

SAME OLD STORY

a play
by Pieter-Dirk Uys

P D Uys Productions
P O Box 175
Darling 7345

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Same Old Story opened in the Tesson of the Johannesburg Civic Theatre on 15 September 2004, directed by Lynne Maree and featuring the following cast:

YVONNE GODARD	Bambi Kellermann (Pieter-Dirk Uys)
RUFUS	Greg Melvill-Smith
GREGORY	James van Helsdinger
SANDRA	Michelle Bradshaw

Designed by Nicholas de Klerk

Bambi's costumes by Gideon & Francois Vedemme

Lighting by Denis Hutchinson

Produced by the Johannesburg Civic Theatre in association with
P D Uys Productions

The time is now.

London.

The action takes place in the living room of YVONNE GODARD's apartment from early evening to early the next morning.

The characters are:

YVONNE GODARD

RUFUS her lover

GREGORY his friend

SANDRA Gregory's girlfriend

There are two Acts.

ACT ONE

THE RADIO IS ON: A NEWSCAST ABOUT THE DAY'S CAR BOMB ATTACK IN PAKISTAN.

THE CELL PHONE ON THE TABLE RINGS.

YVONNE ENTERS TALKING ON ANOTHER CELL PHONE.

YVONNE Yes darling, of course our lunchdate for tomorrow is on. I'd never get anything done! What happened? Are you sure it didn't happen in Baghdad? Was that yesterday? Oh, this is another one? No, I'm getting ready to go out. Momento, the other mobile...

SHE PICKS IT UP. IT IS THE RADIO REMOTE.

SWITCHES OFF THE NEWS.

LOOKS AROUND FOR THE CELL.

FINDS IT UNDER SOMETHING.

Ja? Oh, you phoned earlier. No, I'm in London. I left Berlin years ago ... I got your email.

You spell my name wrong. G-o-d-a-r-d. With a D. How old are you? I thought so. No, I read about your new club. Oh thank you, I'd love that. Ja ja, Boy George always takes me ... oh, did he? No, just me. I'll bring my ... personal trainer, Rufus ... no, just put down Yvonne Godard and ... guest. MTV will be there too?

Ja ja ... ciao.

SHE PUTS THE PHONE DOWN AND CHECKS HER APPEARANCE.

TALKS TO HERSELF:

Oh God thank you. MTV. No more cooking cameos on morning shows. Now let me restore what You are so rapidly taking away. I have to get ready for a very important meeting about my career. My life. I can't believe I'm still doing this. Fuck these eyelashes!

EVENTUALLY PICKS UP THE FIRST PHONE.

Are you still there? Why are you still here? ... no I was talking to God. She pops in every now and then. ... yes, I'd love to see you tomorrow; Brompton Road Bistro. No wait, ring me first, say after eleven? I'm in for a late night ... Ja, I'll wait for your call. Fine. Yes I believe so. Car bombs? Pakistan today, Israel tomorrow. Darling, I can't cancel my day every time a Muslim auntie sticks a bomb up her vagina and blows up a supermarket – I'll never get anything done. No, I refuse to have a tv. They keep playing my old movies and Rufus laughs and then goodbye the erection ... Ciao darling ... bye.

SHE ENDS THE CALL. CHECKS THE TIME.

Where is the fucker ...?

HEADS THE DOOR CLOSED.

LOOKS UP AN MUTTERS.

That was quick!

RUFUS Did you hear the news?

YVONNE I thought you'd been run over or kidnapped. I worried like a mother.

RUFUS Suicide-bombers in Mecca and Riyadh.

YVONNE Pakistan.

RUFUS No, that was this morning.

HE LOOKS FOR THE RADIO REMOTE.

YVONNE Wipe your feet.

RUFUS Where's the remote for the radio?

YVONNE I said: wipe your fucking feet!

RUFUS It was live on tv! Why can't we have a tv! Arms and legs all over the place!

YVONNE I don't want you treading muck and mud into my beautiful carpet.

RUFUS It's not raining!

YVONNE It's London!

HE JOINS HER AND LOOKS AT THE PHOTOS.

RUFUS I like this one. Yvonne, this is cool!

YVONNE Which one? Oh that? Cool? The photographer forced me to take off my eyelashes. I felt naked.

RUFUS One of the best I've seen of you.

YVONNE I like this one.

RUFUS You look like a drag queen.

YVONNE I like it.

RUFUS I'm sure you love it. I prefer this naked one.

YVONNE I look like my mother.

RUFUS You look real!

YVONNE Where the hell were you?

RUFUS I couldn't get away.

YVONNE You what?

RUFUS I couldn't get away.

YVONNE Your mobile?

RUFUS I couldn't use it inside the building.

YVONNE I was due at Alexis at six thirty.

RUFUS So? It's only seven.

YVONNE Why couldn't you SMS me?

RUFUS Why must I always SMS you?

YVONNE I worry.

RUFUS I told you – I couldn't use the mobile. It was off. I had to wait for my turn.

YVONNE And how long did you have to wait?

RUFUS Ages.

YVONNE But you couldn't go into the street and phone? You knew I was waiting.

RUFUS I told you Yvonne, I couldn't!

YVONNE Yes, story of your life. Couldn't!

PAUSE.

RUFUS Alright, I suppose I could've, but at the time I just stayed put.

YVONNE Stayed put.

RUFUS Yes, there were hundreds of people.

YVONNE Hundreds of people.

RUFUS Yes, about twenty White South African actors all up for the same part.

YVONNE And what time was your whatever?

RUFUS Three.

YVONNE Three? You could easily have phoned, you bastard!

RUFUS Do I have to clock in every hour, Madame Godard?

YVONNE I worry. I don't like going out and leaving my flat empty.

RUFUS You just want to check how many people I bring home off the streets.

YVONNE I feel responsible for you. Show some consideration for me too, once in a while – or is that too much to ask?

RUFUS You can take a taxi and be there in twenty minutes.

YVONNE I was meant to be there half-six! Six-bloody-thirty! They're very important people. I never arrive late – not for important people!

RUFUS You're not even dressed.

YVONNE What's that got to do with it?

RUFUS You can always say it's my fault!

YVONNE Darling, you don't feature. They don't even know your name.

RUFUS Of course they do. I was here that night Alexis and Maggie came to have dinner with us.

YVONNE So was that tight-arsed little waiter from the Indian restaurant. At least he added some style to the evening. Disaster! You looking like a mechanic and smelling worse!

RUFUS Alright Godard, you've made your point.

YVONNE What you do between the hours of three and seven pm couldn't bother me less; just don't fuck up my schedule! Lay-about!
CELL PHONE RINGS.
Rentboy!
SHE PICKS UP THE WRONG ONE AGAIN, THEN THE RIGHT ONE.

Cocksucker! Oh Alexis darling! What can I say - you know I'm never late!
No darling something's suddenly cropped up – no, of course I'll be with you now-now
THEATRICALY SOTTO VOICE.
But darling you know what these young producers are like. Yes, he's ... they're sitting here. MTV. HBO. No, I'm speaking from my bedroom ... mmmm ... say sorry to Maggie for me. Ja, *schön schön* ... I'll see you in about ... twenty minutes? Bravo bravo.
ENDS CALL WITH A SIGH.
Mutti always said if I tell lies I will end up in hell. She was right.
SHE EXITS.

RUFUS MTV? HBO?
 COPIES ALEXIS' ITALIAN ACCENT.
 'There's bound to be an Oscar Nomination somewhere in it for you, cara, who knows?
 Of course, you'll need to lose some weight my dear. It'll be a very exhausting role and at your age ...'

YVONNE (off) Go to hell, you spineless little cocksucker!

RUFUS You don't for a moment think that Alexis believed that rubbish? 'Young producers'? You're just playing hard to get, just in case Alexis might have some little cameo for you in one of his crappy Italian pornos.

YVONNE BREEZES IN SHOES IN HAND.

YVONNE Senor Alexis Vallance, winner of the Donatello Award, little boy.

RUFUS In 1974? I can hear him saying to his hideous wife Maggie ... 'Cara, Godard is arseholes again!'

YVONNE I'm never arseholes!

RUFUS You always come across arseholes when you're nervous. That phone call came across like a drunken brawl!

YVONNE I have not been drunk for years ...

RUFUS An old liver can take so much ...

YVONNE You've never seen me drunk. And my liver's fine!

RUFUS Pissed as an old fart!

YVONNE Admit it, you bugger, never!

RUFUS You're right. Who needs booze when you've got the pills. Ha! What about that night at the flat?

YVONNE I can't remember.

RUFUS 32 Winchester Avenue, London, NW6? The night Greg made it with Sandra. You spent half the night vomiting in the lavatory.

YVONNE What a pathetic lie!

RUFUS Your lipstick was so smudged, two taxis drove past us in the street – probably thought you were an old drag-queen!

YVONNE Never old!

RUFUS You vomited in the taxi!

YVONNE I was sick! That 32 Winchester Avenue was enough to make an angel puke!

HE SLIP ON HER SHOES.

RUFUS You were jealous because Greg fancied Sandra and not you!

YVONNE Jealous? I, who shared you with Gregory for two years?

RUFUS You sort-of fancied Gregory. Flattered by his gushing attention to your image.

YVONNE What image was it then?

RUFUS You tell me, Yvonne? God knows young and beautiful is gone for good.

YVONNE I'm on a diet.

RUFUS Oh kak man Yvonne, you stuff yourself with everything you can lay your hands on. You're always gutsing!

YVONNE I guts because I'm unhappy.

RUFUS Really? What right have you to be 'unhappy'? You've got everything you want.

YVONNE Really.

RUFUS Yes really. This flat has got to be worth millions.

YVONNE And a nice view of the rear entrance of Harrods and the real queen's just down the road.

RUFUS All the mod-cons except a TV and DVD player ...

YVONNE Of course, with mod-cons like you, darling, who needs a Japanese vibrator.

RUFUS People still recognise you in the street ...

YVONNE And MTV phoned me. I did not phone them.

RUFUS So? What more do you want? A normal life? That went out of the window the day you put on those eyelashes!

YVONNE You tried to spoil my evening – typical! Why didn't you phone?

RUFUS Because I was waiting in a passage for a job! Casting agents don't know who I am; they don't make an effort to put other actors off to see me – I'm not 'Yvonne Godard'!

YVONNE I'm glad you realise.

RUFUS Unhappy. What do you know about unhappiness? People ask you out to parties, you're at premieres. You have a good time.

YVONNE Don't glamorise.

RUFUS But it is glamorous: your life. Even having me around in your bed is glamorous!

YVONNE Don't speculate.

RUFUS When I stand in an audition queue with so many other Rufusses ...

YVONNE One Rufus; two Rufifi?

RUFUS ... I think of your life and it is glamorous. 'Unglaublich kitsch' is the word in your language.

YVONNE Well then learn German and try and get a job in Berlin if you're too talented for this little island. Never mind, I also had my time standing in queues.

RUFUS Auditioning for Attila the Hun? Today at the studios among all the ambitious white South African police cops, was a coloured woman from Cape Town. Where I come from. In a red anarak. She was there when I arrived; she was still there when I left. Told me her name was Sally de Santos ...

YVONNE She must be a stripper!

RUFUS She was wearing terrible green eye shadow and orange lips. Should've worn glasses. Chain-smoked.

YVONNE Big tits?

RUFUS She'd heard about the movie. She said she'd survived the old South Africa and could give the film authenticity. Her family had been killed by the Boers. Her real name mind you, turned out to be Betsy de Bruyn, not Sally de Santos. YVONNE SHRIEKS WITH DELIGHT.
Sally de Santos disguised as Betsy de Bruyn got cast as a corpse. She survives apartheid to play a dead body! Now that dear star, is what the simple folk call a reason for unhappiness.

YVONNE What do you want me to do? Employ her as my maid?

RUFUS You see what I mean? Fuck it Yvonne, your values are up to shit!

YVONNE My darling, if a job required me to go and sit in someone's passage so that I could play the Jewish victim of the nazi camps, I'd sit in someone's passage! Red anarak and all. I draw the line at the orange lipstick!

RUFUS That poor old bitch probably has one room and a scrapbook to go back to. No pension, no glamour.

YVONNE I don't have a pension either!

RUFUS No Parties, no Alexis, no Eyelashes!

YVONNE Why don't you become a politician, Rufus. You don't need talent! You can fight for the rights of the wronged and get some free publicity! Listen, it's your Betsy's own fault, she probably doesn't have any talent. She's deluding herself and making me angry! She should get a job.

RUFUS As your maid?

YVONNE Wherever she won't be so unhappy, Rufus.

RUFUS I didn't say she was unhappy. It just made me sick to see her sitting there, hoping from day to day.

YVONNE Don't we all just hope from day to day? She should get a job, in a nice shop.

RUFUS Would you work in a shop?

YVONNE Of course not, darling, I'm an actress!

RUFUS Of course, The Actress. Shit, I'm going to bed.

YVONNE Again?

RUFUS You make me sick, Godard. Sometimes, *liebchen*, you can be a real fucking pain in the arse.

YVONNE And you should know.

PAUSE.

RUFUS Look, fix your face and go. You don't want to miss out on all that sushi, do you?

YVONNE Do I look all right?

RUFUS Do something to the hair ... no, at the back. It's standing up like straw.

YVONNE *Scheisse ...*

SHE PEERS INTO THE MIRROR.

RUFUS So, eh, what is this thing in aid of? Has Alexis Vallance got a film for you?

YVONNE Wouldn't it be wonderful ...

RUFUS Good luck.

YVONNE Thank you, darling.

RUFUS I hope you have better luck than me.

PAUSE.

YVONNE Darling, how stupid of me! Did you get the part?

RUFUS Afrikaans policeman. It's set in Cape Town in the 1980s.

YVONNE Apartheid. Again?

RUFUS Afrikaans security policemen. Not like the one I did for that ITV episode last year.

YVONNE We Germans are forever condemned to play nazis.

RUFUS Ja but that's different. These are Afrikaners.

YVONNE Of course, big difference.

RUFUS There were three of us up for the same part. We had to do a video test. Something to do with size.

YVONNE I meant to ask, but you've been so horrible to me.

RUFUS I noticed.

YVONNE Well? How did the test come out?

RUFUS Okay.

YVONNE What did you have to do for the audition? Torture a black? Kill a child?

RUFUS Ja sure.

YVONNE Did you take your clothes off?

RUFUS Boere cops didn't take their clothes off.

YVONNE So, it's only a movie. Anyway if that test was to find size, you should've shown them. You'd have won by inches!

RUFUS Lay off ...

YVONNE You should've shown them all your assets. You still have the nicest arse in any casting queue.
HE IS IRRITATED.
So?

RUFUS They'll get back to me.

YVONNE Poor darling, they said no?

RUFUS They said they'd phone.

YVONNE Oh well, you know what that means.

RUFUS It means I have a chance.

YVONNE Not without your true South African credentials. Anyway, playing those Afrikaner policemen in every British TV movie is no way to find a career. You should try something more artistic.

RUFUS You mean like all those ancient Yvonne Godard horror movies?

YVONNE I'm glad they said you're no good. Maybe being naked for your living is the only alternative.

RUFUS You don't want me to succeed, do you.

YVONNE Why do you keep saying that?

RUFUS I think you'd really be upset if I got a part, naked or not!

YVONNE Darling! I'll phone someone at the agency for you! Is that Irish drunk still in charge? We once had a thing when I was still thin and he had hair. I'll put in a word for you, darling.

RUFUS Would you really?

YVONNE At least you'll know.

RUFUS No thanks.

YVONNE Alright, if you want to be pigheaded.

RUFUS I'm not pigheaded!

YVONNE You are fucking pigheaded! Ever since I've known you, you've been the number one pig head! When you lived with Gregory ...

RUFUS Don't start on that!

YVONNE Let me finish! When you lived with Gregory ... I still don't know what you saw in him.

RUFUS He, at least, was interested in me.

YVONNE Oh. So now I'm not interested in you!

RUFUS No, frankly I don't think you lose sleep over me. Except when I'm on top of you.

YVONNE Refresh my memory!

RUFUS Stop bullshitting! It's what you think happens behind your back that really interests you. Well, go on, my pigheadedness?

YVONNE What? Oh yes, I got you that wonderful part in the Altman film

RUFUS The game keeper's son.

YVONNE A marvellous part in a great movie ...

RUFUS And if you coughed you'd miss me!

YVONNE I didn't cough.

RUFUS The game keeper's son in a Robert Altman film! Thanks!

YVONNE I was interested enough in you to make a big effort to get you that part against all the odds, and you spit it back at me! Then there was the punk Twelfth Night and the tour to Scotland?

RUFUS The director owed you a favour.

YVONNE And what did you do with that great chance?

RUFUS I couldn't go on tour. Gregory was going through one of his bad stages.

YVONNE Of course, Gregory's 'bad stages'!

RUFUS It might be difficult for you to understand, Yvonne, but sometimes it's better to be with someone, than to go whoring after a walk-on in Twelfth Night!

YVONNE 'Bad stages'! Gregory always enjoyed playing the victim and rattling the pills. He always used that so cleverly to keep you there!

RUFUS He would've gone to dogs if I'd left him.

YVONNE And instead that poodle bitch took over.

RUFUS Sandra would've gone on, if you hadn't sent her crusading after Greg.

YVONNE Please, leave me out of this! Sandra was bored and looking for some fun. She found 32 Winchester Avenue. Your little houseboy liked her. You were even too pigheaded and weak to kick her out!

RUFUS Greg wanted her to stay ...

YVONNE Of course he wanted her to stay. It was good for his male ego to prove himself with a real woman and then rub your nose in it! It was still your home, in spite of the security of Yvonne Godard's warm bed. God forbid that I ever be attacked by a maniac with you around. You wouldn't beat them, or join them – oh no, nothing as appealing as that!

RUFUS LOOKS AT HIS WATCH.

RUFUS You're going to be very late!

YVONNE If a gorgeous sexy piece broke into this room now and said he wanted to ravish me on my beautiful carpet, what would you do?

RUFUS Send him to a shrink!
SHE BURSTS OUT LAUGHING.
You'd better go. Darling Alexis doesn't like being kept waiting!

YVONNE Is my hair flat at the back?

RUFUS Yes, yes, it's fine.

YVONNE How do I look?

RUFUS You look fine.

YVONNE Fine? Rufus, look me in the eye when you lie!

RUFUS You look fantastic!

YVONNE I'm prettier than you!

RUFUS I'm younger than you! Don't forget to double lock. We don't want to invite the burglars!

HE EXITS.

YVONNE Scared of competition?
MUTTERS.
Cocksucker!
COLLECTS HER THINGS AND MOVES TO THE DOOR. CALLS:
Ciao!

TELEPHONE RINGS IN HER BAG.

Oh what is this now. Yes?

THEN INTO ACCENT.

Si? Senora Godard is out. No, the houseboy Rufus isn't back yet. Who? Gregory?

Gregory ... *Ciao* ... Gregory

ENDS THE CALL.

Oh God, not again, please ...

RUFUS ENTERS WITH GLASS OF MILK AND SANDWICH.

RUFUS I thought you'd gone.

YVONNE On my way.

PAUSE

Eh ... Rufus, why don't you come with me?

RUFUS Who called?

YVONNE What.

RUFUS Called. The phone.

YVONNE Oh ... eh ... nothing. You expecting anyone?

RUFUS Tonight?

YVONNE To call.

RUFUS No. Was it a heavy breather?

YVONNE Put on your nice leather pants and come with me.

RUFUS No thanks.

YVONNE You'll have a wonderful time, darling! You do like Alexis and Maggie?

RUFUS I don't even know if I've spoken to either of them. You were right; they probably don't even know I exist.

YVONNE Oh, but they do!

RUFUS They know I'm your young young young lover?

YVONNE Actually, I told them you were the retarded orphaned son of my late brother, Gunther! Seriously Rufus, Alexis said you should come!

RUFUS When.

YVONNE When? On the phone, he said so on the phone.

RUFUS I thought it was a wanker!

YVONNE Come on darling. Some very important people!

RUFUS Very important people?

YVONNE Uh-huh.

RUFUS TV, movies, modelling?

YVONNE You name it.

RUFUS Thanks all the same, but no.

YVONNE Why? Do you plan to go out tonight?

RUFUS No.

YVONNE You can come and watch TV there! He's got all the latest DVDs.

RUFUS Yvonne, for God's sake leave it now!

YVONNE I'm asking nicely.

RUFUS I don't want to come to your hideous business dinner. I want to stay here. Look: milk, little sandwich. I'll clean up the kitchen.

YVONNE Why? We never use it.

RUFUS It makes 32 Winchester Avenue look like the Ritz.

YVONNE Rubbish!

RUFUS Lots of it!

YVONNE Then put out the black bags! Must I do everything?

RUFUS That's what I'm saying: I'll put out the black bags!

YVONNE Well then don't tell such lies. My flat is clean.
SHE DRINKS FROM THE MILK.
Ugh ... the milk's sour.

RUFUS A bit.

YVONNE Taste.

RUFUS A bit!

PAUSE.

YVONNE Boy George phoned.

RUFUS Yes?

YVONNE Yes.

PAUSE.

RUFUS How come?

YVONNE Invited me to the opening of the new club.

RUFUS That's nice.

YVONNE MTV insisted that I come.
PAUSE.
Rufus, don't let me go out into the street on my own.

RUFUS What?

YVONNE Well, I'm still an old-fashioned unliberated girl. I like gentlemen to open doors for me and light my cigarettes. I really don't care to walk in the street in these heels trying to find a taxi.

RUFUS Oh for fuck's sake ...

YVONNE The Kensington streets are dangerous! I might get mugged by an immigrant!

RUFUS Who would bother to ... Okay I'll phone for one.

YVONNE No, no, it's quicker if you come down with me into the street.

RUFUS For fuck's sake Godard, there are hundreds of taxis outside in the square. Go on, you'll be even later and I'll never hear the end of it for days!

YVONNE Yes, well ... I don't think I'll go.

RUFUS Why not?

YVONNE I don't know! I don't feel like it! I don't know! Anyway darling, you're so right. It is late-late-late and Alexis gets so drunk and talks shit about Fellini and the old days. I'll get

into something more comfortable – that g-string you got me for Mother’s Day – we can share a little joint to fight the stress and who knows, we can have a special evening: just the two of us. We don’t have to wait till Friday night, you know.

SHE GOES OFF TO THE BEDROOM, BUT HE STOPS HER.

RUFUS Listen Yvonne, I really think ...

YVONNE You really think?

RUFUS I really think ...

YVONNE Ja, I hear the wheels turn!

RUFUS Godard, stop fucking around! I think you’ll really miss out on something important if you don’t go tonight.

YVONNE I don’t know about that.

RUFUS If Alexis Vallance asked you to dinner, he must have a project for you. You said he might have a film?

YVONNE Yes, he might.

RUFUS Well, there you are. This might be the chance you’ve been waiting for for months! Something worthwhile!

YVONNE That’s always possible.

RUFUS Look Yvonne, you’ll never forgive me ...

YVONNE No, I won’t!

PAUSE.

RUFUS Alright, I’ll go down and get a taxi.

YVONNE No, no ...

RUFUS I'll come down with you ...

YVONNE Oh Vin Diesel, why don't you carry me in your arms! Don't overdo it!

RUFUS It's no trouble ...

YVONNE Don't try and push me out so subtly, Rufus. You make me feel insecure. Insecurity could lead to unhappiness and suicide. Anyway, you might lock yourself out by mistake and wouldn't that be a pain in the arse!

SHE SCRABBLES IN HER HANDBAG.

RUFUS IS UNCOMFORTABLE; CHECKS THE TIME.

RUFUS Have you got your keys?

YVONNE Yes.

RUFUS And your money?

YVONNE Ja ja!

RUFUS Eh ... I might put up some of the pictures.

YVONNE What?

RUFUS The ones you had framed.

YVONNE Don't put up anything! No pictures, no nothing! They're my walls!

RUFUS Okay okay they're your walls!

HE TAKES MONEY OUT OF HIS POCKET.

. Here, keep this in your hand for the taxi.

YVONNE Keep my petty cash. I have my own.

RUFUS Give me your bag ...

YVONNE What's wrong with you?

HE CONFISCATES HER PACKET OF CIGARETTES.

RUFUS Your glasses ...

HE PICKS THEM UP AND PUTS THEM IN HER BAG.

We at least want to see what we're eating. We don't want to end up drinking a bowl of rose petals again now do we now? Take the lift ...

YVONNE But what if it ...

RUFUS It won't get stuck again. It was fixed last June! You're more likely to fall down the stairs.

YVONNE Why are you so horrible to me?

RUFUS Because that's why you love me.

YVONNE I'd much rather stay here with you.

RUFUS Career first, remember?

YVONNE But Gregory ...

PAUSE.

RUFUS What? What about Gregory?

YVONNE Gregory?

RUFUS What about Gregory?

YVONNE Nothing ... I ...

RUFUS Why did you call me Gregory?

YVONNE I didn't!

RUFUS We haven't seen Gregory for months, why!

YVONNE I don't know ...

SHE DROPS HER BAG IN THE CONFUSION.

Careful, my glasses ...

HE PICKS UP THE BAG AND CHECKS.

RUFUS They're okay. Here ... go now ...

YVONNE I won't be late.

RUFUS How late?

YVONNE Not late. I'll come home early ... I promise ...

RUFUS You always stay out till the sun comes up.

YVONNE No, I'll come home early.

RUFUS Godard, once you find the limelight, you're the star of any show. You don't leave till they sweep you up with the used condoms.

YVONNE I might hate it. All those foreigners.

RUFUS You need some interesting work.

YVONNE From Alexis? Maybe I should phone him and say I'm sick.

RUFUS Go.
HE HERDS HER TO THE DOOR.
THE OTHER PHONE RINGS.
I'll get it, go on, I'll get it ...
HE ANSWERS IT.
Hello? Yes, she's just left ... a few minutes ago. Rufus.
Rufus! No you won't remember me, Senor Vallance. Yes he
did. Goodbye.
ENDS CALL.
So much for my invitation.

YVONNE Was he angry?

RUFUS I think so.

YVONNE Oh God ... he probably forgot your name.

RUFUS A name like mine?

YVONNE Well, he's ... he's just had a triple bypass!

RUFUS What's that got to do with it?
SHE SHRUGS.
He asked if your Young Producer was driving you. I said yes.

YVONNE What young producer?

RUFUS The one that made you late, remember?

YVONNE Ah! So he's worried about my young producer?

RUFUS Use it for bargaining. Say you've been offered something.

YVONNE Something confidential.

RUFUS Something you can't talk about ...

YVONNE But something that will make Alexis sweat with frustration!

RUFUS Put your price up!

YVONNE RUMMAGES AMONG A PILE OF SCRIPTS.
PICKS ONE OUT.

YVONNE This will help. I'll say my young producer gave this to me in the car.

RUFUS 'Sex and the Suburbs'?

YVONNE He'll just have to move into The City!
SHE EXITS TO FRONT DOOR.
RUFUS SIGHS WITH RELIEF.
THEN YVONNE REAPPEARS.
Rufie? Do you care for me?

RUFUS LOOKS AT PHOTOS.

RUFUS I love you.

YVONNE I didn't ask about love, I asked if you care for me.

RUFUS Yes, Godard, I care for you.

YVONNE Be careful. I won't be late.

SHE EXITS.

RUFUS LISTENS FOR A MOMENT. SWITCHES ON RADIO.

HE EXITS WITH THE GLASS.

THE DISCUSSION OF THE LATEST TERROR-ATTACK.

HE COMES BACK LISTENING WHILE DRESSING.

GREGORY ENTERS UNSEEN BY HIM AND WATCHES.

SUDDENLY RUFUS IS AWARE OF HIM.

RUFUS Oh sorry. The news. One gets so used to it now ...

GREGORY Yes.
THEY LISTEN.
I rang the bell but ...

RUFUS No, it doesn't work.

GREGORY What's wrong with the lift? Stairs nearly killed me.

RUFUS Godard's on her way down. Shhhh.

HE LISTENS.

GREGORY I can go if you prefer ...

RUFUS SWITCHES OFF THE RADIO.

RUFUS No, sorry. We still don't have a television.

GREGORY No man!

RUFUS In case there's an old Yvonne Godard horror film on late.

GREGORY So you didn't tell her?

RUFUS No.

GREGORY No.
PAUSE.
I ... eh ... I wanted to bring something. I wasn't sure what you'd need. I thought of some wine but ...

RUFUS It's okay, we have wine.

GREGORY Yes, but I thought maybe ...

RUFUS It's okay. What will you have?

GREGORY Anything.

RUFUS You name it.

GREGORY Whisky?

RUFUS Whisky.
GOES TO DRINKS TROLLEY.

GREGORY Just water.

RUFUS No more gin?

GREGORY What?

RUFUS Gin.

GREGORY No. I don't really drink much anymore. Sandra hates it.

RUFUS Don't tell me her father was an alcoholic who beat her mother.

GREGORY I don't think so ...

RUFUS Just a joke. Here – whisky and water.

HANDS HIM A DRINK.

GREGORY Thanks.

PAUSE.

RUFUS So, where's Miss America?

GREGORY She'll be a bit late. Didn't you get my message?

RUFUS Message?

GREGORY That she'd be late. She's expecting an important call.
Something to do with work. I phoned.

RUFUS Ah.

GREGORY You'd said we'd eat.

RUFUS Yes ... nothing spectacular. You leave message on Yvonne's
machine?

GREGORY Was that a machine?
PAUSE.
Will it be alright if we waited with the food till Sandra
comes?

RUFUS Food? Oh no no – it's the usual old crap.

GREGORY Spaghetti.

PAUSE.

RUFUS You've picked up some weight.

GREGORY Oh ...

RUFUS No, it's good for reputations today: 'Thin is infected, hunky
is healthy' or something like that.

GREGORY I wouldn't know. Sandra prefers a bit of body.

RUFUS You don't say?

GREGORY She doesn't go for skinny people.

RUFUS Don't go on, I'll hang myself in the lavatory!

GREGORY Well, you did ask.

PAUSE.

RUFUS Yes. Fattening you up, little Greg? Built for comfort not for style?

GREGORY If you like.

RUFUS I was quoting.

GREGORY Yes, Godard.

RUFUS She eats like a pig.

GREGORY Really?

RUFUS Will never order in a restaurant, but will lean over with her fork and pick your plate clean! Like an old sow, oink oink.

GREGORY She still does that?

RUFUS Oink oink oink!

PAUSE.

GREGORY Maybe she's unhappy?

RUFUS Oh please, she's a greedy old cow!

GREGORY Poor Godard.

RUFUS Excuse me. Poor Rufus.

PAUSE.

GREGORY We saw her on tele recently.

RUFUS Tele still in the kitchen?

GREGORY She was quite good.

RUFUS Godard still plays the rental on that tele, did you know?

GREGORY Not at all fat.

RUFUS No, she was okay. I take it you're still at 32?

GREGORY Yes.

RUFUS Change anything, except the sheets?

GREGORY We put up shelves and made a little alcove in the kitchen for dinner parties.
Sandra's PR work sometimes means they come to the house.

RUFUS Fascinating!

GREGORY New wallpaper ...

RUFUS Posters of Bush and Bin Laden?

GREGORY Hey?

RUFUS Joking.

GREGORY We're very happy, Rufus.
PAUSE.
Oh yes, we also put a shower in at last.

RUFUS Didn't I always say that bathroom needed a shower?

GREGORY Yes, you did.

PAUSE.

GREGORY Fatcat was run over.

RUFUS Oh shit, no man.

GREGORY Blondie's still fat and cuddly ...

RUFUS All blondes are.

GREGORY Won't eat anything but steak mince ...

RUFUS Expensive girl!

GREGORY Won't eat anything else.

PAUSE.

GREGORY I thought Godard was really spectacular in that variety show. What was her song again?

RUFUS 'Mack the Knife'. Kurt Weill.

GREGORY Sandra agreed, can you believe it. That says a lot. Sandra liking Godard.

RUFUS Sandra liking Kurt Weill more likely.

GREGORY Why weren't you in it?

RUFUS In the variety show?

GREGORY Yes, we were watching out for you. Every time there was a commercial break Sandra expected to see you appear selling tampons.

PAUSE.

 Sorry, I didn't mean it to sound like that ...

RUFUS The tampon ad was already cast. No, I was in her dressing room. She was as sick as a dog. I had to help her – she wouldn't allow anyone else.

GREGORY Flu?

RUFUS Nerves. I thought she'd die, stupid old bitch.

GREGORY It didn't show.

RUFUS It never shows ...

GREGORY She didn't look that fat, Rufus?

RUFUS Like I said, when she has to, she gets thin overnight. God knows how ...

GREGORY Self-preservation?

RUFUS Maybe. And by the way, I turned down the tampon ad.

GREGORY I said I'm sorry.
PAUSE.
So, what have you done since I saw you last?

RUFUS Bits here and there ...

GREGORY Doesn't she help you?

RUFUS I don't need her help.

GREGORY She could get you parts like that!
SNAPS FINGERS.

RUFUS I don't need her help! Anyway I'm waiting to hear if I have the lead in that new telefilm about the Sharpeville Massacre.

GREGORY No shit. The lead!

RUFUS The main cop. Colonel Bronkhorst.

GREGORY What was the last cop called? Also that?

RUFUS No, he was a sergeant. Sersant Benny Nel. Did you see that episode?

GREGORY Yea. Cool. So it's all working well for you. I'm glad.

RUFUS I suppose a spiders' web offers some comfort and security ...

GREGORY Till the spider gets hungry ...

RUFUS Yes, and this old spider can gobble if she wants to.

GREGORY Gobble?

THEY LAUGH. THE TENSION LESSENS.

RUFUS Have you finished your play?

GREGORY Play?

RUFUS The one you were writing when ...

GREGORY Oh no, I'm working at a novel. Sandra suggested that I get away from all that theatricality.

RUFUS A novel, hey? Move over Harry Potter!

GREGORY You can say more in a novel than in a play.

RUFUS People don't read anymore, Greg.

GREGORY Everyone travelling on the Underground has a book.

RUFUS Ja. Harry Potter. We never read anything! What's your novel about? Me?

GREGORY No, the play was supposed to be about you. The novel is about ... it's difficult to say ...

RUFUS About Sandra.

GREGORY Globalisation. Exploitation by the first world. You know ...

RUFUS Ja, Harry Potter. Oh fuck yourself Greg! 7% of the population owning 80% of the wealth!

GREGORY 84%!

RUFUS Oh give me a break, Greg. It's 2004 for fuck's sake!

GREGORY And these are still the problems we're faced with!

RUFUS The novel is about Sandra then?

GREGORY No, Rufus, Sandra just made me aware of those things.

RUFUS So, you sit at home and write about the exploited masses and corrupt systems, before signing on for your weekly dole handout?

GREGORY And it's coming on rather well!

RUFUS Shit, you're a pain in the arse!

GREGORY Hey, don't you begrudge me my commitment just because you're not part of it anymore!

RUFUS Power to the People?

GREGORY Yes!

RUFUS And Miss America checks what you write and corrects your spelling?

GREGORY No! My computer corrects my spelling. Can I have another drink please.

RUFUS TAKES HIS GLASS.

RUFUS Whisky and perrier? The downtrodden share a half-pint, old darling!

GREGORY Not too much water.

RUFUS Let me refresh your memory. There was once a white South African who tried to find a better world and become a better human being ...

GREGORY I'm not demeaning what you've achieved, Rufus.

RUFUS ... who was turfed out of his home and bed to make way for this new fetish.

GREGORY Globalisation?

RUFUS Fucking girls.

GREGORY Not too much water!

RUFUS Listen to you: bla bla bla bla! At least in the old days you were original when we were together dreaming about the impossible and planning the ridiculous. The boy from Oz and the 'ouk' from SA going to conquer the world!

GREGORY By writing little plays about glamour and stars and all the glittering shit that propped up our lives and our dreams? Rufus, that was in the last century.

RUFUS Yes.

GREGORY We had to make a change.

RUFUS The Millenium changed. I didn't make a change. I don't think you did either.

GREGORY I found Sandra.

RUFUS I think I'm going to cry!

GREGORY I've become aware of my social impotence.

RUFUS So now you want to rid the Third World of their crippling debts?

GREGORY There are so many issues at stake here.

RUFUS Sure. Let's face it Comrade, it boils down to one thing doesn't it: the haves and the have-nots. Let's pool all our piggy banks and give everyone a hundred bucks – 100 to Miss Godard, 100 to Rufus if they can remember his name, 100 to toyboy Gregory, 100 to Miss America, 100 to old Betsy de Bruyn ... now maybe if we give Sally de Santos 100 as well, old Betsy will get 200!

GREGORY Who's Betsy de Bruyn?

RUFUS Betsy de Bruyn's what it's all about. Betsy de Bruyn far from home, in her red anarak and faded dreams, sitting all day waiting for nothing. She doesn't begrudge Godard her arrogance and success. She uses it as a goal to fight towards. Betsy de Bruyn might never get what Godard has, but at least she doesn't sit on her fat arse drinking other people's whisky and dribbling second-hand political graffiti!

GREGORY Who the hell is Betsy de Bruyn!

RUFUS I am Betsy de Bruyn!

PAUSE.

GREGORY I didn't come here to argue about politics.

RUFUS Politics? We're talking about me and you.

GREGORY Really? I don't see the connection.

RUFUS And that makes me really sad.

GREGORY I was hoping we could talk about old times.

RUFUS We started hinting at old times. I even took off my audition jock-strap before you came just to make the view more interesting for you.

GREGORY Don't start on that. It's finished.

RUFUS TAKES GREGORY'S FACE ROUGHLY IN HIS HANDS.

RUFUS It's never finished. Love is never finished!

GREGORY Don't do that ...

RUFUS Look at me! People should start looking at each other's faces before writing about them!

GREGORY Rufus, you're hurting me!

RUFUS So what's new? Go on, look at me – what's different!

GREGORY Nothing! You look the same!

RUFUS LETS HIM GO.

RUFUS Yes, same old face. That's what the security of fucking fame does to youngish men with a sex drive and no prospects.

GREGORY I'm not going to listen to this pathetic ...

RUFUS Then let me refresh your memory ...

HE KISSES HIM.

GREGORY Don't be so pathetic, Rufus.

RUFUS But it is pathetic. Self-preservation is pathetic. Pretending to be something you're not is also pathetic. We're both being as pathetic as we can.

GREGORY I'm happy.

RUFUS You're in love with Teacher.

GREGORY Oh no ...

RUFUS Oh yes! The novelty of her normality.

GREGORY Things couldn't be better with me, I'm sorry Rufus. I'm okay.

RUFUS Okay.
PAUSE.
So, hetrolife really doesn't suck? Or does she?

GREGORY I said I'm fine.

RUFUS Fine. And when you find her pubic hairs in the bath – blood on the toilet seat?

GREGORY Jesus!

RUFUS What do you feel when you make love to her and you think of me? When she starts crying after you've pretended love? And she cries and you think it's your fault? And it maybe it is your fault because you're pretending and she knows it!

GREGORY Speak for yourself!

RUFUS I am.

GREGORY So? Try thinking for Yvonne. She's too scared to start again with someone else. Who has she got but you?

RUFUS Her fucking career!

GREGORY She can't take it to bed with her.

RUFUS Would if she could. She certainly tries.

GREGORY If it's so disgusting for you, why don't you leave?

RUFUS I never said it was disgusting ...

GREGORY You give that impression.

RUFUS I can't leave her.

GREGORY Sounds familiar. She'll go to pieces if you left her?

RUFUS Of course.

GREGORY And yet she cries?

RUFUS Yes ...

GREGORY Because she knows that if she threw you out, she might fuck you up for good. You don't think she might be pretending too, for your sake? For your 'preservation'?

RUFUS I ...

GREGORY You and Godard need each other like a cripple needs a wheelchair. Oh yes, I've found curly hairs in the bath but

then she tries to come to terms with my ... habits. It's that give and take that makes it work.

RUFUS Ja, we also lived together like that for two years.

GREGORY No. I waited for you for two years, with aftershave under my arms, waiting for you to put in an appearance, to tell me what great things you did to Yvonne and how she loved it and begged for more and how nice it was to be normal too and turn over Greg it's time for your ...

RUFUS Say it.

GREGORY No ...

RUFUS Say it!

GREGORY No, I don't even want to think about it.

PAUSE.

RUFUS You should shave off that beard. It makes you look too intelligent.

GREGORY I never thought I could grow one.

RUFUS Why not, homos also have beards.

PAUSE.

GREG BUSIES HIMSELF WITH THE PHOTOS.

RUFUS Don't you miss it?

GREGORY No.

RUFUS No?

GREGORY No.

RUFUS I do.

GREGORY Go to the Steambaths.

RUFUS I do. Life on five condoms a day!

GREGORY What do you tell Godard?

RUFUS Gym.

GREGORY And does it help?

RUFUS SHRUGS.

PAUSE.

RUFUS Sandra will be here soon?

GREGORY Yes.

RUFUS Good.

GREGORY Why did you ask us over?

RUFUS I don't know. I wanted to see you again. I thought it might be sports, sport!

GREGORY Sports?

RUFUS SCREAMS INTO HIS FACE.

RUFUS Sports!!!

GREGORY IS QUITE STARTLED.

RUFUS REFRESHES THE DRINKS.

GREGORY So why did you ask us both if you wanted ‘sports’.

RUFUS Would you have come on your own?

GREGORY I don’t know. Maybe.

RUFUS No, I hoped you’d come together. I wanted to avoid what’s happening now. Greg, I only wanted to remind you that it wasn’t always the waiting, the pretence. That there were also good times.

GREGORY Yes.

RUFUS You remember the good times?

GREGORY Like the times I used to play with my skateboard when I was ten? I think back often.

RUFUS Wanting to skate again?

GREGORY Yes. I’m a little too old for that now – skateboards.
THE FRONT DOOR SLAMS.
Here she is. You should have that bell fixed ...

YVONNE ENTERS. VERY CONTROLLED.
STANDS IN DOOR SMILING.

YVONNE Well, dip me in chocolate and feed me to the lesbians! Even without my glasses I recognise that little schoolboy bum. Gregory my lost angel, fancy seeing you here, my dear.

RUFUS Yvonne I thought ...

YVONNE I doubt that!
THEN TO GREG WITH CHARM.
My darling, I don’t need to spend all night haggling over scripts and contracts.

'Alexis,' I said ... Alexis Vallance, you know him, of course?

GREGORY No ...

YVONNE You must meet him. Such a darling. No, a real bastard but a sweet bastard as long as you don't work for him. Anyway I said: 'I love the part! See you in Rome!' I said, swilling down the Dom Perion and making a stunning exit, thinking how nice and peaceful the privacy of my home would be.

GREGORY I was just leaving ...

YVONNE Leaving Godard? No one ever leaves Godard. Here Godard is the centre of every man's universe ...

RUFUS I can explain ...

GREGORY No really, I was just passing. I thought I'd say hello.

YVONNE Then say it: Hello! Rufus, light of my life, isn't this a surprise?

RUFUS Yes ... yes.

YVONNE Yes.

RUFUS Yes, well I'd better ...

YVONNE ... yes, you'd better ...

RUFUS ... see to the food ...

YVONNE Good idea ...

RUFUS I'll ...

YVONNE A good idea!
RUFUS EXITS IN CONFUSION.
When will he learn not to hide things from the German
landlady...
IN HER ITALIAN ACCENT.
Senora Godard not home, please leave message after bleep.

GREGORY It wasn't a machine.

YVONNE Come now Gregory, don't give my talents more credit than
they deserve. Where is your Elizabeth?

GREGORY Elizabeth?

YVONNE Your ... eh ... what is she? Nanny? Mistress?

GREGORY Sandra.

YVONNE Elizabeth and Sandra? You sex-maniac.

GREGORY No, just Sandra.

YVONNE Just Sandra? Oh never mind darling, there's an Elizabeth in
every boy's life. So where is the elusive Miss America?

GREGORY She's coming.

YVONNE Some people have all the luck.

GREGORY She had to wait for a phone call.

YVONNE Oh, is that her line of business now?

GREGORY Something to do with her job.

YVONNE Yes, that's what I meant.
SHE SITS NEXT TO HIM ON THE COUCH.
I like your funny little beard.

GREGORY Thank you.

YVONNE Makes you look so ... what's the word ...

GREGORY Intelligent.

YVONNE No, that's not the word.

GREGORY Well, I've been told.

YVONNE Ah. Ja, very butch. So everything seems to have worked out
between you and ...

GREGORY Sandra.

YVONNE I'm very happy for you both.

GREGORY Thank you.

YVONNE Any wedding plans?

GREGORY What?

YVONNE Or aren't you that old-fashioned?

GREGORY Sandra doesn't really believe in marriage.

YVONNE Oh.

GREGORY Not unless there are children.

YVONNE Of course. Do you intend having children?

GREGORY Hopefully.

YVONNE Ah.

GREGORY Depends on her career.

YVONNE Ah!

GREGORY But we haven't any immediate plans.

YVONNE For children?

GREGORY Yes.

YVONNE Her career. Same old story. You'll have beautiful children, beautiful boys.

GREGORY Lay off, Yvonne!

YVONNE No darling, I mean it. Beautiful children.
PAUSE.
I once nearly had a son. Oh yes, it even looked like a sleeping baby boy. I didn't see him, of course. The Portuguese nurse told me ... like a sleeping angel. It was either him or what I thought would be my first break, my first big film! What a choice ... Stupid. People so often make the wrong choice for what they think is the right reason. People shouldn't be allowed to choose; they should be told. Someone ... something should tell them. Maybe it's an old German habit: obeying orders. Belief in our own abilities isn't enough. We should be told!

GREGORY What was the film?

YVONNE My breasts were big and beautiful because of the child. Stupid tits didn't realise there'd be no mouth to feed. I gave everything to that film: what became known as the Yvonne

Godard Treatment. I thought I was good. Some people still say I was marvellous. I was. Fucking incredible. And young. And so sure that my sacrifice would produce results. And what results – sagging tits at twenty-three.

GREGORY I didn't know this ...

YVONNE The baby or the boobs?

GREGORY LOOKS AWAY ANNOYED.

Of course you didn't know. When I had to go on my daily pilgrimage to 32 Winchester Avenue to reclaim my Rufus, I didn't want to tell you anything. Nothing you could use against me.

GREGORY I'd never have ...

YVONNE I still want to be sick at the thought of those times. 32 Winchester Avenue. I hated that place. And I hated you. Pity from you would've been the last straw. Pity from such a pitiable little creative!
PAUSE. SHE SMOKES.
Rufus tells me now that you actually fancied me?

GREGORY Never!

YVONNE Not even a tiny hard-on? I could have looked like the boy of your dreams. Very much your type. Come on, sweetheart, you must tell me now. What appealed to you. My image? My glamour? Gregory, you can safely tell me all, I just don't have the energy to attack you!

GREGORY I can't remember.

YVONNE Are those feelings of passion so easy to forget?

GREGORY At that time Glamour meant everything to me. I so wanted to be part of it – of the fame and fantasy, that so-called mystery that’s actually so meaningless.

YVONNE Me? Meaningless?

GREGORY I didn’t want to die unknown, unwanted, unloved. It sounds so pathetic ...

YVONNE Ja ...

GREGORY Yes, I suppose I did envy you. I was jealous of Rufus’s association with Yvonne Godard. I suppose I thought ... yes, she was glamorous. It was very appealing then.

YVONNE But meaningless.

GREGORY Yes. Glamour is subjective, a state of mind, a therapy – as Sandra says: the pretence of maturity.

YVONNE Without which you are mature?

GREGORY Possibly maturer.

YVONNE Fascinating. And your unnoticed death?

GREGORY I have my Sandra.

YVONNE And I have my Rufus.

RUFUS ENTERS WITH SNACKS.

RUFUS What? Are you talking about me again?

YVONNE Yes, we were talking about the end of the world.

RUFUS Not again. Godard is convinced she's middle-aged and past it!

GREGORY That's silly, Yvonne. Age is in the mind.

YVONNE What?

GREGORY It's what you tell yourself. Believe me, if you think yourself old, you'll be old!

YVONNE All in the mind you say?

GREGORY Yes.

SHE LOOKS DOWN AT HER BREASTS.

YVONNE Did you hear that, you tired old tits? The mind says: Pull yourself together! Now! *Zufort!*

SMIRKS.

In the mind? God what do you kids smoke nowadays? What about the pains in the back and a bladder that leaks? Don't tell me my hair falls out because of pollution? Please! At least I can handle age!

GREGORY We saw you in that tv show.

YVONNE Of course, everyone saw that tv show.

GREGORY You were very good.

YVONNE Now is that in the mind or is it straight from the heart? I was too fat.

GREGORY Nonsense.

YVONNE Too fat!

RUFUS Tell her she was too thin!

YVONNE Go fuck yourself with a banana!

RUFUS Alright, you were too fat! It's your own fault! You eat too much!

YVONNE I only eat when I'm unhappy.

SANDRA HAS APPEARED IN THE DOOR ONLY SEEN BY YVONNE.

RUFUS Well, the food's nearly ready if that's what you're waiting for. You must've gone through Alexis's fancy foods like a bulimic.

YVONNE Like a bulimic, yes.

RUFUS You must've been terribly unhappy!

YVONNE Actually no, deliriously happy. Alexis Vallance offered me the starring part in his new epic.

GREGORY That Alexis Vallance? No shit!

YVONNE Rufus might think me middle-aged and past it, but my professional reputation stands. I'm a good investment.

RUFUS Greg, Alexis Vallance produces fuckfilms!

YVONNE Which make money and now go as Art. Ah, the nanny has come to fetch the child.

RUFUS AND GREG TURN STARTLED TO SANDRA.

RUFUS Oh.

GREGORY The doorbell doesn't work.

SANDRA The door was wide open.

RUFUS Yvonne ...

SANDRA Someone seemed in a hurry to get here.

YVONNE Someone was.

RUFUS That's exactly how burglars get in!

YVONNE That's what I've been hoping for. A sexy rough burglar who at least knows what he's doing!

GREGORY Hi.

SANDRA Hi.

YVONNE I've always thought how hot it would be to fuck a burglar on the carpet and then charge him for services rendered.

GREGORY You remember Rufus?

SANDRA How can I forget ...

SHE AND RUFUS NOD.
YVONNE IS LEFT OUT.

YVONNE And I'm his German aunt from Stuttgart. Well, Rufus, offer your guest a drink.

RUFUS Oh, sorry ... Sandra?

YVONNE Typical!

SANDRA Something soft.

YVONNE My dears, you wouldn't believe what I have to go through here. Alexis Vallance came over to dinner ... oh, you must've done some PR for Alexis?

SANDRA Not personally, no. They say he doesn't pay.

YVONNE What absolute rubbish. Such an important artist! He and Maggie – she's his third beautiful wife! Such a sweet Norwegian girl.

RUFUS Your adjectives are showing!

YVONNE Came to dinner! Well, my darling. Shrek over there sat so in awe, it was quite pathetic!

SANDRA Maybe you over-impressed Rufus, Yvonne. All those intellectuals and artists at the same time?

YVONNE The whole point of the evening was so that Rufus could make contacts! Here he is in London, the centre of the world, after so many years at the arsehole of the earth ...

RUFUS Tell that to Mandela.

YVONNE And yet all he gets to play here are the monsters from his past.

RUFUS And you still play nazi wives.

YVONNE Nazi girlfriends! How many times can you play the same thick-set Afrikaner thug who kicks black women and tortures black kids?

RUFUS It's called acting.

YVONNE Maybe acting would be to play a decent caring human being for a change?

RUFUS Oh yea, just what Alexis Wallace is famous for. It's porno, Godard, porno!

YVONNE The world has become porno! You go into a café and someone presses a button and blows you up as well. That's porno. Planes into towerblocks. That's porno. Starving kids. Porno. AIDS denials. Porno.

GREGORY Globalisation ...

SANDRA Not now, Greg.

YVONNE I brought Alexis here to see you and to be impressed by you and help you and you sat here like a ... a ...

SANDRA Toyboy.

RUFUS You treated me with more contempt that you did that Indian waiter!

YVONNE I? I??? You couldn't keep your eyes or your hands off him all night!

RUFUS I tried to make him feel at ease, especially after you kept on calling him 'Boy' all night.

YVONNE Boy! Boy? I never call people that! Never!

RUFUS You called him Boy. Or the Coolie. You tried to impress Alexis by ordering around the menials!

YVONNE Stupid boy, I pay this Labour Government enough in taxes to have the occasional waiter here to assist me when I entertain.

SANDRA And what have taxes got to do with restaurant service, Yvonne?

YVONNE Eh ... nothing. I was just trying to make a point.

RUFUS That because you're Yvonne Godard you can be racist and rude to people.

YVONNE I am never rude to people! I just don't believe in making an embarrassing effort to break down natural barriers. Now if I'd called that Coolie 'darling', it would've embarrassed him even more! I don't go out off my way kissing niggers on the cheek just to show my political-correctness!

RUFUS What Yvonne is trying to say is that I didn't make an effort to charm a job out of the porno-king. I don't believe in licking arse just to get favours!

SANDRA Pity, you seem to be missing out on some very good opportunities.

RUFUS I don't care to be known as Yvonne Godard's toyboy. I prefer doing things my way.

YVONNE And the angels sing: Arsehole! Arsehole! Forgive me. I'm sure you children have a lot to talk about. You still have your lives ahead of you. You poor fuckers. I've survived mine. You know, Rufus, you should also grow a little beard. It might fool us too!

YVONNE EXITS GRANDLY.

PAUSE.

GREGORY Is she still on pills?

RUFUS Can't you see? Up-pills, Down-pills, In-pills, Out-pills.

GREGORY So, nothing has changed.

SANDRA No, Greg, nothing has changed. Do you still have that Indian waiter in the kitchen, Rufus?

RUFUS Hey? Oh fuck, the food!

HE EXITS QUICKLY.

SANDRA REFILLS HER GLASS. LOOKS AROUND THE ROOM.

GREGORY We can go if you like?

SANDRA Want one?

GREGORY No.

SANDRA I thought the German landlady would be out.

GREGORY She must've come back because of us.

SANDRA Pity.

GREGORY I spoke to her earlier on the phone. I thought she was the maid.

SANDRA Old first-world habit.

GREGORY Let's slip out while we can? Sandra?

SANDRA Mmmm?

GREGORY Let's go!

SANDRA Let's go to bed?

GREGORY Cool.

SANDRA No Greg, we might as well get fed.

PAUSE.

GREGORY Did you ... eh ... speak to your parents?

SANDRA No, they're still somewhere in the Caribbean.

GREGORY Who was supposed to call you?

SANDRA McClintock and Holmes.

GREGORY The Disney agency?

SANDRA Yes. I got an email this afternoon.

GREGORY And?

SANDRA I've got the job.

GREGORY Congratulations!

SANDRA Listen, it's down-down-down on the ladder.

GREGORY But it is 'The Ladder'!

SANDRA At last.

GREGORY When do you start?

SANDRA Funny, I expected this place to look different.

GREGORY Will we have to move to France?

SANDRA I don't know.

GREGORY If it's the Nice office, we can stay near the sea! In a beach house? We'll put butter on Blondie's paws ...

SANDRA But your friends are here.

GREGORY What friends?

SANDRA INDICATES ROUND HER.

SANDRA Friends.

GREGORY Oh, they're not my friends.

SANDRA You'll get bored, Greg.

GREGORY I'll work on the book! It'll be ideal!

SANDRA French cottages cost money we don't have and you've just done up Winchester Avenue here.

GREGORY I'll get someone to take it over ...

SANDRA I don't think you will.

PAUSE.

GREGORY I think we should go home and discuss this.

SANDRA Later.

GREGORY Now.

SANDRA Later, Greg. Later. Okay?

PAUSE.

GREGORY Okay.

PAUSE.

SANDRA Was Yvonne here when you arrived?

GREGORY No.

SANDRA So you and Rufus could recap on old times?

GREGORY He tried.

SANDRA Have those years with him no meaning for you anymore?

GREGORY There was no point in discussing it. Sandra, let's go!

SANDRA What did you two talk about?

GREGORY We argued.

SANDRA About who was to blame?

GREGORY No. About the book.

SANDRA Ah yes ... I thought that would piss him off.

GREGORY He's so unaware. I don't think he's changed at all.

SANDRA Probably not.
PAUSE.
I think I'll sell my car.

GREGORY Won't we need a car?

SANDRA I'll be using the company transport, and anyway ...

GREGORY I'll see if we can get a good price for the car.

SANDRA Anyway I won't be there for long. There are plans to send me to Miami to head the Think Tank there. I'd rather keep an open mind.

GREGORY Miami, Florida?

SANDRA At least we'll be speaking the same language.

PAUSE.

GREGORY Why didn't you tell me?

SANDRA It wasn't finally decided until today.

GREGORY Why didn't you tell me!

SANDRA I told you. We had to wait for the email!

GREGORY Who's we? That smooth-talking Bruce McClintock I suppose!

SANDRA Please don't jump to conclusions.

GREGORY I have a right to know! God, you can't have made that decision in ten minutes. You must've known for weeks! You should've consulted me!

SANDRA Since when do I have to consult you about my life?

GREGORY But we're together! You're my ...

SANDRA Best friend! Gregory, please, not in front of these awful people!
YVONNE ENTERS WITH A LOUD COUGH. SHE WEARS A KAFTAN.
That's very pretty.

YVONNE You think 'pretty'? Mmmm, a little something I picked up for the Berlin Festival last year.

SANDRA Very nice. '*Schön*'.

YVONNE '*Schön*'? Yes, I also think *schön*.

SANDRA Didn't you wear it on TV?

YVONNE How closely you must've looked. Now where is The Boy!

SANDRA I was saying to Greg that I expected your place to look different.

YVONNE Different from what? 32 Winchester Avenue?

SANDRA Well, you live in this great part of Kensington. I expected it to be ...

YVONNE ... like a palatial reception hall for minor visiting royalty?

SANDRA Not exactly.

YVONNE 1970's Retro Barbara Cartland maybe?

SANDRA I wouldn't go that far back.

YVONNE Not all us stars spend their lonely nights with their Danish vibrators under the duvet, and because I sometimes feel obliged to share my bed with an African doesn't make me quite primitive!

SANDRA Did I say that?

YVONNE Oh no, you're too much of a pr ... of a promosexual to be honest. I don't care what you think about me. And the moment you leave my home, I will forget all about you.

GREGORY Yvonne!

YVONNE And you too, please God before you move starving Ethiopians into my flat. I already gave to Biafra! Now where is the virus in my bloodstream? Coolie?

RUFUS (Off) Wait dammit!

YVONNE Mmmm. Sandra my dear, your glass is half empty.

SANDRA Actually, it's half full.

YVONNE And the evening hasn't even warmed up yet! And the child?

GREG SULKS. RUFUS ENTERS.

RUFUS Food is ready.

YVONNE Good. Bring it in like a good Coolie Boy.

RUFUS Would you all come through to the dining room?

YVONNE Let's not try to be so English, darling. We're all refugees here: a German, a South African, an American, an Australian. We're four foreign squarepegs looking for the round English hole. Let's eat on the carpet.

RUFUS I laid the table.

YVONNE Your sex drive will be the death of me yet.

SHE EXITS.

PAUSE.

RUFUS I'm sorry about this balls up ...
HE AND SANDRA MANAGE AN EXCHANGE
UNHEARD BY GREG.

SANDRA Fuck you, Rufus. That old bitch was supposed to be out.

RUFUS She came back.

SANDRA You promised she'd be out!

RUFUS She came back.

SANDRA Obviously. You're not much help, you know!

SHE EXITS.

RUFUS GOES TO GREG.

RUFUS Come on, Greg, let's get this over with.

GREGORY She's going to leave me.

RUFUS What?

GREGORY She's going to leave me! She just told me. First France, then Miami. I think she's in love with another man ...

RUFUS Another man?

GREGORY I've changed my whole life for her and now she's going to leave me. I can't understand it!

RUFUS No Greg, she's probably freaking out because of Godard. Yvonne's behaving like her worst movies tonight. You know how she can do that, from a vampire to a mummy ...

GREG PUTS HIS ARMS ROUND RUFUS TIGHTLY.

GREGORY I can't live without her, Rufie. I don't want to be alone.

RUFUS Alone? I don't know about that ...

HE KISSES HIM.

BLACKOUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

AFTER THE MEAL. THERE IS LAUGHTER OFF. YVONNE IS TELLING ONE OF HER STORIES.

YVONNE (OFF) Of course ‘Yvonne Godard’ isn’t my real name. Never mind, you won’t be able to pronounce it anyway. When I worked in Andy Warhol’s film in Berlin in 1960-something – dear Andy, terrible BO – he would look at me lying there naked and say: ‘I want dinner at the Hungry Y’– meaning my pubic area. So the Y became Yvonne and then Jean-Luc Godard’s new film won at Cannes and I became Yvonne Godard. Sounds dramatic and sexy: like Yvonne de Carlo, like Paulette Goddard ...

GREG ENTERS AND POURS A DRINK.

RUFUS ENTERS HOLDING THE PLATES.

Why do I even mention their names. No one here is old enough to even remember Cliff Richard! Put the plates in the dishwasher, Rufus ...

RUFUS We must talk ...

GREGORY What about?

RUFUS Us ...

GREGORY Piss off!

YVONNE (Off) Now what are you queens up to?

RUFUS SWITCHES ON THE RADIO. NEWSCAST ON
THE LATEST CARBOMB IN AUSTRALIA.

Second door to the right, Sandra.

SHE ENTERS, TAKING THE PLATES FROM RUFUS.

For God's sake, don't encourage them to stay. And switch
that off.

SHE DOES.

GREGORY Porno.

RUFUS Don't you want to know what's going on?

YVONNE Only if I'm in it. Oh, my tummy's sore ...

RUFUS Just don't blame my food again.

YVONNE Food? Food! You could've fooled me. Greg, do I remember
one of your cats regarding spaghetti as an invasion of
worms? Greg? I'm trying to make harmless smalltalk.

GREGORY What? Oh yes, Fatcat.

YVONNE Fatcat, so original. Tell me, now that everything in your
garden is growing normally what do you call the cats? Butch
and Bitch?

GREGORY Fatcat was killed.

YVONNE Oh, I'm sorry. You liked her very much, didn't you? Never
mind darling, you've still got that other beast with one eye
... eh ...

RUFUS Blondie.

YVONNE Ah ja, Blondie. Brainless but beautiful.

PAUSE.

RUFUS Blondie only eats steak mince.

YVONNE No! Steak mince? How fascinating! Here it's pensioners who eat catfood!

RUFUS I was saying to Greg how expensive it must be.

YVONNE You should know. Pets cost a lot nowadays. Kittie kittie?

PAUSE.

RUFUS Anyone for coffee?

YVONNE So Greg, you and Miss America must have quite an exciting social life? Going to her parties. Meeting her friends. When do you find time for your book?

GREGORY I don't expect Sandra to pay for everything you know! I have a morning job in a travel agency!

YVONNE You don't have to impress me, Greg.

GREGORY Then just lay off my life with Sandra, okay?

RUFUS How's your drink, Greg?

GREGORY Whisky ...

YVONNE I have nice cooldrink in the fridge if you like.

GREGORY No water.

PAUSE.

YVONNE So Greg, tell me about your book. Is it sexy?

RUFUS Sexy??

YVONNE Shhhhhh ... Greg?

GREGORY It's got nothing to do with sex.

YVONNE Then it won't sell.

GREGORY It's about the struggle for survival.

YVONNE Ja? Autobiographical.

RUFUS The Human Predicament!

GREGORY You wouldn't understand.

YVONNE I'm human.
SHE IGNORES RUFUS' SNORT OF AMUSEMENT.
Is it a love story or a boring documentary thing?

RUFUS Life reflecting the struggle against globalisation and
exploitation.

YVONNE Was?

RUFUS That's what the book's about.

YVONNE Greg, you're joking.

GREGORY No.

YVONNE No? Why don't you just write a Harry Potter?

RUFUS Because it's been done.

PAUSE.

YVONNE Globalisation. Sounds sexy. I suppose it could sound sexy – even pornographic with talent and imagination. I can't wait to read it. Rufus where's my bag?

RUFUS How should I know?

YVONNE It was here in the room!

RUFUS I don't know! Greg, when you and Sandra ...

YVONNE And what's that on the table?

RUFUS The cushion you got from Mick Jagger! For fuck's sake Yvonne, find your glasses!

YVONNE *Scheisse ...*
SANDRA ENTERS.
Liebchen, have you seen my bag?

SANDRA Pardon?

YVONNE My bag. Have you seen it?

SANDRA There's a brown bag in the bathroom.

YVONNE A black one in the bathroom?

SANDRA Yes, an old black bag.

YVONNE Hope it's someone I know!

SHE EXITS.
PAUSE.

GREG AVOIDS SANDRA'S GAZE.

SANDRA I liked the way you did the vegetarian dish, Rufus.

RUFUS Good. Thought we'd give meat a miss tonight.

SANDRA A good idea.

RUFUS Still trying to get Godard off her red meat.

SANDRA Yes, she said how she had looked forward to some bratwurst tonight.

RUFUS It's a German thing.

SANDRA I hope so.

PAUSE.

RUFUS Would you like some coffee?

GREGORY I want to go ...

SANDRA I'd love a coffee Rufus.

GREGORY It's late!

RUFUS Come on Greg, just a coffee ...

SANDRA He only drinks decaff. You don't have some green tea?
Would you like that, honey?

GREGORY Don't 'honey' me!

YVONNE ENTERS POWDERING HER NOSE.

YVONNE *Was geht los?*

RUFUS Coffee, Yvonne?

YVONNE What on earth for?

SANDRA No, maybe I'll not stay ...

GREGORY Please don't feel you have to go because of me!

RUFUS Oh come on, Greg ...

PAUSE.

SANDRA Thanks for the meal.

YVONNE Sorry there was no bratwurst. It's Tuesday.

RUFUS Pleasure.

SANDRA Are you coming Greg?

RUFUS Have another whisky, Greg?

YVONNE Leave my booze, give the kid a coke!

PAUSE.

THEN OVERLAPPING.

RUFUS Sandra, are you sure you won't ...

SANDRA No really, I think I'd better ...

GREGORY Let her go, the bitch has other commitments!

RUFUS Black or white, Sandra?

YVONNE Make up your minds!

SANDRA Black with one sugar ... look, I'll make it. Coffee beans?

YVONNE Yes, but Nescafé's quicker. Sour milk's in the fridge.

SANDRA Gregory?

YVONNE Bring the sugar separately.

SANDRA Gregory! Come and help me!

SHE EXITS.

GREG FOLLOWS.

YVONNE Ten minutes for instant coffee, ten for cigarettes, five to have a pee, one for greetings, two minutes for appearances and then I fucking kill you, you little shit!

RUFUS Yvonne ...

YVONNE Playing the Good Samaritan behind my back ...

RUFUS Okay Yvonne ...

YVONNE ... playing head of the house in my home! Entertaining old lovers at the expense of my career. In my time! My life! Always the same - self self self!

RUFUS That's a really terrible imitation of Elizabeth Taylor!

SHE LAUGHS.

YVONNE Namedropper!

PAUSE.

SHE COMPOSES HERSELF.

Oh God, they're boring!

RUFUS Don't worry, you're the life and soul of the wake.

YVONNE Of course, I can handle anything if I create my own dialogue and applause.

RUFUS You don't have to stay up. Pity we don't have a tv. You could watch one of your own movies.

YVONNE This is one of my old movies. No, please, I don't want it said later that I behaved like an old bitch to your friends. God knows you have few enough as it is.
SHE IS AWARE OF HIS STARE; CONSCIOUS OF HER APPEARANCE.
Do I look alright?

RUFUS There's a smudge on your cheek.

YVONNE *Scheisse ...*

SHE PEERS INTO THE MIRROR AND RUBS. THERE WAS NO SMUDGE.

RUFUS So was Alexis really nice to you?

YVONNE *Du lieber Gott*, why do I always look like a used tampon at the end of every day ...

RUFUS Was he cross that you were late?

YVONNE Gone?

RUFUS Mmmm.

YVONNE Is my nose shiny, or what is it?

RUFUS Wear your glasses Yvonne!

YVONNE Once my glasses go on permanently, you go out permanently! Allow me a few illusions!

RUFUS What's the new film about?

YVONNE There is no film.

RUFUS But you said ...

YVONNE Ja ja, in the company of your little friends I always have the starring role in a new film!
PAUSE.
So, your Gregory looks very happy with his Fraulein Übermensch, or what do you think, darling?

RUFUS He's not my Gregory!

YVONNE Our Gregory then. The two of you couldn't have done much talking. Especially not with your talent dangling down your thigh.

RUFUS What?

YVONNE Unsubtle, darling. No underpants means poverty, not lust.

RUFUS Fuck off!

YVONNE I can't stand bossy women. She has the car and he has the cats! No-no-no – I believe in the good solid German things in life. Like public transport and catfood in tins. Like knowing where I stand in my own home. Like not wearing glasses at the right times. Thank heaven we don't depend on each other for much.

RUFUS Yes, thank heaven.

YVONNE That's the one good thing about us, darling. We are both free to do exactly as we wish.

RUFUS Absolutely.

YVONNE You're free to leave me, and I'm free to kick you out! I suppose little Greg's always been the born masochist. If that's a happy normal heterosexual relationship I'll become a lesbian.

RUFUS They call it living together.

YVONNE And they should know.

RUFUS She's going to leave him.

YVONNE What on earth does he see in her? Is she pretty? Rich? That's American. But then I wonder what she sees in him for that matter. Didn't you once tell me his cock is small?

RUFUS Jesus, Yvonne!

YVONNE Yvonne is deaf, darling, she's not listening.

RUFUS She's going to leave him, damn it. She's in love with some other man!

YVONNE Some other what? Man?

RUFUS They're probably talking about it right now!

YVONNE I don't want to know! Don't tell me! I don't want to know!

RUFUS But we're his friends!

YVONNE Speak for yourself. I won't get sucked into this nightmare again.

RUFUS You're here! We might not depend on each other for much ...

YVONNE Thank God.

RUFUS ... but Greg has no one else! We're his friends!

YVONNE Does he want to move in with me too?

RUFUS Don't you understand?

YVONNE Actually, no.

RUFUS No one has ever left him before.

YVONNE And that coming from you.

RUFUS I was kicked out. It's the first time he's been left by someone he loves. He believed things would go on happily ever after.

YVONNE I told you this was one of my old films.

RUFUS Thank God it happened here.

YVONNE Here. In my home.

RUFUS At least we can help him!

YVONNE Sometimes you scream but nobody hears ...
SHE SIGHS AND TURNS HER ATTENTION TO
RUFUS.
Alright. What do you want me to do?

RUFUS Help him!

YVONNE How can I help him? I'm not the one he loved! Yvonne Godard has always been the rival, the other one, remember? The old cunt with the cash and contacts?

RUFUS Have you no compassion?

YVONNE Do you demand that of me too? Compassion for that pathetic little queen?

RUFUS Don't call him that!

YVONNE Only what you taught me! And why should I care? He walked right into it and with eyes wide shut. If you open the door to every knocker, you're bound to get beaten up one day. I didn't ask him to exchange his one pretence for another? I felt quite at ease with his old habits. Although they bored me to death, at least I was in control of the set-up. Not quite centre-stage, but in control all the same. Cash and contacts!

RUFUS Don't rub it in.

YVONNE Ignore it but it won't go away?

RUFUS You didn't try and stop his choice.

YVONNE Oh please darling, Sandra wasn't a choice – she was an alternative, a new way to play old scenes. Anyway my dear I'm not that surprised. Apfelstrudel and sauerkraut just don't mix. Of course they would come and *kotz* up what remains of their sordid relationship on my carpet!

RUFUS And what about my feelings?

YVONNE I'm sorry darling, you've lost me. What feelings? Sympathy? Passion? Envy? Greed?

RUFUS Greg.

YVONNE Ah. Lust.

RUFUS He's like a brother to me. He's always been the only one I could confide in.

YVONNE Ja ja, and the last year without him has been such hell for you? Don't worry ...

RUFUS I didn't say that!

YVONNE Don't worry! Just blame me for everything. 'It's old Godard, you see, Greg-my-love. I can't just leave her. She might do herself an injury!'

RUFUS I never said that!

YVONNE 'She's so insecure, so blonde, so frightened, so fat, so alone. So rich!' Ha! You should've stayed with your beloved Greg in the first place, liebchen! I didn't force you to play my little pet! I'm not the one who waves around wrists and pills! But then I'm sure you told him – after you were thrown out – how you had to come back to me – poor darling! – how desperately I needed you to hold my hand – poor angel! Clean up after me, poor Boy! - inspire me to be Yvonne Godard you stupid old bitch, because Rufus is here! Out-of-work, useless Rufus with the big schlong and kind words is here and things will improve! Work, looks, happiness – things are bound to get better because the Whore is back in the House!
PAUSE.
Zip caught your tongue? Why did I not keep a diary through the years? If only to show that today can be a smaller nightmare than yesterday. That what was so hideous on Sunday might be better on Monday. That every day without any mention of him or number 32 or those fucking cats just meant one thing: that old Godard still had something she could call her own.

RUFUS Memories?

YVONNE You. You! YOU! You young healthy happy hopeful rubbish!!!!!!

HIS SARCASTIC SMILE IS TOO MUCH FOR HER.

Fuck that smile!!!!

SHE GOES FOR HIM AND CLAWS AT HIS FACE.

HE PUSHES HER OFF WITH EASE.

SHE FALLS BACK ON THE SOFA OUT OF BREATH.

PAUSE.

The commune in West Berlin where I lived ... it was so brave, so free, so filthy ... after that Warhol film that ended me on the editing-room floor and Warhol never paid for the abortion. Fassbinder was still so young and I didn't fit in anywhere. Hanna Schagulla got all the leads in his films. There was a spider on the wall of the toilet. No door. Seldom paper. Just the spider. Scheissehaus Spinne. One of those rubbery spineless cartoon things, all legs, no body, no face, no name. It stayed there in the same place for so long, we all used to look up at it out of habit. It was just there. It could have been dead it was so still.

Then one day it was gone. I made such a scene. Who had killed my mascot? Which nazi fucker had eliminated my sweet Jewish spider? We smoked and shot up and talked about it for days. It was comforting seeing it sitting there, day after day. Even now when I go to Berlin, I look up into the corner of every toilet just out of habit. It was so comforting having the old spineless fucker there ...

PAUSE.

SHE SLOWLY TURNS TO RUFUS AND PUTS HER ARMS ROUND HIM TIGHTLY.

Hello Spinne ...

RUFUS Yvonne, the reason Greg came over tonight ...

THEN HE SEES SANDRA IN THE DOOR.

SHE INDICATES THAT HE IS NEEDED OFF.

HE EXITS.

YVONNE SEES SANDRA AND PULLS HERSELF TOGETHER.

YVONNE Coffee?

SANDRA What?

YVONNE Kaffee!!!

SANDRA Oh yes, sure ...

SHE EXITS.

YVONNE FINDS HER CELL AND DIALS.

YVONNE Buona Sera, Alexis Vallance per favore? Hurry ...

SANDRA ENTERS WITH TWO MUGS.

YVONNE ENDS THE CALL.

It's three o'clock!

SANDRA Is it?

YVONNE No, I phoned for the official time. Three o'clock? The computer must be drunk. I know people say when they enter my world they have to put their clocks back a century, but this is ridiculous. What is the time, Sandra?

SANDRA I don't have the time.

YVONNE Nor do I!

SHE TAKES THE MUG AND THEY SIT.

PAUSE.

So, is it that hard to find a way out?

SANDRA Someone's been talking.

YVONNE Rufus always talks. If talk maketh the man, he'd be the father of us all. Would you like a nice piece of strudel?

SANDRA No thanks. Yes Yvonne, it is difficult to find a clean way out of a mess.

YVONNE Abortion.

SANDRA What?

YVONNE Your mess, darling. Have an abortion. It's quick, clean and if your reasons are strong enough, there should be no regrets. You can always pick up someone else and start again. It's all external and objective – not like cutting out a child. I've known worse messes in my long and glamorous life.

SANDRA I can't fight tears.

YVONNE Did he cry when his little Fatcat was killed?

SANDRA No.

YVONNE Ach Gott ja ... a mess. Well, Sandra, there's nothing I can do.

SANDRA Why should you?

YVONNE I mean, you don't really expect me to do anything, do you?

SANDRA I don't know. I planned it all so carefully ...

YVONNE You don't know?

SANDRA I don't know.

PAUSE.

YVONNE POINTEDLY OFFERS A CIGARETTE TO SANDRA.

YVONNE Want one?

SANDRA I've given up.

YVONNE Sure?

SANDRA Yes. Sure.

YVONNE God bless America.
SHE EXHALES INTO SANDRA'S FACE WITH RELISH.
WE SEE SANDRA REACT, DYING FOR A CIGARETTE.
You've destroyed everything he had, everything he was – a
happy homosexual, star struck sodomist, quaint little queen.

SANDRA He was none of those homophobic things!

YVONNE He was all of those homophobic things! It made him an
adorable young man a bit mad, but relatively balanced and
with a wonderful sense of humour too. Now all the
originality is gone. He even looks like you.

SANDRA He dotes on me like a little slave.

YVONNE Ja, we noticed.

SANDRA I can't stand it.

YVONNE Tell him to stop.

SANDRA How can I? I won't know what to expect. At least doting is
manageable.

YVONNE Oh come now, Miss America! Don't let yourself down like
that. Show him you're more than just a commercial neon
sign. Go on. Be a devil. Show him your true colours. They're
pretty vivid!

PAUSE.

SANDRA I believe you're being wheeled out for the MTV Awards.

YVONNE Rufus always talks.

SANDRA No, I heard it at the club last night. Boy George was the DJ.

YVONNE He's a friend.

SANDRA Yes, I mentioned your name. He ... he didn't seem to recall.

YVONNE Oh ...
PAUSE.
Oh, because the name's wrong.

SANDRA Oh yea?

YVONNE Oh yea. Boy George always calls me Pussy Face.

PAUSE.

SANDRA Of course. I didn't say Pussy Face. That explains it.
PAUSE.
What part did you get?

YVONNE Part?

SANDRA Your famous producer friend, Alexis?

YVONNE Oh, big movie, fabulous wild mad divine part.

SANDRA Different?

YVONNE Different?

SANDRA Yes different! I gather you're desperately trying to get away from your image.

YVONNE Oh? And what image is that?

SANDRA You. The Xerox Dietrich. The poor mans' Ute Lemper. MTV's Munich Beerhall Madonna. You know, the ancient old vampire living next door. Is the part different?

YVONNE Yes, of course it's different!

SANDRA Young and beautiful siren?

YVONNE Yes.

SANDRA Young?

YVONNE Not much older than you!

SANDRA Congratulations! What's the part? Some little starlet's drunken stepmother?

YVONNE I played Medea once!

SANDRA Oh my God, yes., Gregory told me! Medea? No shit!

YVONNE No shit.

SANDRA But that must've been many years ago, surely?

YVONNE It was the best performance I ever gave.

SANDRA Medea?

YVONNE Oh yes. It was in German – which made it so much more tragic than in English, because we German mothers remember killing our children because Hitler asked us to. I was directed by Gerhardt Flicke. In Cologne. He died of AIDS in Marburg in 1985. So many of my beautiful friends died of AIDS.

SANDRA It's treatable now. Glaxo Smith Kline is one of our clients.

YVONNE I was far too young to play the part, but the Frankfurter Allgemeine said I was so very convincing.

SANDRA You've never had children, have you Yvonne?

YVONNE What has your little fucker been saying?

SANDRA The usual.

YVONNE Children?

SANDRA Yes, Yvonne, children.

YVONNE I've not walked into strange houses and tried to take people over, if that's what you mean.

SANDRA Leave Gregory out of this.

YVONNE It's difficult, but I'll try.
YVONNE WANDERS AROUND THE ROOM.
SHE'S AWARE THAT RUFUS AND GREGORY ARE
TOGETHER IN THE BEDROOM OFF.
Why did you come here tonight?

SANDRA I was invited to dinner.

YVONNE Do you know why?

SANDRA One sure gets hungry in London.

YVONNE *Wird jemand mit mir sprechen???*

SANDRA Pardon?

YVONNE Why were you invited? You and your Gregory?

SANDRA Behind your back.

YVONNE Was it just old times?

SANDRA No.

YVONNE No?

SANDRA It was part of my plan.

PAUSE.

YVONNE Part of your plan?

SANDRA Yes.

YVONNE After a year? Suddenly?

SANDRA It all seemed to go well in the beginning but then everything went wrong.

YVONNE Anything to restir old heart pangs?

SANDRA Anything.

YVONNE Dear American Sandra, you're about as imaginative as one of your politicians. You want a way out and the only way you can manage it quickly is to dump the body in my bed!

SANDRA If you like.

YVONNE But I don't like! And you thought you'd changed him?

SANDRA My normality became his perversion. I hated all his little secrets. I don't think I was the only one in his life. I ...

YVONNE Say it: you were scared you'd pick up a virus.

SANDRA I don't want to talk about it. Anyway you weren't supposed to be here. I was going to break the news to Greg gently and then leave them together. Like old times. Nice and clean.

No suicide, no tears, no scenes.

YVONNE But, alas, Old Godard was here first!

SANDRA Yes. And I'm not going to explain things to you of all people!
YVONNE MOVES TO THE DOOR QUICKLY.
Where are you going?

YVONNE To throw you both out. It's late; I'm tired. I don't like either of you. You make me nervous.

SANDRA I wouldn't go in there if I were you.

YVONNE Oh, you wouldn't?

SANDRA No frankly, I wouldn't.

YVONNE And why not? I live here!

SANDRA The sight of two young men naked in bed together no doubt has its moments but not when the one is your man and the other my guy.

PAUSE.

YVONNE Anything to re-stir old heart pangs ...

SANDRA What else could I do?

PAUSE.

YVONNE Why am I so calm? When they used to do ... it ... in Winchester Avenue, I knew but at least I could leave. I had my own home. But now they're here in my home. What do I do? Scream?

SANDRA Nothing.

YVONNE Nothing?

PAUSE.

I used to dream a lot. Once. I used to have one nightmare, a terrible technicolor nightmare. But at least I would say to myself: this is a nightmare Yvonne, don't be frightened. It's only a dream. Pretend it's one of your horror films. I used to say that to myself ...

SANDRA Say it now.

YVONNE I would dream I was invisible and no one could see me. Or hear me. I would scream! I wore red. All in red, hoping that someone would see me! I'd be trapped in my room with Rufus and Gregory and they would laugh about me and do things together. Ugly things and I would scream and scream. But no one would hear me. And then I would say: 'Never mind it's just a dream. All dreams must end ...' and then I'd stop screaming and watch them love each other. Touch each other. Enter each other. Calmly pretending it was a dream. Knowing it wasn't ...

SHE HOLDS HERSELF IN AGONY.

Same old story. Two naked boys in bed with funny old Godard supplying cash and comic relief. Please God, don't do this to me again ... I can't scream any more.

PAUSE.

SANDRA We couldn't keep them apart. Not for long ...

YVONNE Quatsch!

SANDRA This is inevitable!

YVONNE Rubbish! Not if you hadn't planned it all so carelessly!

SANDRA One can't change what there is.

YVONNE And that coming from you!

SANDRA I thought it would work! It did work – for some time. But one can feel when the novelty has worn off. Yvonne, believe me, it's just not in my nature. I can't stay in one place for too long.

YVONNE This I hope you told Gregory, in the beginning? That you're allergic to responsibility?

SANDRA I must be going ...

BUT YVONNE DOESN'T LET HER.

YVONNE As far as he was concerned, you'd stay forever. As long as he played the game according to your rules!

SANDRA It's not all my fault!

YVONNE There are some of us, even some of us who pretend we control everything, who would gladly give up all we've fought for, just in exchange for a hint of security. Emotional security. What Gregory thought he'd found in you.

SANDRA And he got it! There's nothing more I'm prepared to do! I can't stand possessiveness, Yvonne. No one owns me!

YVONNE Aren't you what they call a really crappy investment?

SANDRA I don't have to explain anything to you.

AGAIN YVONNE BLOCKS HER ATTEMPTS TO LEAVE.

YVONNE But haven't you noticed, darling? I've been doing all the explaining! You pretty boring American tourist. To have the

nerve to expect me to help you out of this? Oh yes, I could easily take over your dirty washing and disinfect it and iron it and put it back in the closet but to hell with it! We all have our backs against the wall here. You're not the only one in casualty.

SANDRA I expect nothing. It's just the end of a relationship. It's not a car bomb in a café.

YVONNE It's his life!

SANDRA He's not very together ...

YVONNE So you even have the arrogance to expect him to attempt suicide!

SANDRA It's possible ...

YVONNE Quatsch quatsch nonsense and rubbish! Idiot girl! Suicide isn't his alternative. You're not the last straw to clutch at. And even without Rufus he'll survive. He's been with us in the self-preservation business long enough not to lose his life over a bad investment. It happens all the time. People get sick of each other. God knows I don't blame you. We all tend to grab and hold on for dear life. None of us wants to die unknown, unloved, unmissed. When you slithered into his life taking a shortcut through mine, what did you expect? He exchanged his pretence for yours because at the time yours looked more believable, more acceptable. My glamour was ethereal and Rufus didn't want to suck his little cock in the cinema. And let's face it, Miss America, you were prettier than Rufus then.

SANDRA Get out of the way, Yvonne ...

YVONNE Don't you come here into my home and moan about your shattered illusions while discarding your soiled habits.

Exploiting Gregory's feelings for Rufus because it's an easy way out. If I could find my glasses, I'd hit you. Hard!

GREGORY ENTERS APPLAUDING.

GREGORY I'll drink to that. Still here, Sandra dear?

HE POURS A DRINK.

YVONNE Leave my booze!

GREGORY So what's next, Sandra? A final supply of sleeping pills as a farewell present?

SANDRA Gregory please ...

GREGORY Not in front of our hostess? No worries, I've known old Godard since before my voice broke. I don't have to hide anything from you, do I, darling?

YVONNE Oh Gregory go home!

SANDRA Greg, it's time to go!

GREGORY Sit down cow, I haven't finished with you yet!

YVONNE Stupid boy, don't talk to her like that!

GREGORY So go and brush your hair somewhere!

YVONNE What for!

SANDRA Gregory, let's go and we can talk ...

GREGORY I'm talking.

SANDRA Not here ...

GREGORY Yes, well, you should've thought about that before you planned this party with Rufus.
GREGORY NOW KNOWS YVONNE HAS JUST FOUND OUT.
Yes Yvonne, Rufus does a lot of talking, doesn't he? I think he was scared I might cut the wrists or something. So he just kept talking.

YVONNE Just talking?

GREGORY Eventually. As you said, his sex drive will be the death of us all. I told him I went for a blood test last week and it was HIV-positive.

SANDRA Oh my God ...

GREGORY It was a feeble joke but he did go and sit across the room on a chair.

SANDRA Greg?

GREGORY I don't care anymore, Sandra.

SANDRA Look at me!

GREGORY You can't hypnotise me again. I'm armed now you see, with a wooden stake. And a cross.

RUFUS ENTERS.

YVONNE My Cross.

GREGORY Hey mate? Why am I surprised?

RUFUS You're an optimist. You believe in happy endings.

GREGORY Hand in hand towards the perfect sunset.

RUFUS Living happily ever after.

GREGORY But can you believe in happy endings, Rufus? After so many years with your monster?

RUFUS Only when she plays the lead.

GREGORY Well, Miss America's no leading lady.

RUFUS She's an American. They don't do walk-ons.

GREGORY Just walk-outs.

RUFUS A little regime-change and then off into their own sunset.

GREGORY Leaving the chaos and shit behind.

RUFUS Is she worth killing yourself for?

GREGORY Hey mate. She's just passing through.

RUFUS Hello and goodbye

GREGORY So maybe all is not lost?

RUFUS I won't make demands.

GREGORY I won't expect delivery.

RUFUS Bring back the past!

GREGORY Viva 32 Winchester Avenue!

RUFUS Viva!

YVONNE Stop it!

SANDRA LIGHTS A CIGARETTE.

GREGORY Oh Sandie, not after six weeks?

SANDRA Do you really care? Then put it out for me.

PAUSE.

GREGORY Right. Off to the Glory Hole! New gay sauna. Radical cool. Bareback riding. They say arsefucking is like riding a bike. You never lose the technique once you got it right the first time at the age of 17.

RUFUS I thought you were 20-something.

GREGORY I lied.
TURNS IN THE DOOR.
Miss America?

SANDRA I'll collect my things.

GREGORY I've been meaning to tell you.

SANDRA Can't it wait for later?

GREGORY You're not that good in bed you know!

YVONNE Enough now Gregory!

GREGORY See you down the lane, Betsy de Bruyn.

HE EXITS.

PAUSE.

RUFUS I've never seen him cry like that before.

YVONNE I'm sure you comforted him?

SANDRA This cigarette tastes dreadful ...

RUFUS I wouldn't cry if you left me.

YVONNE I should hope not!

RUFUS And that makes me very sad.

PAUSE.

SANDRA Is he really going off to that gay place?

RUFUS Has he gone to those places?

SANDRA Has he?

RUFUS I haven't seen him around any of the old places during your time together.

SANDRA Oh God ...

YVONNE She's busy.

SANDRA Well, I'd better ...
PAUSE.
Look I'm sorry ...

YVONNE Tears have that effect. It's too late now. You've killed it, clean, quick and dead! Rufus will take you to the lift. I'll be waiting here when you get back, darling. There are a few little things that I need to discuss with you.
PAUSE.
Well? What are you waiting for? This is the happy ending! Fuck off!
SHE SWITCHES ON THE RADIO. THE NEWSCAST IS STILL ON.
RUFUS AND SANDRA EXIT.

AFTER A MOMENT YVONNE FOLLOWS THEM.

YVONNE (Off) And Boy George calls me Pussy Face. *Verdampte Ashloch!*
SHE ENTERS, SWITCHES OFF RADIO. FINDS HER
CELL AND DIALS.

Hallo? Alexis? Oh? What's the time? Oh I'm sorry ... no, I
just wanted to apologise for not coming to your dinner party
tonight. I was on my way but then I felt sick – yes, maybe I
can see you tomorrow? No darling I'm sober now. I swear.
No pills. No drugs. Like a virgin. I promise. I don't drink ...
I just want you to know that while I work for you, I will be
clean. I will be sober. I will be great, Alexis. Like those
dreams we had in the old days? Remember how we gave
Fellini ideas and suggested he cast Anita Ekberg in *La
Dolce Vita*? Hello? Alexis?
BUT HE HAS HUNG UP.

Porno-fucker ...

POURS A DRINK. IN HIS ACCENT:

'It's the Godard again, Maggie ... her little sickness ... she's
arseholes again, Maggie *amore*, that old has-been ...' I'm not
as blind all as you think I am ... bastards! You haven't even
left me and I'm already crying ...

RUFUS ENTERS.

RUFUS Who are you talking to? There's no one here.

YVONNE As usual.

RUFUS I'm here.

YVONNE Ja, but I've stopped looking at your spot on the wall.

RUFUS POURS A DRINK.

Leave my booze!

RUFUS I need a drink!

YVONNE You need! You want! You always want – a career you want! A Godard you want! A Gregory you want! Well okay, take what you want! I come free! You’ve had Gregory. Again!

RUFUS Fuck off!

YVONNE Now all you need is a bit of self-respect! A little more supply from you and a little less demand from me!

RUFUS Don’t start on that again ...

YVONNE Starting with a nice job without my help!

RUFUS They said they’d call!

YVONNE Sometimes you scream but no one hears ...

RUFUS What?

YVONNE Same old shit!
SHE TURNS ON HIM WITH RELISH.
Loser! You don’t get a job because you don’t want a job!

RUFUS Go and brush your hair somewhere ...

YVONNE You don’t want a job. You’re terrified of a job! You haven’t done an honest job for so long you know you won’t be capable of doing a job!

RUFUS I work all the time!

YVONNE Oh yes, darling, you work on me! To remind me of my age, my fears, my insecurity! That in spite of my worries, your subsidised presence might keep me with-it, young, cool, swinging, hip-hop man! You should get a bonus for all the sweat you waste working out on me!

RUFUS You can't live without it! You need reminding so that you can always prove me wrong!

YVONNE Well then, go! Fuck off! My life won't end the moment you walk out of that door!

RUFUS The day I leave, put on your red anarak and stand in the queue!

YVONNE Oh no, walk-on! I am Yvonne Goddard! I am a legend, a retro goddess rediscovered in this new century. I can appear at any function and say nothing and they go crazy!

RUFUS There's a smudge on your cheek.

YVONNE Where?
SHE RUBS.
Gone?

RUFUS Other cheek. Higher. Lower.

YVONNE Gone?

RUFUS Gone.

YVONNE I've never been a parasite. I came from nowhere and now I'm somewhere ...

RUFUS Your hair.

YVONNE What's wrong with it?

RUFUS Standing up at the back like straw.

YVONNE Scheisse ...

TO MIRROR AND CHECKS. THERE IS NOTHING WRONG BUT WITHOUT GLASSES SHE CAN'T SEE.

RUFUS So go on. You were saying about being somewhere?

YVONNE Hard work! Discipline. Taking the knocks and rolling with the punches. Falling down and getting up again with a fist ready to fight the world. I'm not a passenger going for the free ride and handouts!

RUFUS MTV's tips and handouts?

YVONNE And you should know about handouts.

RUFUS You pathetic old cow! Look at yourself!
HE DRAGS HER TO THE MIRROR.
Go on, Yvonne Godard, have a good look!

YVONNE I can't see ...

RUFUS You don't want to see. Ignore and it'll go away? I won't go away!

YVONNE You're hurting me ...

RUFUS Who the fuck do you think you are? Look at you! No more eyelashes! No more hair!
HE PULLS OFF HER WIG. SHE IS BALD.
Oh God, now I know why we keep the lights off. It would be like fucking a goblin! Punk is dead, Godard. You look like a little old man!

YVONNE No!!!

RUFUS What a joke. Can't you hear them all laughing at you? The great late Yvonne Godard? Alexis wouldn't give you a job even if you begged him. And do you know why?

YVONNE Don't do this ...

RUFUS I'll tell you why. It's not that you're over 55 – you're a terrible actress!

YVONNE No!

RUFUS Yes! And when you do something in public, you come across pissed!

YVONNE Nerves!

RUFUS Well so much for your great personality!

YVONNE Bastard!

SHE HITS HIM. HE STOPS HER. A SCUFFLE. A GLASS BREAKS.
SHE CRIES OUT.

RUFUS Give me your hand, let me see ...

YVONNE Oh God, I can't look ... is there blood?

RUFUS A bit. Anyway you can't see anything without your glasses ...

YVONNE Where are my glasses?

RUFUS I don't know.

YVONNE They promised after the chemo it would grow back.

RUFUS It doesn't matter. The cancer's gone. That's all that matters.

YVONNE I'm not over 55.

RUFUS And I'm not under 28.

HE SITS HER DOWN AND EXITS. SHE COVERS HER BALDNESS WITH A SCARF. AWARE OF HER MAKEUP DISORDERED. RUFUS ENTERS WITH MEDICINE. PUTS A PLASTER ON THE CUT.

YVONNE Rufus?

RUFUS What.

YVONNE Am I a vampire like in my movies?

RUFUS How can you be a vampire without Alexis Vallace ... open your hand ...

YVONNE That girl called me a vampire.

RUFUS That's really something coming from an American.

YVONNE If you want to go back to Gregory ... Ow!

RUFUS Sorry. If I want to go back to Gregory?

YVONNE Do you want to?

RUFUS What do you think?

YVONNE I don't know ... but it seems ...

RUFUS There. Is that okay?

YVONNE What. Ja, *danke*.

RUFUS You were saying?

YVONNE Is it still bleeding? I won't get tetanus or something will I?

RUFUS About me going back to Greg?

YVONNE I can see the poison move up to my heart – I need a doctor ...

RUFUS I could move in with him next week. Sandra'll out by then. I'll go over in the evening. By Sunday we should have 32 Winchester Avenue back to normal again. Then on Monday, we can invite you over for dinner in the new alcove, like the old days.

YVONNE I'm going out with Boy George on Monday.

RUFUS Tuesday then. Any night, really. I don't suppose Greg and I will go out much with all the catching-up we have to do. A year is full of interesting things.

YVONNE Ja. And what will you tell him?

RUFUS All the parties we went to. Famous people we met. Dinners we had. You know? All the same old shit that kept his mouth hanging open for more?

YVONNE You'll tell him of all the good times we had together?

RUFUS Yes. Lie if necessary.

YVONNE Make him feel you sacrificed a lot to go back to him?

RUFUS Oh yes.

YVONNE Refer to me as the old has-been, the old German bitch, the old drag-queen?

RUFUS Of course.

YVONNE You faithful little fucker.

HE STARES AT HER. THEN GENTLY PUTS THE WIG BACK ON HER HEAD.

RUFUS You look so much better without all the face-crap on.

YVONNE My eyes are too small ...

RUFUS Don't frown ...

YVONNE I can't see ...
HE FINDS HER GLASSES AND PUTS THEM ON HER
FACE.
You really hurt me.

RUFUS I'm sorry. I'm just as touchy about my career as you are
about yours.

YVONNE What career?

RUFUS Us.

PAUSE.

YVONNE So, you're leaving on Friday?

RUFUS No.

YVONNE Saturday then. Tell me and I'll help you move.

RUFUS Where to.

YVONNE 32 Winchester Avenue NW6!

RUFUS Won't be necessary. Greg doesn't want me there. I asked. He
said: no thank you, mate.
PAUSE.
Come to bed, it's late.

HE EXITS.
AFTER A MOMENT YVONNE COMES TO LIFE.

WITH THE REMOTE ACTIVATES THE RADIO:
NEWSCAST.
SHE CHANGES STATIONS TO MUSIC.
REPLACES HER EYELASHES AND FIXES UP HER APPEARANCE.
SWITCHES OFF THE RADIO.
CHECKS HERSELF IN THE MIRROR.
THEN DISCARDS HER GLASSES.

YVONNE Spineless old cocksucker!

SHE MAKES A GRAND EXIT TO THE BEDROOM.

BLACKOUT.

THE END

