

SCENE 9 INTERIOR DAY

(THE BOY OPENS THE PLASTIC WRAPPING, SPREADS IT OUT AND GOES ON CARVING.)

SCENE 10 EXTERIOR - DAY

(THE BOY, IN HIS REGULAR SPOT ON THE ROCKS, IS FISHING. IT IS RAINING. HE HAS A WHOLE BASKETFUL OF FISH BESIDE HIM. HE IS FISHING PATHER FRANTICALLY AND BUSINESS LIKE UNLIKE IN THE FIRST SCENE. THE BASKET FULL, HE WALKS TO THE ROAD, SITS AND HUDDLES UNDER A TREE AND WAITS. HE HEARS A CAR COMING, GOES TO THE ROADSIDE, WATCHES THE CAR APPROACHING, SEES THAT IT IS NOT THE ONE HE'D BEEN WAITING FOR AND RETURNS TO UNDER THE TREE. HE WAITS A WHILE LONGER. ANOTHER CAR APPROACHES. HE GETS UP AGAIN. THIS ONE IS THE RIGHT CAR. HE WAVES. THE CAR SLOWS DOWN AND STOPS. HE RUNS TO THE CAR AND GIVES THE FISH TO JOE. JOE GIVES HIM A SMALL PARCEL.)

THE BOY: Thanks a lot, Joe,

JOE: No worries, Come into the car. You'll catch your death, you're soaking wet.

THE BOY: Thanks. **(HE GETS INTO THE CAR.)** Joe...

JOE: Yes?

THE BOY: Mum's the word.

JOE: Mum. **(PAUSE)** How's old Stylianos?

THE BOY: Same as usual I guess.

JOE: Say hello to him.

THE BOY: Yeah, sure. **(HE HASN'T MUCH ELSE TO SAY.)** I'd better go now.

JOE: I'll drive you home.

THE BOY: No. Grandpa.. I like walking in the rain.

JOE: Dry yourself properly when you get home, will you?

THE BOY: Sure. Thanks again.

JOE: See you. **(DRIVES AWAY.)**

THE BOY: See you.

(THE BOY WALKS AT A LEISURELY PACE UNTIL JOE'S CAR DISAPPEARS, THEN RUNS AND SHELTERS UNDER A TREE. TAKING CARE NOT TO GET THE PARCEL WET, HE OPENS IT. IT IS A BOX OF MODELLING PAINT.)

SCENE 11 INTERIOR - NIGHT

(THE BOY IS HUDDLED IN BED. GRANDPA IS BESIDE HIM, PUFFING HIS PIPE AND CONTINUING WITH THE STORY.)

GRANDPA: I knew nobody would believe me, so I kept it a secret. You are the first person ever.... ever to hear this story, Because you believe me. You do, don't you?

(THE BOY RODS ENTHUSIASTICALLY)

GRANDPA: The colour of its scales... I'll never forget that. It's been aaa... perhaps ten, perhaps twelve years now. Your Dad was still alive. The orange-purple scales... I'll never forget that. I saw him and I'm sure he saw me see him. He went straight down. His eyes... I only saw them an instant. He went straight down as if diving all the way to the centre of the earth. The next thing I saw was the forked tail waving as if to say good-bye. There have been a lot of stories, you know, about sea monsters, but I'd never heard anything about a two-headed monster before. That's why I never told anybody. Who would believe me? When I mentioned monsters to people they said: "Monsters only appear to the best of seamen. They only appear in the worst weather. They know they are not supposed to be there. But they also know that men are not supposed to be there either, not in that sort of weather. So, when they see a man, they think

they must have something in common. If you think you've seen one, Stylianas Hrisopoulos", they said, you must be a monster, too. Or out of your mind." "No", I said, "of course not. I was just asking." So, you see, that's what they think, that you're a monster, too. Don't laugh. Of course they think. This one had two heads, remember? Perhaps he was at two minds about me... It must have had quite a few arguments between himself. Yes, they think if a man is mad enough to be at sea in that kind of weather, the worst weather mind you, if he is there when he is not supposed to be, and survives, then he must have something in common with the monster. So... the double headed monster appears only in the worst weather. I've only seen him once, and I never told anybody except you.

THE BOY: It's been very rough this week, too.

GRANDPA: Won't be for long, though. The tourists will start pouring in soon.

THE BOY: (WITH DISTASTE) Yeah.

GRANDPA: You'd better sleep now.

THE BOY: I'm not sleepy. Really. If you're not tired...

GRANDPA: (STERNLY) Good night.

(GRANDPA COVERS THE BOY, TUCKS HIM IN. SUDDENLY THE BOY JUMPS UP. PUTS HIS ARMS AROUND THE OLD MAN AND QUIETLY CRYING, KISSES HIM. GRANDPA HUGS HIM AND KISSES HIM ON THE FOREHEAD.)

SCENE 12 INTERIOR - DAY

(THE BOY IS NOW PAINTING THE BOAT WITH GREAT CARE. THE BOX HE GOT FROM JOE IS BESIDE HIM. THE BOAT HAS A TALL MAST. AS THE PAINT DRIES, HE GOES TO THE WORK BENCH, GETS A PAIR OF SCISSORS, TAKES A PIECE OF WHITE CLOTH FROM UNDER THE BED AND CAREFULLY CUTS THE CLOTH TO MAKE A SAIL. HE IMAGINES HIMSELF CAPTAIN OF THE YACHT.)

SCENE13 EXTERIOR - DAY

(CARS MOVING ON THE DUST ROAD TOWARDS THE HOLIDAY VILLAGE IN THE DISTANCE, PACKED FULL OF CHILDREN, ESKIES AND OTHER HOLIDAY PARAPHERNALIA. THE BOY WATCHES THEM DRIVE PAST AND TURNS TO PUT THE FINISHING TOUCHES TO THE BOAT. HE HAS JUST FINISHED WRITING THE NAME IN GOLD: "HMAS STYLIANOS". THE FINAL 'S' IS WRITTEN THE WRONG WAY.)

SCENE14 EXTERIOR-DAY

(CHILDREN ON THE BEACH. THEY ARE PLAYING WITH ALL SORTS OF REMOTE-CONTROLLED

BOATS AND PLANES, SOME HAVE TOY GUNS. AN INCREDIBLE AMOUNT OF BUZZES, WHISTLES AND BANGS. THE BOY WATCHES THEM FROM A DISTANCE FOR A WHILE, THEN TAKES OUT HIS MOUTH ORGAN AND STARTS PLAYING.)

SCENE 15 INTERIOR - NIGHT

GRANDPA: Launch? What launch?

THE BOY: My boat. I'm launching my boat.

GRANDPA: What boat?

(THE BOY CHUCKLES.)

GRANDPA: What boat?

SCENE 16 EXTERIOR- NIGHT

(THE BOY GETS A BIG PARCEL, WRAPPED IN PLASTIC, FROM HIS TREE AND RUNS HOME.)

SCENE 17 INTERIOR - NIGHT

THE BOY: (PLACES THE PARCEL IN FRONT OF GRANDPA) Open it.

GRANDPA: All right, all right.

(THE BOY TAKES OUT HIS MOUTH ORGAN AND STARTS PLAYING A FANFARE-LIKE TUNE. GRANDPA OPENS THE PARCEL AND TAKES THE BOAT OUT. HE IS HALF CURIOUS, HALF SURPRISED.)

GRANDPA: Did you?..

THE BOY: Of course. With the knife you gave me.

GRANDPA: What knife?

THE BOY: You know, backgammon...

GRANDPA: All right, all right. I'll have you know that it was pure luck.

THE BOY: Oh yeah?

GRANDPA: 'Course if was. Those three doubles..

THE BOY: I'm learning.

GRANDPA: You'd better.

(GRANDPA TURNS BACK TO THE BOAT, HE HASN'T SEEN THE NAME YET.)

GRANDPA: When are you launching her?

THE BOY: Tomorrow morning.

GRANDPA: Early?

THE BOY: No, before lunch. You should be back by then.

GRANDPA: I may be late. There's a storm coming.

THE BOY: Don't go tomorrow.

(GRANDPA GIVES THE BOY A TERSE LOOK

THE BOY: Try to be back early.

(GRANDPA STROKES THE BOY'S HEAD.)

THE BOY: I want the kids to see it. They go to tennis after lunch.

GRANDPA: Do it in the cove.

THE BOY: But I want them to see it.

(GRANDPA TAKES THE BOAT IN HIS HANDS AND STARTS EXAMINING IT.)

THE BOY: I've already told them.

GRANDPA: You shouldn't have. **(HE SEES THE NAME.)** Ho ho ho! What is this?

(THE BOY LOOKS AT GRANDPA WITH PRIDE AND SATISFACTION.)

GRANDPA: **(HE CAN'T FIND ANYTHING TO SAY.)** Where... did you get the paint from?

(THE BOY REGARDS THIS AS A RHETORICAL QUESTION. THE FAKE ANGRY LOOK ON GRANDPA'S FACE DOESN'T LAST VERY LONG. HE HUGS THE BOY, TRYING TO CONTROL HIS TEARS.)

THE BOY: You're the bestest grandpa.

GRANDPA: That's... Shut up!

SCENE 18 EXTERIOR - DAYBREAK

(THE BOY HELPS GRANDPA WITH THE BOAT, THEN WATCHES HIM ROW AWAY. WAVES, GRAY CLOUDS.)

SCENE 19 EXTERIOR - DAY

(CHILDREN UNDER THE TREES WITH THEIR ELECTRONIC REMOTE CONTROL GEAR. THE BOY IS ON THE BEACH WITH A GIRL, SHOWING HER THE BOAT. TWO BOYS FROM UNDER THE TREES COME DOWN TO THE BEACH, GO TO THE BOY AND FROM A DISTANCE INSPECT HIM AND THE

BOAT. ANOTHER BOY FROM UNDER THE TREES SHOUTS.)

A BOY: C'mon, let's go. Tennis time.

ANOTHER BOY: Lunch time, dumbo,

THE BOY: Aren't you going to watch?

(THE TWO BOYS ON THE BEACH TURN BACK EXPRESSIONLESS AND GO TOWARDS THE TREES.)

THE GIRL: I'll stay.

(ALL THE CHILDREN DISAPPEAR BEHIND THE TREES. WIND. THE BOY HAS A STRING TIED TO THE BOAT AND CEREMONIOUSLY LAUNCHES IT. HE EXPECTS SOME REACTION FROM THE GIRL, WHICH DOESN'T COME. THE SAIL FILLS. THE GIRL STARES BLANKLY, UNEXCITED. THE BOY IS EXHILARATED. THE BOAT IS GOING REALLY WELL. HE LIES FACE DOWN ON THE SAND WATCHING THE BOAT SAIL AWAY, HOLDING TIGHT ON TO THE STRING. THE WIND GETS STRONGER. HE IS DREAMING THAT HE IS THE CAPTAIN OF THE YACHT. SUDDEN EXPLOSIONS. THE CHILDREN UNDER THE TREES ARE FIDDLING WITH KNOBS AND DIALS. MISSILES ARE LAUNCHED. THE GIRL IS STILL TOTALLY WITHOUT EXPRESSION. THE BOY PANICS AND LOOKS AROUND. IT TAKES HIM SOME TIME TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IS HAPPENING. HE MAKES FOR THE TREES, BUT HE HAS THE STRING. HE HANDS THE STRING TO THE GIRL, WHO TAKES IT. LIGHTNING AND THUNDER. THE BOY RUNS BACK, TAKES THE STRING BACK FROM THE GIRL AND TRIES TO DRAG THE BOAT BACK. MISSILES ARE WHIZZING, THE BOAT IS HIT. THE BOY FRANTICALLY TRIES TO PULL IT BACK, THE STRING BREAKS. THE GIRL TURNS AROUND AND STARTS WALKING AWAY, BUT NOT TOWARDS THE TREES. A HEAVY THUNDERSTORM. THE BOY RUSHES INTO THE SEA AFTER THE BOAT. LIGHTNING.)

SECOND PLAY

THE SAMOVAR

(Based on a story by Sait FAİK)

CHARACTERS:

THE MOTHER: In her sixties

THE SON: Drago, in his early twenties

THE FRIEND: A young man, a little older than the son

THE GIRL: In her early twenties

CROWD IN A PUB

CROWD IN A COFFEE SHOP

SCENE 1 INTERIOR - DAY

(INSIDE A SMALL COTTAGE. ONE ROOM, A DIVAN COVERED WITH BRIGHT, CLEAN, SPRING-LIKE MATERIAL. A FEW FLOWERING POT PLANTS, A SIMPLE ROUND TABLE WITH A FRESH TABLE-CLOTH. A SAMOVAR OF IMPOSING SIZE ON THE TABLE, TWO CHAIRS. THERE IS ONLY A KITCHEN AND A BATHROOM IN ADDITION TO THIS ONE ROOM. ON ONE DIVAN, WHICH IS IN FRONT OF THE WINDOW, SITS THE MOTHER. SHE WEARS A SCARF. SHE BLENDS INTO THE DECOR WITH HER SIMPLE, BUT TASTEFUL DRESS. IN FACT, IT TAKES SOME EFFORT AND HER SLIGHT MOVEMENT TO DISTINGUISH HER FROM THE BACKGROUND. SHE IS KNITTING A JUMPER AND OCCASIONALLY LOOKING OUT OF THE WINDOW. SHE LOOKS CALM, BUT ANXIOUS. SHE GETS UP, DUSTS AND CLEANS A BIT. SHE GROWS UNEASY. SHE GOES AND SITS ON THE DIVAN AGAIN, DOES A BIT MORE KNITTING AND LOOKING OUT OF THE WINDOW. THE WHOLE ROOM IS SEEN FROM A DISTANCE. SHE GETS UP AGILELY, HAVING OBVIOUSLY SEEN WHAT SHE HAD BEEN WAITING FOR.)

SCENE 2 EXTERIOR - DAY

(THE SON IS WALKING IN A NARROW INNER CITY STREET. HE SEES THE MOTHER AT THE WINDOW. HE LOOKS OVERLY SERIOUS FOR A WHILE, OCCASIONALLY LOOKING UP DISCREETLY TO CHECK HIS MOTHER'S REACTION. HE CAN'T KEEP IT UP FOR VERY LONG AND A BROAD SMILE INVADES HIS FACE. THE COTTAGE DOOR OPENS AND THE MOTHER APPEARS AT THE DOOR WITH HER ARMS WIDE OPEN. A BIG EMBRACE. IT IS MORE THE SHARING OF UNTOLD GOOD NEWS THAN ANYTHING ELSE.)

THE MOTHER: I knew it, I knew it.

(SHE GIVES HIM ANOTHER BIG HUG AND LEADS HIM INSIDE BY THE HAND,)

SCENE 3 INTERIOR - DAY

(THEY ENTER THE COTTAGE, SHE SITS HIM ON THE DIVAN BESIDE HER. THE SON IS STRONG LOOKING, NEATLY DRESSED. HIS SHIRT IS CLEAN AND PRESSED. NO TIE. THE MOTHER LOOKS AT HIM FOR A WHILE; THERE REALLY IS NOT ANY NEED TO SAY MUCH MORE.)

THE MOTHER: (GETS UP) I'll make your tea. (SHE GOES INTO THE KITCHEN.)

(THE SON MAKES HIMSELF COMFORTABLE ON THE DIVAN, EXAMINES THE KNITTING.)

THE MOTHER: (FROM THE KITCHEN) I knew you'd get it this time.

THE SON: This is the seventeenth job I applied for in two months. About time.

THE MOTHER: (COMING OUT OF THE KITCHEN WITH A TEAPOT IN HER HAND) Tell me what you'll do.

THE SON: Oh, nothing exciting. It's just a job.

THE MOTHER: Rubbish, It's a bakery, isn't it? **(SHE SITS THE TEAPOT ON THE SAMOVAR AND LIGHTS IT.)**

THE SON: A regular factory job.

THE MOTHER: A bakery. **(HE NODS INDIFFERENTLY, SHE STARTS DREAMING.)** I love the smell of fresh bread. Just out of the oven. I don't know if you remember... You were about four or five... Your father used to come home at around four in the afternoon... He used to work day shift... It was the smell of oven-fresh pretzels that brought him straight home. He never went to the pub. I always had his tea ready with fresh pretzels and cheese. Strong black tea as he liked it. And pretzels... He loved the warmth. He used to say: "I like the odd beer, but it's cold in the pub". There's nothing like fresh pretzels or crusty bread just out of the oven.

THE SON: I'll be working at the ovens. The worst bloody job. Hot. At least it's night shift. The heat would be too much during the day. At night it won't be too bad. Still hot though. But the money's all right.

THE MOTHER: You'll finish at seven. You'll bring back fresh bread for breakfast.

THE SON: Yeah, I guess.

THE MOTHER: (GIVING OUT A BIG SECRET) The apricot jam is almost ready.

THE SON: You didn't tell me.

THE MOTHER: I know you like it.

THE SON: Where is it?

THE MOTHER: Don't you touch it. **(PAUSE)** In the backyard. It has to stay in the sun a few more days. Good apricot jam takes a month. It's got to soak in the sun, the warmth.

THE SON: I'll just have a taste. **(HE GOES OUT INTO THE BACKYARD.)**

THE MOTHER: Don't you... **(SHE SMILES, SHAKES HER HEAD AND SHOUTS AFTER HIM.)** Put the gauze back on!

(THE MOTHER GOES INTO THE KITCHEN, COMES BACK WITH TWO TEA CUPS AND STARTS PUTTING THEM ON THE TABLE. THE WATER IN THE SAMOVAR IS BOILING. THERE IS A LOT OF STEAM. SHE PUTS SOME BOILING WATER IN THE TEAPOT)

THE SON: (COMES IN LICKING HIS FINGER) Delicious, Mum. Thanks. **(HE SITS AT THE TABLE ACROSS FROM HIS MOTHER.)**

(THE SAMOVAR IS STEAMING.)

SCENE 4 INTERIOR - MORNING

(THE MOTHER AND THE SON AT THE TABLE. THE SON IS BREAKING A LOAF OF FRESH, CRUSTY, STEAMING LOAF OF BREAD. THERE IS THE SAMOVAR STEAMING ON THE TABLE, CHEESE ON A PLATTER, A BOWL OF APRICOT JAM AND BUTTER. THEY EAT. THE SON PUTS A STICKY KISS ON THE MOTHER'S CHEEK.)

THE MOTHER: You're all sticky.

(HE PLACES ANOTHER STICKY KISS ON THE OTHER CHEEK.)

THE MOTHER: (MOCK ANGER AT THE LITTLE BOY) Go and wash your mouth this instant.

(THE SON GETS UP, TAKES ANOTHER MOUTHFUL OF JAM ON HIS WAY TO THE BATHROOM. THE MOTHER TIDIES UP, GETS THE SECOND DIVAN READY FOR HIM TO SLEEP IN. FRESH, WHITE SHEETS. HE COMES IN, UNDRESSES, GIVES THE MOTHER A BIG HUG.)

THE MOTHER: You must be tired.

THE SON: No, Mum.

THE MOTHER: The breadwinner needs his sleep. (SHE ORDERS HIM TO BED.) I'll be quiet as a mouse.

(THE MOTHER GOES AND DRAWS THE CURTAINS, PUTS THE SON'S SLIPPERS UNDER HIS DIVAN AND COLLECTS HIS CLOTHES. BY THE TIME SHE IS FINISHED, THE SON IS ALREADY FAST ASLEEP. SHE COVERS AND TUCKS HIM IN, THEN GOES AND GETS A BOOK, SITS ON HER DIVAN AND READS.)

SCENE 5 EXTERIOR - MORNING

(THE SON IS RIDING HIS BICYCLE IN THE NARROW STREET TOWARDS HOME. HE SEES THE MOTHER AT THE WINDOW AND WAVES AT HER. HE HAS A WHITE PAPER BAG ON THE BIKE. HE GETS OFF AND TAKES THE BAG. IT IS HOT. THE DOOR IS NOW OPEN. HE THROWS THE BAG AT THE MOTHER AS SOON AS SHE APPEARS AT THE DOOR. SHE CATCHES IT. IT IS HOT. BEFORE SHE HAS A CHANCE TO GET IN, THE SON GIVES HER A BIG HUG. THE BAG IS CAUGHT BETWEEN THEM. THE MOTHER TRIES TO GET THE BAG OUT OF THE WAY. SHE CAN'T. LITTLE SCREAMS. FINALLY SHE GETS HOLD OF THE BAG. IT IS HOT. SHE JUGGLES IT AND THROWS IT TO THE SON. HE STARTS JUGGLING IT. THEY GO INSIDE, TOSSING THE BAG AT EACH OTHER. THROUGH THE OPEN DOOR, THE STEAMING SAMOVAR, THE TWO CUPS, THE CHEESE PLATTER AND THE JAM BOWL CAN BE SEEN ON THE TABLE.)

SCENE 6 INTERIOR - DAY

(IT IS MID-AFTERNOON. THE SON WAKES UP)

THE SON: What's the time, Mum?

THE MOTHER: Half past three.

THE SON: God, I'll be late.

THE MOTHER: You have more than an hour.

THE SON: Where's my shirt?

THE MOTHER: You need a new one.

THE SON: I don't.

THE MOTHER: I'll get you a new one.

THE SON: You know where the money is. **(HE STARTS PUTTING HIS CLOTHES ON.)**

THE MOTHER: When do I get to see her?

THE SON: I don't know.

THE MOTHER: How do you feel about her?

THE SON: How do you mean? Where's my shoes?

THE MOTHER: Under the bed. I mean, like... Permanent...

THE SON: We haven't got that far yet.

THE MOTHER: I'd like to see her.

THE SON: (STOPS SCURRYING AND FACES THE MOTHER) Look Mum, I'm not even sure.

THE MOTHER: Of what?

THE SON: She is nice and all that...

THE MOTHER: But?

THE SON: I don't know, something's missing.

THE MOTHER: What do you mean?

THE SON: I don't know...

THE MOTHER: You like her.

THE SON: Yes, but... There is a... distance... a coldness...

(THEY SIT DOWN ON THE MOTHER'S DIVAN.)

THE SON: The other day... We were walking. This old man came towards us. You know, one of those old winos, with the bottle in the brown paper bag. Dirty. In rags. One of those. He started talking. We really didn't have anything to do. Just having a walk. I mean, it wasn't as if we were in a rush or something. The old wino kept talking. You know, they usually ask for a smoke or money, and I never give any. Wait, I don't smoke anyway, and I don't have any money to spare. But this man, this old wino started talking about the weather, the trees, the flowers, the colours of flowers. There was this tiny little weed in a crack in the asphalt. Right on the footpath. Right in front of me, with one single flower. I hadn't seen it. He asked us to be careful and not step on it. He didn't ask for anything else. He said he just wanted to

talk to us. And you know what she said? She said: "That's enough now. Get out of the way, we're in a hurry." We weren't. (PAUSE) Do you see what I mean?

THE MOTHER: Go on, you're running late.

SCENE 7 INTERIOR - DAY

(THE MOTHER IS IN A DEPARTMENT STORE, LOOKING AT SHIRTS. SHE EXAMINES THOSE ON SPECIAL. SHE IS IN A CROWD OF SHOPPERS AND IS SERIOUS AND EXCITED. FINALLY SHE CHOOSES TWO SHIRTS AND PLEASED WITH HER CHOICE, TAKES THEM TO THE COUNTER.)

SCENE 8 EXTERIOR - DAY

(THE SON IS WEARING ONE OF THE SHIRTS SOUGHT BY THE MOTHER. HE IS RIDING HIS BICYCLE HOME THROUGH NARROW STREETS WITH THE WHITE PAPER BAG ON THE BIKE. HE LOOKS DEEP IN THOUGHT. SEEING THE MOTHER AT THE WINDOW, HIS FACE BRIGHTENS. HE WAVES AT HER.)

SCENE 9 INTERIOR - DAY

(THE TWO ARE AT THE TABLE, SIPPING TEA. THE SAMOVAR IS STEAMING.)

THE MOTHER: It's me. isn't it?

THE SON: No, Mum.

THE MOTHER: I can live by myself.

THE SON: I know Mum.

THE MOTHER: I'll be right. (SHE MEANS IT.)

THE SON: It's the way she looks at it, at you, at things...

THE MOTHER: I don't want to be in her way. And yours.

THE SON: You are not in anybody's way.

THE MOTHER: That settles it then.

THE SON: No, it doesn't.

THE MOTHER: Look now, she is not the first girl who doesn't want her mother-in-law.

THE SON: But she doesn't know you,

THE MOTHER: That doesn't make any difference.

THE SON: Of course it does. If she knew you and decided that she couldn't live with you, that'd be different.

THE MOTHER: Well... You love her.

THE SON: I'm not so sure now.

THE MOTHER: C'mon.

THE SON: Really, Mum,

(HE POURS TEA FOR HIS MOTHER, THEN FOR HIMSELF.)

SCENE 10 EXTERIOR - MORNING

(THE SON IS RIDING HIS BICYCLE TOWARDS THE COTTAGE. HE HAS THE PAPER BAG.)

SCENE 11 INTERIOR- NIGHT

(THE TWO ARE AT THE TABLE DRINKING STEAMING SOUP.)

SCENE 15 INTERIOR - DAY

(THE MOTHER AND THE FRIEND ARE AT THE TABLE SIPPING TEA.)

THE MOTHER: So you work with my son, do you?

THE FRIEND: Not exactly. We are not in the same section, but I see him. I am the shop steward, see?

THE MOTHER: Shop steward?

THE FRIEND: Yes, You know, the union...

THE MOTHER: Yes, yes...

THE FRIEND: I like him.

THE MOTHER: You are friends.

THE FRIEND: Yes, he's a good mate. He's been in the bakery for two months now and he is mates with everyone already.

THE MOTHER: He is a good boy.

THE FRIEND: Yes. That's why I came to you. We have an industrial dispute...

THE MOTHER: Dispute?

THE FRIEND: We might go on strike. Stop work.

THE MOTHER: Yes. He will stop, too. **(PAUSE)** Won't he?

THE FRIEND: Yes.

THE MOTHER: He won't let his mates down. He'll... strike too.

THE FRIEND: That's my point. Part of the union's agreement with management is a three month trial period for new employees. He hasn't been working for three months yet.

THE MOTHER: He is a good worker.

THE FRIEND: I know that. But if he joins the strike, they might put him off and the union can't do anything about it.

THE MOTHER: You think they'd sack him.

THE FRIEND: They might. I'd like him to know that if he doesn't join the strike it's all right. But he wouldn't listen to me. You tell him. Tell him he won't be a scab. Tell him it'll be all right. We don't want him to risk being sacked.

THE MOTHER: They wouldn't sack a good worker.

THE FRIEND: They might, We don't want that, do we?

THE MOTHER: I understand. You are a good man. Thank you for telling me all this. Another tea?

SCENE 13 EXTERIOR - DAY

(THE SON IS AT THE DOOR. THE MOTHER OPENS THE DOOR. THE SON THROWS THE WHITE PAPER BAG AT HER. IT IS HOT. JUGGLING. A BIG HUG. TOSSING THE BAG BACK AND FORTH. THEY GO INSIDE WITH LITTLE CHUCKLES.)

SCENE 14 INTERIOR- DAY

(THE TWO ARE SITTING ON THE MOTHER'S DIVAN, TALKING.)

THE SON: I can't afford it, Mum.

THE MOTHER: Rubbish. We'll be all right.

THE SON: It could go on for weeks.

THE MOTHER: I have a few vegetables in the backyard. We'll manage. You just tell me if you are in the right. The union? Is it right, what they're doing?

THE SON: Sure. The bosses want us to start wearing overalls and caps but they won't pay for it. It is not just buying the stuff, but it has to be spotless, which means at least two sets and washing every other day.

THE MOTHER: I could, I guess. But I shouldn't, really. If they want all that, they should pay for it.

THE SON: Right. That's what the union is saying.

THE MOTHER: Well?

THE SON: I agree, but I don't want to lose any pay. I... we can't afford it.

THE MOTHER: Do you want to be a... scab?

THE SON: No.

THE MOTHER: Go on. We'll survive.

SCENE 15 INTERIOR - MORNING

(THE TWO ARE AT THE TABLE, SIPPING THEIR TEA, HAVING BREAKFAST.)

THE MOTHER: (PUSHING THE BOWL OF JAM IN FRONT OF THE SON) Cherries!

SCENE 16 EXTERIOR - DAY

(THE SON IS WALKING HOME WITH A LOAF OF COMMERCIAL BREAD IN PLASTIC WRAPPING. HE IS SULLEN. HE DOESN'T LOOK UP TO SEE THE MOTHER AT THE WINDOW. HE OPENS THE DOOR WITH HIS KEY.)

SCENE 17 INTERIOR- DAY

(THE MOTHER IS ON HER DIVAN, LOOKING OUT, AS IN SCENE ONE.)

SCENE 18 INTERIOR- DAY

(THE MOTHER OPENS THE DOOR. THE SON COMES IN. HE GIVES A GIFT-WRAPPED PARCEL TO THE MOTHER. SHE OPENS IT. IT IS A BEAUTIFUL DRESSING GOWN.)

THE MOTHER: It's not my birthday.

THE SON: It doesn't matter. The strike's over. We've won.

(SHE PUTS IT ON. THE SON PRODUCES THE WHITE PAPER BAG WHICH HE HAD BEEN HIDING BEHIND HIS RACK AND THROWS IT AT THE MOTHER. A BIG HUG.)

SCENE 19 INTERIOR - DAY

(THE TWO ARE AT THE TABLE. THE SAMOVAR IS STEAMING. THE SON IS BREAKING A FRESH LOAF OF BREAD.)

SCENE 20 EXTERIOR - MORNING

(IN FRONT OF THE COTTAGE. THE WHITE PAPER BAG IS JUGGLED.)

SCENE 21 EXTERIOR - DAY

(THE SON IS GOING THROUGH THE NARROW STREETS ON HIS BICYCLE, WHISTLING CHEERFULLY. HE ARRIVES AT THE COTTAGE AND QUITE AUTOMATICALLY, TAKES THE WHITE PAPER BAG CONTAINING THE HOT BREAD WITHOUT EVEN CHECKING IF THE MOTHER IS AT THE DOOR. AS HE IS ABOUT TO THROW IT, HE REALISES THAT SHE ISN'T. 'CURIOUS', HE THINKS. HE GOES TO THE WINDOW, LOOKS IN, CAN'T SEE ANYTHING. WITH THE BREAD IN HIS HAND, HE FUMBLES FOR THE KEY, FINDS IT AND OPENS THE DOOR.)

SCENE 22 INTERIOR - MORNING

(HE LOOKS AROUND. THE CURTAINS ARE DRAWN, THE MOTHER IS LYING ON HER DIVAN. THE SAMOVAR IS NOT STEAMING. IT'S COLD. HE PUTS A QUILT ON THE MOTHER. HE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO. HE WALKS UP AND DOWN, THEN BENDS DOWN TO THE MOTHER TO GIVE HER A GENTLE KISS ON THE CHEEK. THE MOTHER HAS A CONTENTED LOOK, WITH ALMOST A SMILE. HE FEELS THAT SHE IS COLD, AND COVERS HER A BIT MORE. HE WANDERS AGAIN, THEN UNDRESSES AND GETS UNDER THE QUILT BESIDE THE MOTHER.)

THE SON: (TRYING NOT TO WAKE HER UP) You're cold, Mum.

(HE RUBS HER ARMS, THEN GIVES HER A BIG EMBRACE TRYING TO WARM HER UP. SHE DOESN'T MOVE. HE HOLDS HER FOR A WHILE, THEN PANICS.)

THE SON: Mum!

(THE MOTHER LOOKS LIKE SHE DOESN'T WANT TO BE DISTURBED. THE DRESSING GOWN IS HANGING VERY NEATLY BESIDE THE BED. THE SAMOVAR IS NOT STEAMING.)

THE SON: Mum!

(HE GETS UP AND LOOKS AT HER FOR A WHILE FROM A DISTANCE.)

THE SON: Mum... (HE CAN'T CRY. HE LOOKS MORE LET DOWN AND INCREDULOUS THAN SAD OR SORRY.)

(THE SAMOVAR IS NOT STEAMING.)

SCENE 23 EXTERIOR - DAY

(THE SON IS RIDING HIS BICYCLE. HE IS REALLY EXERTING HIMSELF. THERE IS NO WHITE PAPER BAG ON THE BIKE.)

SCENE 24 INTERIOR - DAY

(THE SON IS ALONE IN THE COTTAGE, WAITING FOR THE ELECTRIC KETTLE TO BOIL. THE SAMOVAR IS ON TOP OF THE CUPBOARD. HE FEELS COLD.)

SCENE 25 EXTERIOR - DAY

(THE SON IS WANDERING IN THE STREETS. IT'S COLD. HANDS IN POCKETS, HE LOOKS AT ALL THE LONELY PEOPLE WALKING BY THEMSELVES. A CAT MEOWS BETWEEN HIS LEGS. HE BENDS DOWN TO PAT HER. THE CAT SNARLS AND RUNS AWAY.)

SCENE 26 INTERIOR - DAY

(INSIDE A PUB. HE IS DRINKING BEER IN A CORNER, BY HIMSELF. IT IS A COLD, TILED, IMPERSONAL PUB. THE CHATTER FORMS AN UNINTELLIGIBLE BACKGROUND. IT IS COLD. HE DOESN'T EVEN FINISH HIS DRINK. HE GOES OUT.)

SCENE 27 INTERIOR - EVENING

(A SMALL AND COSY COFFEE SHOP. A STEAMING COFFEE MACHINE SURROUNDED ON THREE SIDES BY A SERVICE COUNTER. HE IS WAITING FOR HIS COFFEE. THE WARMTH GLOWS ON HIS CHEEKS. HE STARTS A CHAT WITH A GIRL AT THE COUNTER. THE FACES ARE SEEN THROUGH THE STEAM. HE SIPS HIS COFFEE. THE CONVERSATION GETS WARMER AND FRIENDLIER. HE FINISHES HIS COFFEE.)

THE SON: (AS HE GOES OUT) See you at eight.

THE GIRL: (WITH A GLOWING SMILE) See you Drago.

(THE COFFEE MACHINE IS STEAMING.)

THIRD PLAY

GUL, MY ROSE

(Based on a story by Alev Doğangün)

CHARACTERS:

THE WOMAN: In her late thirties

THE SON: The woman's son, 17-18

GÜL: The woman's daughter, 13-14

THE LITTLE GIRL: The woman's younger daughter, 7 years old

A WOMAN: In her fifties

THE MILKMAN: In his forties

THE COUNTERCLERK: A woman in her early twenties

THE INTERVIEWER: A man in his late twenties

THE YOUNG MAN: 19-20 Years old

WELFARE DEPARTMENT CLIENTS

SCENE 1 EXTERIOR - MORNING

(DOGS BARKING. THEY ATTACK THE TWO MILK CARTONS THAT ARE BESIDE A SECURITY DOOR. THE DOOR OPENS QUICKLY. THE WOMAN, OBVIOUSLY JUST OUT OF BED, DISHEVELLED, COMES OUT, CHASES THE DOGS AWAY, LOOKS AT THE CARTONS. ONE CARTON IS BEYOND HELP. SHE TRIES TO SALVAGE IT, SHE CAN'T.)

THE WOMAN: Shit! (SHE TAKES THE OTHER CARTON, WHICH IS INTACT, AND GOES IN.)

SCENE 2 INTERIOR - MORNING

(THE WOMAN IS SETTING THE TABLE. 4 CEREAL BOWLS WITH CORNFLAKES IN THEM. SHE STARTS POURING THE MILK. THERE IS ONLY ENOUGH FOR THREE. SHE TAKES THE FOURTH BOWL AND PUTS THE CORNFLAKES BACK INTO THE BOX. SHE GOES TO THE FRIDGE, TAKES OUT SOME BLACK OLIVES AND BRINGS THEM TO THE TABLE. THE HOUSE IS A FAIRLY NEW, BUT RATHER BARE, CHEAPLY FURNISHED AND IMPERSONAL HOUSING COMMISSION HOUSE. SHE TAKES OUT SOME BREAD AND PUTS IT IN THE TOASTER. SHE BOILS SOME WATER, CHECKS THE TIME. IT'S 6.30 IN THE MORNING. SHE TIDIES UP A BIT. THERE ARE THINGS LYING AROUND THAT INDICATE TEENAGERS LIVING THERE. THE WATER HAS BOILED AND THE TOAST IS READY NOW. SHE MAKES TEA USING A TEA BAG, SITS AT THE TABLE AND STARTS EATING TOAST AND OLIVES, SIPPING HER TEA.)

SCENE 3 INTERIOR - DAY

(THE CHILDREN, THE SON, GÜL AND THE LITTLE GIRL HAVE JUST FINISHED BREAKFAST AND ARE READY TO LEAVE FOR SCHOOL. THE SON IS THE FIRST.)

THE SON: See you Mum. (KISSES HER ON THE CHEEKS RATHER PERFUNCTORILY.)

GÜL: (STARTS TO GO) See you. I'll be a bit late today, Mum, we have an excursion.

{THE SON LEAVES.}

THE WOMAN: What time will you be back?

GÜL: I shouldn't be too late.

THE WOMAN: What time?

GÜL: (AT THE DOOR) I'll be home for tea.

THE WOMAN: (CALLS AFTER HER AS SHE GOES OUT) Gül! (GÜL TURNS) Gül, please be careful.

GÜL: Oh Mum!

(GÜL LEAVES. THE WOMAN IS LEFT WITH THE LITTLE GIRL. SHE TIDIES HER UP, BRUSHES HER HAIR.)

THE WOMAN: We have another ten minutes. come on, sit down. We can hear the bus coming.

(THE LITTLE GIRL SWITCHES THE TELEVISION ON BEFORE SHE SITS DOWN. THERE IS SOME NOISY CARTOON ON. THE WOMAN FEELS LEFT OUT, GETS UP, STARTS CLEARING THE BREAKFAST TABLE. ON A SIDEBOARD ARE AN EMPTY VASE AND A BLUE-AND-WHITE PORCELAIN PEPPER MILL.)

SCENE 4 INTERIOR - DAY

(THE WOMAN IS ALONE. SHE IS GETTING READY TO GO OUT. SHE GOES TO THE PEPPER MILL, OPENS ITS LITTLE DRAWER. THERE IS SOME SMALL CHANGE IN IT, SHE CAREFULLY TAKES AS MUCH AS SHE NEEDS, WHICH IS ABOUT HALF THE MONEY. SHE GOES TO THE DOOR.)

SCENE 5 EXTERIOR - DAY

(THE WOMAN GETS OFF A BUS AND STARTS WALKING.)

SCENE 6 INTERIOR/EXTERIOR - DAY

(INSIDE A WELFARE DEPARTMENT OFFICE. PEOPLE SITTING AROUND, WAITING. THE WOMAN GOES IN AND OUT, CHECKING HER NUMBER, AND SMOKING OUTSIDE. SHE FREQUENTLY LOOKS AT HER WATCH AND THE CLOCK INSIDE. AN UNKEMPT WOMAN APPROACHES HER.)

A WOMAN: Can I bludge one of your fags, love?

THE WOMAN: **(SHE WASN'T LISTENING.)** What?

A WOMAN: Smokes, love. Can I have one? I've just run out.

THE WOMAN: Yeah, sure. **(OFFERS A CIGARETTE)** Sorry, my mind wasn't here.

A WOMAN: It's for the kids' books and things, is it?

THE WOMAN: Yes. **(DELAYED SURPRISE)** How did you know?

A WOMAN: Well, it's that time of the year, love, isn't it? I'm here for the gas bill.

THE WOMAN: Oh.

A WOMAN: You shouldn't have any trouble. **(PAUSE)** How many?

(THE WOMAN STARTS COUNTING THE CIGARETTES IN THE PACKET.)

A WOMAN: How many kids?

THE WOMAN: Oh... Three.

A WOMAN: You shouldn't have any trouble.

THE WOMAN: They're good kids.

A WOMAN: I mean, getting the money... You shouldn't have any trouble.

(A LONGISH SILENCE. THE CIGARETTES, THE NUMBER, THE WATCH, THE CLOCK. IN THE MEANTIME, OTHER PEOPLE ARE CALLED AND GO IN AND OUT OF INTERVIEW ROOMS.)

THE WOMAN: I wish they had some tea or coffee here.

A WOMAN: Yeah, I could do with a coffee myself. Bloody mean, that's what they are. They used to have one of them machines here before.

THE WOMAN: Cutting costs, I guess.

A WOMAN: Bloody mean, that is.

THE COUNTER CLERK: I am sorry ladies and gentlemen. We are closing for lunch. You can come back at one-thirty. Or you can wait here if you like.

A WOMAN: Them and their bloody lunch. and have a coffee across the road.

THE WOMAN: No, I think I'll stay. **(PAUSE)** I don't want to miss my turn.

A WOMAN: You got your number. **(PAUSE)** C'mon love, I'll shout you one.

THE WOMAN: No. **(SMILES)** No, thanks.

A WOMAN: **(AS SHE GOES)** Can I have another fag, love?

SCENE 7 EXTERIOR - DAY

(THE WOMAN CATCHES A BUS. SHE IS CLUTCHING AN ENVELOPE. SHE'S GOT THE MONEY.)

SCENE 8 INTERIOR - EVENING

(THE WOMAN IS PUTTING FLOWERS INTO THE VASE THAT IS NEXT TO THE PEPPER MILL.)

THE WOMAN: You know I love flowers, but you really shouldn't steal them.

GÜL: It's not stealing, Mum, they were hanging all over the fence.

THE WOMAN: Still... You shouldn't have.

THE SON: C'mon Mum. Anybody could've picked them. They were all over the place. They probably don't know what to do with all those flowers.

THE WOMAN: You could have asked them. I don't want any more stealing, okay?

THE SON: You had to spoil it, didn't you? (**GOES OUT.**)

THE WOMAN: (**AFTER HIM**) Thank you. Thanks... all the same... (**NO RESPONSE FROM THE SON. SHE TURNS TO GÜL.**) Thanks. They are beautiful. (**SHE HUGS GÜL.**) Thank you.

THE LITTLE GIRL: (**HER TV VIEWING IS INTERRUPTED**) Shush Mum, please.

SCENE 9 INTERIOR - EARLY MORNING

(**DOGS HOWLING. THEY ATTACK THE LITTLE GIRL. SHE IS SCREAMING SILENTLY. THE MILK CARTONS ARE TORN TO BITS. THE LITTLE GIRL'S CLOTHING IS SCATTERED. THERE IS MILK, BLOOD AND DOGS' TEETH. A NIGHTMARE.**)

THE WOMAN: (**WAKES UP SCREAMING AND PANTING**) No, stop! (**AFTER A WHILE, SHE REALISES THAT IT WAS A DREAM, CALMS HERSELF DOWN, CHECKS THE TIME. IT'S 5.30 IN THE MORNING. SHE GETS UP.**)

SCENE 10 EXTERIOR - EARLY MORNING

(**THE WOMAN OPENS THE SECURITY DOOR. THE TWO MILK CARTONS ARE INTACT. SHE PICKS THEM UP, RATHER PLEASED WITH HERSELF FOR BEING EARLY ENOUGH. AS SHE STARTS BACK, SHE NOTICES A BEAUTIFUL LONG-STEMMED YELLOW ROSE THAT WAS BEHIND THE MILK CARTONS. SHE PICKS UP THE ROSE, SMELLS IT, THEN LOOKS AROUND. SHE CAN NOT SEE ANYBODY. SHE GOES INSIDE.**)

SCENE 11 INTERIOR - EARLY MORNING

(**THE WOMAN HAS MADE HERSELF A CUP OF TURKISH COFFEE. SHE LIGHTS A CIGARETTE AND TURNS THE TV ON. THERE IS SOME OLD BLACK AND WHITE, ROMANTIC MOVIE ON. SHE CAN NOT CONCENTRATE ON THE MOVIE. SHE PUTS OUT THE CIGARETTE, GOES TO THE VASE, TAKES OUT THE YELLOW ROSE AND SMELLS IT. SHE SWITCHES OFF THE TV AND GOES TO THE WINDOW. DAY IS BREAKING.**)

SCENE 12 INTERIOR- DAY

(**THE WOMAN IS AT AN EMPLOYMENT OFFICE.**)

THE INTERVIEWER: I am sorry, but we really must be realistic. There are so many unemployed people looking for full-time work and that is hard enough. You are saying you can't start before ten and you have to finish by three. There aren't many of those around.

THE WOMAN: My children...

THE INTERVIEWER: I know, I know. But we must be realistic. What was I saying? Oh yes, there aren't many of those around. Whatever there is, is in the city anyway. How long would it take you...

THE WOMAN: (PROMPTLY) An hour twenty minutes.

INTERVIEWER: Exactly. It'd take you at least an hour. That doesn't leave much time for work, does it?

(WITH EACH STATEMENT OF FACT, THE WOMAN SHRINKS.)

THE INTERVIEWER: We must be realistic. You don't really have any marketable skills either. I think what we might do is to see what kind of training we might get you into.

THE WOMAN: I used to work for a publisher before...

THE INTERVIEWER: That was more than fifteen years ago, madam.

THE WOMAN: Twenty.

THE INTERVIEWER: See? Now, let's see... Can you type?

THE WOMAN: No... The job I had...

THE INTERVIEWER: Let's start with typing. Now, let me see... **(HE CHECKS HIS COMPUTER SCREEN)** There are day classes. That's nine to one. Evening classes... Six to ten...

THE WOMAN: I've got to be home by three thirty.

THE INTERVIEWER: Your youngest is... what? ...seven?... Surely the older ones can take care of him until you get back.

THE WOMAN: Her. My little girl. She needs me.

THE INTERVIEWER: (CONTINUING) Once you've done the course, come back. We do have some vacancies for word processing...

THE WOMAN: Part-time?

THE INTERVIEWER: Now, we must be realistic...

SCENE 13 INTERIOR - DAY

(THE WOMAN, WITH A LONG-STEMMED PINK ROSE IN HER HAND, IS WATCHING AND EXAMINING HERSELF IN FRONT OF THE MIRROR. HER HAIR IS TIDIER AND THERE IS A HINT OF TASTEFUL MAKE-UP ON HER FACE. SHE IS WEARING A DRESS WHICH, ALTHOUGH CHEAP, LOOKS GOOD ON HER AND BRINGS OUT HER FIGURE. SHE LOOKS QUITE ATTRACTIVE. SHE TURNS SLOWLY, POSES, WATCHES HERSELF. SHE GETS CLOSER TO THE MIRROR, EXAMINES HER FACE, SMILES, THEN BURSTS OUT LAUGHING. SHE LOOKS AT HER FACE AGAIN, GRIMACES PLAYFULLY.)

SCENE 14 INTERIOR- DAY

(THE WOMAN OPENS THE LITTLE DRAWER OF THE PEPPER MILL AND TAKES OUT SOME CHANGE. THERE ARE THREE ROSES OF VARYING AGES IN THE VASE NEXT TO THE PEPPER MILL. SHE SMELLS THEM, SMILES AND GOES OUT.)

SCENE 15 INTERIOR- EARLY MORNING

(THE WOMAN IS SITTING, WATCHING TV WITH THE SOUND TURNED OFF, SIPPING HER COFFEE AND SMOKING. SOME TIME PASSES. THERE ARE FOOTSTEPS APPROACHING THE DOOR. SHE RUSHES TO THE DOOR AND OPENS IT.)

SCENE 16 EXTERIOR - EARLY MORNING

(THE WOMAN IS AT THE DOOR. THE MILKMAN APPROACHES WITH TWO CARTONS IN HIS HAND.)

THE MILKMAN: 'Morning love. You're up early.

THE WOMAN: Yes... Well... (STARES AT THE MILKMAN. HE IS PLEASANT BUT BUSINESS-LIKE AND OBVIOUSLY IN A HURRY TO GET AWAY.) I wanted to get the milk before the dogs do.

THE MILKMAN: Bloody dogs! Oh well, my day's nearly over. I'll be in bed by six. Why don't you do the same love, you look a bit off colour.

THE WOMAN: (TAKES THE MILK. DISAPPOINTED. WITH A FORCED SMILE) Yes. Thanks. (SHE LOOKS AT THE CORNER WHERE THE MILK CARTONS GO. THERE IS NO ROSE.)

SCENE 17 INTERIOR- NIGHT

(THE FAMILY IS HAVING DINNER. THE WOMAN IS SERVING SOME KIND OF STEAMING STEW. THERE IS A VERY FRESH LOOKING LONG-STEMMED WHITE ROSE IN THE VASE AND A BUNCH OF FLOWERS NEXT TO THE WOMAN'S PLATE.)

THE SON: But Mum, I'm telling you we bought them.

GÜL: None of the neighbours have any left, anyway. So we couldn't steal them even if we wanted to, right?

THE SON: That's right, we all chipped in.

THE LITTLE GIRL: I had no money. I didn't chip in.

THE WOMAN: Look, don't think I don't appreciate it. I love flowers. But I love you even more. You don't have any money to spare to buy me flowers.

THE LITTLE GIRL: We'll nick them, then.

GÜL: (TO THE LITTLE GIRL) You shut up. **(TO THE WOMAN)** We just wanted to cheer you up a bit, Mum. Is that wrong?

THE WOMAN: No, of course not. But I am fine, really. You being here, just being my kids, doing well at school is all I want from you. Understand?

GÜL: It doesn't seem to be enough, Mum. You're still as miserable as ever.

THE WOMAN: I'm not. I won't be. Promise. I love you all.

SCENE 18 INTERIOR - DAY

(THE WOMAN, LOOKING QUITE ATTRACTIVE, IS SMELLING A YELLOW ROSE IN FRONT OF THE MIRROR.)

SCENE 19 INTERIOR- EARLY MORNING

(THE WOMAN IS SITTING, SIPPING HER COFFEE, SMOKING, CHECKING THE TIME. SHE HEARS FOOTSTEPS APPROACHING. SHE GOES TO THE WINDOW, PEEPS OUT.)

SCENE 20 EXTERIOR - EARLY MORNING

(THE MILKMAN PLACES TWO CARTONS OF MILK BESIDE THE DOOR, GOES AWAY.)

SCENE 21 INTERIOR - EARLY MORNING

(THE WOMAN GOES BACK TO HER CHAIR AND CONTINUES HER WAIT. TIME PASSES. SHE CHECKS THE TIME AGAIN. SHE HEARS FOOTSTEPS. EXCITED, SHE WAITS BESIDE THE DOOR. THE FOOTSTEPS COME CLOSER AND STOP. SHE OPENS THE DOOR QUICKLY AND COMES FACE TO FACE WITH A YOUNG MAN WHO HAS A LONG-STEMMED RED ROSE IN HIS HAND.)

THE WOMAN: What do you... **(COLLECTS HERSELF)** What do you think you're doing? **(THE YOUNG MAN IS STUNNED.)** At this time?... Here?... What?...

THE YOUNG MAN: (TAKEN ABACK) I... I wasn't doing nothing bad. **(HE TRIES TO HIDE THE ROSE BEHIND HIS BACK.)**

THE WOMAN: Who are you? What's all these roses for?... What?...

THE YOUNG MAN: (REGAINS HIS COMPOSURE) I don't have to explain nothing to you.

THE WOMAN: Oh yes, you do. **(CHANGES TACT, RATHER SOFTLY)** They are beautiful roses, really. They're nice. But why? I want to know. You can tell me.

(THE YOUNG MAN DOES NOT ANSWER.)

THE WOMAN: You can explain it all to the police, then.

THE YOUNG MAN: I ain't done nothing wrong.

THE WOMAN: (SEARCHES FOR A CHARGE) You're... trespassing.

THE YOUNG MAN: I didn't steal nothing.

THE WOMAN: Why, then? Why the roses?

THE YOUNG MAN: It ain't a crime to be in love, is it?

THE WOMAN: In love? What do you mean? Don't be silly.

THE YOUNG MAN: You know... In love... Like in the movies... Roses are supposed to be... You know... The right kind of flowers... I dunno... I didn't mean to upset nobody.

THE WOMAN: How old are you?

THE YOUNG MAN: Nineteen. Nearly twenty. But...

THE WOMAN: Now listen...

THE YOUNG MAN: (GATHERING ALL HIS COURAGE) Maybe she loves me too. How do you know she doesn't?

THE WOMAN: She? Who? What? Who do you mean?

THE YOUNG MAN: Gül.

(THE WOMAN LOOKS AT HIM UNCOMPREHENDINGLY.)

THE YOUNG MAN: Gül, your daughter. It ain't a crime, is it?

THE WOMAN: (BLANKLY) She's only fourteen.

THE YOUNG MAN: Yeah, I know. She'll be fifteen in October. She's in the same class as me sister. That's how I saw her. Really.

THE WOMAN: Look. She is too young. You are too young. **(CAN NOT FIND ANYTHING ELSE TO SAY)** Come back in ten years' time.

THE YOUNG MAN: What's so wrong with being young? Do we have to be old and crinkly to be in love?

THE WOMAN: Go and study... get a job, whatever... She's still a child.

THE YOUNG MAN: I love her but.

THE WOMAN: Goodbye. **(SHUTS THE DOOR.)**

SCENE 22 INTERIOR - EARLY MORNING

(THE WOMAN GOES IN, SITS DOWN, LIGHT A CIGARETTE, QUICKLY GETS UP, GOES TO THE WINDOW, MAKES SURE THAT THE YOUNG MAN HAS GONE. SHE PUTS OUT THE CIGARETTE,

GOES AND TAKES OUT ALL THE ROSES FROM THE VASE, CALMLY THROWS THEM AWAY, STARTS SOBBING SILENTLY. AFTER A WHILE SHE GETS UP, GOES TO THE DOOR, TAKES THE TWO MILK CARTONS. OF COURSE, THERE ARE NO ROSES BEHIND THE CARTONS. SHE GOES TO THE KITCHEN, TAKES OUT THE CEREAL BOWLS AND PUTS THEM ON THE TABLE. SHE OPENS THE CIGARETTE PACKET FOR ANOTHER CIGARETTE. IT IS EMPTY. SHE GOES TO THE PEPPER MILL AND OPENS THE LITTLE DRAWER. THE DRAWER IS COMPLETELY EMPTY. SHE SLAMS IT. THE PEPPER MILL DROPS AND IS BROKEN. SHE SOBS. AFTER A WHILE, SHE STRAIGHTENS UP AND WIPES HER FACE. HER FACE NOW IS A MESS OF SMUDGED MAKE-UP. SHE WIPES OFF HER TEARS AND PUTS ON A SMILE.)

THE WOMAN: Come on beauties, breakfast time!

Gundogdu Gencer

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