

Gundogdu Gencer

# THE CELLAR

a comedy in two acts



**THE CELLAR**  
**a comedy in two acts**  
**by Gün GENCER**

Can not be performed without the written permission of the playwright

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playwright

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**CHARACTERS:**

**THE MAN**

**THE WOMAN**

**THE DAUGHTER**, young and beautiful

**THE GRANDMOTHER**, old with gray hair

**1. ZAP MAN**

**2. ZAP MAN**

ACT ONE

(THE MAN, DRESSED VERY FORMALLY, ENTERS WITH A DUSTY BOTTLE OF WINE IN HIS HAND, WHICH HE CARRIES WITH GREAT CARE.)

**THE MAN:** Cherie! How does 64 sound to you? It sounds wonderful to me. Not that they'll appreciate it, but you... (TO HIMSELF) wouldn't appreciate it either. What has she, ever? (EXAMINES THE BOTTLE WITH REVERENCE. CALLS OUT) We have about two hours to go. Cherie! I mean, you never know, some people just turn up, don't they? No regard for other people, or their time, or their priorities. So, you never know. Some might turn up early. Cherie!

**THE GRANDMOTHER: (APPEARS)** If you have something to say, go and say it, how many times have I told you. Don't shout! You've been in the cellar again. You're covered in dust.

**THE MAN:** The wine...

**THE GRANDMOTHER:** You could have gone before you changed. Boys...

**THE MAN:** I had to get the wine.

**THE GRANDMOTHER:** Now, now, who's being an aquarium again?

**THE MAN:** Yes, mother.

**THE GRANDMOTHER:** Full of little...

**THE MAN:** ...red herrings. Yes, mother.

**THE GRANDMOTHER:** Well, go and tell her then.

**THE MAN:** Tell her what?

**THE GRANDMOTHER:** Whatever you have to tell her. Whatever you were shouting a minute ago.

**THE MAN:** Oh, the wine.

**THE GRANDMOTHER:** I don't know why you drink so much. You never used to. Not before. She's a bad influence on you.

**THE MAN:** Who's a bad influence?

**THE GRANDMOTHER:** She. Whats-her-name... I don't want you to play with her any more.

**THE MAN:** We've been married twenty two years mother.

**THE GRANDMOTHER:** That only shows I'm right. I've always said so. From the moment I set eyes on her. She never even looks at me any more. She's jealous. I know her kind. I've always told you she's a bad sort. But do you listen? You tore your new shoes again, playing ball. I work my fingers to the bone and you... Do you care?

**THE MAN:** I wasn't playing ball, I swear. Cross my heart and hope to die...

**THE GRANDMOTHER:** Don't swear. And don't play ball with those boys any more. They're not your kind. Dad and I work like slaves to give you a good education and you bring home a girl like that. You should be ashamed of yourself.

**THE MAN:** I...

**THE GRANDMOTHER:** And what kind of swearing is that? Hope to die? I told you, no mention of dying in this house. I may be old, but it is still my house. Your Dad and I worked all these years to have roof over our heads. It leaks occasionally, but it's still a roof nevertheless. You haven't fixed it yet, have you? How many times do I have to tell you? Dad has arthritis, he can't climb on the roof any more. You are nearly a young man now, you're not a boy. You should be able to fix the roof. But no, I have to say it again and again before you'll take any notice. You're just plain lazy. Your father was lazy too, when I married him, but I soon put him right. What you need is a girl like me, to put you right. I don't want that girl in my house.

**THE MAN:** Yes, mother.

**THE GRANDMOTHER:** I didn't hear that.

**THE MAN: (LOUDER)** Yes, mother.

**THE GRANDMOTHER:** Yes mother what?

**THE MAN:** Yes, mother. I mean, no, I won't see her again.

**THE GRANDMOTHER:** You're a little liar, aren't you? You said just a minute ago  
you've been married twenty two years.

**THE MAN:** She's not that girl, mother.

**THE GRANDMOTHER:** Liar!

**THE MAN:** She's changed.

**THE GRANDMOTHER:** People never change. You're too young to understand  
that, and too stupid...

**THE MAN:** Mother!

**THE GRANDMOTHER:** Don't interrupt! What was I saying?

**THE MAN:** Would you like some wine?

**THE GRANDMOTHER:** You're trying to confuse me. Don't change the subject.

**THE MAN: (FACETIOUS)** What was the subject?

**THE GRANDMOTHER:** I'll show you! I'll teach you not to make fun of your  
mother!

**THE MAN:** I wasn't!

**THE GRANDMOTHER:** Liar!

**THE MAN:** I wasn't lying.

**THE GRANDMOTHER:** Don't deny it! You men are all the same. First you lie,  
then you deny it. Bend over!

**THE MAN:** Mother, please!

**THE GRANDMOTHER:** You should have thought of it before you lied. Bend over!  
And before you denied!

**(THE MAN BENDS OVER. THE GRANDMOTHER HITS THE MAN ON  
THE BOTTOM RATHER FORCEFULLY.)**

**THE MAN:** Please! I won't! I promise! I won't!

**THE WOMAN: (FROM INSIDE)** What is it darling? Who are you talking to?

**(THE GRANDMOTHER DISAPPEARS THROUGH A TRAP-DOOR.)**

**THE MAN:** No one. I was just saying... I got the wine. 64. The one we got in Bordeaux on our trip. We've still got a dozen bottles left.

**THE WOMAN:** I can't hear you darling!

**THE MAN:** I'm coming. **(EXITS)**

**(THE DAUGHTER COMES IN, BAREFOOT, WEARING A WHITE WEDDING DRESS, VEIL AND TIARA. SHE SITS ON THE FLOOR, TAKES OUT A BAG FROM UNDER HER SKIRT, TAKES OUT A NAIL CLIPPER AND STARTS CUTTING HER TOE-NAILS.)**

**GRANDMOTHER'S VOICE:** This little piggy went to the market

This little piggy went to the shops

This little piggy became the bride

This little piggy knew not where to hide

**THE DAUGHTER: (GOES TO AN IMAGINARY COUNTER, TAKES OUT A BROKEN DOLL FROM UNDER HER DRESS)** I want a new one. This is broken. I don't know, it's broken, can't you see? I want a new one. I didn't do it. It wasn't my fault. I don't want a broken one. I want a new one. Give me a new one. **(HER PLEA APPARENTLY REFUSED, SHE THROWS THE DOLL AWAY AND STARTS SOBBING)**

**THE WOMAN: (FROM OUTSIDE)** Is that you Dolly?

**THE DAUGHTER:** No, mummy.

**THE WOMAN: (ENTERS IN AN EVENING DRESS)** I thought it was you. What's the matter? Why are you crying?

**THE DAUGHTER:** I'm not crying.

**THE WOMAN:** It's all right, Dolly, you can tell me...

**THE DAUGHTER: (SOBBING)** Nothing, mummy, really...

**THE WOMAN: (SITS ON THE FLOOR, PUTS THE DAUGHTER'S HEAD IN HER LAP AND STARTS STROKING HER HAIR)** Here, here, what did the little bear do today?

**THE DAUGHTER:** I suddenly thought of Grandmother.

**THE WOMAN: (STOPS STROKING)** Is that why you were crying?

**(THE DAUGHTER LOOKS UP, DEMANDING)**

**THE WOMAN: (RESUMES STROKING)** Is that why my little baby was crying?

**THE DAUGHTER:** Yes, mummy.

**THE WOMAN: (GETS UP ABRUPTLY)** You're getting late, the guests will be here any time now. Your make-up is running. You are allowed to cry, I've told you, but only during the ceremony and only a few tears. It's all right for the bride to do that.

**THE DAUGHTER:** I missed grandmother.

**THE WOMAN:** She's been dead for seven years, Dolly, what on earth made you remember her now? She didn't even like you.

**(THE DAUGHTER SHRUGS)**

**THE WOMAN:** I'll go check the flowers, and you'd better get a hold of yourself.

**THE MAN: (ENTERS)** You haven't bought chrysanthemums, have you? You know I hate chrysanthemums. They have this awful stink.

**THE WOMAN:** Of course I bought chrysanthemums. White ones. That's what one has at a white wedding. Stink? My foot! **(GOES OUT)**

**(THE MAN GOES OUT AFTER THE WOMAN. THE DAUGHTER TAKES OUT THE BAG AGAIN, PRODUCES A HUGE MIRROR AND STARTS EXAMINING HER FACE. SHE TAKES OFF THE TIARA, STARTS BRUSHING HER HAIR. THE HAIR COMES OFF, REVEALING UNKEMPT GRAY HAIR UNDERNEATH. SHE THROWS AWAY THE MIRROR AND STARTS SOBBING AGAIN.)**



**THE MAN: (ENTERS)** Where's mummy? Why are you crying? Oh, why is my little baby crying? Is it because you've broken your new doll? It doesn't matter sweetie, daddy will buy you a new one.

**THE DAUGHTER: (KEEPS SOBBING)** I haven't...

**THE MAN:** Shush, shush... On a day like this... What would grandmother think? She'd be very upset if she saw you like this. Very upset. You don't want to upset grandmother now, do you? You know how much she loves you.

**THE DAUGHTER:** Mummy says...

**THE MAN:** It's all right. I know what mummy thinks of her. It's because grandmother never liked mummy. But grandmother loves you. She thinks you're like her in many ways. Not like mummy, she thinks.

**THE DAUGHTER:** Grandmother...

**THE MAN:** There's a stink here, have you noticed, Dolly? How long have you been here? You haven't been naughty again, have you? Where's your hair? What have you done with the mirror? Are those nail clippings on the floor? It's not healthy, I've told you so many times, it's not hygienic.

**(THE MAN GOES AND COLLECTS THE MIRROR. HE PUTS IT UPRIGHT IN A CORNER. THE DAUGHTER COLLECTS THE NAIL CLIPPINGS.)**

**THE MAN:** God, you look a mess. Here, here's the mirror. Put your hair on, will you? What will people think?

**(THE MAN HOLDS THE MIRROR TO THE DAUGHTER. SHE PUTS HER ORIGINAL HAIR ON. THE MAN BRUSHES IT.)**

**THE MAN:** You have such lovely soft hair, just like grandmother's. That's why she loves you so much. It's time you put some nail polish on those lovely toes, darling, the guests will be here soon. This is your big day. What will people think if you've got no nail polish on your toes, huh? Be a good girl, now.

**THE DAUGHTER:** Yes, daddy.

**THE MAN:** Can you smell it?

**THE WOMAN: (ENTERS)** What are you two doing? There are still the decorations to be put up and you're here, chatting. What's this smell?

**THE MAN:** I was asking Dolly.

**THE WOMAN:** No use asking her. You're supposed to be the man of the house. It's your duty to find out where the smell is coming from and extinguish it.

**THE MAN:** I don't know...

**THE WOMAN:** Ever since... **(TO THE DAUGHTER)** Go and put some nail polish on your toes, darling, the guests will be here any minute now. **(SHE WAITS FOR THE DAUGHTER TO EXIT)** Ever since your mother died... I told you so many times. But you've always found an excuse. If it's not the garbage, it's the dishes. Anything to spite me. Well, mister, it's not the garbage or the dishes this time. The house is spic and span and there is still this awful stink.

**THE MAN:** Well, spray some air freshener or something.

**THE WOMAN:** Air freshener? You're lucky I don't have the time for a proper fight. I don't like short fights, as you well know. I need the time, I need the space. But you never leave me any. And today, on this very auspicious day... You tell me to spray the air with some synthetic scent. If you did your duty as the man of the house, there would be no smell and no need for air freshener.

**THE MAN:** We don't have time...

**THE WOMAN:** Don't I know it?

**THE MAN:** I've told you about the smell so many times...

**THE WOMAN:** Yes, but have you ever done anything about it?

**THE MAN:** I've always had a very powerful sense of smell.

**THE WOMAN:** That's because you have no other senses. You can't see, you can't hear. As for touch... I should have listened to Daddy, you know. He said, the moment he saw you, this man has no sense. And he wasn't even talking about common sense. Because all your other senses are so stunted,

you can smell. You can smell, I'll give you that. Oh, things I've given you, things I keep giving you. I'm a giving person, that's my nature. It's the way I've been brought up. I wasn't an only child like you. I was the oldest, you know, I had responsibilities, I had to take care of the younger ones. Whereas you... I've always blamed your mother for that.

**THE MAN:** I'm glad you agree I can smell.

**THE WOMAN:** That's because I am an agreeable person. If you didn't start fights all the time, we'd have such a blissful existence.

**THE MAN:** I am happy.

**THE WOMAN:** It's not enough, being happy. You must do something about the smell. The guests will arrive any time now. Why don't you spray some air freshener or something. Once the guests are gone, then you can find the source of it. I don't want my house smelling like this.

**THE MAN:** She's an only child, too.

**THE WOMAN:** Who?

**THE MAN:** Dolly.

**THE WOMAN:** Are you blaming me for that? I always wanted children, plenty of them. I like little children. The problem is they grow up. Sometimes they even grow up to be like their parents. If we had a son, he could grow up to be like you.

**THE MAN:** I would have liked to have a son.

**THE WOMAN:** We have the most beautiful daughter. The wedding dress is so becoming. She is so pretty, especially when she puts nail polish on her toes. Don't you think she is pretty?

**THE MAN:** She's looking more and more like your mother.

**THE WOMAN:** Better than looking like your mother. Oh, this smell.

**THE MAN:** It is your chrysanthemums. I told you not to get chrysanthemums. I told you they stink.

**THE WOMAN:** You would deny me the pleasure of having white chrysanthemums for the wedding of my only daughter. You would, wouldn't you?

**THE MAN:** She's my daughter, too.

**THE WOMAN:** With men, you can never be sure...

**THE MAN:** She looks like my mother...

**THE WOMAN:**... One minute you think they like chrysanthemums, the next minute they tell you they don't.

**THE MAN:** I never...

**THE WOMAN:** Go and check the cellar. I'm sure it's something you've left there that's rotten, or worse still, rotting, or in the process of rotting, maybe at the throes of rotting, or at the threshold...

**THE MAN:** I keep my cellar clean.

**THE WOMAN:** My cellar, is it? That's your idea of sharing. You selfish lout. That cellar belongs to both of us.

**THE MAN:** But separately.

**THE WOMAN:** Of course.

**THE MAN:** Therefore, I can say it's mine, just as you can say it's yours.

**THE WOMAN:** That's not logical. It can't be mine if it's yours. It would be mine if it was ours.

**THE MAN:** That's old hat. Cartesian logic died long ago, haven't you heard? Maybe I haven't told you. Well, I'm telling you now. Cartesian logic is dead.

**THE WOMAN:** Dead and buried?

**THE MAN:** I don't know about that. But dead, anyway.

**THE WOMAN:** Maybe it's that, stinking in the cellar.

**THE MAN:** Logic doesn't stink, even Cartesian logic.

**THE WOMAN:** Yours does. Go and check it anyway.

**THE MAN:** I know about Cartesian logic. I don't need to check it.

**THE WOMAN:** The cellar. Go and check the cellar. I don't want wedding guests in a stinking house.

**THE MAN:** This is all we've got.

**THE WOMAN:** All the more reason. And I'll spray some air freshener.

**THE MAN:** Synthetic scent, you said. You said you didn't want to.

**THE WOMAN:** You leave me no alternative. If you'd kept your cellar clean, I wouldn't have to.

**THE MAN:** How do you know it's not clean? You never go there.

**THE WOMAN:** To your cellar, definitely not. I wouldn't set a foot there. It's horrific. But I go and visit my own cellar regularly, and it's spic and span. It's always been so. Not like your cellar. Go and check your cellar.

**THE MAN:** It's dark.

**THE WOMAN:** Because you don't light it. You have this crazy notion that good wine should be kept in the dark.

**THE MAN:** It gives out heat.

**THE WOMAN:** The wine?

**THE MAN:** No, the light, the light source. And wine has to be kept cool. That's why I don't have any lights there. Consequently, it's dark. Even your Cartesian logic should figure that out.

**THE WOMAN:** I thought you'd said it was dead.

**THE MAN:** For you it's not. So, use it.

**THE WOMAN:** Are you going down to the cellar, or aren't you?

**THE MAN:** Mutual exclusivity.

**THE WOMAN:** What?

**THE MAN:** Mutual exclusivity. A typical attribute of Cartesian logic. See, even if you say you don't, you still use it.

**THE WOMAN:** What?

**THE MAN:** Cartesian logic. That's your downfall. If I just stuck my head in there, would that be considered going down to the cellar, since the purpose of the exercise is to check it?

**THE WOMAN:** You can't check it by just sticking your head in there. Maybe your nose. If you had a long enough nose, you could sniff every corner of it, and that would be checking. Unfortunately I didn't take my mother's advice and marry this wonderful young man with a long nose. I thought his nose was too long. And now I am stuck with someone who's afraid of the dark.

**THE MAN:** I'm not afraid of the dark. I took the wine out, didn't I?

**THE WOMAN:** Without ever going down into the cellar. I don't know how you manage.

**THE MAN:** How could I have taken the wine out without going down into the cellar? You've seen the bottle. 64. Bordeaux. Living proof that I'm not afraid of the dark.

**THE WOMAN:** That's a leap of faith.

**THE MAN:** No, it's not.

**THE WOMAN:** From Bordeaux to the cellar. It's a huge leap if ever I've seen one.

**THE MAN:** I'll go and spray the chrysanthemums.

**THE WOMAN:** You will do no such thing.

**THE MAN:** You like the way they look. Becoming a white wedding, you would say. For me smell is more important. It won't change the way they look.

**THE WOMAN:** Leave my chrysanthemums alone.

**THE MAN:** You won't ever notice the difference. For you it's only appearances. I'll spray it with the gardenia spray.

**THE WOMAN:** That's ridiculous. Anyone can tell chrysanthemums do not smell of gardenia. It would be all fake.

**THE MAN:** Your chrysanthemums are all fake, anyway. Haven't you noticed? They've been grown in a greenhouse.

**THE WOMAN:** So?

**THE MAN:** They're not natural, so a bit of gardenia spray will enhance their unnaturalness.

**(THE DAUGHTER ENTERS IN HER WEDDING DRESS, BAREFOOT, CARRYING A BASKET. SHE HAS LOTS OF GARDENIA IN HER HAIR AND DRESS, BUT NO NAIL POLISH ON HER TOES.)**

**THE DAUGHTER:** Hey no nonny, nonny, hey nonny...

**(THE MAN STARTS DANCING WITH THE DAUGHTER. IT'S A SLOW, DREAMY KIND OF DANCE.)**

**THE WOMAN:** I'll go and check the napkins. **(EXITS)**

**THE DAUGHTER:** **(AFTER THE WOMAN)** Fare you well, my dove.

**(THE MAN STOPS THE DANCE AS SOON AS THE WOMAN EXITS.)**

**THE MAN:** You haven't used up all the gardenia spray, I hope.

**THE DAUGHTER:** I never even touched it. I promise I didn't. Cross my heart and hope to die.

**THE MAN:** There's a distinct gardenia smell in your hair.

**THE DAUGHTER:** I love that smell.

**THE MAN:** So do I. You must wash it off immediately.

**THE DAUGHTER:** Can I wash it a bit later? Please! Oh, please, please daddy!

**THE MAN:** Oh, well, all right. I'm just too soft with you. It grandmother found out... I'll go and wash my hands, then... **(EXITS)**

**(THE DAUGHTER DANCES SLOWLY IN THE SAME DREAMY WAY.)**

**THE GRANDMOTHER:** **(APPEARS. SHE'S WEARING A GREEN, FRILLY DRESS. SINGS.)** I feel pretty, oh so pretty, I feel pretty and witty and gay... **(SHE DANCES FOR THE DAUGHTER.)**

**THE DAUGHTER:** Wonderful. You're so old, grandmother, but so pretty, witty and gay...

**THE GRANDMOTHER:** You will be, too, when you're as old as me.

**THE DAUGHTER:** You don't look old at all.

**THE GRANDMOTHER:** Neither do you, my child, neither do you.

**THE DAUGHTER:** You never age any more.

**THE GRANDMOTHER: (SINGS. THE DAUGHTER DANCES TO THE TUNE.)** I feel charming, oh so charming, it's alarming how charming I feel...

**(THE GRANDMOTHER STARTS DANCING WITH THE DAUGHTER. THE DANCE GOES ON FOR A WHILE WITH THE GRANDMOTHER SINGING AND THE DAUGHTER THROWING OFF THE GARDENIA IN A COQUETTISH WAY. THE GRANDMOTHER STOPS. WHILE THE DAUGHTER STILL CONTINUES DANCING, THE GRANDMOTHER MOVES INTO A CORNER, TAKES OUT A GREEN BLANKET FROM UNDER HER DRESS, LIES DOWN AND COVERS HERSELF. THE DAUGHTER LOOKS AROUND, CAN NOT SEE THE GRANDMOTHER, STOPS AND COLLECTS ALL THE FLOWERS AND PUTS THEM INTO THE BASKET. A BRIGHT RED LIGHT LIGHTS BOTH HER AND THE GRANDMOTHER. THE DAUGHTER ARRANGES HER VEIL TO LOOK LIKE A HOOD.)**

**THE DAUGHTER: (KNOCKS ON AN IMAGINARY DOOR)** Grandmother, grandmother!

**THE GRANDMOTHER: (IN A HUSKY VOICE)** Come in my girl, come in my lovely, pretty, beautiful, my scrumptious little girl.

**THE DAUGHTER:** Why grandmother, you have such big eyes...

**THE GRANDMOTHER:** To see you better with.

**THE DAUGHTER:** I brought you some apples, grandmother. Why are you in the dark, grandmother?

**THE GRANDMOTHER:** Because my eyes are so big, they let in too much light. So I have to sit in the dark, otherwise my eyes hurt.



**THE DAUGHTER:** They are lovely apples grandmother.

**THE GRANDMOTHER:** Come close my girl, my pretty girl, my scrumptious, delicious pretty little girl.

**THE DAUGHTER:** Why grandmother, you have such big ears.

**THE GRANDMOTHER:** To hear you better with.

**THE DAUGHTER:** They're lovely apples grandmother, red and juicy and crisp.

**THE GRANDMOTHER:** Like my lovely, pretty little crunchy girl.

**THE DAUGHTER:** Why is it so quiet here, grandmother?

**THE GRANDMOTHER:** Because I have such big ears, I must turn down all the sounds. I can't stand noise, my lovely little girl, it gives me such a horrible headache. Come closer my lovely, pretty, tasty little girl.

**THE DAUGHTER:** Why grandmother, you have such a big mouth.

**THE GRANDMOTHER:** To...

**(THE WOMAN ENTERS AS THE LIGHTS SUDDENLY CHANGE BACK TO NORMAL AND THE GRANDMOTHER DISAPPEARS.)**

**THE WOMAN:** Are you still here, daydreaming? I know it's your big day and you must feel awkward, what with the wedding dress and everything... But you must pull yourself together. If we women don't pull ourselves together, the whole world would burst at the seams. That's why I've always wanted you to be seamstress. But you never took my advice. If I had my life to live all over again, I don't think I would want to be a seamstress, though. It's tedious.

**THE DAUGHTER:** Grandmother...

**THE WOMAN:** No, she wasn't a seamstress, either. **(TIDIES THE DAUGHTER'S DRESS AND VEIL.)** Your father keeps thinking she was, but your father is always wrong, except in matters of the nose. He's got a good nose for things. Things that stink, that is. It figures. When you cause the stink yourself, it's very easy to pick up the smell. He's always had it so easy. I've always been behind him. As you will be

behind your husband. And when you are behind your husband, he won't be able to see you. I know I probably should have told you these things before, but one always thinks that one's child is still a baby. In one blink of the eye, you've grown up, became a woman and now you are marrying. This is the happiest day of my life. **(WEEPS)** You should know I am always behind you. That's why you won't see me any more, after you get married. And you will be behind your husband, don't ever forget that. That's why you must always carry your mirror with you. Take it out every now and then and show yourself to him. But you must always be behind him, in sickness and in health, and all that stuff. You can use the mirror for other purposes too. To cut your toe-nails for example, when you grow fat and can't see your toes. But take my advice, this is your mother speaking. Flick the mirror every now and then, on carefully selected occasions and show yourself to him. Always through the mirror. If it ever gets broken, you know I am behind you, so just turn your head and tell me. I know this glazier, he's an old family friend. I can always get you a new mirror at a good discount. Well, it's important, especially when you're newly married, to be thrifty, if you get my drift...

**THE DAUGHTER:** Yes, mother.

**THE WOMAN: (HAS FINISHED TIDYING UP THE DAUGHTER'S DRESS)**

That's much better, don't you think? But you can't see it. Of course. Sorry, it's just that I'm so excited. Where's the mirror? Have a look at yourself. Then go and check the candles on the table.

**THE DAUGHTER:** Yes, mother.

**(A LONG MELODY DOOR-BELL IS HEARD)**

**THE WOMAN:** Don't tell me they're here already!

**THE DAUGHTER:** They're not here.

**THE WOMAN:** Haven't you heard the door-bell? Isn't it funny we still call it the door-bell, when it's not a bell at all any more? They must be here.

**THE DAUGHTER:** No mother.

**THE WOMAN:** That's a good girl.

**THE DAUGHTER:** Who do you think it is mother? I am young and naive, I can't guess. You are wise and mature, mother, don't you feel wonderful that you're so wise and so mature that you can guess who it is at the door?

**(THE DOOR-BELL RINGS AGAIN)**

**THE WOMAN:** Surely he can hear that.

**THE DAUGHTER:** Hear what?

**THE WOMAN:** That's rude. You should have said, whom might he hear, dear mother?

**THE DAUGHTER:**...as there is nobody at the door...

**THE WOMAN:** He's got no sense, your father. That's why we bought this door-bell. Because it is loud and expensive. Surely he can hear that.

**(THE SOUND OF A DOOR OPENING. THEY BOTH STOP AND LISTEN. THERE IS NO OTHER SOUND. THE WOMAN QUICKLY GOES TO THE DAUGHTER AND BLOCKS HER EARS.)**

**THE WOMAN:** It's bad luck to hear such things before the wedding.

**(THE SOUND OF A DOOR CLOSING.)**

**THE WOMAN:** It's over, thank God. My poor baby, what are you going to do when your mother is no longer with you to block your ears?

**THE DAUGHTER:** Sorry, mother, I can't hear you.

**THE WOMAN: (MOVES HER HANDS AWAY)** You don't have to show yourself. That's one advantage of being the bride. Nobody expects you to be polite, until after the wedding. It falls on us, as your parents, to do the boring work...

**(THE MAN ENTERS, CARRYING A GIFT-WRAPPED BOX)**

**THE WOMAN:** Don't tell me!

**(THE MAN JUST STANDS THERE, WITH THE BOX.)**

**THE DAUGHTER:** Who was it, Daddy?

**THE MAN: (TAKES THE DAUGHTER TO ONE SIDE)** It was the Blacks...

**THE WOMAN:** The Blacks are here? I should have guessed that. They're always on time, if not early. As they are not on time now, I should have guessed they're early.

**THE MAN:** They're not here.

**THE WOMAN:** You think you can keep it a secret between father and daughter, do you? I've heard you, mister. I am not short of hearing like you, you know. I can hear and I can see. Of course, I couldn't see who it was because it was you who opened the door.

**THE MAN:** They apologised that they couldn't be at the wedding and left the present.

**THE WOMAN:** Not present? Our best friends? How can they do this to me? After all that I've done for them. I fed their cat for three days when they were away frolicking in the Caribbean. It wasn't my fault that the stupid cat got run over by a sea-plane.

**THE MAN:** It wasn't a sea-plane.

**THE WOMAN:** That's what the autopsy report said.

**THE MAN:** I know that. But it was somewhat far-fetched. The poor cat wasn't even wet.

**THE WOMAN:** It was a very hot day. It would have dried by the time we got there.

**THE DAUGHTER: (TAKES THE BOX FROM THE MAN)** Can I open it?  
Please, please, can I open it?

**THE WOMAN:** Definitely not. Not until after there isn't one guest in sight.

**THE DAUGHTER:** I can't see any guests.

**THE WOMAN:** Because they haven't arrived yet. I can understand you getting impatient, my dear, but it's definitely out of the question.

**THE DAUGHTER:** Can I have a peek?

**THE MAN:** Let her have a peek.

**THE WOMAN:** Oh, well. I am being soft again, don't you forget that. When I am old and decrepit, remember how soft I've been.

**THE DAUGHTER:** Thank you, mother. Oh, thank you, thank you. I am so excited.

**(THE DAUGHTER STARTS UNWRAPPING THE PRESENT. THE WOMAN AND THE MAN BOTH WATCH WITH GREAT CURIOSITY. THE DAUGHTER GETS RID OF THE WRAPPING.)**

**THE MAN: (JUBILANT)** It's a toaster, it's a toaster. Isn't this wonderful! It makes me feel like it's a wedding. One can't have a wedding without a toaster. Aren't the Blacks wonderful?

**THE WOMAN:** Why didn't they come in? How were they dressed? Did they say anything? Didn't they even wish eternal happiness for our daughter? What kind of friends are they? Just dumping a measly toaster and disappearing like that? **(TO THE MAN)** What did you do to them?

**(THE DAUGHTER HAS NOW TAKEN THE TOASTER OUT OF ITS BOX. SHE EXAMINES IT AS IF SHE'S SEEN ONE FOR THE FIRST TIME.)**

**THE MAN:** They said they had unusually sensitive noses and heavy smells made them nauseous. They were very polite about it.

**THE WOMAN:** You still haven't done anything about the smell, have you? If it goes on like this we'll have no more friends left. Only those who can't smell. And who wants them for friends, huh?

**THE MAN:** I can't blame them.

**THE WOMAN:** I'm blaming you.

**THE MAN:** I don't smell. I only washed this morning. And you've always said my breath smells very fresh, especially after I started using that new toothpaste you bought me.

**(THE DAUGHTER IS ON THE FLOOR, PLAYING WITH THE TOASTER.)**

**THE WOMAN:** I couldn't sleep with a man with bad breath, that's why.

**THE MAN:** All the same.

**THE WOMAN:** What do you mean all the same? For you it is, isn't it? As long as it's female. Bad breath or not, as long as...

**THE MAN:** One has to look deeper... **(TO THE DAUGHTER)** Stop playing with that, you'll hurt yourself! It's got sharp edges!

**THE WOMAN:** You can't even look as deep as the cellar.

**THE MAN:** I do. I have.

**THE WOMAN:** Without the lights on.

**THE MAN:** I've explained all that...

**(THE DOOR-BELL RINGS AGAIN.)**

**THE WOMAN:** I'll get it this time. I want to get to the bottom of this. **(EXITS)**

**THE DAUGHTER:** Do I have to eat toast when I am married, daddy? I don't like toast. It hurts my gums.

**THE MAN:** That's not normal, dear. At your age, your gums shouldn't hurt. Your grandmother's gums hurt, even when she was young, but she's always been very old. Maybe you need some extra vitamins or something. Tell your husband to have them checked.

**THE DAUGHTER:** I don't like toast...

**(THE WOMAN ENTERS WITH A BOX OF IDENTICAL SHAPE AND SIZE, BUT A DIFFERENT WRAPPING.)**

**THE MAN:** Another toaster! How wonderful!

**THE WOMAN:** They didn't even bring it themselves.

**THE MAN:** Who was it Cherie?

**THE WOMAN:** They were just waving from the street corner. I don't know how they managed to ring the bell and run to the street corner in such a short time. I know Mr. White has been at athlete, but Mrs. White... She couldn't run to save her life. This was at the door.

**THE MAN:** Isn't it nice?

**THE WOMAN:** No, it's not nice. Mrs. White was gesticulating from the street corner. Mr. White was smiling and waving. Mrs White was gesticulating and holding her nose. As if she had a nice nose. Really! Why don't some people ever look at themselves in the mirror, I'll never know.

**THE DAUGHTER:** Can I have it, mummy? Please, please mummy, can I have the present, please, please...

**THE MAN:** It does smell. The smell is not getting any better. In fact, it is getting worse. Have you noticed it, Cherie? Would you agree that it is getting worse? Do you think Mrs. White holding her nose had anything to do with the smell?

**THE DAUGHTER:** Please, please, mummy...

**THE MAN: (GIVES THE BOX TO THE DAUGHTER.)** Here, darling!

**(THE DAUGHTER TEARS OFF THE GIFT WRAPPING, BUT LOOKING AT THE BOX AND SEEING THAT IT IS A TOASTER, LEAVES THE BOX UNOPENED. SHE PLAYS WITH THE FIRST TOASTER AND THE BOX.)**

**THE WOMAN:** How should I know? You are the one boasting this wonderful sense of smell. As if it was anything to write home about. Come to think of it, I think I did once write to Daddy about it. But that was in the early days, when you were out to impress me. And I must say I was impressed by your efforts to impress me. So I wrote to Dad that you were really impressive. Dad wasn't impressed.

**(THE DOOR-BELL RINGS. THE MAN AND WOMAN LOOK AT EACH OTHER AND NEITHER MOVES. THE DOOR-BELL RINGS AGAIN.)**

**THE MAN: (TO THE DAUGHTER)** Why don't you see who it is, darling? It may be another wonderful pressie for you, you never know.

**(THE DAUGHTER GOES OUT. THE SOUND OF A DOOR OPENING.)**

**THE WOMAN:** Sometimes you are considerate, I must say. But I really hate you when you're not considerate.

**THE MAN:** I couldn't bear another woman gesticulating at you from a street-corner.  
It's degrading, disgusting... It's awful...

**THE WOMAN:** You sometimes understand perfectly how I feel. I could kill you  
when you don't. You can be so infuriating.

**(THE SOUND OF A DOOR CLOSING.)**

**THE WOMAN:** Shush! She mustn't hear us fighting! We must set a good example.  
Especially now that she is going to have her own little love nest...

**(THE DAUGHTER ENTERS WITH A PILE OF -PERHAPS A DOZEN OR SO- BOXES OF IDENTICAL SIZE AND SHAPE AS THE FIRST TWO, ONLY WITH DIFFERENT KINDS OF WRAPPING.)**

**THE WOMAN:** Who was it, dear?

**THE DAUGHTER:** I can use them for building blocks.

**THE MAN:** Answer when you're spoken to, darling. Mum asked you who it was.  
Besides I am very curious as well.

**THE DAUGHTER:** I don't know. There was nobody at the door. Just these...

**THE WOMAN:** You have checked the street corner, haven't you? That's where they  
usually go, after putting the present at our door-step.

**THE DAUGHTER:** I looked out, there was nobody there. **(STARTS BUILDING A  
TOWER, USING THE BOXES AS BUILDING BLOCKS.)**

**THE WOMAN:** I want to see who they're from.

**THE MAN:** It doesn't matter now.

**THE WOMAN:** It does, to me.

**THE DAUGHTER:** **(TAKES THE CARDS FROM THE BOXES VERY CAREFULLY SO AS NOT TO UPSET THE TOWER AND READS THEM)** The Browns, the Greens, the Mauves, the Scarlets, the Cyclamens...

**THE WOMAN:** The Cyclamens? We don't know them. Are they French?



**THE MAN:** They are Greek, Cherie, and we do know them. They're the ones with the pinkish, crimson...

**THE WOMAN:** Oh, them. Oh, well... **(EXAMINES THE CYCLAMENS' BOX.)**  
They are well adapted. You can't really tell them apart, can you? That's nice.

**THE MAN:** And you thought they were French?

**THE WOMAN:** It must be because of the wine...

**THE MAN:** Peculiar, that. Because your French is better than mine.

**(THE WOMAN BLINKS AND WINKS FLIRTATIVELY AT THE MAN. THE DOOR-BELL RINGS. ALL THREE RUSH OUT.)**

**THE GRANDMOTHER: (APPEARS)** Rapunzel, Rapunzel, where are you?

**(AS THE GRANDMOTHER WANDERS OFF, THE OTHERS COME IN, EACH LADEN WITH BOXES OF IDENTICAL SHAPE AND SIZE, BUT WITH DIFFERENT WRAPPINGS. THE DAUGHTER DIRECTS THEM TO WHERE SHE'D BUILT THE TOWER. THEY PUT THE BOXES DOWN. THE DAUGHTER STARTS BUILDING A BIGGER TOWER USING THE NEW BOXES.)**

**THE WOMAN:** It's so frustrating.

**THE MAN:** I feel tense.

**THE WOMAN:** It's so hard with children around.

**THE MAN:** She's not a child any more. She's getting married today. She's grown up, she's a woman.

**THE WOMAN:** And she is pretty.

**THE MAN:** Never as pretty as you, my love.

**THE WOMAN:** You're only saying this to get me into the bed.

**THE MAN:** And you are being pretty to get me into the bed, aren't you, my lovey dovey?

**THE WOMAN:** It's such a glorious day.

**THE MAN: (ADVANCES)** We're still young. We have a long life ahead of us.

**THE WOMAN: (TEASES)** The guests will be here soon. I haven't even put water  
in the vases yet.

**THE MAN:** You teaser.

**THE WOMAN:** You are a stud, aren't you?

**(THE MAN AND THE WOMAN GO TO ONE CORNER, AWAY FROM THE EYES OF THE DAUGHTER, AND START HAVING SEX. THE DAUGHTER HAS BUILT THE TOWER BY NOW. MIST.)**

**THE GRANDMOTHER: (APPEARS. TO THE DAUGHTER)** Oh, here you are.

**THE DAUGHTER:** It's a long way up here, I can't hear you.

**THE GRANDMOTHER:** Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair!

**THE DAUGHTER:** I can only smell.

**THE GRANDMOTHER:** Your lovely, long, shiny, golden hair. Let down your hair  
Rapunzel!

**THE DAUGHTER:** Is that a cloud of dust on the horizon?

**THE GRANDMOTHER:** Your hair is strong, the tower is steep. Let down your  
hair, my lovely child! Let down your long, shiny, golden hair.

**THE DAUGHTER:** I feel so wonderful, so free, in this tower, and so safe.

**THE GRANDMOTHER:** Your hair Rapunzel, your hair!

**THE DAUGHTER:** Oh, my hair. **(SHE LOOKS DOWN AND SEES THE GRANDMOTHER. SHE TAKES OFF HER HAIR AND THROWS IT DOWN TO THE GRANDMOTHER, REVEALING UNKEMPT GRAY HAIR UNDERNEATH. THE GRANDMOTHER PUTS ON THE HAIR.)**

**THE GRANDMOTHER:** Let me up, let me up!

**THE DAUGHTER:** I can't! I've got no hair!

**THE GRANDMOTHER:** It's all right. I'll give it to you when I came up. Just let  
me up!

**THE DAUGHTER:** I can't. Where's my mirror? I must look at my hair.

**THE GRANDMOTHER:** I'll give you a mirror, a silver mirror, when I came up.

Just let me up!

**(THE DOOR-BELL RINGS. THE GRANDMOTHER IS STARTLED AND HITS THE TOWER. THE TOWER TUMBLES DOWN, BURYING THE DAUGHTER. THE MAN AND THE WOMAN ALSO GET UP WITH THE DOOR-BELL, TIDY THEMSELVES UP. THE GRANDMOTHER HAS DISAPPEARED.)**

**THE MAN: (TO THE DAUGHTER)** Get the door, will you darling? I think there's someone at the door.

**(THE DOOR-BELL RINGS AGAIN. THE DAUGHTER EMERGES FROM UNDER THE BOXES. HER HAIR IS IN PLACE, AND SHE LOOKS AT THE MAN QUIZZICALLY.)**

**THE MAN:** The door, darling!

**THE DAUGHTER:** I was just...

**THE WOMAN:** This is your big day darling, we mustn't keep the guests waiting, it's not nice. Even if the guests so far have not been nice, that doesn't mean we shouldn't be nice to the other guests who might turn out to be nice.

**(THE DOOR-BELL RINGS AGAIN.)**

**THE MAN:** There must be a whole crowd at the door. This is the third ring.

**THE WOMAN:** Tidy up your dress, darling. We can't afford another wedding dress you know, if you mess this one up.

**(THE DOOR-BELL RINGS AGAIN.)**

**THE MAN:** Four.

**THE WOMAN:** It could well be just one person ringing five times.

**THE MAN:** Four.

**(THE MAN AND THE WOMAN LOOK AT THE DAUGHTER TO REFEREE.)**

**THE DAUGHTER:** I can't count.

**THE MAN: (MEANING THE WOMAN)** Neither can she.

**THE WOMAN:** It was four.

**(THE DOOR-BELL RINGS AGAIN)**

**THE MAN:** Five.

**THE WOMAN:** That's what I said in the first place. **(TO THE DAUGHTER)** Go and open the door, dear. I think these are nice people; they haven't rung the door-bell and run away like some others who are supposed to be our friends.

**THE DAUGHTER:** All right, all right... **(GOES OUT)**

**THE MAN:** That was a close shave.

**THE WOMAN:** Do you think she...

**THE MAN:** She was playing with the toasters. She is so innocent...

**THE WOMAN:** All right, then. Are you all right?

**THE MAN:** Yes. You?

**THE WOMAN: (MEANING SO-SO)** Mmm-mh.

**THE MAN:** Only mmm-mh?

**THE WOMAN:** The noise. I have an aversion to loud noises, you should know that by now.

**THE MAN:** Oh, well, the next time... We have a long life ahead...

**(THE DAUGHTER ENTERS WITH THE TWO ZAP MEN. THE ZAP MEN HAVE PEGS ON THEIR NOSES AND CARRY LARGE TOOL-BOXES.)**

**THE MAN:** Hello. So lovely to see you. Do we know you?

**THE WOMAN:** Do we know them?

**(THE DAUGHTER GOES BACK TO PLAYING WITH THE BOXES.)**

**THE MAN:** I don't know, Cherie. I'm sure they're invited.

**THE WOMAN:** Do we know you?

**1. ZAP MAN:** Do you know us? Do you know us! (**INTRODUCES 2. ZAP MAN**)

This is Joe. (**INTRODUCES HIMSELF**) Jim.

**2. ZAP MAN:** Yes?

**1. ZAP MAN:** No, Jim, you're Joe.

**2. ZAP MAN:** Of course.

**THE MAN:** You must be...

**1. ZAP MAN:** Must we?

**2. ZAP MAN:** If you say so. Always pleased to oblige.

**THE WOMAN:** So glad to see you. You see, we had a few... how shall I say it...  
rude guests, so we just want to make sure...

**1. ZAP MAN:** Sure.

**THE WOMAN:** All we got were these toasters. You can only see one of them now,  
it's there, somewhere, but we're quite sure that the other boxes contain  
toasters, too.

**THE MAN:** Each.

**THE WOMAN:** What?

**THE MAN:** They might get the impression that there are a number of toasters in each  
box... The way you said it... (**TO THE ZAP MEN**) We have reason to  
believe that each of these boxes contains a toaster... Each.

**1. ZAP MAN:** I see.

**2. ZAP MAN:** Why?

**THE WOMAN:** Presents. Wedding presents.

**THE MAN:** (**TO THE WOMAN**) Now Cherie, there's absolutely no reason to  
embarrass them. Perhaps they haven't brought any toasters.

**(THE TWO ZAP MEN GO TO THE BOXES AND WRESTLE AWAY TWO BOXES FROM THE DAUGHTER WHILE THE MAN AND THE WOMAN ARE TALKING.)**

**THE WOMAN:** I don't see why this should be embarrassing. They could have brought other presents.

**THE MAN:** I didn't see anything.

**THE WOMAN:** They might have them in their pockets. They might be small presents. Good things come in small packages, I've always said.

**THE MAN:** This is the first I've heard of it...

**1. ZAP MAN: (PRESENTS ONE OF THE BOXES)** Here. I'm sorry. We thought perhaps the newly marrieds could use a toaster. It's such a basic...

**2. ZAP MAN: (PRESENTS THE BOX)** We really have no imagination. So we thought we should play it safe.

**THE WOMAN:** Better safe than sorry. **(LAUGHS. THE OTHERS JOIN HER IN POLITE LAUGHTER.)**

**THE MAN:** So...

**1. ZAP MAN:** Exactly...

**2. ZAP MAN:** That's what I've always said.

**(POLITE LAUGHTER ALL AROUND.)**

**1. ZAP MAN:** So, this is the little bride, eh?

**(THE ZAP MEN GO TO THE DAUGHTER.)**

**2. ZAP MAN:** Lovely girl.

**1. ZAP MAN:** Such shiny hair.

**2. ZAP MAN:** Such demeanour! **(PINCHES THE DAUGHTER'S CHEEK.)**

**1. ZAP MAN:** Just ripe. **(PINCHES THE DAUGHTER'S BOTTOM.)**

**2. ZAP MAN: (GRABS THE DAUGHTER'S BREAST.)** Firm, too.

**1. ZAP MAN:** Jim!

**2. ZAP MAN:** Joe!

**THE WOMAN:** We've always thought so. But again, being parents...

**1. ZAP MAN:** Exactly.

**2. ZAP MAN:** So hard being a parent these days.

**1. ZAP MAN:** You must be proud.

**2. ZAP MAN:** Very proud.

**1. ZAP MAN:** Proud parents.

**2. ZAP MAN:** Where's the bridegroom?

**1. ZAP MAN:** Maybe he's too shy to come out.

**2. ZAP MAN: (LIKE CALLING A PET)** Bridegroom, bridegroom, bridegroom...

**THE MAN:** I don't think he's arrived yet.

**1. ZAP MAN:** Oh.

**2. ZAP MAN:** Oh.

**THE WOMAN:** He will, I'm sure. In no time.

**1. ZAP MAN:** Well...

**2. ZAP MAN:** Well...

**THE MAN:** Do you know him? The bridegroom? He's such a lovely boy.

**1. ZAP MAN:** Do we know him?

**2. ZAP MAN:** Do we know him!

**(POLITE LAUGHTER ALL AROUND.)**

**THE WOMAN:** He's got a mole on his left hip, so his mother tells me. Lovely boy.

**1. ZAP MAN:** A mole, eh?

**2. ZAP MAN:** Mole or no mole, he's not here, is he?

**THE MAN:** I'm sure he'll turn up.

**THE WOMAN:** In no time.

**THE MAN:** In the meantime...

**THE WOMAN:** Just make yourselves comfortable. Would you like some hors d'oeuvres?

**THE ZAP MEN:** No.

1. **ZAP MAN:** No, thank you.

2. **ZAP MAN:** Thank you, no. You see we are not allowed to, when we're on duty...

1. **ZAP MAN:** Joe!

2. **ZAP MAN:** Jim!

1. **MAN:** What he means is, you shouldn't feel it a duty to serve us hors d'oeuvres. We are quite full.

2. **ZAP MAN:** Quite full, really.

1. **ZAP MAN:** Have you had a rehearsal yet?

**THE WOMAN:** Pardon?

1. **ZAP MAN:** The ceremony. You don't want anything to go wrong, do you? My advice to you, as a friend...

2. **ZAP MAN:** As a friend of the family...

1. **ZAP MAN:** You should have a rehearsal before the other guests arrive. We are like family.

2. **ZAP MAN:** We don't mind.

**THE MAN:** Oh, thank you. That's a good idea. We never thought of that. Don't you think it's a good idea, Cherie?

**THE WOMAN:** Yes... Of course.

1. **ZAP MAN:** Is the celebrant here yet?

2. **ZAP MAN:** The marriage celebrant?

**THE WOMAN:** No.

**THE MAN:** You know what they're like.

**THE WOMAN:** Always arriving at the last minute...



**(POLITE LAUGHTER ALL AROUND)**

**1. ZAP MAN:** He's not here.

**2. ZAP MAN:** Neither is the bridegroom.

**1. ZAP MAN:** My friend here, Jim happens to be...

**THE WOMAN:** You don't say!

**1. ZAP MAN:** He is. Really.

**2. ZAP MAN:** I am.

**THE MAN:** Then we can.

**THE WOMAN:** So nice of you.

**1. ZAP MAN:** What are family friends for?

**2. ZAP MAN:** The bridegroom...

**1. ZAP MAN:** I'll just have to do it. There is nobody else around.

**THE MAN:** Are you sure you don't mind?

**1. ZAP MAN:** Absolutely!

**THE WOMAN:** Wonderful. I don't have to cry. It's only a rehearsal, isn't that right?

**2. ZAP MAN:** That's optional. You must feel free. Absolutely free.

**THE MAN:** Well, let's get on with it. The guests will arrive any minute now. Are you sure you don't mind?

**1. ZAP MAN:** Absolutely.

**THE WOMAN:** I'm so excited.

**(THE MAN GOES AND DRAGS THE DAUGHTER FROM AMONG THE BOXES. 1. ZAP MAN TAKES THE DAUGHTER'S ARM AND FACES UPSTAGE. 2. ZAP MAN TAKES HIS PLACE UPSTAGE CENTRE AS THE MARRIAGE CELEBRANT. THE MAN ON ONE SIDE, THE WOMAN ON THE OTHER SIDE, FACING UPSTAGE. 1. ZAP MAN AND THE DAUGHTER SLOWLY WALK UPSTAGE. THE GRANDMOTHER**

**APPEARS DOWNSTAGE AND STARTS THROWING CONFETTI ON THE COUPLE FROM BEHIND. THE MAN AND THE WOMAN HUM THE WEDDING MARCH.)**

**ACT TWO**

**(2. ZAP MAN IS SITTING ON A TOOL-BOX, WITH A TABLE CLOTH SPREAD IN FRONT OF HIM AND A TOASTER BESIDE. A SERIES OF**

**SMALL EXPLOSIONS IS HEARD. 2. ZAP MAN TAKES NO NOTICE OF IT.)**

**THE MAN: (ENTERS)** Your friend said I would find you here. As if I'd lost you.  
Are you comfortable like that? Let me get a chair for you.

**2. ZAP MAN:** Jim.

**THE MAN:** My name isn't Jim.

**2. ZAP MAN:** My friend's name. I think you should learn our names, it looks like we might have to be with you for a while.

**THE MAN:** And you're Joe. I thought it was the other way around. It's all the commotion, you see, with the wedding and everything... My apologies.  
Oh, the chair...

**2. ZAP MAN:** Stop! Please. Where would you get the chair from?

**THE MAN:** The dining room.

**2. ZAP MAN:** That's what I thought. It's understandable. I'm sure this is the first time this is happening to you. So you really have no idea.

**THE MAN:** No.

**2. ZAP MAN:** Once one room is secure, one sticks to that room. Going into another room is risking serious contamination.

**THE MAN:** I didn't know.

**2. ZAP MAN:** Most people don't. It's perfectly excusable. But no. No chairs, thank you, if they're not in this room.

**THE MAN:** I can't see any.

**2. ZAP MAN:** There.

**(TWO SLICES OF TOAST POP UP FROM THE TOASTER. 2. ZAP MAN TAKES THEM AND STARTS SPREADING BUTTER ON THEM.)**

**THE MAN:** The least I can do is get some butter for you.

**2. ZAP MAN:** We carry our own butter with us always, as you can see. Not that we don't appreciate your hospitality, but one can not be too careful.

**THE MAN:** True.

**(2. ZAP MAN EATS.)**

**THE MAN:** How long do you think... I mean how long until... Can you perhaps give me some idea...

**2. ZAP MAN:** I could. Of course. But it wouldn't be accurate. It wouldn't be honest. One never knows what one might unearth in these situations. So it's company policy not to give any indication of time. Even an approximation...

**THE MAN:** I see...

**2. ZAP MAN:** That is if you want the job done properly. Otherwise I could be dishonest, as most of our competitors are, and give you a time, only to be proven a liar afterwards. We don't want that, do we?

**THE MAN:** Of course not.

**2. ZAP MAN:** As for the cost, I can only tell you that after a complete inspection is done. And that does take some time. I can see you're about to ask how much time...

**THE MAN: (PROTESTS)** No, no, I wasn't... Honestly...

**2. ZAP MAN:** Good. Joe should be here shortly. Then we'll be in a position to proceed with an evaluative assessment of the situation, followed by a strategic plan of action.

**THE MAN:** He's a good worker, your friend... Jim... He's already... What's he doing in the garden, if you don't mind my asking?

**2. ZAP MAN:** No, the customer always has a right to ask. And sometimes we even answer it. What Jim's doing is securing the security of a secure outcome.

**THE WOMAN: (ENTERS)** My daffodils are blown up. I don't want to sound ungrateful but, couldn't you, or your friend...

**2. ZAP MAN:** Joe...

**THE WOMAN:** Joe. Couldn't he dig the trench without blowing up my daffodils?

**2. ZAP MAN:** It's perfectly understandable and fair that you should ask that...

**THE WOMAN:** And how are the wedding guests going to get in? Are you going to build a bridge?

**THE MAN:** A moat, Cherie, it's called a moat!

**2. ZAP MAN:** **(TO THE MAN)** That's all right. **(TO THE WOMAN)** You have all the toasters that are ever going to come. I mean, I don't think there are any more guests coming. That, of course, makes the second question redundant.

**THE WOMAN:** The bridegroom... The celebrant... Perhaps even a draw bridge...

**2. ZAP MAN:** We'll cross that when we come to it.

**THE WOMAN:** He's such a lovely boy. He's got a mole on his right hip, so his mother tells me. I hope he won't be late.

**2. ZAP MAN:** Better late than never, madam.

**THE WOMAN:** That's what I've always said.

**2. ZAP MAN:** I could tell you are a lady of intelligence, not to mention style and discernment...

**THE WOMAN:** I am flattered...

**2. ZAP MAN:** That's company policy, madam, and I often agree with it. **(TO THE MAN)** Could you possibly go and check if Jim's finished his work, Sir? I can't hear any more explosions.

**THE MAN:** Certainly. **(GOES OUT.)**

**2. ZAP MAN:** Can I offer you some buttered toast, Madam?

**THE WOMAN:** I'm not sure. I hardly know you.

**2. ZAP MAN:** Jim, Madam. At your service. Our sole aim is to please you. As our motto says... **(KISSES HER HAND)**

**THE WOMAN:** **(BLUSHES)** Oh, stop it...

**2. ZAP MAN:** I can bet you anything that later on you'll be telling me not to stop. **(LOOKS HER IN THE EYES)** Isn't that right... Cherie?...

**THE WOMAN:** I don't know... This is the first time... I never...

**2. ZAP MAN:** I know... **(HIS KISSES START CLIMBING UP HER ARM.)**

**THE WOMAN:** Oh, stop it. I know I'll ask you not to stop later, but my husband...

**2. ZAP MAN:** Your husband is a gentleman, Madam. I could tell you are a lady of taste, the moment I saw your husband. We have to be very perceptive in this job, Madam. It is an essential requirement.

**(THE MAN COMES IN WITH 1. ZAP MAN, FOLLOWED BY THE DAUGHTER. THE DAUGHTER HAS NAIL POLISH ON HER TOES AND IS WEARING SHOES.)**

**THE DAUGHTER: (AS THEY COME IN)** He's going to put water in the ditch. Can I have some crocodiles, please. Please, please, Daddy, can I have some crocodiles please.

**THE MAN:** We'll discuss the moat later, Dolly, we have more pressing matters now. **(TO THE 2. ZAP MAN)** I must say you're very efficient. You don't lose any time.

**THE WOMAN:** I was only...

**2. ZAP MAN:** I'm glad you think so, Sir. We pride ourselves in doing a job efficiently. I imagine you want to know how long the job will take and how much we're going to charge you.

**THE MAN:** Precisely.

**THE DAUGHTER:** Just two, Daddy. Please, please just two little crocodiles. Oh, I would feel so safe.

**1. ZAP MAN:** That's an optional extra.

**THE MAN:** Let's get the essentials sorted out first.

**2. ZAP MAN:** My sentiments exactly. **(TO 1. ZAP MAN)** What do you reckon, Jim? **(1. ZAP MAN TAKES OUT A LAP-TOP COMPUTER FROM THE TOOL-BOX AND STARTS WORKING.)** In the meantime... **(TO THE DAUGHTER)** Would you like some toast? This is an excellent toaster.

**THE DAUGHTER:** I don't like toast. I want crocodiles.

**1. ZAP MAN:** If I may have your attention, please...

**2. ZAP MAN:** Shush!

**THE WOMAN:** We're listening.

**THE DAUGHTER:** Daddy!

**THE MAN:** Not now, Dolly!

**1. ZAP MAN:** The main problem area is the cellar. We've established that.

**THE WOMAN: (TO THE MAN)** I told you so. **(TO 1. ZAP MAN)** Which section of the cellar precisely?

**1. ZAP MAN:** That matters very little for our purposes, Madam. **(LOOKS AT THE COMPUTER)** We can't really say how long the cellar will take...

**THE MAN:** We must have some idea...

**1. ZAP MAN:** You're absolutely right. **(TO 2. ZAP MAN)** The customer wants to know how long it will take. **(2. ZAP MAN SHRUGS)** I'll tell you what. We'll do a fixed price deal for you. **(2. ZAP MAN STARTS TO PROTEST)** No, we'll do it. Although we only do it very rarely, only in extreme circumstances...

**THE WOMAN:** That's nice.

**2. ZAP MAN:** Because you are nice people. You are a very nice family. We look after the family.

**THE MAN:** Then what?

**2. ZAP MAN:** What do you mean?

**THE MAN:** After the cellar?

**1. ZAP MAN:** One can never know. That might be it. But one never knows. There might be other problem areas.

**THE WOMAN:** You are very thorough.

**2. ZAP MAN:** It's our job to be very thorough, Cherie, and we like our job. We pride ourselves in a job well done.

**THE WOMAN:** I can tell by the way you just turned up, when we were reaching crisis point.

**THE DAUGHTER:** Where are my boxes?

**2. ZAP MAN:** They had to go, unfortunately.

**THE DAUGHTER:** They were my wedding presents.

**THE MAN:** Come now, Dolly, the gentlemen are only doing their jobs.

**THE DAUGHTER:** What was wrong with my boxes?

**(2. ZAP MAN LOOKS AT 1. ZAP MAN, THEN TO THE MAN ASKING IF HE SHOULD TELL. BOTH APPROVE.)**

**2. ZAP MAN:** Toasters are designed to make toast. And no matter how well they're designed, there are always crumbs left in them. Oh, I'd be a rich man if I could design a toaster that has no crumbs in it.

**(1. ZAP MAN SIGNALS TO 2. ZAP MAN 'GET ON WITH IT')**

**2. ZAP MAN:** We had to dispose of your boxes, because we were told they contained toasters.

**THE MAN:** One each.

**2. ZAP MAN:** Yes. And we can't risk having loose crumbs lying about the place.

**THE WOMAN:** They were never used.

**1. ZAP MAN:** No offence Madam but it's obvious that you're not a professional.

**2. ZAP MAN:** You have heard of quality control, Cherie. How do you think they control the quality of toasters?

**THE WOMAN:** I don't know.

**2. ZAP MAN:** Precisely. By sticking slices of bread in them. To see if they work. So every brand new toaster, in fact, has been used at least once and contains some crumbs in them.



**THE MAN:** Amazing.

**1. ZAP MAN:** Jim's very good with details, I'm more of a broad-brush person myself.

**(1. ZAP MAN PUTS THE COMPUTER BACK INTO THE TOOL-BOX AND TAKES OUT SOME SORT OF A GAUGE.)**

**2. ZAP MAN:** So we had to get rid of them.

**(THE DAUGHTER STARTS SOBBING)**

**THE MAN: (TRIES TO CONSOLE THE DAUGHTER)** There, there...

**1. ZAP MAN: (LOOKING AT THE GAUGE)** Unfortunately there was no significant reduction in the level of smell. In fact, we have been recording a steady increase. But, if it's any consolation, the rate of increase has not been accelerating.

**2. ZAP MAN:** That's a comfort.

**THE WOMAN:** Can we have them back, then. Please. You can see how much my daughter is attached to her boxes.

**2. ZAP MAN:** They're incinerated, Cherie. Immediately.

**1. ZAP MAN:** On the spot.

**2. ZAP MAN:** One can not be too careful.

**1. ZAP MAN:** We'll check the levels again after we've gone through the cellar.

**(PUTS THE GAUGE AWAY.)**

**THE MAN:** My wine... I have all this old wine in the cellar. They won't be damaged...

**(THE ZAP MEN LOOK AT EACH OTHER GRAVELY.)**

**2. ZAP MAN:** Did you say wine, Sir?

**1. ZAP MAN:** Old wine?

**THE MAN:** Yes.

**2. ZAP MAN:** And you're telling us you have no idea where all the vermin is coming from?

**(1. ZAP MAN LAUGHS LOUDLY.)**

**THE MAN:** Not from the wine!

**2. ZAP MAN:** You sound like an ignoramus, Sir, if you don't mind my saying so. This... wine of yours presumably has cork stoppers.

**THE MAN: (BOASTING)** You get plastic or metal caps only in cheap wines.

**2. ZAP MAN:** My point precisely. So that the wine can breathe? Don't you realise what that means? Other things can breathe, too. Then they can get out of the bottle when they feel like it.

**1. ZAP MAN:** Rather like a genie.

**THE DAUGHTER:** Can I have my three wishes? Daddy, Daddy, please, can I talk to the genie, please.

**2. ZAP MAN:** The short of it, Sir, is that the wine has to go.

**THE MAN:** Some are from Bordeaux.

**2. ZAP MAN:** It matters very little, Sir whether they're from Bordeaux or Lapland.

**THE WOMAN:** I heard they use plastic stoppers in Lapland.

**(A SHORT PAUSE)**

**2. ZAP MAN:** My apologies, Cherie, my most profound apologies. Then, of course, it would matter. I was assuming, wrongly it appears, that the Lapp wine makers also used cork. You got me there. Such an intelligent woman. Well-informed, too.

**1. ZAP MAN:** Shall I get stuck into the wine?

**2. ZAP MAN:** We'll do it together. It can be rather dangerous. The company policy is never to let one person handle the wine.

**THE WOMAN:** That's smart.

**THE MAN:** So, do you think that will solve the problem, getting rid of the wine?

1. **ZAP MAN:** We'll measure the level afterwards.

2. **ZAP MAN:** But we must tackle the entire basement, not just the wine. Is there anything else in the cellar that you might care to tell us about?

**(THE MAN STARTS SNEAKING AWAY.)**

**THE WOMAN:** Where are you going?

**THE MAN:** You're the one who has a light in the cellar. You tell them. I'm going to the loo. **(EXITS)**

**THE DAUGHTER:** Wait, Daddy, I'm coming with you. **(EXITS)**

2. **ZAP MAN:** That was a bit suspect. You are a very perceptive woman Cherie, as well as having very nice legs. Don't you think this was a bit suspect?

**THE WOMAN:** He does go to the loo often.

1. **ZAP MAN:** Well...

2. **ZAP MAN:** Shall we go?

**THE WOMAN:** I'll turn the light on for you.

**(AS THEY EXIT, THE LIGHTS CHANGE TO BRILLIANT BALL-ROOM LIGHTS AND THE SOUND OF A STRAUSS WALTZ IS HEARD BEING PLAYED ON THE VIOLIN. THE DAUGHTER AND THE GRANDMOTHER ENTER, DANCING, FOLLOWED BY THE MAN, PLAYING THE VIOLIN. THE DANCE GOES ON FOR A WHILE. THEN LITTLE EXPLOSIONS AND THE SOUND OF BROKEN GLASS ARE HEARD, ONE AFTER THE OTHER, LIKE BOTTLES POPPING. THEN, NOISES OF THE ZAP MEN APPROACHING. THE MAN STOPS PLAYING.)**

**THE MAN:** It's time.

**(THE DAUGHTER RUNS OUT, LEAVING ONE SHOE BEHIND. THE MAN PICKS UP THE SHOE AND GOES OUT. THE GRANDMOTHER DISAPPEARS AS THE ZAP MEN AND THE WOMAN ENTER.)**

1. **ZAP MAN: (CARRYING A FLAME-THROWER)** This is most unsatisfactory, Madam.

**2. ZAP MAN:** Calm down now Jim. She told us she'd never seen the other side of the cellar.

**1. ZAP MAN:** Still...

**2. ZAP MAN:** We should have expected something like that...

**1. ZAP MAN:** Are you suggesting we've been amiss in our duties...

**2. ZAP MAN:** Not at all, not at all. But it is only a small step to guessing if there is wine in a cellar, it's very likely there might be champagne as well.

**1. ZAP MAN:** Still...

**(THE MAN ENTERS WITH THE SHOE IN HIS HAND.)**

**THE MAN:** Have you seen...

**THE WOMAN:** Shush!

**1. ZAP MAN:** So here you are. What have you to say for yourself?

**THE MAN:** I only collected it. She was in a rush when the time came and left it behind.

**1. ZAP MAN:** Champagne, huh?

**THE WOMAN:** I never drink champagne.

**THE MAN:** Champagne?

**2. ZAP MAN:** Yes, Sir, champagne. The champagne that you avoided alerting us about, the champagne that nearly blew in our faces, the champagne in the cellar.

**THE MAN:** You haven't blown it up?!

**1. ZAP MAN:** That is not the point, Sir, although I might say, yes, we have. We have done the job better than can be expected of anyone else, despite...

**2. ZAP MAN:** It could have been disastrous, Sir. Fortunately, being professionals we took the standard precautions. Otherwise you could have ended up with a hefty workers' compensation claim, not to mention two innocent Zap Men blown to smithereens.

**THE MAN:** Zap men?

**1. ZAP MAN:** We are the Zap men.

**2. ZAP MAN:** As if he didn't know. **(TO THE WOMAN)** Didn't you know, Cherie?

**THE WOMAN: (TO 2. ZAP MAN)** Oh, yes, yes, I did. Of course... **(TO THE MAN)** From the first moment I saw them.

**1. ZAP MAN:** See, Sir, it's no use playing innocent with us. Why didn't you tell us there was champagne in the cellar?

**THE MAN:** It never occurred to me.

**1. ZAP MAN:** It never occurred to him...

**THE MAN:** Honestly.

**2. ZAP MAN:** Honestly!

**1. ZAP MAN:** Surely you're not so ignorant not to know that champagne explodes?

**THE MAN:** I never...

**1. ZAP MAN:** He's never...

**2. ZAP MAN:** As if we didn't...

**THE WOMAN:** He didn't mean it. Honestly. He always means well. He's a nice man. We've been married thirty two years. Let's have some champagne. After all, you are all safe. Let's celebrate.

**1. ZAP MAN:** There's no champagne, Madam.

**THE WOMAN:** Oh, of course. Let's pretend. **(SHE PRETENDS RAISING HER GLASS. NOBODY FOLLOWS SUIT.)**

**2. ZAP MAN:** What do you intend doing with that shoe, Sir?

**THE MAN: (APPROACHES 2. ZAP MAN)** I don't know. I guess I'll have to...

**2. ZAP MAN:** Stop! Do you want to kill me? First the champagne, now the shoe. I am seriously beginning to have misgivings about your motives Sir, and your intentions...

**THE WOMAN:** His intentions have always been honourable. I can vouch for that.

**2. ZAP MAN:** It's so noble of you to say so, Cherie. Being loyal right to the bitter end. In sickness and in health.

**(1. ZAP MAN PUTS THE FLAME THROWER INTO THE TOOL-BOX, TAKES OUT A PLASTIC BAG AND PUTS THE SHOE CAREFULLY INTO THE BAG WITHOUT TOUCHING IT.)**

**1. ZAP MAN:** I'll have to dispose of it later.

**THE WOMAN:** So...

**2. ZAP MAN:** So?...

**THE WOMAN:** The cellar's done. You've done a great job, we are grateful. The bridegroom and the celebrant should be arriving soon.

**1. ZAP MAN:** But the stink's still here, I'm afraid. This is going to be much more complicated than I anticipated.

**2. ZAP MAN:** But we're always prepared for the worst.

**1. ZAP MAN:** We look after the family.

**2. ZAP MAN:** You probably didn't know that ZAP started as a family company.

**THE WOMAN:** You don't say! Well, it makes sense, doesn't it?

**1. ZAP MAN:** You must have heard of our jingle. That was originally composed by the founder of the company. We still use it as a sign of respect for him.

**THE MAN:** What happened to him?

**2. ZAP MAN:** Professional hazard, unfortunately. In those days, you understand, the techniques were not as well developed. So, unfortunately he...

**1. ZAP MAN:** Got involuntarily contaminated.

**THE WOMAN:** My God!

**2. ZAP MAN:** Yes, Cherie. So, for the sake of the company and its reputation, he actually volunteered to...

**THE WOMAN:** Incredible!

**2. ZAP MAN:** That's why we still regard him as our hero. Every time we sing the jingle, it's in remembrance of his services to the society and the family, as well as other Zap men who, in the course of duty...

**THE MAN:** It is dangerous, then?

**1. ZAP MAN:** More than you can imagine. That's why our charges are so high.

**THE WOMAN:** It won't cost us an arm and a leg, will it? You know, with all the wedding expenses and...

**1. ZAP MAN:** Sadly a lot of people still think of the cost. But some things are priceless, Madam. We'd like to think that our services are in that category, too.

**2. ZAP MAN:** After all, we give you a full warranty.

**THE WOMAN:** That's a comfort.

**1. ZAP MAN:** That's our business, Madam, giving comfort.

**THE WOMAN:** So the smell...

**1. ZAP MAN:** Once we get rid of it, there's a life-time guarantee...

**2. ZAP MAN:** First, it was a five-year warranty, but that turned out to be too costly...

**THE WOMAN:** Of course...

**THE MAN:** In writing?

**1. ZAP MAN:** Naturally. It's all above board with us.

**THE MAN:** So... Whatever is causing the smell... won't reappear?...

**1. ZAP MAN:** One zap and they're history!

**THE WOMAN:** I remember that.

**THE MAN:** Are they?

**2. ZAP MAN:** Of course, Cherie, everyone does, especially you...

**THE ZAP MEN: (SING THE JINGLE)** One zap, zap and they're history

Ask your neighbours to tell the story

This ain't no bull-shit, no idle story

One zap, zap and they're his-tory

**THE WOMAN:** I must teach this to Dolly. I think she'd like it. It could be part of her dowry.

**THE MAN:** She probably already knows it.

**THE WOMAN:** I doubt it, dear. All she sings are grandmother's silly old ditties.

**2. ZAP MAN:** Grandmother?

**1. ZAP MAN:** Did you say grandmother?

**2. ZAP MAN:** Thank you, Cherie, if it weren't for you, your husband would probably keep that a secret, too, just like the champagne and the shoe.

**THE WOMAN:** She's been dead a long time.

**1. ZAP MAN:** And where is she buried, Madam? That's more to the point. Or even more relevant, has she been buried at all?

**THE MAN:** I can't see why...

**1. ZAP MAN:** You can't see anything at all, can you, Sir? In fact you can't see further than your nose. And look where that's got you.

**THE WOMAN:** She was a very old woman.

**2. ZAP MAN:** My point precisely, Cherie. We must overlook nothing. But if our customers don't tell us everything, what are we supposed to do? We're not fortune-tellers...

**1. ZAP MAN:** Or clairvoyants.

**2. ZAP MAN:** You see, we're only honest men trying to do an honest day's work.

**THE MAN:** What do you intend to do?

**1. ZAP MAN:** Seal off the cellar, of course.

**2. ZAP MAN:** They're known to lurk in cellars, basements and other dinghy places.

**1. ZAP MAN:** Trust us, we know.

**2. ZAP MAN:** We have nine years' experience between us.



1. **ZAP MAN:** Experience counts, Sir. I was recounting my experience the other day, and Jim said...

2. **ZAP MAN:** There's no need to go into that Joe, I'm sure he wouldn't understand.

1. **ZAP MAN:** Suffice it to say that we have it.

**THE WOMAN:** It's obvious.

**THE MAN:** Shall we ever be able to use the cellar again?

2. **ZAP MAN:** That's entirely up to you, Sir. There's nothing we like less than restricting the freedom of our clients. Except that it nullifies the warranty.

**THE WOMAN:** That's fair.

1. **ZAP MAN:** After we put all our efforts, all our expertise into providing you with a safe, clean and hygienic environment, if you choose to go into the cellar again, we can't be blamed for the consequences now, can we?

**THE MAN:** I guess not.

2. **ZAP MAN:** And I was wondering why the stench was not reduced at all, after the moat and the clean-up in the cellar.

1. **ZAP MAN:** I was, too. What with all the toasters and the wine...

2. **ZAP MAN: (LOOKING AT THE MAN ACCUSINGLY)** ...and the champagne gone...

1. **ZAP MAN:**...and the shoe...

2. **ZAP MAN:** It all becomes much clearer now.

1. **ZAP MAN:** You see, we have no other options, if we are to do the job thoroughly.

2. **ZAP MAN:** The cellar must be sealed off.

**THE WOMAN:** Can I help you with anything at all?

2. **ZAP MAN:** Isn't that lovely? That's what I call a spirit of co-operation. Alas no, Madam, we wouldn't wish to compromise the integrity of our operations.

**THE WOMAN:** I understand.

**2. ZAP MAN: (TO THE MAN)** She's a very understanding woman, Sir. You're so lucky to have her. Lovely legs, too.

**THE WOMAN:** Do you mind if I just watch? From a distance? I promise I won't interfere.

**1. ZAP MAN:** Madam, really...

**2. ZAP MAN:** It's all right, Jim. Madam quite obviously has the right attitude. **(TO THE WOMAN)** Let's go, Cherie.

**(THE ZAP MEN TAKE THEIR TOOL-BOXES. AS THE ZAP MEN AND THE WOMAN GO OUT, 2. ZAP MAN PINCHES THE WOMAN'S BOTTOM.)**

**THE MAN: (SHUTS HIS EYES)** Dolly! I'll count to ten! Ready or not!

**(THE DAUGHTER ENTERS WITH A BUCKET IN ONE HAND, AND HER OTHER SHOE IN THE OTHER. SHE IS BAREFOOT. SHE SNEAKS UP BEHIND THE MAN AND TAPS HIM ON THE SHOULDER.)**

**THE MAN:** Let me guess...

**(THE DAUGHTER TAPS HIM ON THE OTHER SHOULDER.)**

**THE MAN:** Dolly!

**THE DAUGHTER:** Oh Daddy, I am so sad.

**THE MAN:** It's all right, darling. It happens to the best of us.

**THE DAUGHTER:** If I could only have one wish...

**THE MAN:** All your wishes will come true, darling, once you're married, just like your mother before you. And this is your wedding day, after all.

**THE DAUGHTER:** Will they, Daddy? Really, Daddy? Will they, will they?

**THE MAN:** Of course, darling. You deserve every happiness we can give you. Even those we can't. What's the bucket for?

**THE DAUGHTER:** I'm going up the hill, to fetch a pail of water.

**THE MAN:** By yourself?

**(THE DAUGHTER STARTS CRYING.)**

**THE MAN:** Oh, I am sorry. I am sorry, darling. I didn't mean to...

**THE DAUGHTER:** It's just that...

**THE MAN:** It's all right, darling. I understand. Daddy understands. It's all right.

**(PAUSE)** You are barefoot.

**THE DAUGHTER:** I lost one shoe, Daddy. I am sorry. I looked everywhere, but I can't find it.

**THE MAN:** You can't go up the hill with no shoes on. It's full of thorns.

**THE DAUGHTER:** I can put one shoe on, and go hopping, if you want me to.

**THE MAN:** Oh, you are a clever girl, aren't you?

**(THE DAUGHTER PUTS THE SHOE ON.)**

**THE MAN:** What about the moat?

**THE DAUGHTER:** What's a moat?

**THE MAN:** The ditch. Is it filled with water yet?

**THE DAUGHTER:** Yes, but I can swim. You always thought my backstroke was very good.

**THE MAN:** Aren't you glad I haven't got you the crocodiles, now?

**THE DAUGHTER:** Yes, Daddy.

**THE MAN:** Be careful, darling.

**(THE DAUGHTER GOES OUT, HOPPING. STRAIGHTAWAY THE TWO ZAP MEN ENTER WITH THE DAUGHTER CAUGHT BY THE ARMS BETWEEN THEM. THE ZAP MEN ARE BOTH CARRYING FLAME THROWERS.)**

**2. ZAP MAN:** Just as I thought.

**1. ZAP MAN:** Just as we suspected.

**THE WOMAN:** How could you?

**THE DAUGHTER:** Daddy! Please, Daddy!

**THE WOMAN:** On your wedding day, of all days!

**THE MAN:** What's going on? Leave her alone! Finish your job and go away.

**2. ZAP MAN:** So you want us to finish our job, first, do you Sir?

**1. ZAP MAN:** Are you quite certain of that, Sir?

**THE MAN:** Yes, yes, I've had enough of you.

**1. ZAP MAN:** Well, he said it.

**2. ZAP MAN:** That makes it part of the contract. Automatically.

**1. ZAP MAN:** That's what the client wants.

**2. ZAP MAN:** We're here to please.

**THE MAN:** I'll pay you...

**2. ZAP MAN:** He says he'll pay us.

**1. ZAP MAN:** Do you think you can really pay enough? We don't come cheap, you know.

**THE MAN:** Whatever. Just get out.

**2. ZAP MAN:** But finish the job first. That's what you said.

**1. ZAP MAN:** Are you denying what you said, Sir?

**2. ZAP MAN:** Are you trying to breach the contract, Sir?

**1. ZAP MAN:** That's not very nice.

**THE MAN:** I'll call the police.

**2. ZAP MAN:** And what will you say to the police, Sir? That we were trying to fulfil the contract?

**1. ZAP MAN:** Thoroughly?

**2. ZAP MAN:** As we agreed?

**THE WOMAN:** Please. He's a good man. I've been married to him for forty two years. He has the best of intentions.

**2. ZAP MAN:** Your loyalty is so endearing, Cherie, and you have such firm breasts. But you must have known deep down what he was trying to do. We can't let him get away with that.

**THE WOMAN:** You're so perceptive.

**THE DAUGHTER:** Daddy!

**1. ZAP MAN:** Were you or were you not aiding and abetting this young lady here, Sir, to escape? Go through contaminated territory and then came back into this house, bringing with her...?

**2. ZAP MAN:** On her wedding day?

**1. ZAP MAN:** When she's all ready and happy to get married?

**2. ZAP MAN:** Were you or were you nor Sir, pleased with her backstroke?

**THE MAN:** I...

**1. ZAP MAN:** You have the right to remain silent, Sir, but anything you might wish to say will be thrown back at you.

**THE MAN:** You have no right!

**1. ZAP MAN:** You have no right!

**2. ZAP MAN:** Joe has warned you, Sir.

**THE MAN:** Get out of the house! This instant!

**1. ZAP MAN:** Get out of the house! This instant!

**THE MAN:** This is my house!

**2. ZAP MAN: (LAUGHS)** This is my house!

**THE WOMAN:** Poor dear.

**THE MAN:** There's the moat.

**1. ZAP MAN:** There's the moat. Yes, Sir. Full of crocodiles. You couldn't get out of here, even if we let you.

**2. ZAP MAN:** That would be betraying our responsibilities.

**1. ZAP MAN:** We have undertaken to do a thorough job.

**2. ZAP MAN:** You wanted us to do a thorough job, didn't you, Sir?

**THE WOMAN:** Poor dear.

**THE MAN:** How was I to know?

**1. ZAP MAN:** How was I to know, Sir, that you would betray your own family, not to mention our contract?

**(2. ZAP MAN SIGNALS TO 1. ZAP MAN TO TAKE THE DAUGHTER AWAY)**

**THE WOMAN:** Dolly!

**2. ZAP MAN:** It's best if she doesn't watch the rest of it, Cherie. It could be rather gory. Especially if you're not a professional.

**1. ZAP MAN:** On her wedding day, too.

**2. ZAP MAN:** We always had our suspicions, Cherie, but it was only after we sealed off the cellar and the stink level didn't go down...

**1. ZAP MAN:** ...that we really thought...

**2. ZAP MAN:** ...ahem...

**1. ZAP MAN:** ...there's something fishy here. You always liked red herrings, haven't you, Sir?

**THE MAN:** I don't know what this has anything to do...

**2. ZAP MAN:** I don't know what this has anything to do with the price of milk, he was going to say. Just another red herring, if ever I've seen one.

**1. ZAP MAN:** Old Joe here never misses them.

**2. ZAP MAN:** Thank you Jim.

**1. ZAP MAN:** My pleasure.

**2. ZAP MAN:** On second thoughts, it might be best if you stayed here with your daughter. We'll take the gentleman outside, where it's a lot safer.

**1. ZAP MAN:** There'd be less spillage.

**2. ZAP MAN:** And whatever spillage there is, fresh air and the sun usually take care of it. We want our guarantee to have real teeth and be really meaningful.

**1. ZAP MAN:** Therefore it's best if we don't take any risks.

**THE WOMAN:** I wouldn't want the guests...

**2. ZAP MAN:** There's a sensitive woman. Always sensitive to the feelings of other people. So unselfish. Wonderful neck, too.

**1. ZAP MAN:** With due respect Madam, I don't think there will be any more guests arriving.

**THE WOMAN:** The bridegroom... the celebrant...

**2. ZAP MAN:** I promise to keep an eye out for them.

**THE WOMAN:** You're so kind.

**2. ZAP MAN:** Now, if you don't mind... **(MOTIONS TO THE WOMAN TO HOLD THE DAUGHTER.)**

**THE WOMAN:** Sure. Here, darling. This is your happiest day. Everything will be all right.

**THE DAUGHTER:** Daddy!

**THE WOMAN:** Daddy's old enough to take care of himself, darling. After all, he's taken care of all of us all these years. Now he only has himself to take care of. I'm sure he'll be all right.

**(THE TWO ZAP MEN PROD THE MAN AND WITHOUT TOUCHING HIM, PUSH HIM OUTSIDE.)**

**THE MAN:** Cherie, take care of Dolly for me. Tell the bridegroom she doesn't like toast.

**THE WOMAN:** Don't worry darling, everything will be all right.

**(THE GLOW OF FLAME-THROWERS INVADES THE STAGE. THE DAUGHTER TRIES TO GO WHERE THE MAN HAS BEEN TAKEN OUT. THE WOMAN RESTRAINS HER.)**

**THE WOMAN:** It's for us, darling, you know that. Especially for you. You know how much he loved you. Remember how hard he worked all his life to buy you little dolls.

**THE DAUGHTER:** My dolls were all were broken, and they wouldn't change them.

**THE WOMAN:** You can't blame your father for that, dear; that wouldn't be fair. He was a good man.

**THE DAUGHTER:** What's going to happen to us now, mother?

**THE WOMAN:** You are marrying today darling, or have you forgotten? To that lovely young man with a mole on his left hip. Then you'll have your little babies. If you have a son, you might want to give him your father's name.

**THE DAUGHTER:** I don't know his name.

**THE WOMAN:** And I'll survive, somehow. We all do, in the end. As much as anyone can. You must come and visit me. I'll make you bread and butter pudding.

**THE DAUGHTER:** Do you think I'll be happy, mother?

**THE WOMAN:** Of course, my dear, you deserve it. We did the best we can to make sure you deserve it. You'll have a clean house.

**THE DAUGHTER:** And a cellar?

**THE WOMAN:** I don't think that's such a good idea, dear. You've seen what happens when one has a cellar. I'll come and clean your place before you move in, if you like.

**THE DAUGHTER:** What will you do?

**THE WOMAN:** I'm still young. Life goes on. You can never know what's just around the corner.

**THE DAUGHTER:** What will happen to the house?

**THE WOMAN:** I'll probably have to sell it to pay the Zap men. They've just told me how much this whole service is going to cost.

**(THE ZAP MEN ENTER IN A PUFF OF SMOKE, CARRYING THEIR TOOL-BOXES. 1. ZAP MAN HAS THE GAUGE IN HIS HAND.)**

**1. ZAP MAN:** The level's gone down dramatically.

**2. ZAP MAN:** Which proves we have done the right thing. You can probably feel how much fresher it smells now.



**THE WOMAN:** Yes. Amazing. You certainly know your job well.

**2. ZAP MAN:** Profession, yes. I am sad to say, though, Madam, that you do not.

**THE WOMAN:** What do you mean?

**2. ZAP MAN:** You've bugged it up completely, that's what I mean.

**THE WOMAN:** I was going to call you tomorrow. You promised to take me for a mystery adventure.

**2. ZAP MAN:** That was before I knew you, Madam.

**THE WOMAN:** We can get to know each other. The week is still young. We have still a few good years ahead of us.

**2. ZAP MAN:** Alas, Madam. That is history.

**THE WOMAN:** Like in the jingle.

**2. ZAP MAN:** Your husband is the one who's like in the jingle, Madam. Or should I say your late husband...

**THE WOMAN:** We'd been married fifty two years. That's a very long time.

**2. ZAP MAN:** Poor man.

**THE WOMAN:** But you said...

**2. ZAP MAN:** I know what I said, Madam. I am not senile, nor would I stoop to denying what I said. But I haven't been married to him for fifty two years, Madam, not even two years. You're the one who promised...

**THE WOMAN:** I promised to call you... tomorrow.

**2. ZAP MAN:** You are knock-kneed, Madam, and I hate knock knees.

**THE WOMAN:** That's cruel. I can't help it...

**1. ZAP MAN:** We haven't fulfilled all our obligations yet, Jim. Although the level is definitely down, the stench is still considerable.

**THE WOMAN:** Because of what you did to my poor husband.

**1. ZAP MAN:** No, Madam. Our processes are a hundred per cent odourless. That's part of our guarantee.

**2. ZAP MAN:** Therefore, we can safely deduct that there is still some other source of contamination around the place.

**THE WOMAN:** It could be your toaster. I mean Dolly's toaster that you've been using. You said there were always crumbs in every toaster.

**2. ZAP MAN:** And every cloud has a silver lining, Madam. Your daughter will be proud of you.

**THE WOMAN:** My daughter is already proud of me. Aren't you, Dolly?

**THE DAUGHTER:** What?

**1. ZAP MAN:** Never mind that. Let's get on with it.

**THE WOMAN:** I still have the wedding, my only daughter's wedding I have to cry at.

**2. ZAP MAN:** I am sorry, Madam, truly sorry, if I gave you the wrong impression. I was being petulant. I apologise for that. I should never have promised to take you on a mystery adventure before I knew what you were made of.

**THE WOMAN:** I'm flesh and blood, just like you are.

**1. ZAP MAN:** I object to the second part of the proposition.

**2. ZAP MAN:** Quite rightly too, Jim, quite rightly. I have news for you, Madam. *You* are the cause of the lingering stink.

**THE WOMAN:** I can live with that.

**2. ZAP MAN:** But we couldn't live with our consciences, Madam, our sense of duty, or the small print in our contract.

**THE WOMAN:** My eyes aren't very good. I can never read the small print.

**1. ZAP MAN:** Precisely. But we know what it says. We must fulfil our obligations under the contract.

**2. ZAP MAN:** Joe's always been exceedingly conscientious. To a fault.

**1. ZAP MAN:** One has to keep up one's standards.

**2. ZAP MAN:** My sentiments exactly. That's why, Madam, you have to go.

**THE WOMAN:** Go? What do you mean?

**1. ZAP MAN:** He does get teensy weensy euphemistic at times, good old Joe. You must be exterminated, Madam. Only then...

**2. WOMAN:** You can't be serious. I haven't even paid you yet.

**1. ZAP MAN:** The small print says that in the case of the demise of the aforesaid clients, the company will make the necessary deductions from the assets of the deceased.

**THE DAUGHTER:** What does that mean, Mum?

**THE WOMAN: (TO THE DAUGHTER)** You shut up! **(TO THE ZAP MEN)**  
You can't do that!

**1. ZAP MAN:** We are very close to the end, thank God. The last remaining source of contamination has been successfully located.

**2. ZAP MAN:** I will, however, make an exception to our normal methods, Madam. In view of our past -how shall I put it-, proximity.

**THE WOMAN:** Intimacy.

**2. ZAP MAN:** I wouldn't go that far, Madam. But all the same.

**1. ZAP MAN:** You're not going to...

**2. ZAP MAN:** I feel I ought...

**1. ZAP MAN:** If you get into trouble with the company, don't rely on me to save your neck.

**2. ZAP MAN:** The company is compassionate, too, Madam. Old Joe here doesn't realise that yet. He hasn't been with the company a very long time.

**1. ZAP MAN:** It's your funeral.

**2. ZAP MAN:** And your wedding. **(TO 1. ZAP MAN)** You can get on with the rest of it. Hold this, will you? **(HE HANDS HIS THINGS OVER TO 1. ZAP MAN AND GOES OVER TO THE WOMAN)** Come closer, Cherie! **(SHE DOES. HE EMBRACES AND STARTS KISSING HER PASSIONATELY)**

**1. ZAP MAN:** I can't watch this. **(HE TURNS HIS BACK. PUT DOWN THE TOOL-BOXES AND THE GAUGE. WHEN HE GETS UP, HE HAS THE DAUGHTER'S OTHER SHOE IN HIS HAND. HE APPROACHES THE DAUGHTER.)**

**THE DAUGHTER:** My shoe! You're my hero! My prince! **(SHE STARTS KISSING 1. ZAP MAN.)**

**(2. ZAP MAN'S EMBRACE IS SQUEEZING THE LIFE OUT OF THE WOMAN. SHE STRUGGLES FOR A WHILE, THEN GOES LIMP, AS IF HER BACKBONE IS BROKEN.)**

**1. ZAP MAN;** **(TO THE DAUGHTER)** Don't look!

**THE DAUGHTER:** Like my doll!

**1. ZAP MAN:** Don't look! I'll make you happy, I promise.

**THE DAUGHTER:** Oh, Jim!

**(2. ZAP MAN LETS GO OF THE WOMAN. SHE SLUMPS IN A HEAP. LIGHTS CHANGE. FULL VOLUME WEDDING MARCH PLAYED ON THE ORGAN. 1. ZAP MAN TAKES THE DAUGHTER'S ARM AND FACES UPSTAGE. 2. ZAP MAN TAKES HIS PLACE UPSTAGE CENTRE AS THE MARRIAGE CELEBRANT. THE DAUGHTER AND 1. ZAP MAN SLOWLY AND CEREMONIOUSLY WALK UPSTAGE. SUDDENLY THERE IS A SHOWER OF CONFETTI. THE DAUGHTER TURNS BACK AND LOOKS TO SEE WHERE THE CONFETTI IS COMING FROM. HER HAIR IS GONE. THE LAST IMAGE IS OF THE DAUGHTER WITH UNKEMPT GRAY HAIR AND CONFETTI RAINING DOWN ON HER.)**

**(CURTAIN)**

Gundogdu Gencer

# THE CELLAR



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