

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Copyright Protection. This play (the “Play”) is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations, whether through bilateral or multilateral treaties or otherwise, and including, but not limited to, all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention, and the Berne Convention.

Reservation of Rights. All rights to this Play are strictly reserved, including, without limitation, professional and amateur stage performance rights; motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video, and sound recording rights; rights to all other forms of mechanical or electronic reproduction now known or yet to be invented, such as CD-ROM, CD-I, DVD, photocopying, and information storage and retrieval systems; and the rights of translation into non-English languages.

Performance Licensing and Royalty Payments. Amateur and stock performance rights to this Play are controlled exclusively by Playscripts, Inc. (“Playscripts”). No amateur or stock production groups or individuals may perform this Play without obtaining advance written permission from Playscripts. Required royalty fees for performing this Play are specified online at the Playscripts website (www.playscripts.com). Such royalty fees may be subject to change without notice. Although this book may have been obtained for a particular licensed performance, such performance rights, if any, are not transferable. Required royalties must be paid every time the Play is performed before any audience, whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. All licensing requests and inquiries concerning amateur and stock performance rights should be addressed to Playscripts (see contact information on opposite page).

Inquiries concerning all other rights should be addressed to Playscripts, as well; such inquiries will be communicated to the author and the author's agent, as applicable.

Restriction of Alterations. There shall be no deletions, alterations, or changes of any kind made to the Play, including the changing of character gender, the cutting of dialogue, or the alteration of objectionable language, unless directly authorized by Playscripts. The title of the Play shall not be altered.

Author Credit. Any individual or group receiving permission to produce this Play is required to give credit to the author as the sole and exclusive author of the Play. This obligation applies to the title page of every program distributed in connection with performances of the Play, and in any instance that the title of the Play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing, or otherwise exploiting the Play and/or a production thereof. The name of the author must appear on a separate line, in which no other name appears, immediately beneath the title and of a font size at least 50% as large as the largest letter used in the title of the Play. No person, firm, or entity may receive credit larger or more prominent than that accorded the author. The name of the author may not be abbreviated or otherwise altered from the form in which it appears in this Play.

Publisher Attribution. All programs, advertisements, and other printed material distributed or published in connection with the amateur or stock production of the Play shall include the following notice:

**Produced by special arrangement with Playscripts, Inc.
(www.playscripts.com)**

Prohibition of Unauthorized Copying. Any unauthorized copying of this book or excerpts from this book is strictly forbidden by law. Except as otherwise permitted by applicable law, no part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means now known or yet to be invented, including, without limitation, photocopying or scanning, without prior permission from Playscripts.

Statement of Non-affiliation. This Play may include references to brand names and trademarks owned by third parties, and may include references to public figures. Playscripts is not necessarily affiliated with these public figures, or with the owners of such trademarks and brand names. Such references are included solely for parody, political comment, or other permitted purposes.

Permissions for Sound Recordings and Musical Works. This Play may contain directions calling for the performance of a portion, or all, of a musical work, or performance of a sound recording of a musical work. Playscripts has not obtained permissions to perform such works. The producer of this Play is advised to obtain such permissions, if required in the context of the production. The producer is directed to the websites of the U.S. Copyright Office (www.copyright.gov), ASCAP (www.ascap.com), BMI (www.bmi.com), and NMPA (www.nmpa.org) for further information on the need to obtain permissions, and on procedures for obtaining such permissions.

The Rules in Brief

- 1) Do NOT perform this Play without obtaining prior permission from Playscripts, and without paying the required royalty.
- 2) Do NOT photocopy, scan, or otherwise duplicate any part of this book.
- 3) Do NOT alter the text of the Play, change a character's gender, delete any dialogue, or alter any objectionable language, unless explicitly authorized by Playscripts.
- 4) DO provide the required credit to the author and the required attribution to Playscripts in all programs and promotional literature associated with any performance of this Play.

For more details on these and other rules, see the opposite page.

Copyright Basics

This Play is protected by United States and international copyright law. These laws ensure that playwrights are rewarded for creating new and vital dramatic work, and protect them against theft and abuse of their work.

A play is a piece of property, fully owned by the playwright, just like a house or car. You must obtain permission to use this property, and must pay a royalty fee for the privilege—*whether or not you charge an admission fee*. Playscripts collects these required payments on behalf of the author.

Anyone who violates an author's copyright is liable as a copyright infringer under United States and international law. Playscripts and the author are entitled to institute legal action for any such infringement, which can subject the infringer to actual damages, statutory damages, and attorneys' fees. A court may impose statutory damages of up to \$150,000 for willful copyright infringements. U.S. copyright law also provides for possible criminal sanctions. Visit the website of the U.S. Copyright Office (www.copyright.gov) for more information.

THE BOTTOM LINE: If you break copyright law, you are robbing a playwright and opening yourself to expensive legal action. Follow the rules, and when in doubt, ask us.

Playscripts, Inc.
325 W. 38th Street, Suite 305
New York, NY 10018

Phone/fax: 1-866-NEW-PLAY (639-7529)
Email: info@playscripts.com
Web: www.playscripts.com

FOREIGN AFFAIRS
SEVEN SHORT COMEDIES OF GLOBAL IMPORTANCE
by Rich Orloff

Berlin Promotion	7
Prague Summer	17
I Married a Pope.....	27
Triumph in Argentina	38
Off the Map.....	48
Brazilian Wax Eloquent.....	58
Bulgarian Rhapsody	69

Acknowledgements

Foreign Affairs was co-produced by the Foolish Theatre Company in New York City (Rick Tormone, executive producing artistic director) and the WorkShop Theater Company (Elysa Marden and Timothy Scott Harris, artistic directors, and Riley Jones-Cohen, executive director) and premiered on January 10, 2005. The ensemble cast included:

Richard Kent Green

Gary Mink

Laurie Ann Orr

Gerrienne Raphael

Kim Reed

Greg Skura

Baz Snider

Directed by Holli Harms

Sets designed by Timothy R. Mackabee

Costumes designed by Cheryl A. McCarron

Lights designed by Andrew Rothschild

Props designed by Yana Babaev

Stage managed by Stefania Schramm

Production managed by Nicole Godino

For their help developing the plays in *Foreign Affairs*, the author would like to thank the folks at (in alphabetical order) Circle East, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Hypothetical Theatre Company, Johnson County Community College, Naked Angels, Word-of-Mouth, the WorkShop Theater Company and the Writers Bloc. He'd also like to thank that interesting guy who worked as a ticket seller to the observation deck at the tower by the Charles Bridge in Prague, for inspiring thoughts—and the short play *Prague Summer*.

BERLIN PROMOTION

Cast of Characters

FRITZ, a mid-level bureaucrat

UMA, his wife

KARL, his friend, another bureaucrat

HELMUT, Fritz's boss

Time

November 1989.

Place

An office in East Berlin.

(A small office in an East German government office building near the Berlin wall. Not much to look at, but then nobody ever comes here to look. As the play begins, FRITZ and his wife UMA enter. FRITZ is a mild man who tries to stay out of people's way. UMA is a strong-willed woman who may be reincarnated as a tank.)

UMA. Now do we need to go over this again?

FRITZ. No, darling.

UMA. That position won't be open forever.

FRITZ. I know.

UMA. Herr Klausner owes you many favors.

FRITZ. I know that and you know that, but I'm not sure Herr Klausner knows that.

UMA. Then it's your job to remind him.

FRITZ. I don't want to antagonize him.

UMA. You're such a worm.

FRITZ. The world needs worms. Without worms, all the early birds would starve to death.

UMA. We need the money, Fritz.

FRITZ. We live very comfortably. We have food on the table, five nights out of seven.

UMA. Fritz—

FRITZ. I'll talk to Herr Klausner, if he's in a good mood.

UMA. *(Firmly:)* If he's not, then you put him in a good mood!

FRITZ. I should've seen this coming on our first date when you told me your favorite movie was *Triumph of the Will*.

UMA. *(An accusation, not a question:)* Why are you so afraid to talk to him?

FRITZ. My reputation is based on being a spineless toad, and I don't want to ruin it by appearing like I want something.

UMA. He knows you can handle that job.

FRITZ. Then why hasn't he given it to me already?

UMA. You know the pressure a man in his position is under. He has to make sure he's appointing someone who's not only skilled but also a loyal, dedicated member of the party.

FRITZ. That's me?

UMA. You attend all the meetings.

FRITZ. I have to. They count on me to take notes and then lose them.

UMA. Fritz, are you going to talk to Herr Klausner today or not?

FRITZ. Today's a very busy day, Uma.

UMA. I knew you were a worm, but I never thought you were a liar.

FRITZ. When have I lied to you?

UMA. Two years ago, when I said, "Fritz, when are you going to make a man of yourself?" and you said, "By November, 1989."

FRITZ. The month isn't over yet.

UMA. I assumed you meant by November 1st.

FRITZ. No, I meant by the 30th.

UMA. I want you to talk to him today.

FRITZ. I'll see how busy he is.

UMA. Today.

FRITZ. But—

UMA. I'm tired of waiting! You talk to him *today*, or, or I'll withhold my favors.

FRITZ. But sugarprune—

UMA. I mean it. No more Olga the Dairy Maid.

FRITZ. No more Olga?

UMA. No more Ilsa the New Housekeeper.

FRITZ. No more Olga or Ilsa?

UMA. And no more Anna, the Elba River Nudist.

FRITZ. No more Olga, Ilsa or Anna on the Elba? ...Okay, Uma, I'll talk to him.

UMA. Good. Remember, all you have to do is assure him you're completely dedicated to those in power, and the promotion is yours.

FRITZ. Okay.

UMA. *(About to go.)* Now give me a virile, passionate kiss.

FRITZ. Yes, dear.

(FRITZ kisses UMA. She responds. There's chemistry between them.)

UMA. I'll wash my dairy maid uniform. See you later, milkman.

FRITZ. See you later.

(UMA leaves. FRITZ is happily awash in Uma's sexual attention. Then he remembers what he promised and he's terrified. A moment later, there's a knock at the door.)

FRITZ. Come in.

(KARL, another bureaucrat and Fritz's friend, enters, carrying papers.)

KARL. I need your signature.

FRITZ. What is it?

KARL. A directive to reduce unnecessary red tape.

FRITZ. Sure.

KARL. You need to sign ten more times.

FRITZ. Okay.

KARL. What's the matter?

FRITZ. Karl, you think it's true that behind every great man, there's a woman nagging him to death?

KARL. Let me guess: Uma drove you to work today.

FRITZ. Yes. She's pushing me to ask Herr Klausner for a promotion.

KARL. I think you'd fill that position excellently.

FRITZ. Then why hasn't he hired me already?

KARL. Well, you know the pressure a man like that is under. With all the changes going on left and left, he has to make sure he chooses someone who's forward thinking and not tied to the old order.

FRITZ. What changes?

KARL. You don't know about the changes?

FRITZ. No.

KARL. Haven't you been paying attention to what's going on in Eastern Europe?

FRITZ. Oh, no. Uma says whenever I do, it affects my performance.

KARL. Fritz, all through Eastern Europe, Communist countries are being reformed.

FRITZ. Really?

KARL. For the last few months, there have been reports of demonstrations everywhere. Even here. Our party chief just resigned.

FRITZ. Honecker resigned?

KARL. Yes.

FRITZ. But he was only 77; he had a good ten-twenty years left. You're making this all up.

KARL. There are signs of change everywhere. Don't you ever look out your window?

FRITZ. Oh, no. I might see something. Besides, last time I looked out, all I saw was the Berlin Wall. It wasn't a very inspiring view.

KARL. Fritz, take my advice. If you can convince Herr Klausner you're a progressive thinker dedicated to change, the promotion is yours.

(The phone rings. FRITZ picks it up.)

FRITZ. Hello?... Oh, hi, sugarprune... No, I haven't talked to him yet.

KARL. I'll see you later.

(KARL exits.)

FRITZ. Darling, did you hear our country's going through dynamic change? ...No, there's no punch line. Karl told me... What do you mean, they're testing me... You really think they're that paranoid? ...True, I did once approve a wiretap for Directory Assistance... Maybe you're right... But what if you're wrong?

(There's a knock on the door.)

FRITZ. Come in.

(HELMUT KLAUSNER, Fritz's superior, enters.)

HELMUT. If I may have a word with—

FRITZ. Oh, yes, Herr Commissioner. Yes, of course. *(Into the phone.)* I'll talk to you later... If you want, on my way home, I'll pick up a quart of milk. *(Discreetly:)* Don't wear panties.

HELMUT. Assistant Deputy Commissioner Schmidt, let me come straight to the point. As you know, there is a position that has become open due to the untimely death of Herr Klimpner, who sends his regards from Switzerland. It is my job to fill that position.

FRITZ. And I can imagine no one who could make that decision better.

HELMUT. I've narrowed the candidates to you and one other.

FRITZ. I am honored to be considered.

HELMUT. But first I must ask some questions.

FRITZ. Ask me anything you'd like.

HELMUT. As you know, throughout our country there is an immense call for change, but there are also forces who want to keep things exactly as they are. Where do you stand on all this?

FRITZ. Well, Herr Commissioner, I'm so glad you asked this question, because it gives me the opportunity to admit to you what I really think. And from the bottom of my heart, Herr Commissioner, I can say unhesitatingly, I agree with you one hundred per cent.

HELMUT. But I haven't said anything.

FRITZ. Herr Commissioner, we have known each other so long. I know how you think.

HELMUT. And how do I think?

FRITZ. Brilliantly.

HELMUT. Assistant Deputy Commissioner Schmidt, forget me for a moment.

FRITZ. I could never do that.

HELMUT. If I gave you the position, would you make changes or leave things the same?

FRITZ. An excellent question. That question is, is almost as good as your haircut. You look great; have you been working out?

HELMUT. Answer the question.

FRITZ. Yes, of course, I was getting to that... One, uh, one must be open to progress...

HELMUT. Hmmmm...

FRITZ. Without being disrespectful to time-honored policies—

HELMUT. Hmmmm.

FRITZ. Which have shown that no policy is beyond questioning—

HELMUT. Hmmmm.

FRITZ. As long as one never sways from dedication to fundamental truths...

HELMUT. What does that mean?

FRITZ. It, it means I am open to all new ideas—

HELMUT. Hmmmm.

FRITZ. That are fundamentally the same as the ones we have.

HELMUT. You are doing nothing but confusing me, Herr Schmidt.

FRITZ. I'm so glad.

HELMUT. I need to know what you think.

FRITZ. Could you give me a hint?

HELMUT. I'm losing patience, Herr Schmidt. I'm beginning to think you're a man completely without principles.

FRITZ. But that makes me so easy to train.

HELMUT. Herr Schmidt!

FRITZ. Herr Klausner, please, I, well, you and I, well, I like to think that we have an understanding. I looked the other way when your expense account began to exceed the gross national product of Bulgaria, and you never complained when I hired a secretary whose skills did not include typing, filing, or taking messages. And by the way, how *is* Frau Klausner?

HELMUT. Fine.

FRITZ. Such, such support as we've given each other, it creates a bond, does it not? And in recognition of this bond, all I ask is, and I promise your answer will be strictly confidential... What's the answer you want me to give?

HELMUT. I cannot tell you, Herr Schmidt.

FRITZ. Just a hint.

HELMUT. No.

FRITZ. It must be hard to tell me when you're so thirsty. How would you and Frau Klausner like a case of Liebframilch?

HELMUT. No.

FRITZ. Would you prefer cash?

HELMUT. Herr Schmidt, I need to know where your loyalties are.

FRITZ. I assure you, I am completely loyal.

HELMUT. But to which side?

FRITZ. *I don't care.*

HELMUT. That won't do.

FRITZ. Just tell me who to be loyal to, I'll be loyal!

HELMUT. I can't.

FRITZ. Why, tell me, why? After all I've done for you, why!

(HELMUT looks around, approaches FRITZ and whispers.)

HELMUT. Because I don't know.

FRITZ. Oh.

HELMUT. My superiors expect a clear answer from you, and if all I tell them is that you agree with me, then they'll ask what *I* think, and if I answer wrong, my wife will—my wife will... No more Dagmar, the dominatrix from Düsseldorf.

FRITZ. Oh.

(KARL enters in a rush.)

KARL. Fritz, oh, hello, Herr Commissioner, I—

FRITZ. Are you okay, Karl?

KARL. Look outside. You won't believe it.

FRITZ. But—

KARL. Look out the window!

(They look out at the Berlin Wall.)

HELMUT. Oh, my!

FRITZ. What are they doing?

KARL. They're dancing!

FRITZ. But—

KARL. People are dancing on the Berlin Wall!

**PAGES HAVE BEEN CUT FROM THIS SCENE.
THE PLAY CONTINUES ON THE NEXT PAGE.**

In order to protect our associated authors against copyright infringement, we cannot currently present full electronic scripts.

To purchase books with the full text, and to apply for performance rights, click ORDER or go back to:

www.playscripts.com

PRAGUE SUMMER

Cast of Characters

LADISLAV, a Czech born in the late 1940s

XAVIER, a Czech born in the late 1940s

ZELDA, an American in her early thirties

Time

The early 1990s.

Place

An outdoor café in Prague, the Czech Republic.

(LADISLAV, pronounced "La-DEE-slav," sits at a table in an outdoor café in Prague. We hear the sounds of people chatting and silverware clinking on a warm summer day. LADISLAV sips a cup of coffee and reads. He is dressed in the manner of someone who hasn't much money and who, if he did, wouldn't spend it on clothes. LADISLAV puts the book down and stares up at something high. XAVIER enters and, after a moment, recognizes LADISLAV. XAVIER wears a stylish suit and carries a briefcase.)

XAVIER. Ladislav?

LADISLAV. Xavier!

XAVIER. Sorry I'm late.

LADISLAV. That's okay.

XAVIER. You know how business is.

LADISLAV. I've heard rumors.

XAVIER. *(Glad to see him:)* Ladislav, after all these years. Is it truly you?

LADISLAV. That is such a daunting question on so many levels, I can only reply, I believe I believe I am.

XAVIER. That is the kind of answer nobody but Ladislav could give.

LADISLAV. Well, if everybody else is eliminated, then I'm even more confident I'm me.

XAVIER. Ladislav!

LADISLAV. Xavier! You look good.

XAVIER. Thank you. You know what I always said about appearance.

LADISLAV. "It's all you need."

XAVIER. I'm so glad you agreed to meet me. You know, I had several of my associates search all over Prague for you.

LADISLAV. You're kidding.

XAVIER. And to think you work just across the street from my café.

LADISLAV. So you own this café now?

XAVIER. Well, I recently gained an interest in it.

LADISLAV. I hear you've gained an interest in everything profitable in Prague.

XAVIER. And much that isn't profitable, too.

LADISLAV. From what I've read—

XAVIER. So tell me: What are you up to these days?

LADISLAV. Observation, reflection and rumination.

XAVIER. You haven't changed.

LADISLAV. Change is inevitable. Even the effort to not change changes one. Thus, philosophically I disagree with you 100%. Other than that, I think you're right.

XAVIER. How many years has it been?

LADISLAV. Let's see; it's 1992. Over twenty years, I think.

XAVIER. (*Pointing across the street:*) And how did you end up working there?

LADISLAV. Usually I take the bus.

XAVIER. Ladislav, I—A man of your intelligence working as a, a ticket seller to an observation deck.

LADISLAV. People say the tower on the east side of the Charles Bridge offers the best view of Prague.

XAVIER. But—

LADISLAV. You can almost see its potential.

XAVIER. How long have you been doing this?

LADISLAV. Eighteen years.

XAVIER. Eighteen years?! Is this the best job you could find?

LADISLAV. It depends on how you define "best". It was not best in my parents' eyes, or my friends' eyes, but when I considered the jobs the Party would let me have, I knew that this was the job in

which I would face the fewest moral paradoxes. Also, during all those years when tourism was restricted, I could get a great deal of uninterrupted reading done. Of course, now that Prague's become the tourist Mecca of Eastern Europe, I read very little.

XAVIER. Ladislav, something's not right about this.

LADISLAV. I agree. They should allow fewer tourists.

XAVIER. No, I mean, a man of your intellect and vision. You should be, you should be working for me!

LADISLAV. But you're a businessman. How could I—

XAVIER. Ladislav, when we planned demonstrations together in the late sixties, you took ideas and made them fly. Why don't you do that for me?

LADISLAV. Do what for you?

XAVIER. Think about the future for me, about how the Czech Republic can compete and prosper in a new world.

LADISLAV. No, thanks.

XAVIER. I pay very well.

LADISLAV. I earn enough.

XAVIER. If you worked for me, you wouldn't be so depressed.

LADISLAV. I like depression. It feels honest.

XAVIER. You romanticize depression, and you always did.

LADISLAV. Look, you're happy where you are, and I'm miserable where I am. Why can't we leave it at that?

XAVIER. Because leaving things as they are offends my entrepreneurial spirit.

LADISLAV. Xavier, enough. All anyone in this country talks about anymore is business.

XAVIER. What's wrong with that?

LADISLAV. Whatever happened to philosophy? Remember when you and I would stay up till dawn having heated debates over which was better, to turn into a rhinoceros or a cockroach?

XAVIER. (*Dismissive:*) We were college students.

LADISLAV. We had ideals.

XAVIER. Ideals were all we could afford!

LADISLAV. Xavier—

XAVIER. The future belongs to those who are willing to think and work in a market economy.

LADISLAV. Xavier, the future you describe is like a woman dressed in tight clothes and sexy makeup. Attractive, yes, but unlikely to satisfy my deeper longings. She offers excitement without meaning.

XAVIER. Ladislav, I've gone out with that woman you described, and I found meaning in her.

LADISLAV. I believe you. And I hope you don't consider this an insult, but I envy your capacity for superficiality.

XAVIER. Well, if I can't change your thinking, I'm expecting a friend who I know can.

LADISLAV. And what type of friend is this?

XAVIER. One who looks good in tight clothing and sexy make-up.

LADISLAV. How meaningful.

XAVIER. She's an investment banker for a group in the U.S.

LADISLAV. So your relationship with her is business.

XAVIER. Well, so far.

LADISLAV. Same ol' Xavier.

XAVIER. Wait till you meet her. She's not only as beautiful as a Porsche and as smart as a Pentium chip, but, well, if I can ever learn to think and act like her, I know I'll always have a place in Prague's future. (*Seeing her approach:*) Ah, there she is... Zelda, over here!

(ZELDA enters. Her appearance is striking not only because she's confident and dynamic, but also because she has two long feelers protruding from her head and six slender legs extending from her soft brown body. All in all, she resembles a cockroach.)

ZELDA. Hi, hi! *(ZELDA and XAVIER kiss briefly.)* The meeting exceeded our expectations.

XAVIER. Wonderful. Zelda, *this* is Ladislav Smolak. Ladislav, this is Zelda Fleming.

LADISLAV. Pleased to meet you.

ZELDA. Xavier has told me so much about you.

LADISLAV. He speaks well of you, too.

ZELDA. Does he?

LADISLAV. Xavier has said such wonderful things about you I began to think you descended from heaven.

ZELDA. Really? He treats me like I just crawled out of the woodwork.

XAVIER. So what happened? Did your partners agree to take an interest in me?

ZELDA. Xavier, we want to infest your company with our capital.

XAVIER. Great.

ZELDA. Of course, they want me to be your vice president.

XAVIER. I'm not sure I can afford you.

ZELDA. Don't worry. I work for crumbs.

XAVIER. This is so exciting!

ZELDA. *(To XAVIER:)* Have you convinced Ladislav to join the organization?

XAVIER. It seems Ladislav is not interested in capitalism.

ZELDA. I hate to break this to you, Ladislav, but Communism is dead.

LADISLAV. Who said those must be the only two choices?

ZELDA. Is there a third?

LADISLAV. There was once.

ZELDA. When?

LADISLAV. In 1968.

ZELDA. Oh, that.

LADISLAV. Yes, that. Socialism with a human face, a belief in a society in which everyone could flourish, including the capitalistically impaired.

ZELDA. How quaint.

LADISLAV. It inspired a whole country.

ZELDA. For a short time.

LADISLAV. We were invaded by the Soviets.

ZELDA. Still—

LADISLAV. Now we're invaded by McDonald's. And Starbucks and the Gap.

XAVIER. And the masses welcome the invaders.

LADISLAV. And what about that better world we once believed in?

XAVIER. That future is past. That was Prague Spring; this is Prague Summer.

ZELDA. We must all change with the times.

LADISLAV. As soon as there's a time I like, I'll change with it.

ZELDA. And what do you plan to do until then, hide in a hole like a mole?

LADISLAV. No. My dream has always been to fly in the sky like a bird.

XAVIER. And where would you fly to?

LADISLAV. To a land where people want to serve society more than they want to serve themselves. To a place where dreams have beautiful shapes without bottom lines.

ZELDA. You know, I was once like you.

LADISLAV. I doubt that.

ZELDA. When I started business school, I was a mouse. I was timid and small, with a stringy little tail.

XAVIER. I can't imagine you like that.

ZELDA. Unfortunately, I could, and so I lived down to my imagination.

XAVIER. How did you ever—

ZELDA. There I was, trapped inside my mousy exterior, getting nowhere, scurrying about in fear—scurry, scurry, scurry; scurry, scurry, scurry. And one day, one day I just realized I had to take a leap of faith to become something better. So I did. A leap of faith. And now here I am, successful and adaptable. Inspiring story, isn't it?

LADISLAV. I will remember it, I assure you.

ZELDA. You don't like me, do you?

XAVIER. Zelda, please.

LADISLAV. It's okay. I don't dislike you. But I have no desire to be like you.

ZELDA. No, I could tell from the moment our eyes met. Some folks take one look at me and think "disease carrier." It's jealousy. Let's go, Xavier.

XAVIER. Zelda—

LADISLAV. No, I'll go.

XAVIER. Ladislav, wait. You and I were good friends once.

LADISLAV. I know. I admired you so much. You had such creativity and passion. Nobody could publicize a secret meeting better than you.

XAVIER. My door will always be open to you.

LADISLAV. I'm just afraid it will shut behind me. Goodbye, Xavier. Goodbye, Ms. Fleming. It was most educational meeting you.

ZELDA. And what did you learn?

LADISLAV. I learned the future of the Czech Republic probably does belong to creatures like you. But creatures like me, we're not mice. We're dinosaurs. Goodbye.

(LADISLAV exits.)

ZELDA. What a loser.

XAVIER. He's an idealist.

ZELDA. When a less than perfect person is incapable of adapting to a less than perfect world, I don't think it's the world's fault.

XAVIER. I wish I could help him.

ZELDA. If you did, he'd spit on you.

XAVIER. I wouldn't mind.

ZELDA. So my partners want us to begin taking you over immediately.

XAVIER. Just tell me what you want.

ZELDA. Can you put out feelers?

XAVIER. I'm an entrepreneur; I put out feelers constantly.

ZELDA. We also need you to grow four more legs.

XAVIER. Consider it done.

ZELDA. And after that, well, we have such great plans for you. I can't tell you how much I'm looking forward to us merging in every way. When I think of what we'll produce together— *(As ZELDA speaks, the background sounds of the restaurant have increased significantly. People are talking loudly about something.)* What is all the commotion?

XAVIER. People seem to be staring at the top of the tower.

ZELDA. I wish my eyes were better.

**PAGES HAVE BEEN CUT FROM THIS SCENE.
THE PLAY CONTINUES ON THE NEXT PAGE.**

In order to protect our associated authors against copyright infringement, we cannot currently present full electronic scripts.

To purchase books with the full text, and to apply for performance rights, click ORDER or go back to:

www.playscripts.com

I MARRIED A POPE:

THE PILOT EPISODE

Cast of Characters

THE POPE, first American to head the Catholic Church

COOKIE, a cute and perky dancer/showgirl

CARDINAL GIULIO, the Pope's pragmatic assistant

MOM, the Pope's elderly, conservative mother

AUDIENCE WARM-UP GUY (or Gal)

Time

The middle 1990s.

Place

The Pope's private office, a set for a TV show.

(On the stage is a set for the Pope's private office, filled with the usual papal office furniture. As the play begins, we hear from behind the audience:)

AUDIENCE WARM-UP GUY. Where are my kisses?!... I need my kisses!

(For a moment, nothing. Then the irrepressible AUDIENCE WARM-UP GUY [or Gal] bounces into the theater and addresses the audience.)

AUDIENCE WARM-UP GUY. All riiiiighttt! You know, I've worked a lot of TV show tapings, and you are by far the best audience since the last taping. In fact, the producers told me they were so pleased with the way you laughed during the first half of our pilot, that we're going to let you watch the second half... So who'd like a kiss? ...If you'd like a kiss, raise your hand! ...C'mon, let's see those hands! *(The AUDIENCE WARM-UP GUY reaches into his pocket, takes out some chocolate kisses, and tosses them at audience members.)* There you go... And one for you back there... Oh, and in answer to the question that lovely lady asked before we started—By the way, are you free later?—we don't know the air date yet. Of course, we hope we'll make it on the fall schedule, but it all depends on whether the network picks us up as a series.

(Around now, or whenever they're ready, the actors playing the POPE and COOKIE enter on stage, but still as actors. Perhaps they're touching up their make-up or reviewing the script perhaps with a stage manager.)

AUDIENCE WARM-UP GUY. Oh, I'm getting a sign we're ready to resume taping. Now remember, the more you laugh, the more the network will think our show's funny. So now sit back and enjoy the second half of the pilot episode of what we hope will be the big hit of the 1994 TV season, *I Married A Pope*.

(The house lights fade as the stage lights go up on: The POPE, dressed in his usual work clothes, is in shock from the news he's heard from COOKIE, who is dressed in dance leotards.)

POPE. I did *what?!!!*

COOKIE. You put a ring on my finger, and you said "I Do."

POPE. I put a ring on your finger?!!

COOKIE. What's the big deal? You've got lots of 'em.

POPE. I know, but—

COOKIE. You did mean everything you said to me last night, didn't you?

POPE. What did I say?

COOKIE. You said beautiful things.

POPE. I kept asking Monsignor Baffico*, "What's in the punch?", and he said, "Ohhhh, nothing." That's the last time I trust a Jesuit.

*(*Pronounced "Ba-FEE-koh," or my nephew will hurt you.)*

COOKIE. I was very touched when you told me that you've dedicated your soul to Christ, but your body's up for grabs.

POPE. Look, I'm sorry. I didn't know what I was doing last night. I've never been to a bachelor party before.

COOKIE. I suppose you didn't know what you were doing when you signed this, either.

(COOKIE hands the POPE a marriage license.)

POPE. Oh my G—

COOKIE. One of the bishops said he always carries a spare marriage license to marry off pregnant teenagers.

POPE. Then they all knew?

COOKIE. Only that one bishop. And he promised never to tell.

POPE. Which bishop?

COOKIE. I forget.

POPE. You forget?!!

COOKIE. It was my wedding night; I had a lot on my mind! Wait till I call my folks. They never thought I'd marry up.

POPE. No, no, no. Listen, um, er— *(Looks at license.)* Your name is "Cookie"?

COOKIE. I was born Mary Rose, but I changed it for professional reasons. Mary Rose doesn't sound right for a showgirl.

POPE. You're a showgirl?!

COOKIE. You didn't complain last night when I popped out of the cake. It was the first time I ever got tossed a rosary from the audience.

POPE. Cookie, please. You must understand. I'm the Vicar of Christ; the Successor of St. Peter.

COOKIE. And a whiz on the dance floor. You could teach a few steps to Madonna—the current one, not the original.

POPE. We...we danced?!

COOKIE. Don't worry; I tasted that punch. I'm sure *nobody* remembers last night.

POPE. Cookie, you must understand. You and I can't marry.

COOKIE. It's the age difference, isn't it?

POPE. No!

COOKIE. I don't care if there's snow on the roof, as long as there's a fire in the furnace.

POPE. There's no fire in my furnace!

COOKIE. Ohhh. Did you have German measles?

POPE. That's not what I meant. I'm a perfectly healthy, functional male.

COOKIE. That's a relief. I want a *big* family.

POPE. I'm the Pope! And the Pope can't marry.

(COOKIE grabs the marriage license.)

COOKIE. Then how do you explain this?

POPE. To err is human, to forgive divine; I'm a little of both.

COOKIE. *(Starting to get sad:)* Last night, you called me your swella bella.

POPE. Cookie, I gave a sacred vow to Christ.

COOKIE. I see. Well, then... I'll guess I'll go.

POPE. I'm sorry.

COOKIE. Yeah, well, you're not the first man to promise me heaven. I just thought *you'd* be different.

(Suddenly, we hear off-stage.)

CARDINAL GIULIO. *(Offstage.)* Let me get the Pope's signature on this, and I'll be right out.

POPE. Oh, no!

COOKIE. What?

POPE. It's my assistant. If he finds you here—You'll have to hide.

COOKIE. Where?

POPE. Quick, under my vestments.

(COOKIE crawls under and behind the POPE's cassock. It looks like the POPE's wearing a huge bustle. CARDINAL GIULIO enters. The POPE always moves counter to the CARDINAL, so that the bustle is away from the Cardinal's view.)

CARDINAL GIULIO. Your holiness.

POPE. Cardinal.

CARDINAL GIULIO. If I could just have your signature on this—

(GIULIO notices the POPE's movements. GIULIO fakes left and darts right, but the POPE is too quick for him.)

POPE. Yes, Giulio?

CARDINAL GIULIO. You're a real kick, you know that?

POPE. Thank you, Giulio.

CARDINAL GIULIO. When the Cardinals appointed an American as Pope, I thought, that should liven things up around here. But you've surpassed my predictions.

POPE. What can I do for you?

CARDINAL GIULIO. I finished typing up your encyclical.

POPE. Which one is this?

CARDINAL GIULIO. The one everyone's been arguing about: the "Great Compromise on Homosexuality," instructing the gay members of our flock that if they go beyond second base with members of the same sex, they'll fry in eternal damnation.

POPE. Oh, yes. Between me and you, condemning people to eternal damnation is my least favorite part of this job.

CARDINAL GIULIO. Really? I consider it a perk.

(COOKIE sneezes. GIULIO looks to see where it came from.)

POPE. I'm learning to throw my voice.

CARDINAL GIULIO. Why?

POPE. So I can sneeze in public without calling attention to myself.

CARDINAL GIULIO. Good idea.

(GIULIO hands the POPE a pen.)

POPE. Um, let me think about it awhile longer.

CARDINAL GIULIO. But it's perfect.

POPE. It's not perfect.

CARDINAL GIULIO. It'll offend an equal number on the left and on the right. It's perfect.

POPE. *(Laying down the law.)* I'll sign it when I'm ready.

CARDINAL GIULIO. Okay, okay; you're infallible... Next time I think I'll just use your signature machine. *(COOKIE sneezes again.)* You're getting very good at that.

POPE. Thanks.

(CARDINAL GIULIO exits.)

POPE. You can come out now.

(COOKIE crawls out from under the POPE's garb.)

COOKIE. I like your shorts. I've never seen boxers with the Atlantic City boardwalk on them.

POPE. It was a gift from my parish in New Jersey.

COOKIE. What's this umbilical you're signing?

POPE. *Encyclical.*

COOKIE. Don't you like gay people?

POPE. I love all of God's creatures, even the perverted ones.

COOKIE. You know, I think Cardinal Giulio's a closet case.

POPE. How dare you blaspheme my assistant?

COOKIE. I'm not blaspheming anybody. I like gay people. Where would the world be without gay people? Do you think a straight person could've made my hair look this good?

POPE. That doesn't excuse people engaging in sinful behavior.

COOKIE. Well, that's the Pope calling the kettle black.

POPE. I can't believe I'm arguing papal doctrine with a showgirl.

COOKIE. Look, I, I haven't told this to anyone, but...my brother's gay. After my parents split up, he was the only one who cared about me. If he goes to hell, well, then heaven isn't a place that would feel like paradise for me.

(COOKIE begins to cry.)

POPE. Cookie, I, I—You don't understand the pressures I'm under. Millions are leaving the church because they say it's no longer responsive to their needs. But if I liberalize too quickly, the conservative wing would revolt, and the whole church would crumble. This is a very high-stress job. A high-stress, lonely, *lonely*...

(The POPE begins to cry.)

COOKIE. Now don't you cry, too.

POPE. I can't help it. I'm a sensitive guy.

COOKIE. Do you have a brother, too?

POPE. Yes.

COOKIE. You must love him very much.

POPE. My brother has about as much charm as a narcissistic leper. To this day, he teases me that I only entered the priesthood because I couldn't get a date for the senior prom.

COOKIE. I would've gone out with you.

POPE. You weren't born yet. And I think the unborn child has many rights, but dating privileges aren't one of them.

COOKIE. You know what I mean.

POPE. You *are* very pretty.

COOKIE. Thank you.

POPE. And I bet your soul is even prettier than your body is.

COOKIE. Wow. That's the best line I've ever heard.

(They stand very close and look into each other's eyes.)

POPE. Cookie...

COOKIE. Your holiness...

POPE. How will I ever explain this to my mother?

(From off-stage, we hear:)

MOM. *(Offstage:)* Yoo-hoo!

POPE. Speak of the devil.

COOKIE. That's your mother?

POPE. She lives six months in Florida; six months in Rome. Quick, under my vestments.

COOKIE. Oh, no. Once was enough, thank you.

POPE. But how will I—

(The Pope's MOTHER enters. She's short, old and sassy.)

MOM. So there you are. I want to—And who is this?

POPE. Well, she's, um, um, my personal trainer.

MOM. She is?

POPE. You've told me I need to work out more. Cookie, this is my mom.

COOKIE. Nice to meet you, your holy motherhood.

MOM. Call me Mom. Everybody does. Except for my children, who never call.

POPE. (*A whine:*) Ma...

MOM. I heard from Cardinal Giulio's Aunt Lena that you're hesitating signing the homo-cyclical.

POPE. Yes, but I can—

MOM. I approve. Letting those lollypops get to even second base weakens the entire bedrock of the church. I can see the headline now: "PONTIFF PUNTS FOR PUFFS."

COOKIE. You know, it's almost the 21st century. Don't—

MOM. Please, do I tell you how to do squats? Don't butt in.

POPE. Mom, I'm beginning to doubt the whole concept of any doctrine that brings unnecessary pain to my children.

MOM. It's that pussy-footing attitude that's destroying the church. How I miss the good ol' days, when sin was sin, and Friday was for fish.

COOKIE. I hate fish.

MOM. I hate deep knee bends.

POPE. This encyclical is none of your business, Mother.

MOM. Don't start acting "holier than thou" to me.

POPE. Ma...

MOM. So when are you going to make a decision?

COOKIE. Yeah, when are you?

POPE. When I'm good and ready.

MOM. If your brother were Pope, he would've made up his mind already.

(The POPE looks at both of them and tears up the encyclical.)

MOM. What are you doing?!

POPE. I refuse to sign a document that will send anyone's loving brother to hell just because he doesn't practice what I preach.

MOM. Great. You've told off God and your mother in the same day. Lord knows what you'll do next.

COOKIE. You'd be surprised.

MOM. Would I, Bookie?

COOKIE. *Cookie.*

POPE. Well, Mom, I'd love to chat, but it's time for my first workout.

MOM. Okay, I'm going. Goodbye, son.

(The Pope's MOTHER gives her son a motherly peck.)

POPE. Goodbye, Mom.

MOM. *(Referring to his garment.)* Don't jog in that. It'll cost too much to dry clean.

(The Pope's MOTHER exits.)

COOKIE. You have quite a mother.

POPE. Well, you know how moms are. They're always disappointed when you're made Pope and not God.

COOKIE. I was very proud of you when you tore up that encyclical.

POPE. What can I say? I must have been divinely inspired.

COOKIE. Maybe you were divinely inspired last night as well.

POPE. You really think so?

COOKIE. It's possible... Isn't it?

POPE. I know the Lord works in mysterious ways, but this takes the cake.

COOKIE. And I popped out of it.

**PAGES HAVE BEEN CUT FROM THIS SCENE.
THE PLAY CONTINUES ON THE NEXT PAGE.**

In order to protect our associated authors against copyright infringement, we cannot currently present full electronic scripts.

To purchase books with the full text, and to apply for performance rights, click ORDER or go back to:

www.playscripts.com

TRIUMPH IN ARGENTINA

Cast of Characters

TIM, an American

GUSTAV, a German

LULU, Gustav's wife

Time

1998.

Place

A hotel room in Buenos Aires.

(As the play begins, GUSTAV, LULU and TIM enter the hotel room in which GUSTAV and LULU are staying. They're all in a very good mood.)

GUSTAV. ...So then the Polack says to the Chinaman, "She may be a sheep, but she tastes like chicken."

(They all laugh. The rest of the dialogue they take seriously. Better the audience laughs than the actors.)

TIM. That's good.

LULU. Nobody in the world tells a Polack-Chink joke like Gustav.

GUSTAV. It's a gift.

TIM. Nice room you've got.

GUSTAV. Ach, it probably looks like every other room in the hotel.

LULU. Or in any hotel.

TIM. You have a great view of the Plaza de Mayo.

GUSTAV. Is zat so?

TIM. You didn't notice?

GUSTAV. We didn't come to Buenos Aires to stare out a window, Tim.

TIM. You know, I didn't— Why *did* you come?

LULU. Gustav has family here.

TIM. *(To GUSTAV:)* You're Argentinean???

GUSTAV. No. But I have several old relatives who moved here years ago.

LULU. In the 1940s.

GUSTAV. For their health.

TIM. I see.

LULU. They're wonderful people. And so smart.

GUSTAV. My great uncle Gunter could've gone so far in the Fatherland if not for, well, you know...politics.

LULU. Gustav, you haven't offered our guest a drink.

GUSTAV. I'm sorry, Lulu. Let's see what's in our mini-fridge. Would you like a beer? We have Lowenbrau...and Beck's...and some Amazon swamp piss.

TIM. I'll have a Bud if they have one.

GUSTAV. (*A judgment:*) You drink Budweiser?

TIM. Yep.

GUSTAV. *American* Budweiser?

TIM. You don't like American Budweiser?

GUSTAV. American beer is, well, nothing personal, Americans are great at, at—

LULU. Wheat.

GUSTAV. Yes, wheat.

LULU. Corn.

GUSTAV. Great corn.

LULU. Nuclear weapons.

GUSTAV. You're the best.

TIM. But you don't like our beer.

GUSTAV. I prefer beer that has—what's the English word—taste.

TIM. Well, I'd like a Bud.

GUSTAV. I respect how you refuse to compromise your American commitment to mediocrity.

LULU. Maybe we'll give you one later, Tim, *if* you've earned it.

TIM. I'm sure I will.

GUSTAV. He's so confident.

TIM. Yes, I am.

GUSTAV. That's so American.—

TIM. Thanks.

GUSTAV. Like how you're going to take over my wife is, is "manifest destiny."

LULU. I'm so glad you were dining at that restaurant.

TIM. I'm glad you invited me over.

LULU. Well, when I saw you eating that thick slab of Argentinean beef, I turned to Gustav, and said, "Gustav, look at him. He's so carnivorous."

GUSTAV. So few American men seem comfortable around red meat.

LULU. The way you devoured that steak, it made me wish I were a dead cow.

TIM. Thanks.

LULU. I would've never guessed you were an economist, specializing in, in—

TIM. Latin American development.

GUSTAV. You Americans are so generous, always giving advice to other countries on how to be a second-rate America.

TIM. I hope to do more than that. I know 1998's been a rocky year for Argentina, but with the proper management controls, I think it can have the same boom we're having.

GUSTAV. Americans are the best. Your buildings are the tallest, your ketchup is the thickest—

TIM. So you said there was a rather complicated scenario you wanted me to play.

GUSTAV. Are you sure you're ready for it?

TIM. I'm ready for *anything*.

GUSTAV. I like that. You have that American gung-ho-ness. No wonder you won World War II.

LULU. And World War I.

GUSTAV. How many times do I have to tell you: World War I was a draw!

LULU. Okay.

TIM. Shall we start?

GUSTAV. Such impatience, Tim. I'm offering you a delicacy. Don't treat it like fast food.

TIM. I just thought in the restaurant you said you wanted me to—

GUSTAV. (*Overlapping with the above:*) What I meant was—

LULU. Enough yakkin'. Let's start shtuppin'.

TIM. Fine by me.

GUSTAV. Okay, we start. I can see why McDonald's doesn't offer appetizers. So this is what Lulu and I like. I will be sitting in the corner; pretend I'm not here.

TIM. All right.

LULU. I will be lying in bed in my lingerie, looking at the ceiling, and lightly stroking my zeitgeist.

GUSTAV. You enter the room—

LULU. I sit up.

GUSTAV. And you rip off your clothes.

LULU. We kiss, we fondle, we lick and rub and rub and lick, for four to six minutes.

GUSTAV. And then my wife grabs your bratwurst, shoves it inside her beer stein, and yells—

LULU. *"Fuck me, Adolf!"*

GUSTAV. And you reply, *"Adolf's fucking you, baby!"*

TIM. What?!

GUSTAV. If you prefer, you can say, "Adolf's fucking you, honey." That's good, too.

TIM. You want me to—I'm not going to say I'm Hitler!

GUSTAV. We're not using last names.

TIM. You want me to pretend I'm Hitler?!

GUSTAV. You can be any Adolf you want.

TIM. What other Adolfs are there besides Hitler?

LULU. There's Adolph Green.

TIM. Who?

GUSTAV. Famous American lyricist. Wrote "The Bronx is up, the Battery's down."

LULU. "The masses ride around in a hole in a ground."

GUSTAV. He also co-authored several MGM musicals. Very talented man.

TIM. You want me to pretend to be Adolph Green?

GUSTAV. Unless you don't have the guts. (*To LULU:*) I don't think the American has the guts to be Adolph Green.

LULU. Ohhh. Too bad. I could make him so hard it'd be like he had a concrete shlong.

TIM. All right... I'll pretend I'm Adolph Green.

GUSTAV. Good. So you'll say...you'll say...

TIM. "Adolph's fucking you, baby!"

GUSTAV. And she says:

LULU. "*Oh, Adolf, you're so beeg.*"

GUSTAV. And you say, "*Big enough to take Poland!*"

TIM. Adolph Green never took Poland!

GUSTAV. I hear they loved *Singin' in the Rain*.

TIM. I'm not going to say "Big enough to take Poland!"

GUSTAV. How about Czechoslovakia?"

TIM. No! And not Austria or Denmark, either.

LULU. Admit it. You hate musical comedy.

TIM. You're asking me to be the most evil man of the twentieth century.

GUSTAV. That's what makes it naughty.

TIM. I can't—no—I won't do it.

LULU. Are you afraid to play this game?

TIM. I'm not afraid; I'm, I just have some issues about—

GUSTAV. Oh, you Americans with all your *issues*. I suppose if you pretended to be Hitler, you'd have to tell your shrink.

LULU. Do you see a shrink?

TIM. That's not rele—

GUSTAV. How about this: You pretend to be Hitler, and I'll pretend to be Freud.

TIM. That's not my fantasy!

LULU. You have a very limited imagination.

TIM. Why do I have to be Hitler?!

LULU. Hitler was hot.

TIM. I don't thi—

GUSTAV. No woman ever complained about him in bed.

TIM. Yeah, but—

LULU. Name one woman who ever dumped Hitler.

TIM. Maybe that's because—

GUSTAV. Because he was good.

LULU. That's why "Heil Hitler" goes like this— (*Gives Nazi salute.*) and not like this. (*Gives salute with limp arm.*)

TIM. (*To GUSTAV:*) Have *you* ever pretended to be Hitler?

GUSTAV. Of course.

LULU. We both have.

TIM. *You've* pretended to be Hitler?

LULU. I wear a cute strap-on with a swastika on it.

TIM. (To GUSTAV:) When she plays Hitler, who do you play?

GUSTAV. Goebbels.

TIM. Hitler and Goebbels?

GUSTAV. We tried Göring, but we didn't get turned on.

TIM. Look, if you two get off on this fine, but—

GUSTAV. C'mon, play the game.

LULU. Haven't you ever wanted to do something totally verboten?

GUSTAV. Totally offensive.

LULU. Totally bad.

GUSTAV. Don't you think, if you let yourself, you'd enjoy being Hitler for one hour?

TIM. I, uh, I—

LULU. I can make you so excited your sperm will fight over who gets to ejaculate first.

TIM. How about, how about if she says, "Fuck me, Bismarck!" I'll do Bismarck.

LULU. Bismarck was fat.

GUSTAV. Der Fuhrer never had a weight problem.

LULU. Hitler was hot.

TIM. Look, I'll, I'll do almost anything but—

GUSTAV. Before you said *anything*.

TIM. I didn't expect—

GUSTAV. You're willing to shtup a man's wife while he watches, but pretending to be Hitler offends your morality.

TIM. Yes, it does.

GUSTAV. I guess that makes me a bad boy.

LULU. And me a very bad girl.

TIM. There must be some other game we can—

**PAGES HAVE BEEN CUT FROM THIS SCENE.
THE PLAY CONTINUES ON THE NEXT PAGE.**

In order to protect our associated authors against copyright infringement, we cannot currently present full electronic scripts.

To purchase books with the full text, and to apply for performance rights, click ORDER or go back to:

www.playscripts.com

OFF THE MAP

Cast of Characters

SCOTT

JEAN

A LOCAL RESIDENT (*male*)

Time

The recent past

Place

Someplace very cold

(A fairly barren terrain, except for some rocks of all sizes, from boulders to pebbles. JEAN and SCOTT, a young married couple, enter, carrying knapsacks. They've both been hiking long enough to become very tired and very, very irritable.)

SCOTT. I can't go any further.

JEAN. We can't stop here.

SCOTT. *(Taking off his pack:)* Why not?

JEAN. It's too bleak.

SCOTT. I don't care.

JEAN. It's freezing here.

SCOTT. Any place else we go might just be worse.

JEAN. Does this place look familiar?

SCOTT. This place looks even less familiar than every other unfamiliar place we've been.

JEAN. *(Opening a map:)* We must be someplace, Scott.

SCOTT. We've been to 14,000 someplaces, Jean. I think we've finally arrived at No Place.

JEAN. I've never felt so lost.

SCOTT. Maybe we're in South No Place or No Place Heights.

JEAN. You're not helping.

SCOTT. So? Even when I try, you don't appreciate it.

JEAN. Maybe if you tried harder, we wouldn't be lost.

SCOTT. Jean, we've been lost since we got married.

JEAN. *(Looking at the map:)* I, I think we took a wrong turn after our honeymoon.

SCOTT. That's because you refused to linger in Newlywed Bliss.

JEAN. I think if we had headed straight towards Parenthood—

SCOTT. Jean—

JEAN. It would've been so easy to get to.

SCOTT. But impossible to get out of.

JEAN. Scott.

SCOTT. I just want to visit some other places first.

JEAN. You keep wanting to steer us back to Partyland.

SCOTT. And we would've gotten there if you didn't turn us off at Biological Clock World.

JEAN. I just found it more real than Extended-Adolescenceville.

SCOTT. I would've been glad to settle down at the intersection of Love and Lust, but, no, you had to drag us to Responsibility Gulch.

JEAN. It was a nice gulch.

SCOTT. It was a ravine! With a dead end!

JEAN. Having children is not a dead end.

SCOTT. I'm just not there yet.

JEAN. Well, I can't stay here. It's too cold.

SCOTT. Maybe, maybe we should just admit we'll never find a place we both like.

JEAN. Do you think that's true?

SCOTT. All I know for sure is—I'm tired.

JEAN. Well, I'm going to look around and see if there's a way out.

SCOTT. I'm just going to sit here, and see if there's a way in.

JEAN. Good luck.

(JEAN exits. SCOTT thinks, perhaps kicks a pebble or two. Someone from the area—a local resident—who happens to be a PENGUIN—enters. Noticing SCOTT, the PENGUIN approaches cautiously. SCOTT, in his own world, doesn't see the penguin. SCOTT moves, and the PENGUIN scoots away. Working up courage, the PENGUIN moves closer, and closer, and closer, till—)

SCOTT. What the—

(The PENGUIN scoots far away. The PENGUIN and SCOTT study each other.)

PENGUIN. You—you're not a penguin.

SCOTT. No, I'm a person.

PENGUIN. A person?...Oh, yeah, I've heard about your kind. You'll eat anything, won't you?

SCOTT. I don't eat penguins.

PENGUIN. Prove it. Show me your teeth. *(Peering into SCOTT's smile:)* No feathers. Okay, I'll trust you.

SCOTT. Thanks.

PENGUIN. You go near my wife or kids, I'll peck your balls out.

SCOTT. Okay.

PENGUIN. People. Whoever heard of creating a species whose genitals make such easy targets?

SCOTT. We have opposable thumbs.

PENGUIN. *(Sarcastic:)* Ooo, I'm impressed. So what are you doing in Antarctica?

SCOTT. I'm in Antarctica?

PENGUIN. Didn't you notice how cold it is?

SCOTT. I thought it was a chill in the marriage.

PENGUIN. Problems with the little hen?

SCOTT. Yeah. Are you married?

PENGUIN. Of course. Most penguins mate for life.

SCOTT. And the others?

PENGUIN. They just stand around and occasionally scream at the sky.

SCOTT. Oh.

PENGUIN. And humans?

SCOTT. Well, we're *supposed* to mate for life—

PENGUIN. But?

SCOTT. Some of us get married too early.

PENGUIN. I'm glad I waited till I was eight.

SCOTT. You got married at eight?

PENGUIN. I know, I know. My dad used to say, "You're 7½, when are you going to settle down?" I wasn't ready; I was still having too much fun sliding down icy hills on my belly.

SCOTT. I remember days like that.

PENGUIN. And then one day I waddled past her, and suddenly there was more to life than belly-sliding.

SCOTT. I walked past my wife, and I thought, what a fox.

PENGUIN. Oh, you have an inter-species relationship?

SCOTT. No, no, it's—She just has some of the qualities of a fox.

PENGUIN. Is she furry?

SCOTT. No.

PENGUIN. I'm confused. I've never looked at a penguin and thought, "What a sea lion!"

SCOTT. I—

PENGUIN. This may sound odd to you, but what I look for in a penguin—is a penguin. Tight feathers, webbed feet. And when I met her, well, I grabbed the first stone I could find and placed it at her feet.

SCOTT. Why?

PENGUIN. How else can I show her I'm capable of building a good stone nest for our chicks? I gave her lots of stones.

SCOTT. Really?

PENGUIN. Well, how did you impress *your* hen?

SCOTT. I gave her *one* stone.

PENGUIN. Like a boulder?

SCOTT. It was smaller than a pebble.

PENGUIN. You must live in a very barren terrain.

SCOTT. Only since we got married. You two fight?

PENGUIN. We have the occasional squawk.

SCOTT. We squawk constantly. Constantly.

(SCOTT sighs. The PENGUIN moves closer and puts his flipper around SCOTT.)

PENGUIN. Friendly flipper... What's there to squawk about so often?

SCOTT. Well, sex for one thing.

PENGUIN. Oh, yeah.

SCOTT. In the beginning, it was so adventurous. And frequent. Now it's, well, you know how it gets.

PENGUIN. Well, not to brag, but sex with my wife is as good as ever.

SCOTT. And frequency?

PENGUIN. Every single year.

SCOTT. You have sex once a year?

PENGUIN. All penguins do.

SCOTT. You have sex with your wife once a year?

PENGUIN. And she's *always* in the mood.

SCOTT. I'm glad.

PENGUIN. Once it lasted forty seconds.

SCOTT. More power to you.

PENGUIN. I remember one year. We were going at it, feather-to-feather—I hope I'm not being too graphic—

SCOTT. I can handle it.

PENGUIN. And when we finished, I bowed to her, and she bowed to me, and we just stood next to each other. It was dusk, and some of the clouds had soft pink edges. And we just stood next to each other, for hours. Nothing needed to be said. Nothing needed to be done. It was a moment that didn't need to be filled with anything beyond... existing.

SCOTT. Really.

PENGUIN. And a few months later, we had our first pair of chicks. You have chicks?

SCOTT. Not yet. How many do you have?

PENGUIN. Ten.

SCOTT. Ten?! That's quite a responsibility.

PENGUIN. That's why we're not having twelve.

SCOTT. Ten kids, wow.

PENGUIN. I love coming home after swimming for food all day, hopping on the beach with a belly full of krill, and having the youngest pair chase after me. "Feed me, feed me," they yell, and I keep running from them yelling, "Go away, go away." "Feed me, feed me." "Go away, go away." "Feed me, feed me." "Go away, go away." And finally I stop and let them catch me, and I tilt my head up and go gg-gg-gg-gg-gg* (** the sound of someone about to vomit*) and I open my beak wide, and they stick their little beaks in my mouth and eat regurgitated krill. And I keep vomiting and vomiting, until they waddle away happy and full... It's great.

SCOTT. I never knew regurgitating could be so satisfying.

PENGUIN. Every day my wife and I, we swim for krill, come home, and throw up for the kids.

SCOTT. And you like doing this?

PENGUIN. Of course.

SCOTT. Why?

PENGUIN. Because I'm a penguin. And this is what penguins do.

SCOTT. Oh.

PENGUIN. And what do people do?

SCOTT. Well... Depends on the person.

PENGUIN. Sounds complicated.

SCOTT. You see, people, we don't just live by instinct like you guys. Our brains are more developed. We can determine what we do with our lives by thinking things through and deciding what we want.

PENGUIN. Ohhh... Are people happy?

SCOTT. Not in the least.

PENGUIN. Well, don't feel too bad. You're only human.

SCOTT. *(A verbal shrug:)* I have opposable thumbs.

PENGUIN. Well, I better not keep the family waiting. I got a belly full of krill, and I'm sure babies want papa. Friendly flipper?

SCOTT. Friendly flipper.

(They hug. The PENGUIN begins to waddle away. He notices a stone, and brings it to SCOTT.)

PENGUIN. Here. I know it's not fancy, but it's solid. Give it to your wife.

SCOTT. Thanks.

PENGUIN. And make sure you always leave time for belly-sliding.

(The PENGUIN exits, waddling. SCOTT looks at the stone. JEAN enters.)

JEAN. Hi.

SCOTT. Any luck?

JEAN. Every place I looked was cold and bleak.

SCOTT. Yeah, well.

JEAN. But I realized something.

SCOTT. What?

**PAGES HAVE BEEN CUT FROM THIS SCENE.
THE PLAY CONTINUES ON THE NEXT PAGE.**

In order to protect our associated authors against copyright infringement, we cannot currently present full electronic scripts.

To purchase books with the full text, and to apply for performance rights, click ORDER or go back to:

www.playscripts.com

BRAZILIAN WAX ELOQUENT

Cast of Characters

JOEL, in his fifties, more or less

CAROL, in her fifties, more or less

Time

Early 21st century.

Place

A hotel room in Rio.

(As the play begins, JOEL and CAROL enter their hotel room in Rio. It's a stylish room overlooking the beach of Ipanema. They bring in their luggage—or maybe a bellhop carries it in, gets a tip, and exits.)

CAROL. Wow.

JOEL. Rio. We're actually in Rio.

CAROL. And our luggage made it, too.

JOEL. *(Walking to the window:)* The beach of Ipanema... Isn't that the most gorgeous beach you've ever seen?

CAROL. Sure looks nicer than any of the beaches in Kansas City.

JOEL. "Cidade Mavilhosa"—the Marvelous City. My tongue is getting aroused just saying it.

CAROL. I think I packed too much.

JOEL. Unpacking can wait. Let's see Rio.

CAROL. How'd you like to take a walk through Old Town? It's supposed to be magnificent.

JOEL. I know. Let's go to the beach.

CAROL. How about going to the Museu de Arte Moderne? It's supposed to be fantastic.

JOEL. Let's go to the beach.

CAROL. How about if we hike up Sugar Loaf Mountain? The view's supposed to be amazing.

JOEL. Let's hike across the beach.

CAROL. Joel, I...

JOEL. What?

CAROL. I heard you on the phone last night with Seth.

JOEL. Oh, that was, that was just guy talk.

CAROL. You told Seth the main reason you wanted to come to Rio was to gawk at "bodacious babes in abbreviated bikinis."

JOEL. It's nothing. I like alliteration.

CAROL. I heard you go on and on.

JOEL. What were you doing—

CAROL. (*Overlapping:*) You need to talk softer when you use your cell phone.

JOEL. You know, I'm sure you'll see a lot of beefsteak on the beach, or bifteka, or whatever the guys here are called.

CAROL. Look, if you want to go on the beach and gawk, go ahead. I'll start unpacking. With luck I'll be done by the end of the trip.

JOEL. Honey, I—

CAROL. Go. Enjoy the— (*Struggling to alliterate:*) bountiful bevy of buxom bedbugs—I have no idea what I'm saying.

JOEL. Carol, I won't be happy knowing you're here being miserable. I'd like you with me—

CAROL. Pretending to be happy.

JOEL. You do that so well.

CAROL. Great.

JOEL. I mean it. When the kids were little, I can't tell you how much I admired how excited you got by those stupid drawings they did. *I couldn't fake it.*

CAROL. I love art.

JOEL. Me, too. It's one of the things we share.

CAROL. Oh, sure. When I was overwhelmed in Florence last year looking at Michelangelo's David, you kept going on and on about, "Why isn't he circumcised? He's Jewish, isn't he?"

JOEL. I had a great time in Florence. And I loved making one of your dreams come true.

CAROL. Then enjoy the beach. I'll see you later.

JOEL. Honey, my desire to look at those women does not detract from my love for you in any way.

CAROL. It doesn't?

JOEL. Not at all. I don't want to *be* with them; I want to be with *you*.

CAROL. Gawking at them.

JOEL. Enjoying their aesthetic beauty.

CAROL. Preferably with a hard-on.

JOEL. I think increased blood flow is a good thing.

CAROL. Look, honey, I think it's great that you're in touch with your inner pervert, but, but I'm just, I'm just not in the mood.

(A beat.)

JOEL. Was it something I said?

CAROL. No.

(A beat.)

JOEL. Was it something I did?

CAROL. No.

(A beat.)

JOEL. Was it something I didn't say or didn't do and should've said or done?

CAROL. No.

JOEL. This is the point where I'm supposed to ask what's really bothering you, isn't it?

CAROL. Whatever you'd like.

JOEL. What's really bothering you?

CAROL. Nothing.

(A beat.)

JOEL. Great. Can we go to the beach now?

CAROL. *(Resigned:)* Okay. Okay. If that's what you want, let's go to the beach.

JOEL. Great. Let's put on our swimsuits—

CAROL. Swimsuits?

JOEL. It's the beach.

CAROL. Of course.

(CAROL takes out a one-piece swimsuit.)

JOEL. Hey, you want to go downstairs and I'll buy you a bikini?

CAROL. No thank you.

JOEL. Why not?

CAROL. Because of something that happened 22 years ago.

JOEL. What?

CAROL. The twins.

JOEL. It's not like they're still inside you.

CAROL. No, but they left their marks on the way out.

JOEL. You know, older— *(Off CAROL's look:)* middle-aged women in Rio wear bikinis, and they have stretch marks.

CAROL. No, they don't. They rub on some magic cocoa butter, and it erases stretch marks, increases estrogen, and removes cellulite.

JOEL. How, how about if we go downstairs to one of the shops, and I buy you a skimpy bikini, and we just say to hell with everyone.

CAROL. You really want me to walk around in a bikini and be stared at by every leech and degenerate on the beach?

JOEL. Fine by me.

CAROL. I could've sworn I phrased my question to guarantee a No answer.

JOEL. I don't care what other guys do with their eyes as long as no other body part comes near you.

CAROL. And do you want me to buy you one of those teeny-weeny almost-shows-your-weenie swimsuits for men?

JOEL. *(Thinks, then:)* Sure. Let's go Brazilian!

CAROL. We'll look ridiculous.

JOEL. We're Americans. That's our role in the world.

CAROL. Okay, then. If that's how you feel, let's do it.

JOEL. You mean it?

CAROL. Let's go Brazilian.

JOEL. Right on.

CAROL. We'll buy the skimpiest suits they have.

JOEL. Yes!

CAROL. We'll drink caipirinhas* all day long.

*(*Caipirinhas are a popular mixed drink in Brazil.)*

JOEL. Amen, sister.

CAROL. Oh, and let's get a Brazilian wax.

JOEL. Yes! Remind me, uh, what exactly *is* a Brazilian wax?

CAROL. Remember how you liked it that time I got a bikini wax?

JOEL. Uh-huh.

CAROL. Well, a Brazilian wax removes *everything*.

JOEL. You'd do that?

CAROL. Is that a fantasy of yours?

JOEL. No, but I'm willing to add it to the list.

CAROL. Great. I'm sure this hotel has a spa. I'll sign us both up.

JOEL. Both?

CAROL. Don't *you* want to go Brazilian?

JOEL. Is this a fantasy of yours?

CAROL. No, but I'll add it to the list.

JOEL. Exactly...exactly how much um how much foliage would they be waxing off of me?

CAROL. Complete deforestation.

JOEL. Does uh, does it hurt?

CAROL. Well, there is that moment when they go *rrrrrrrrriipp*, but otherwise no... So how much do you want to go Brazilian?

JOEL. What the hell. Let's go for it.

CAROL. You're bluffing.

JOEL. Would you prefer if I shaved down there? Get me my razor and some shave cream.

CAROL. Yeah, right.

JOEL. Go ahead: I dare you.

(CAROL starts to go through Joel's luggage and gets out his razor and shave cream. Watching her, JOEL sits in a chair. At first his legs are apart, but then they close. He crosses his legs, and nonchalantly places his hands on his lap one at a time, completely protecting his private parts.)

CAROL. Ready?

JOEL. Sure.

CAROL. You're scared.

JOEL. Damn right I'm scared. But I'd do it for you.

CAROL. I'd never ask you to do something that scared you.

JOEL. Yes you do. All the time.

CAROL. When?

JOEL. When you ask me to be a sensitive husband.

CAROL. That scares you?

JOEL. It's much easier being a superficial jerk.

CAROL. You're not scared of *me*, are you?

JOEL. In some ways, sure.

CAROL. We've been married 28 years.

JOEL. Which is why I'm scared of you in completely different ways than when I first met you.

CAROL. *(Getting angry:)* You're really scared?!

JOEL. Well on occasion—

CAROL. Why haven't you brought it—!

JOEL. I assume you're scared, too, on—

CAROL. You think I'm scary?!

JOEL. No, no, it's just—!

CAROL. Is that why you want to go to the beach—!!

JOEL. No, it's—!!

CAROL. Because it's too scary just being with—!!!

JOEL. No, it's, it's, it's—you know, I'm really working hard on staying with things when we're in conflict and all that other crap our counselor told us, but—could you remind me what the topic of this fight is? 'Cause I've lost track.

CAROL. The topic is... You need to go outside our marriage for sexual excitement.

JOEL. Oh... No wonder I'm losing... Sweetie, you know I love you.

CAROL. Do I excite you?

JOEL. Of course.

CAROL. Then why do you want to look at half-naked women on the beach?

JOEL. Because, because—No, sorry, I can't win. It's my DNA, it's my wiring, it's God's idea of a practical joke. But it's not because I find anything lacking in you.

CAROL. I don't believe you.

JOEL. Honey, *you* find more lacking in you than I do.

CAROL. Well, I have higher standards than you do.

JOEL. Honey, it's—You and I have so many blessings in our lives. Our kids are grown and probably won't move back in. We sold our tech stocks minutes before they tanked. We can finally afford to travel to places where we're not surrounded by people like us. This

is our only chance to go crazy before our kids start blaming it on Alzheimer's.

CAROL. You don't get it, do you?!

JOEL. Not usually.

CAROL. When I heard you tell Seth how much you wanted to see, as I think you put it, "nearly naked nubile nymphs," what upset me wasn't how much you wanted to.

JOEL. Then what—

CAROL. What upset me, was that I didn't blame you. I mean, look at me.

JOEL. I'm looking.

CAROL. What do you see?

JOEL. (*Way too insistent:*) I see... I see the most beautiful woman in the world.

CAROL. You really don't fake it well, do you?

JOEL. Honey, I—

CAROL. I know I'm okay-looking, but, but even before the stretch marks, and wrinkles, and decades of gravity made my boobs go from horizontal to diagonal, I, I'm *not* beautiful.

JOEL. You know, I'm no hunk.

CAROL. This isn't about you.

JOEL. Oh.

CAROL. I don't think I crave hunkeness the way you crave beauty.

JOEL. I think you're very prett—

CAROL. Honey, if you want me to believe anything you say for the rest of our marriage, cut the crap.

(A long stretch of silence. Every time JOEL starts to say something, he thinks better of it. Finally:)

JOEL. I just wanted to have fun.

**PAGES HAVE BEEN CUT FROM THIS SCENE.
THE PLAY CONTINUES ON THE NEXT PAGE.**

In order to protect our associated authors against copyright infringement, we cannot currently present full electronic scripts.

To purchase books with the full text, and to apply for performance rights, click ORDER or go back to:

www.playscripts.com

BULGARIAN RHAPSODY

Cast of Characters

VASILKA, a middle-aged Bulgarian woman

TATIANA, Vasilka's daughter, 20ish
(pronounced "Ta-tee-AN-a")

STANIMIR, Vasilka's husband

PLAMEN, their neighbor

KEN, Vasilka's American cousin

DEISLAV, Vasilka's brother

IVANA, his fiancée

Time

November 2004.

Place

A modest Bulgarian home.

(As the play begins, VASILKA, a middle-aged Bulgarian woman of modest means, is tidying the modest living room of her modest Bulgarian home. Her tidying is more a result of anxiety than need. She calls out.)

VASILKA. Are you ready yet?

TATIANA. *(Offstage:)* Almost.

VASILKA. He should be here any second.

TATIANA. *(Offstage:)* I know, I know.

VASILKA. For our American cousin, you better look *perfect*.

(TATIANA enters. She's dressed to give a man an unmistakable positive signal. She wears thick make-up and a dress with its top buttons unbuttoned.)

TATIANA. How do I look? You think he'll find me attractive?

VASILKA. If he likes frigid nuns.

TATIANA. I don't want to be too forward.

(VASILKA unbuttons some of the buttons of TATIANA's dress.)

VASILKA. He'll only be in Bulgaria a few days. This is no time for subtlety.

TATIANA. But what if he prefers virgins?

(VASILKA rebuttons the buttons.)

VASILKA. You're right. Let's not overwhelm him.

TATIANA. I don't think they still have virgins in America.

VASILKA. Then there must not be a market for it.

(VASILKA unbuttons a couple of buttons.)

TATIANA. Oh, Mama. What if he doesn't like me?

VASILKA. Simple. You'll change.

TATIANA. And what if he still doesn't like me?

VASILKA. Then you'll have to get a job.

TATIANA. Mama, wake up. Ever since Communism ended, there are no jobs.

VASILKA. Did you check the newspaper today?

TATIANA. Yes. There were only seven want ads.

VASILKA. So?

(TATIANA picks up a newspaper.)

TATIANA. “Prostitute, Prostitute, Prostitute, Drug Dealer, Drug Dealer, Drug Dealer.”

VASILKA. That’s six.

TATIANA. “Executive secretary.”

VASILKA. Ahh.

TATIANA. “Skills include prostitution, drug dealing, and typing sixty words a minute.”

VASILKA. Your Aunt Zelda could teach you to type. *(There’s a knock at the door.)* Coming. *(VASILKA checks the room one last time and unbuttons another button on TATIANA’s dress. There’s another knock.)* Coming.

(VASILKA opens the door. In the doorway is her neighbor PLAMEN. He’s dressed as sophisticated as possible for a man who has no sophistication.)

PLAMEN. Hello.

VASILKA. Oh, it’s you.

PLAMEN. This is how you greet your neighbor?

TATIANA. We were hoping you were Mama’s cousin.

VASILKA. Stanimir’s picking him up at the airport.

PLAMEN. Where’s Desislav? Doesn’t he want to meet his cousin?

VASILKA. I haven’t heard from my brother or his fiancée in weeks.

PLAMEN. Really?

VASILKA. For all I know, they’re dead.

PLAMEN. Oh, no.

VASILKA. Or their phone's been disconnected.

PLAMEN. Oh.

TATIANA. Have Desislav and Ivana set a date yet?

VASILKA. No, and they never will.

TATIANA. Then what makes her his fiancée?

VASILKA. Civilized people don't use the word "slut."

TATIANA. *(To PLAMEN:)* How do you think I look?

PLAMEN. I can honestly say you look so beautiful that only the fear of your mother killing me prevents me from lunging at you.

TATIANA. Oh, good.

PLAMEN. *(To VASILKA:)* Does your American cousin know you're—

VASILKA. He'll find out soon enough.

PLAMEN. Are you sure he's single?

TATIANA. We don't even know if he's heterosexual.

(PLAMEN unbuttons a couple of buttons on his shirt.)

TATIANA. What are you doing?

PLAMEN. I'd rather be a gay American than a straight Bulgarian... How rich do you think he is?

VASILKA. He's American.

PLAMEN. Not all Americans are rich.

TATIANA. Really?

PLAMEN. I read an article about it. Only ten percent of Americans are really wealthy. The other ninety percent are upper middle class.

TATIANA. Mama, what's for dinner tonight?

VASILKA. I'm hoping my cousin will take us out.

TATIANA. What if he doesn't?

VASILKA. Then we'll have leftovers from last night.

TATIANA. But last night we went without food. I didn't eat anything.

VASILKA. And whatever you didn't finish, we're having tonight.

TATIANA. Mama!

PLAMEN. You better finish it tonight, or you'll have leftovers all week.

(There's a knock on the door. VASILKA checks the apartment. TATIANA unbuttons one button. PLAMEN sees this and unbuttons one button. TATIANA unbuttons one more button. PLAMEN unbuttons one more button. They both start furiously unbuttoning. There's another knock.)

VASILKA. Coming! *(To PLAMEN, then TATIANA:)* You, button up, or I'll kick you out. Tatiana, I want you to look like a non-virginal but shy girl who will put out for the right man.

(VASILKA opens the door. Her husband STANIMIR enters with her American cousin KEN. STANIMIR carries Ken's suitcase.)

VASILKA. Hello, welcome.

STANIMIR. Ken, I would like you to meet your cousin Vasilka, and our daughter Tatiana.

(VASILKA smiles. TATIANA curtsies with a bow, revealing deep into her dress. KEN is overwhelmed by the view.)

STANIMIR. And this is our neighbor Plamen.

PLAMEN. Hello.

(PLAMEN curtsies, too.)

KEN. Hi. Stanimir, you didn't tell me you had such a lovely wife and daughter.

STANIMIR. The wife's taken.

PLAMEN. Your trip must've been exhausting.

STANIMIR. Would you like a seat?

VASILKA. A drink?

TATIANA. A full-body massage?

KEN. No, thank you, Tatwana.

TATIANA. Tatiana.

KEN. Ta-tee-wana.

TATIANA. Ta-tee-*an*-na.

STANIMIR. Call her Betty.

VASILKA. It such a pleasure to meet you, cousin.

KEN. It is an honor to finally meet you.

VASILKA. When I look at you, I think, if only our great-great-grandfather were alive today...

KEN. I know. I could almost cry.

PLAMEN. You must be a very, very sensitive man.

TATIANA. In America, even heterosexuals cry.

PLAMEN. Just my luck.

VASILKA. So how was your flight?

KEN. Well, you know how flights are. There's no leg room, and the food is barely edible.

VASILKA. They have food on planes?!

TATIANA. Oh, Mama, someday we must fly somewhere.

KEN. I'm sure both of you can cook much better than anything you'll find on planes.

VASILKA. Maybe once we could.

KEN. What do you mean?

STANIMIR. Surely you've read about Bulgaria in the newspapers.

KEN. Actually, my hometown paper doesn't have much interna—

PLAMEN. Then I'm sure the news on TV—

KEN. Tells me less than my newspaper.

STANIMIR. Doesn't American news media ever cover Bulgaria?

KEN. I think I read a couple of paragraphs when you ousted the Communists.

STANIMIR. That was fifteen years ago.

PLAMEN. November, 1989.

KEN. So... What's new?

VASILKA. My dear cousin, we all thought the end of Communism would bring the beginning of prosperity.

PLAMEN. Instead, most of us are worse off than ever.

STANIMIR. Unemployment is rampant.

TATIANA. And if you're lucky enough to have saved something, you dare not put it in the corrupt banks.

STANIMIR. And crime is so bad you dare not keep it under your pillow, either.

KEN. That's so sad.

STANIMIR. At least we don't live in Romania.

ALL THE BULGARIANS. (*Spitting.*) Ptui!

KEN. Could I, I don't mean to trouble you—

VASILKA. Ask for anything.

KEN. Could I have a glass of water?

TATIANA. I'll get it.

(*TATIANA curtsies, bows and exits.*)

VASILKA. She is so good at getting water.

STANIMIR. Whenever she's around, men get thirsty.

VASILKA. I'm sorry we cannot offer you any food.

KEN. That's quite all—

STANIMIR. We were going to make you a huge feast, but we have no money.

VASILKA. I was going to make you a roast chicken—

STANIMIR. How dare you! Your cousin comes all the way from America, and you're telling him you're not making him a chicken? You could at least not make him a lamb.

VASILKA. My apologies. Forget the chicken. I'm not making you a sumptuous roast lamb, in paprika and wine sauce.

PLAMEN. Oooo.

VASILKA. With fresh canned vegetables and imported potatoes.

STANIMIR. And for dessert?

VASILKA. I'm not making you my apricot-pear strudel.

PLAMEN. Oh, I love when you don't make that!

(TATIANA returns with a glass of water.)

TATIANA. Here's your water. Let me know if it's moist enough.

KEN. Thank you, Tatiana.

STANIMIR. Will you listen to him? He got her name right.

VASILKA. It must be love.

KEN. Actually, I, I do have someone back home.

PLAMEN and TATIANA. *(Simultaneously:)* Damn.

STANIMIR. Is she a nice girl?

PLAMEN. Is she female?

KEN. She's very nice.

VASILKA. Is she good at giving blow jobs?

TATIANA. Mama!

VASILKA. I just—

TATIANA. You know I hate it when you brag about me.

KEN. (*To VASILKA and STANIMIR.*) You're not—you're not trying to—I mean, we're relatives.

VASILKA. You have different last names.

KEN. Yes, but there are biological reasons people don't—Our kids could be morons.

TATIANA. Oh, Mama, just think. I could give birth to an American moron.

VASILKA. And one day he could become president!

KEN. I, uh, I'm sorry. If you hoped—

VASILKA. You see, cousin, it's just—life is so hard.

STANIMIR. Under Communism, we were miserable, year after year.

KEN. Sounds awful.

STANIMIR. At least we had stability. When I wake up today, I don't know if the day will be miserable or horrible. Who can live with such uncertainty?

KEN. I'm, I'm so sorry to hear about your plight, all of you.

STANIMIR. At least we don't live in Romania.

ALL THE BULGARIANS. (*Spitting.*) Ptui!

KEN. As you know, America is also going through a difficult time economically—

PLAMEN. I've heard. In America, the average household can barely afford a DVD player, a cell phone *and* premium cable.

KEN. Do you really want those things?

ALL THE BULGARIANS. Yes!

KEN. My parents used to tell me how down to earth Bulgarians were.

STANIMIR. That's because most of us can't afford a second floor.

KEN. You know, last year, when I lost my job—

TATIANA. You lost your job?

(TATIANA starts buttoning her dress.)

KEN. Look, if all you're interested in is my money—

VASILKA. Cousin, we don't care about your money.

KEN. That's good, because—

VASILKA. Just to finally see your plump face and your well-fed belly—

(There's a knock on the door.)

STANIMIR. Who is it?

DESLAV. *(Offstage:)* It's Desislav.

VASILKA. Thank God. He's alive!

IVANA. *(Offstage:)* And Ivana.

VASILKA. Ehh.

(STANIMIR opens the door. DESLAV and IVANA enter. DESLAV's in good health, except that he has one leg. He uses crutches. IVANA carries a duffle bag.)

IVANA. Sorry we're late.

VASILKA. Desislav, what happened?!

DESLAV. The bus was late.

VASILKA. No, I mean—

STANIMIR. Desislav, Ivana, I want you to meet Ken.

DESLAV. It's good to meet you, cousin Ken.

IVANA. Desislav talks about you all the time.

KEN. He knows nothing about me.

DESLAV. I make it up.

TATIANA. Uncle Desislav, are you okay?

VASILKA. Why haven't we heard from you?

DEISLAV. A few weeks ago, we went to the countryside to visit my ex-cow.

STANIMIR. How is she?

DEISLAV. Bulgarian grass is so lacking in nutrients she no longer has the strength to go “moo.” She just goes “mm.”

IVANA. On our way home, Desislav was hit by a train.

DEISLAV. Most of me survived fine, but they had to cut off my leg.

(For a moment there's silence. Then, overlapping:)

STANIMIR. Congratulations!

VASILKA. I'm so happy for you!

TATIANA. That's great, Uncle.

PLAMEN. You lucky bastard.

IVANA. Isn't it wonderful?

KEN. Why are you all congratulating him?

PLAMEN. He only has one leg.

KEN. So?

STANIMIR. Now he'll only have to buy one shoe.

PLAMEN. A pair of socks will last twice as long.

VASILKA. Think of what he'll save on podiatrists!

IVANA. Not only that, but the train commission will let him ride free for six months.

TATIANA. It's like you've won the lottery.

DEISLAV. I consider myself a lucky man.

KEN. I never realized things were this bad.

STANIMIR. At least we don't live in Romania.

ALL THE BULGARIANS. *(Spitting:)* Ptui!

KEN. What's so awful about Romania?

PLAMEN. In Romania, they have laws against spitting.

KEN. I, I really wish I could make things better for all of you.

VASILKA. Just seeing you in my home, seeing you in person, knowing that each day you probably crap more nutrients than we get in our diet...

KEN. Look, I—

DEISLAV. My dear American cousin—

KEN. I—

DEISLAV. Don't worry. I'm not asking for money.

KEN. If I had, I'd gladly—

DEISLAV. I ask nothing for myself. For me, *nothing*. But I do have *one* favor to ask.

(IVANA opens the duffel bag and takes out Desislav's leg.)

DEISLAV. Take my leg to America.

VASILKA. Could you?!

KEN. I can't take—

DEISLAV. Look at its calluses; look at its blisters. Is it too much to want one American foot? I want this leg to have the opportunities the rest of me will never have. To think that one day this leg may be slipped into Nikes and not a knock-off, to think this leg might once press on the brake of an American SUV.

TATIANA. *(Wiping tears:)* Those are beautiful dreams.

KEN. Look, there are laws. What do you want me to do, take this back on the plane with me?

DEISLAV. Would you?

IVANA. Please?

KEN. *I can't.*

DEISLAV. *Why not?!*

PLAMEN. There's no leg room.

DEISLAV and **IVANA**. Oh.

VASILKA. Surely, cousin, you can take *one* leg.

KEN. I wish I could, but—

STANIMIR. I promise, we will ask nothing else of you.

TATIANA. You would make my uncle so happy.

(TATIANA unbuttons the top of her dress.)

PLAMEN. We would all rejoice in his leg's good fortune.

(PLAMEN unbuttons the top of his shirt.)

KEN. Look, I... America is not this great land you think it is. Most Americans, most Americans, they prefer comfort to freedom. That's why I came here, hoping to rediscover what it felt like to hope.

VASILKA. For us, cousin, hope is still a luxury item.

(KEN looks at the group and thinks.)

KEN. Maybe if the leg was wrapped up, and if there was some certificate—

DEISLAV. You mean it?

KEN. I'll do my best.

DEISLAV. Thank you.

IVANA. Thank you.

VASILKA. Thank you.

STANIMIR. Thank you. *(A beat.)* Take my nose.

VASILKA. Take my ear.

TATIANA. Take my elbow.

IVANA. Take my belly button.

KEN. No—you said if—

STANIMIR. Vasilka, get the carving knife.

(VASILKA exits, as PLAMEN drops his drawers.)

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!

In order to protect our associated authors against copyright infringement, we cannot currently present full electronic scripts.

To purchase books with the full text, and to apply for performance rights, click ORDER or go back to:

www.playscripts.com