

TRASH

A play in five tableaux by Cristian Panaite

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CAST REQUIREMENTS

7 Men, 2 women (double casting possible)

CHARACTERS

Doru and Valentin - Eastern European parents

Pepe and Sophie – Eastern European children

Frantz and Hantz – a Western version (father and son)

Leo – a “Gypsy”. Pepe’s assistant.

Man

Woman

TIME past, present, future, far future, far distant future

PLACE For now all the geographical references (Streets, places, stations, etc) are taking us to Berlin. The references can be changed accordingly and easily, to any other western grandiose shiny, clean spot (Paris, Vienna, Rome). I picked Berlin out of being familiar with the space, and do not wish to make the play become a statement, more than it seems to be already.

Note:

Mizil (pronounced **Mi** as in *Me* and **Zi** as in *zinc*, **I** in any form) – a small town (approx. 16.000 people) with a very high rate of unemployment (like many other), situated some one hour and a half north east of Bucharest.

1. When our parents were good at stealing and feeding us

Evening. An alley outside an apartment building. A couple of dumpsters on one side, one half full, one packed over the top with rugs, lamps, some electronics, etc. On the opposite side a bench. The space is lit by the electric poles and the lights coming from the apartments. Two men enter: Doru, a middle aged Eastern European and his son Pepe. They search the space, hide behind the bench. Pepe takes out a walkie talkie, Doru a small bottle of liquor.

PEPE

Can you hear me now, dad? I think it's the volume which didn't work earlier...

DORU

Shhh! Keep quiet. Keep your head down and stay quiet.

PEPE

Hey, you can even use it as a radio. Wow! Ma- De in EU!

Pepe continues to play with the walkie talkie. Suddenly a radio voice can be heard

RADIO VOICE

"This is Europe Station 92.4 WFM. Here are the news. The largest expansion of the European Union is announced to take place. 10 new countries, most of them part of the Ex- Sovietic Block are about to suffer a crucial make over"

DORU

Mother of Christ! Give me that, give it to me now! You want to wake up the whole neighborhood.

PEPE

But I didn't do anything...dad...

DORU

Now, or else I'll sell you to the gypsies. No more toys for you then!

PEPE

(laughing loudly)

Yeah. I want to see that.

DORU

You think it's funny. Mother of Christ! That's what I have lived for, to see my own son making fun of me.

Doru grabs the walkie talkie from Pepe and is about to step on it.

PEPE

No dad, no! Please...don't! Please! I promise, I'll keep quiet. Just don't...I had to dig through a ton of shit to get them.

DORU

And you'll dig some more if you don't shut up. Here! Set it on channel four and stop fucking around or else...ayyyy! Shoot!

PEPE

(taking out a small notebook out, from his pocket)

We took the tram to Shonhauser Alle...you had three beers on the way there.

DORU

Such a hot spot. Nothing better than a warm night and packed trash cans.

PEPE

Checked everything from Block 12 to 45. We skipped 27, 38 and 41 though...

DORU

Fuckers, I tell you. Great stinky fuckers. You know those blocks were ours, my son. Ours.

PEPE

I am sorry, daddy. Really sorry.

DORU

Open your Dumbo ears my son, when I say...you can trust a gypsy but never ever trust a Hungarian, nor a Turkish, nor an Albanian, nor a Slovenian, nor a Slovakian, nor a Serbian, nor a Macedonian, nor a Ukrainian nor a...*(thinking and anger management process)*

PEPE

Aaaaaa? A what daddy? French, Swedish...Norwegian

DORU

No my son, those are all pussies like my cousin Bebe. No, out there, there are more fowl creatures chewing on our trash. Our existence. For centuries now, they've been doing so.

PEPE

Orcs?

DORU

Greeks! That's it...the Greeks and the Bulgarians. Don't trust them. If they offer to help you by keeping an eye over your business for a minute, take out a bat and break their bones. Do you understand me? Your father was a moron that he trusted them. You hear me...a moron. (beat) Friendship Bridge between Bulgaria and Romania, my ass. Bridge of thieves – that's what it is.

PEPE

Yes, Daddy.

DORU

Good. Keep that in mind, as you'll grow up stronger than your dad. Revenge me, Pepe. Pay back time, hear me? (Pepe nods) Go on, where are we now?

PEPE

Platannenstrasse, three blocks away from Aldi's.

DORU

Did you inspect the grounds?

PEPE

Several doctors, six lawyers, four teachers, three newlyweds and some WW2 widows.

DORU

Excellent. My son, I feel that tonight will make more than in a month. Do you smell anything?

PEPE

Nothing except garbage. I'll stink the whole week and no girl will ever want to hangout with me. I hate all this trash.

DORU

You hate what's good money huh? Oh, my boy is grumpy because he had to get dirty. I'll give you such a beating when we get back home. What did I tell you... You have to practice. I am getting old. Someone has to follow on my steps. Now, take a deep breath. Take a deep breath, yes – yes - keep it in...and release. What do you smell?

PEPE

More rotten food and beer cans.

DORU

Ahh! You are just like your mother. I married someone with no imagination and I have a son with no brains. I wonder how that worked. I smell new rugs, barely used TV's, digital cameras which didn't hit puberty yet and dvd players still in their dippers. They are hiding right there. I know it. They are waiting for us, waiting to be picked up like ripen fruits, ready to be transported to our bitter homeland and be given a new life...oh such nights make a poet from me, my son. I feel like I am giving birth.

PEPE

You want another son don't you? I knew you don't love me.

DORU

Are you whining again? How could I wish for another son...for someone as...special and unique as you?

PEPE

I am special, am I not dad?

DORU

You are so special that sometimes I feel like...

PEPE

Can I keep the walkie talkie then?

DORU

Yeah sure, what the hell...you have a birthday too, don't you? Remember that Hi-Fi system, doctor Franz Wagner threw away last week? It's now on the shelf of Professor Vladimir Molotov.

PEPE

Oh yes, I remember. So loud.

DORU

Remember the fourteen square meters of Persian rug that bank assistant Carlotta Brunmeier left outside her house.

PEPE

Yes, I remember, the one that had all the elves on it. So soft.

DORU

It now lies in all its beauty in the office of Olga Roman.

PEPE

The fat bus dispatcher with three hairy moles on her left chick?

DORU

No, the pediatrician. And do you remember that gorgeous panoramic Japanese TV we found in the backyard of architect Sebastian Lemm.

PEPE

We found a dish for it, some twenty meters away. If it weren't for me running like a thunder, Gigi's son would have taken it.

DORU

Yes my son, it was a glorious day. Well that Tv. is now enchanting the eyes of the head of our municipal police, Captain Varza. Remember my son, there is one difference between our miser country and this one. Back home some make fortune out of someone's misery, but here – in the west...

*The door of the apartment building opens.
A man comes outside, he throws away a
bag and a couple of boxes.*

DORU

Heads down. Stay still.

PEPE

Shhh! I'm not moving. I'm not breathing! Shhh!

*They observe the man, with great
amazement. The man exits.*

DORU

Isn't he some great EU fucker?

PEPE

Sure dad.

DORU

Look at him. Did you see his Kelvin Versace flip flops. Hell, I want a pair of those.

PEPE

Maybe there's one in the boxes.

DORU

A Kelvin Versace pair of flip-flops. My son listen here... 'cause I know you're special. Time will come when you'll have your own house, your own woman to feed.

PEPE

And my own pair of flip flops.

DORU

Yes. You don't throw Kelvin Versace flip flops away. You might throw some Cleins away, you might throw your wife out of the house, you might set the whole neighborhood on fire but never ever let your Kelvin Versace out of hand. Promise, my son?

PEPE

I'll carry them and honor them better honoring my wife.

DORU

I wonder about those boxes. Definitely made out of eighty percent recycled materials, two centimeters and a half thick, tops made of sixty percent polystyrene, bottoms that could very well have bubble rap margins. (pause) I smell...

PEPE

A stereo, a laptop.

DORU

At least, maybe some family jewels as well.

PEPE

Ha! Ha!

DORU

Shhhh! Square head. God this is beautiful. I'll take your mom to Pizza Hut when we get home. You know why they do it after 10 pm my son. (pause) They are ashamed their neighbors will see that they haven't washed the carpet before dumping it...or even worse, didn't replace the batteries in the cameras. Now that is called being civilized.

PEPE

I think we should go... rip the whole thing up and...

DORU

No wait! There is always something big coming in the end. When you least expect it.

PEPE

When you least expect it...

Pause. A young woman dressed in black comes out, dragging a box

DORU

That's it! I told you. God, this is hot. Hotter than the day I got two prostitutes for the price of one.

*They watch her in glorious amazement.
Doru could even fall over at her sight.*

PEPE

It's the most beautiful thing I have ever seen.

DORU

Must be a Sony! Are you ready my cute special Romanian vampire! Are you ready to get your fangs into this beauty.

As Doru's excitement build up, another middle age man enters from the opposite side. He is dressed in a nice fashionable suit. He goes to the lady and approaches her in a polite manner.

DORU

What the fuck?

PEPE

Dad?

DORU

Who the hell is that? Fucker! I can't believe it.

PEPE

What's happening? Let me see...

DORU

Mother of Christ! Crosses and devils!

The woman exits. The man in the suit, starts pushing and pulling the box

DORU

That is the most decadent thing I have ever seen. Son of a gypsy.

PEPE

It's a thief! It's a thief! Let me bite him.

DORU

Well, we'll see about that. Nobody messes up with my territory. Come on son. It's time to stop being civilized.

They run out and grab the man. Pepe holds onto the man as he is about to bite

DORU

What the hell you think you are doing?

THE MAN

Excuse me.

DORU

You heard me well. Who the fuck are you and what are you doing on my territory?

THE MAN

Listen, I do not want any trouble. I just helped the lady...

DORU

You helped the lady. He helped the lady...crosses and graves! What if I help you a bit, too. Would you like that?

THE MAN

Listen, I don't want any trouble.

PEPE

Yeah would you like that?

DORU

Shut up! Don't you start lying to me, I met so many like you. Dirty smelly thieves who don't respect the rules.

THE MAN

Excuse me, but I don't understand. I am no thief.

DORU

Mothers and Christs! You don't...he doesn't...maybe you are Hungarian, that's why?

THE MAN

No!

DORU

Ukrainian. Cernobil made you so special, huh?

THE MAN

No!

DORU

Bulgarian!

PEPE

If you happen to be Bulgarian you are in big doo doo.

THE MAN

No! No Bulgarian!

DORU

Yugoslavian...or whatever the heck is left over there.

MAN

No!

DORU

Then what the fuck are you?

THE MAN

Romanian! Romanski! Rumanischen!

DORU

Oh great, one of us!

PEPE

Gypsy! Yuck, and I was about to bite you.

THE MAN

Hey! Don't talk like that.

DORU

Apologize to him right now, Pepe.

PEPE

Sorry! (quietly) Too bad you are not a Greek...oohhhh!

THE MAN

Thank you! Now, can you be good and give me a hand with this box.

DORU

Mother of God! That's it. You have some balls don't you. Maybe you want us to have a coffee with you as well.

THE MAN

That would be nice. I'm new around here.

*In a moment of rage, Doru grabs the man
and takes him to the ground*

DORU

Listen, I do not care if you are one of us, I do not care if you have a family to feed, I do not care if I smash your head on this sidewalk...but I care when someone is trying to grab my business. It happened before and I shall not let anyone fuck me over again. There are six million people in this town and enough spare garbage cans. But these...these are mine. All mine...

PEPE

All his. He's my dad!

THE MAN

I think you misunderstood. I am no threat to you.

DORU

You will be no threat to me when I shall not see your face anymore. If you are trying to make a living (*takes out some money*). Well take U-Bahn 2, get off at the second to last stop from ZOB, and start over there. But not here...

PEPE

Not here!

THE MAN

Alright!

DORU

Understood?

THE MAN

Understood. Now will you let go of me. Danke!

DORU

Well, Gutten Nacht!

THE MAN

Auf Wiedersehen!

*The man is about to leave, when he turns,
grabs a camera out of the box and tries to
run. Pepe jumps on him, Doru grabs him by
the legs*

DORU

Hit son! Hit for mother of Christ! Hit for Romania!

PEPE

Sicher, gewis!

The man starts screaming

THE MAN

Help! Hilfe! Sophie!!!! Get off me!

A young woman, runs in and jumps on top of Pepe, hitting him with her shoe

DORU

My God!

PEPE

Ahhh! I am attacked! Ahhh! Dad! Dad! Help! Hilfe! Dad! Nein!

DORU

Take this and this you lousy gypsies! I'll show you!

A lot of noise. Lights get turned on in the apartments. Everyone freezes.

DORU and THE MAN

Shhhh! Schnell! Hide! Come on! Kids! Pepe...Sophie!

Pepe and Sophie jump in one of the dumpsters. Doru and the man hide behind the bench. The stage stays empty for a few seconds as the lights in the apartments switch off .

DORU

Clear? Pepe, you idiot – tell me!

PEPE

I am not coming out.

DORU

Look out and tell me, or I'll...

SOPHIE

(stands up, covered in trash and looks out)

All clear.

THE MAN

That was close.

DORU

Well it's all your fault. You started it all...

SOPHIE

How is it his fault, mister. Don't we all have a right to the bounties of the west.

THE MAN

Sophie!

PEPE

(from the bottom of the dumpster)

Wow, half a Milka, half a Bounty! Sweet.

DORU

It's better if you give it back and go.

THE MAN

I will, don't worry. Come on, Sophie...the party is over.

SOPHIE

No dad. I am not leaving.

She grabs Pepe out of the dumpster, and takes some of the chocolate from him

PEPE

Hey! Give it back! Dad!

DORU

Learn how to protect your jewels, Pepe.

THE MAN

Sophie listen to your dad. You don't want to give me a stroke again.

DORU

Yes Sophie! Bitte! You know what we say home...too many cooks spoil the food.

SOPHIE

But I am tired and bored. We've been walking and sniffing all day with no luck. I want to eat and go to sleep. You can leave without me. I'll find you, don't worry. And besides, you should have fought more for that camera.

THE MAN

How could I- two against one. Your father is not as young as you think.

DORU

He is right. Our family always had strong men in it. Look at my son...

SOPHIE

Yeah, well I can fight both of you. Now – for that camera.

PEPE

Can I fight her dad? Can I? I never hit a woman before.

DORU

You shut up. Go back to the dumpster. See what else you can find.

THE MAN

Well, you two proved your point. You said U Bahn 2 right?

DORU

Yeah, many dumpsters on the other side. Packed with riches. You'll love it. Some good spots to sleep and drink too. You'll make some money in no time. Beware of the Neo-Nazis though.

THE MAN

Thanks.Come on Sophie.

SOPHIE

Thanks for nothing. You are right dad, let's go. If we reached this side of the continent, we can make it in this city...as long as you don't get a stroke or I get raped.

She stuffs herself with more chocolate and starts crying

PEPE

Oh no!

DORU

Can you make her stop, please. ...she will wake everyone up again.

THE MAN

Sophie! Honey! Don't cry, you know it will be fine.

SOPHIE

(crying louder)

But my little brother will never have the chance to see some good food.

DORU

Take her out of here now!

Sophie and The Man are walking away

SOPHIE

He's never been to a fast food...and there will never be one in our town village. I know it. I want to take pictures of burgers and bags of chips and stacks of chocolate...and us, stuffing ourselves with apple pie at McDonalds.

THE MAN

Soon, Sophie! Soon! You have to be strong though and work with your daddy, ok.

SOPHIE

No fast food in Mizil. No disco club. Nothing but trains passing by our house. We'll go back there and we'll rot. I shall die of boredom, lonely and with no love...

PEPE

Mizil? Mizil!

DORU

Wait a second, did you just say Mizil?

THE MAN

Yeah- we just came from there. Listen my sweetest Baklava you know you are wrong. We'll get back home rich and happy. Your mamma will not hit me with the cooking pan anymore, and you'll find a nice boy who'll marry you, you'll have beautiful children and *(to Doru whispering)* She's at that age...sorry

DORU

Mother of Christ! Mother of Christ! Well, why didn't you say so from the beginning. Oh God! I am from Mizil, myself.

THE MAN

Really?

PEPE

Really! It's my dad's birthplace.

SOPHIE

It's my dad's birthplace. A dungeon.

THE MAN

Mother of Christ! I can't believe it.

DORU

Small world.

THE MAN

Smaller than our town it seems. Why didn't you say so from the beginning?

DORU

Doru is my name.

THE MAN

Valentin.

DORU

Wait a second? Turn around! Turn!Turn! Walk in place.

THE MAN

What? Why? Man, if you just want me to leave still, say it.

Doru walks in circle around. The man starts to turn also.

DORU

Can you jump, run in place. Stick your tongue out.

THE MAN

Well what wouldn't I do for a compatriot. Like this...

DORU

Like that. Now...make a funny face.

THE MAN

You make a funny face. I don't want the whole Berlin laughing only at me.

SOPHIE

This is fun!

*They both
make funny faces. While walking in a circle and
observing each other they also start humming a
Romanian folk song.*

DORU

A thousand Christs! It's you isn't it. Coza? Valentin Coza. School Nr, 14. Slow runner, funny, king of homework, nose picker.

VALENTIN

Class 2 B. Doru Constantin? Tree climber, bubble gum thief, skirt picker.

BOTH

embracing instantly

Yes! Mother of all Christs!

SOPHIE

Well isn't that sweet. I think we should let them be. Got any more chocolate?

PEPE

No. Want to look for more?

SOPHIE

Sure? Sorry for the shoe.

PEPE

It's fine. You know, no other girl did that to me.

*They go back in the dumpster. Doru and
Valentin go and take a seat on the bench.*

VALENTIN

Must be 20 years right. Maybe 22. Why did you leave?

DORU

Crazy parents wanted to try the capital. It killed them in no time but it was good for me.
Look at me now (laughing to himself)Why did you stay?

VALENTIN

I was always the slow runner one, you said it.

DORU

Yeah. I did let you win once. Ran slow, just so you can get that redhead girl.

VALENTIN

Whom I did marry...and here is the result

SOPHIE

Here, Pepe , more candy raps. Lick them.

DORU

Yeah, we are supposed to call them our treasures.

VALENTIN

One thing you can't sell, right.

DORU

Don't even joke about it. Light of my days, that's what he is for me.

VALENTIN

So for how long have you been doing this?

DORU

Can't really remember. Actually I don't want to remember. All what I know a friend told me to try it. I am not sure I would call him a friend now (pause) But nobody died from trash, yet...right?

VALENTIN

Such a life: collect trash in the west, and arrive in a fancy car in the east. Impressive, everyone's dream.

DORU

It's still a dream for me. No car yet, no video cell phone. There's a long way to go.

VALENTIN

How long do you think it will take me?

DORU

Laughing

With such a suit? (pause) A while. Get rid of it. With such help (pointing at Sophie)...I was honest when I was saying no time...but one advice though, think yourself as a stamp collector.

VALENTIN

A stamp collector? I do remember the time you tricked me into giving you my collection of European paintings for a worthless one of Australian bears. I gave you a Rubens for a Panda.

DORU

Not that there was any aesthetic difference.

PEPE

An automatic toothbrush!

SOPHIE

Half a radio!

DORU

What I am saying is...Don't get greedy and don't collect all the junk. You have to learn how the value the things, how much they would worth back home, how much it will take you to carry them and bribe the custom officers, how much you will share with the other dealers and so on.

VALENTIN

That's why you almost killed me.

DORU

Yeah! A thousand apologies... a keen eye and a good smell make all the difference in this business. Oh and another thing, do not mingle with any western junk collectors. Dangerous shit I tell you.

VALENTIN

I thought we are the only ones.

DORU

While easterners collect stereos, westerners collect cheap organs, cheap women. Whatever makes one happy and rich.

VALENTIN

Well I saw that on Tv but never believed that... And nobody says a word?

DORU

Why should one do that? Do you want anyone to point a finger at you while you dig through this pile of crap? I don't think so. It's part of the same big dirty circle.

VALENTIN

Where there's a demand – there is a supplier.

DORU

Exactly. You're nerdy as always. Just the other day Pepe found a plastic bag with some... what was it Pepe? Pepe tell your dad what did you find?

PEPE

(from the dumpster)

Ahhh, a bag of intestines.

SOPHIE

Yuck! I'm not touching you anymore.

DORU

He knows they were lamb parts. (pause) You must stay away...make yourself noticed as little as possible and do not bother their kind.

VALENTIN

It's more dangerous than I thought.

DORU

No profit comes without risks. Danger is my name nowadays.

DORU

I see, well maybe I do need some tutorials.

DORU

Tomorrow night. Want to be my partner?

VALENTIN

Well, of course...but are you sure...

DORU

What the hell man, it's a miracle we ran over each other. Partners, and brothers just like in the good old days.

VALENTIN

You get the lolly pop, I get the stick?

DORU

Will share 50% - 50%. Agreed.

VALENTIN

O.K. Agreed.

DORU

Sehr gut! Remember, there is one difference between our miserable country and this one. Back home some make fortune out of someone's misery, but here – in the west...

PEPE

pops out holding some plastic flowers

These are for you, Sophie.

SOPHIE

Oh you shouldn't have, mister Pepe.

PEPE

But I insist. They are genuine Dutch...they smell nice too.

SOPHIE

Made in Malaysia. Well thank you.

VALENTIN

Aren't they great.

DORU

As great as two kids who are dragged from dumpster to dumpster can be. Want a sip?

Valentin takes the bottle.

VALENTIN

To our old friendship and our painfully born one.

DORU

Mother of Christ!

2. How our parents grew older and how we learned to steal more and more

*Lights fade in, over the exterior of another apartment building. Similar setting. The bench could be of a different color, and a phone booth could complete the set. The dumpsters are half full and their walls are spray painted with: **Go home you dirty gypsies! We cannot stand your stench! Balkan trash! Didn't it hurt your mothers to give birth to such garbage? Recycle your brains!** Valentin and Doru enter, dressed as garbage men.. They climb the dumpster, take out from their bags some sandwiches. Doru takes out the walkie talkie, sets it as a radio.*

DORU

Checking his watch

Wait! Wait! Another minute...forty seconds...

VALENTIN

Come on I am starving. Nobody cares, nobody will see...

DORU

What do you mean nobody cares? Fifteen seconds...fourteen! This is what the west is all about, discipline, strictness.

RADIO VOICE

“This is Europe Station 92.4 WFM. It is 13:00 pm. Here are the news of the day. The European Union has invited Romania and Bulgaria to start the negotiations towards joining the Union. Such an utopian perspective might become reality as early as 2007.”

Doru and Valentin start eating.. They do not talk for a while.

DORU

Got t any mayo? Shit, it's tasteless.

VALENTIN

(taking a good look at what's written on the dumpsters)

This is cheap paint. I bet it's made in Russia. It's going to wash out right away. What do you think about this?

DORU

Eh! Like I haven't heard shit like this before. But you know what our mothers use to tell us: the one who says so is so. So fuck them.

VALENTIN

No, I mean our costumes.

DORU

Well I don't know. Kind of tight when you have to climb in. I got a rash.

VALENTIN

I found a jar of Vaseline the other day. Remind me when we're done. (pause) Honestly, I think this is the most brilliant idea our kids had, since they took over the business. Makes me feel proud as a parent.

DORU

I still liked the home improvement and designer outfit was better. It made me look younger. I had a bunch of widows all over me. I begged Pepe to let me keep it, but he says we need more diversity in our work. It's safer, for now, he says, at least until police finishes the immigration check ups.

VALENTIN

He is right, you should listen to him more often. He won the chess championship in the park, didn't he. He made all that money.

DORU

Yeah, I am so proud of him. For the first time, he used his head, and not on breaking an ATM with it.

VALENTIN

Want to hear a secret? Promise not to spread the word.

DORU

Shoot!

VALENTIN

Sophie just showed me the new clothes for next month. She designed them herself.

DORU

No way.

VALENTIN

I knew there was some raw talent in that girl. Fiery like her mother. She says she used only organic and recycled materials, in accordance with the EU standards.

DORU

Did she add big large pockets with double bottoms?

VALENTIN

Nine of them. Couldn't believe my ears, the way she was talking – so elevated. She changed so much since she started taking piano lessons from this Polish professor.

DORU

Polish you say?

VALENTIN

Polish. It's the new deal in town.

DORU

As long as they don't take my work, I'm fine with it.

VALENTIN

I am so proud of her. She used aquatic blue, sunset red and some specs of impossible pink. We are going to look better than when we got married.

DORU

Valentin was planning to have us work as avante-garde artists as soon as next week.

VALENTIN

Avante-garde you say?

DORU

Alternative. Revolutionary. It's the new deal in town. We say – we need the stuff to hang it and stick it around. We're making installations that are supposed to provoke a cathartic and inquisitive impulse in our audience.

VALENTIN

Mother of Christ!

DORU

Pass me the ketchup. So don't forget to say that, when they find you carrying a couple of Panasonics around Potsdamer Platz.

VALENTIN
to himself

Inquisitive impulse in our cathartic...

DORU

Genius! Ingenious! He is right. Pretending you are working for an NGOs or an orphanage it's useless nowadays. You won't have a door open for you. It's art which makes these rich fuckers give away, even the stuff they bought with a day before.

VALENTIN

Hey there is a guy three stations from here, he tried to convince a family that he is from Ghana.

DORU

Ha! And he is whiter than cheese. Moron.

VALENTIN

Wait, it gets better. He swears on his mother's grave, he is a soccer coach and he needs a home theater system to show tapes to his team. He wanted to get Ghana in the World Cup...but you know he's like : "in Ghana we are so so poor, we don't have such good electronics...no good Tvs means we cannot watch our adversaries, and if we don't do that we can't possibly win the world cup.

DORU

Did they fall for it?

VALENTIN

Almost, but then it happened that the young of the family spoke out. Mommy, teacher told us that there is no electricity in Africa. So the guy is like...well you know...Ghana is better than the rest of Africa, it's Togo where they don't have electricity and eat hypo meat. Little girl starts crying when she hears that, and then the Romanian shit hit the fan, my friend. Mother calls their older son who happened to be a boxer. The guy is like...by the nose and all the jell in your hair you must be Romanian and that's that. After all the beating the retard got...he must be black by now.

DORU

He must be on his way to Somalia huh? If it were for me, I would have given him a pair of Banana Republic

VALENTIN

You idiot! Ha! Banana Republic. Give me some of that mustard.

A man comes out with a trash bag.

DORU and VALENTIN

Gutten tag mein Herr. How are you doing on this beautiful spring day?
Wie get es Ihnen?

THE MAN

Gut! Gut! Working hard I see. (throwing the bag) Cigaretten? Bitte, Bitte...

The man opens a pack of cigarettes and offers it to them

DORU

taking one

Darf Ich...Viel Danken!

THE MAN

I think it might rain today. I should hurry then. (continues smoking contemplating) My wife is in Tahiti, so it's my turn to clean the house.

DORU

Sehr gut. Who says "menshen cannot washen or cleanen"?

THE MAN

Yah!Even when she is home I cook and clean and do everything she says. Es ist mir egal. Been married eleven years now and I love to do whatever she wishes. Well, you must excuse me, work is calling. Have a nice day! Tschüs!

VALENTIN

Seien Sie vorsichtig (Take care)

Man exits

DORU

Pussy! I like to cook and clean and...mother of Christ. Let me tell you something, when you see men acting like this you know the end of the world is near. One thing I cannot get used to in the west is seeing men getting pussified. If my son will ever end like this

VALENTIN

What are you saying?

DORU

Well since he got married with Sophie...I just...I don't know. He is not the same in many ways.

Doru opens the garbage bag the man threw out

VALENTIN

It's not her fault he likes expensive perfumes and fancy shoes. Give me that.

DORU

I know, I know, but still... something is not right. The way he walks, the way he speaks.
Do you think he would like this (*finds a tie in the bag*)

VALENTIN

Maybe he is gay!

DORU

Maybe you're insane, and wish to end up in Ghana.

VALENTIN

When two young people love each other as much as they do, nothing is right. Remember
when we found them all cuddled in a recycling bin.

DORU

Of course I do – you almost killed Pepe. Look, a blender!

VALENTIN

And you wouldn't have done the same I suppose. I had to protect my innocent jewel.
We don't have to declare the food to them, right?

DORU

Keep the candy raps for Pepe, he still likes to lick them. (pause) You had to protect your
innocent jewel. I know for sure she was not "pure" when Pepe married her.

VALENTIN

You're sick.

DORU

Whispering to Valentin

Karl Putzen...the associate director of Hamburg Recycling Bins Company

VALENTIN

Well, that...that was a dumb accident. She thought she'll get the citizenship.

DORU

Citizenshit. If it weren't for my son, she might have been lost nowadays – you know
that. I told you to keep an eye on her.

VALENTIN

Are you done? I don't want to hear your blabbing anymore.

DORU

I'm just saying. I don't consider myself a conservative person but love or no love...Sophie's cherry was long gone when Pepe made his entrance.

DORU

You're the one afraid he'll end up pussified.

DORU

Mothers and Christs!

Sophie and Pepe enter, dressed very stylish, wearing sun glasses, shiny shoes, They observe part of the argument in silence. They play with their cellphones, check messages regularly, and smoke. At their sight, Doru and Valentin sink themselves in the dumpster.

PEPE

Working hard, dad?

DORU

We were just finishing our lunch break, just in time to find more precious stones, my son.

SOPHIE

Working hard dad?

VALENTIN

My back hurts from so much climbing, but I'll be fine, my jewel. I'll be fine. Here I have something for you.

Valentin offers her some candy

DORU

When do we get off work today son?

PEPE

Depends on what you got. You know we have to catch up on profit this week. We are two shipments behind, you realize that!

DORU

I am sorry I twisted my ankle in a trench last week. I am so sorry my son. It will not happen again. I shall work harder, as hard as in our first days.

PEPE

I am glad to hear that. Our company...my company didn't name you an honorary president for nothing.

SOPHIE

Dad, remember you have to pass by and help me with the intro to modeling class. I'm tutoring you know...I am a teacher just what mom always wished for me...opening up the minds and tastes of so many occidental girls. When you come, you can have as much caviar as you wish.

VALENTIN

Oh, that's so sweet of you. But I couldn't...I wouldn't.

SOPHIE

Don't be silly. Once a week you can relax and forget about work. Isn't that right Pepe?

PEPE

As long as we are on schedule, I don't see why not. As a matter of fact, what are you doing this Saturday dad?

DORU

Well, you know...hanging at Platanenstrasse 15. Reading some magazines in the park, collecting beer caps. I am pretty busy, myself.

PEPE

Why not join me and the boys for a night of poker.

DORU

You know I do not gamble, my son.

PEPE

I know, it's one thing you didn't want me to do...but you failed. Ha! What can I say? I couldn't help myself, dad. What will you do now? Sell me to the gypsies and get a new one. (pause) Maybe with some Viagra, who knows...

DORU

Oh no, I wouldn't do that my son.

PEPE

I knew you love me with all your heart. So you have to come. We'll spend some quality time, like in the good old days.

DORU

I have no money to gamble, you know that.

PEPE

Doesn't matter, you are my father. (pause) So I'll lend you some, and you can pay me back with more work. Deal?

DORU

I don't know. I am better off resting one day a week.

PEPE

Oh come on, stop being so anti social. How can you win something in life if you don't want to play? I'll roast some pig for you.

DORU

I don't see how I could refuse.

PEPE

Great! 6 a clock then. In front of the second dumpster. Be sure to wear something nice. Oh come on, show me some excitement. Tell me how proud you are of me.

DORU

You know you make my heart explode with joy when I see where you are now.

PEPE

Really?

DORU

Of course, a father couldn't be happier than when he sees his son surpassing him.

PEPE

That's from Herodotus, right? Hell you are right. I worked hard didn't I. I learned everything. I listened to you as you asked me to. I stopped fooling around, I kept my eyes on the prize and now I am someone. All with your help. Thank you, papa!

DORU

Don't even mention it. Now if you'll excuse me...nature calls.

Doru takes some toilet paper out, heads behind the bench

SOPHIE

Honey I must go to the therapy session. Can you pick me at 4 from the salon?

PEPE

No problem butterfly, I'll send Leo with the limo.

SOPHIE

Dad, are you proud of me? Tell me how proud you are of me? Whenever you say something sweet to me, you make me grow more and more beautiful.

VALENTIN

Yes my sugary piece of baklava.

SOPHIE

Dad, do you think I am wise?

VALENTIN

Of course, pumpkin pie. Otherwise you wouldn't be here, telling your daddy where and how to work.

SOPHIE

Dad, do you think I deserve all this richness?

VALENTIN

Yes princess...you worked hard and you deserve to have everything at your feet.

SOPHIE

Thank you daddy!

PEPE

Well if there isn't anything else, I'll let you guys dig some more and we shall see you at midnight with the products.

DORU and VALENTIN

Sure! Sure! Take your time!

PEPE

Oh and could you please wash out that bullshit. It makes me sick, it makes me sad. God I still cannot understand these westerners. How can they treat us like animals...it's not like we've been raised in a cage. Wash it out, please.

DORU

Right away my son.

Pepe and Sophie exit, Doru and Valentin remain by the dumpster. Doru starts cleaning the spray paint, and after a while he starts crying.

VALENTIN

Oh come on – it will be all right. Don't worry. They are doing fine, our children are doing fine – that's what's the most important right. That's what we were taught as kids, remember.

DORU

Yeah! Wash away!

VALENTIN

They are the light of our days and we must keep it going and bright for as long as we can.

DORU

Get it clean! It must be clean! For Pepe! For my child!

VALENTIN

You said you wanted to see them rich, happy and content. That was your big wish...well look now.

DORU

Yeah! Everything must be spotless! We haven't been raised in a cage! We are no filthy animals! Clean! Wash!

VALENTIN

So, what else do you want? They are part of the western civilization? We brought them here, we raised and taught them...that's it our job is done.

DORU

You know what Pepe told me once: "dad, you didn't steal enough. You really didn't. Such a fool you are. When I'll grow big and strong, I shall steal more than you would have ever imagined. Because that's how the change will come in my country." I would have never thought, I can't believe it...I...mother of Christ. Our job is done right? Then why aren't we free? Why can't we run away? Why can't we disappear? Why are they doing this to us? Why don't they simply forget about us? They would be better off anyway, don't you think. The business would grow faster. You wouldn't have to be stuffed with caviar.

VALENTIN

I hate caviar.

DORU

We wouldn't have to wear all these clothes.

VALENTIN

I hate the colors. I hate the texture, I hate the feeling of it all over my body. It's like carrying the burden of all what they have done to me...to us daily.

DORU

Why are we so weak? Why?

VALENTIN

What a question Doru? Because we are the parents growing weaker and they are the children growing stronger. The law of life. Ha!

DORU

The law of the Balkans. Come, time to change!

They go back in the dumpster. We can see them taking their shirts off, They start washing one another, using water from a bucket. As they do so, two undistinguishable figures appear behind the bench. We shall call them: Hantz and Frantz

FRANTZ

Mein Gott, that is the most beautiful thing I have ever seen.

HANTZ

Russians!

FRANTZ

Nein!

HANTZ

Bulgarians!

FRANTZ

Nein!

HANTZ

Polish?

FRANTZ

Do you see them playing the piano? No...they are Romanians.

HANTZ

How do you know for sure?

FRANTZ

With those rashes on their backs they must be Romanians. It's all those years of transition. Transition towards a better and cleaner society. Ha! Just look at them. Poor fuckers! Idiots, taking our Sony's away.

HANTZ

And we take their cheap women. Cheap pussy dad. Cheap pussy!

FRANTZ

Hey watch your language. Do you smell anything my son.

HANTZ

Nothing except Eastern Europeans. They stink.

FRANTZ

And that's money. Oh my boy is grumpy because he has to get dirty. What did I tell you... You have to practice. I am getting old. Someone has to follow on my steps. Now, take a deep breath. Take a deep breath, yes – yes - keep it in...and release. What do you smell?

HANTZ

More rotten Romanians and their shitty pants.

FRANTZ

Ahh! You are just like your mother. I married someone with no imagination and I have a son with no brains. I wonder how that worked. I smell new hearts, barely used spines, kidneys that didn't hit puberty yet and livers still in their dippers. They are hiding right there. I know it. They are waiting for us, waiting to be picked up....

HANTZ

So let's go dad. Let's do it. What are we waiting for?

FRANTZ

Not yet my son. First rule – think yourself as a wine maker – some of the stuff out there gets better and stronger with years. Like grapes, they must be picked and crushed at full maturity for getting the best juice and therefore profit out of them....oh such nights take the poet out of me.

HANTZ

Dad...dad... Will I ever be pussified?

FRANTZ

If you don't do what I say, yes. If you don't get yourself one of those Balkanic women who do what you tell them to...then yah...you'll turn gay. That is the law of the west, my son.

HANTZ

Mein Gott!

3. To love and to promise doesn't cost a thing

Before sunrise. Same setting, a different neighborhood. One of the dumpster has been "modified". It is covered with a metal roof, the other stands half full. A young man, Leo (dressed very stylish) enters. He carries a walkie-talkie and a brown bag.. He stops in front of the locked dumpster, starts knocking.

LEO

Time to wake up! Wake up! Up! Up! Up! Rise and shine, grannies.

*No answer. He turns on, the walkie talkie.
Loud pop music then news:*

RADIO VOICE

“Good morning Europe! A day to celebrate, a historical day to remember. After years and years of transition and suffering, Romania and Bulgaria are joining the ranks of the civilized countries. The smell of the east is being changed with the smell of the west: prosperity, solidarity, peace and tolerance.”

LEO

Mother of Christ! Lazy asses, come out. Valentin, Doru, be good boys. I have to wake up another thirteen containers. Come on people!

DORU's VOICE

I am getting dressed, wait a second.

VALENTIN's VOICE

Christ, it ain't time yet. Give me another five minutes, I need to...

LEO

Fine! Fine! (pause) You know, your son Pepe is asking for the loan payment. He said...

DORU

I don't want to know what he said. Tell him that his father...his father doesn't have the money yet. What is he going to do anyway? Throw me away, sell me to the gypsies. Ha! Ha!

LEO

There is no need to be passive aggressive Doru. It was just a friendly reminder. It would be better to pay though, interest will go up.

DORU

(sound of unlocking from inside, comes out) And my love for him will go down. At least he should have the guts to come and say things in my face. There is still my blood running through that fucked up brains he has.

LEO

I shall pretend I didn't hear what you just said.

DORU

How much he pays you anyway? How much he gives you, to check on us when we pee and when we fart? Come on, I am just curious? We sweat, we break our backs and all what you do is suck, suck and stuff yourselves...

LEO

That's enough. Here is your food. Something you are looking forward, too I believe.

VALENTIN's VOICE

It was better before the revolution. I would have a coupon for a bread but at least it was my bread. Mine! One liter of oil, five eggs – all mine.

DORU

Leo between me and you, like true men we are...how much do you think a man, a strong Romanian like I used to be, can last in a container like this before he rots.

LEO

I don't know. What question is that?

VALENTIN's VOICE

A legitimate one!

DORU

Just estimate. It's not hard...you're a smart kid, kissing Pepe's ass and everything.

LEO

Well, if it were dead not long. You know they found Karl Putzen in a suitcase the other day.

VALENTIN's VOICE

Freaking Chinese!

DORU

And I found this. Incredible! So shiny! (*he takes out from a brownbag a skull*) It could come from a museum, but then again the word goes it could have fallen straight down from the top of a body like mine or Valentin's or yours. Hell if I know... that's why I was asking.

LEO

Put that away Doru. You'll get me in trouble.

DORU

It must have come from one of those clowns who think business in the west is piece of cake. Should I put a red ribbon and rap it nicely as a gift from me to you. Come on take it. It's a collector's piece. A must have around town.

LEO

Valentin can you tell your friend to stop fooling around. I don't need that. Come on, there's work to be done today.

DORU

What you don't like it? It's not as aesthetically pleasing as my son's money Well just wait...I have something better, something special you definitely wouldn't want to miss. Wait till you see this...Vali, Vali come out now...show him the great prize you got the other night. Come on, my friend show your face.

Doru uses the skull as a drum in building up Valentin's entrance. Valentin pops up from the dumpster, his clothes are all ripped, he's been beaten the night before.

LEO

Fucking Christ!

DORU

A work of art don't you think. Won't you take a picture at least?

Doru embraces Valentin, keeping the skull between them, while putting on huge smiles on their faces.

VALENTIN

Ouch! I need a kilogram of pain killers.

LEO

Who the hell did this?

VALENTIN

I have no clue. I was caring some electronics when out of nowhere...I felt a stab in the back. I fell to the ground. Five or six of them surrounded me...then started to kick me and spit at me. I closed my eyes, I couldn't hear anything...

DORU

Found him at the tram station bleeding with one of those notes on him.

LEO

What notes?

VALENTIN

The poetic ones.

Valentin takes out of his pocket a piece of paper partly soaked in blood, he gives it to Leo

LEO (*reading*)

“On sale today: smoked and rare gypsy. On sale tomorrow: schnitzel and well done gypsy. A piece of shit should know when to grow legs and run”. (pause, folds the paper and puts it in his pocket) Well I assure you gentlemen that Pepe and Sophie will take care of everything in a most professional way.

VALENTIN and DORU

Isn't that great. Splendid! Are you sure?

DORU

Why of course, don't you trust your own children.

VALENTIN

Why, of course we do.

LEO

I am sure that they will come up with a revised plan to protect you and get you safer working hours and places. They have always kept their promise towards the workers.

DORU

Like giving us only one spoon of ketchup per day instead of three or half a potato. Hell I get more from this trash.

VALENTIN

I am a mogul, if I compare what I get from the street than what I get from my own daughter.

LEO

Mister Pepe, announced a dumpster crisis.

DORU

I didn't read about it in the newspaper.

LEO

Madame Sophie has to run three NGO's. It's extremely complicated. There are reasons far more delicate...

DORU

Complicated huh? I have to pay rent to stay in this can.

LEO

A small sum considering the first class neighborhood and the walking distance to the “all new ecological restroom cabins”.

DORU

Where we also have to pay to take a crap. I have to pay fifty cents which I don't have. When I don't have fifty cents, we borrow and when we borrow we get in bigger shit then the ones we're planning to take. Can you call this filial love?

LEO

Gentlemen, since I see you so energetic, I have to announce that you are on the clock now. Have a good day and I shall see you with the products at dusk.

DORU and VALENTIN

Wrong!

DORU

Shall we?

VALENTIN

We shall! After you!

Valentin goes back in the dumpster throws out an old suitcase and some bags they both climb down and grab Leo

LEO

What are you doing? You are crazy!

DORU

No, I am just tired.

VALENTIN

I am just bleeding.

The next four lines of Doru and Valentin are to be said simultaneously, as they tie Leo to the dumpster

DORU

Tell my dear son, we are leaving. That's it. Tell him I had enough of his love.

VALENTIN

Tell my dear daughter, I am leaving. That's it. Tell her I had enough of her promises.

DORU

Tell my dear son, I don't care if I get caught, for I would better spent the rest of my life in prison, far away from him and from his promises.

VALENTIN

Tell my dear daughter I don't care if I get beaten and murdered by some racists mother fuckers, for I would rather have them spit at me than have her love.

LEO

You will pay for this you know.

DORU

With fat interest, I am sure. After you mister Valentin.

VALENTIN

No, please sir, I couldn't...after you,

They both slap Leo and make the same funny faces to him as in the scene they met

DORU

That is for talking back to an elder.

VALENTIN

That is for lying to an elder.

They grab Leo's briefcase.

DORU

That should be enough to take us to Tahiti, don't you think?

VALENTIN

Would you like to get pussified?

DORU

Wouldn't mind a bit of that, at all.

DORU and VALENTIN

We love them and we are proud of them. Have a good life.

They are about to exit.

LEO

No you cannot do this! You cannot leave! Come back! Fuck! Fuck! Don't leave! They will kill me. They will fucking kill me. Mother of Christ. For the sake of my gypsy

family I left burning in a Mercedes...for the sake of your grandson, don't leave me here. Please don't.

*Doru and Valentin stop and drop the suitcases.
They freeze.*

DORU

What did he just say?

VALENTIN

What did you just say?

LEO

Shit!Fuck! Hell! You shouldn't have known. I shouldn't have...

Doru and Valentin turn to him

LEO

Iona...Iona – they baptized him two weeks ago.

DORU

Iona? Io – Na

VALENTIN

Our grandson?

LEO

I was not supposed to tell you. You shouldn't have...

DORU

Why?

LEO

I don't know....company policy, politics, safety. I have no clue. Lots of people. are jealous at your children's success. We were just told not to whisper a word. Please let me go.

DORU

Mother of Christ. Iona....my grandson. Christ!

VALENTIN

Virgin Mary and Saint Peter! Iona... I am a grandpa. Christ!

DORU and VALENTIN

I can't believe it. Mothers and Christ! How could they?!

They head towards Leo, who by now is about to cry of fear

LEO

I know this must be a shock but I beg you don't do anything stupid. I beg you! It's not my fault. Please don't be angry. I'll do anything you ask.

Doru and Valentin grab Leo. Leo screams, Doru and Valentin scream louder. Valentin opens his suitcase, takes out a pocket knife. At the sight of it, Leo screams even louder. Doru throws him in the dumpster, he jumps after him. Valentin follows. More screaming coming from inside. Finally Valentin pops out with an open bottle of wine. He pours wine on Leo, Doru hugs him. A celebration!!!

DORU

A thousand devils – we are grandparents. Grandparents! Drink Leo, drink!

VALENTIN

Let's celebrate. We have to fucking celebrate. Let the whole city know that God brought a new Romanian in town. Our wonderful kids are parents.

DORU

How does he look?

LEO

I don't know. We're not allowed to see him.

VALENTIN

Beautiful eyes like his grandfather.

DORU

Strong and agile, like me... right?

VALENTIN

Lie to us Leo It does not matter. We're in heaven.

LEO

Yes.

VALENTIN

Smart and inquisitive?

LEO

Yes! Yes!

DORU

Who're the godparents? I hope they are rich.

VALENTIN

I congratulate you, my friend.

DORU (hugging Valentin)

May your grandson live a thousand years and bring you joy in your late years.

DORU and VALENTIN

Drink Leo! Drink! Be merry!

LEO

No I can't. I must go. I must go back to work.

DORU

Work? How can you work with such news?

VALENTIN

starts dancing and humming a folk song

Celebration! So when can we see him?

LEO

I don't know. I don't think you can, at least until you get a hold of...

DORU

Now listen Leo...we have been good to you, haven't we? I think it is time to pay the same respect. Show us a way to see him.

LEO

I can't. I don't have priority. Besides you can't tell them that you found out from me. Your Pepe will sell me to the Turks.

VALENTIN

That won't happen...if you give us a hand, here. Come on Leo, think for crying out loud.

DORU

We'll pay them a visit.

LEO

Impossible. They are moving around day and night. Not more than a week in one place.

DORU

Shit. It's impossible to be a good grandfather nowadays, huh?

LEO

Maybe if you write an inquiry letter.

DORU

An inquiry...what the heck are you talking about.

VALENTIN

A letter...that could work. That's right – a card for our kids. Brilliant idea. Wait a second *(he goes back in the dumpster, he comes back in a second with a dirty bag packed with papers, and some cards)* What do you think?

DORU

I don't know. What should we write?

VALENTIN

First pick one. You think the Valentine one would work?

DORU

Too slutty. I say you should go with one that has a puppy. Sophie would love that.

VALENTIN

Since when do you know my daughter's tastes better than me.

DORU

Let's see. Dear children...

VALENTIN

Dear Pepe and Sophie....

DORU

We gladly found out from...

LEO

Please don't say my name. Don't.

VALENTIN

We recently found out from an anonymous source who happens to pay daily visits to us ... that you just became the beautiful parents of a gorgeous boy....

DORU

No! The gorgeous parents of a beautiful boy. Sounds better. OK? A boy, who we strongly and firmly believe...no, too rough. A child who we guess...guess is good...we guess it could be what some would call... our grandson.

VALENTIN

Very nice, Doru! We would really appreciate if you gave us permission to see him.

DORU

Maybe we can pass by your place or you can drop him off here. We could teach him some good old tricks when we are not on duty...

VALENTIN

And feed him Milka and candy raps. We appreciate your love, support and understanding, and wish to hear from you soon.

DORU

Best regards and congratulation once more. Your loving parents!

VALENTIN

Cut the loving. Too sweet...they won't like it.

DORU

Perfect! Now Leo, you must give this to them, you understand.

VALENTIN

And we promise not say a word. Go now!

DORU

We will wait! Now run Leo, run like the wind.

LEO

Aren't you going to leave?

DORU

Hell no! Grandparents can't leave just like this. Maybe parents can, but grandparents – no way. Have you heard of any grandparent leaving their grandson, Vali?

VALENTIN

Of course not! We are staying. We must see Iona grow up.

DORU

Teach him how to walk.

VALENTIN

Teach him how to swim.

DORU

Teach him how to chase girls, see him build sand castles.

VALENTIN

There is a lot to be done. We must plan ahead.

DORU

Even if we are growing older, slower and hungrier...we must do all these. It's our duty, at any price. It's the unwritten law of Balkans.

VALENTIN

Of life! Now, go Leo – fly away tiger! Promise us you will give them the letter.

LEO

I do on my grandmother's cross, I stole and sold at the junkyard.

DORU

Good! Tell them we love them, we always shall.

Leo exits. Doru and Valentin hug each other some more.

VALENTIN

Grandparents, Doru...we are grandparents. Can you believe it? I never thought these bones will live to see it. I haven't felt like this since I got my hands on that one flat screen Tv.

DORU

I can't wait to hold him, hold the light of the rest of my days! Now stay still...I must fix you. This will make you look like new...what would Iona think, if he saw you like this.

Pours some alcohol on Valentin's wounds

VALENTIN

Devils! It burns! (pause) Pour some more. Some more! More!

4. the organ of all passions is the liver

Same setting. Passed midnight. Doru by himself, chewing on a piece of bread, fixing a walkie-talkie. Valentin enters carrying a bag. He climbs in the dumpster. Takes out a piece of bread and starts gulping it. They do not talk for a while.

VALENTIN

This town is changing its smell every week, don't you think?

DORU

Yeah! Just like a cheap whore. Remember Dora...Christ!Why isn't this thing working?!

VALENTIN

(building up to laughing hysterically)

The finest woman Mizil ever saw. You know, a year after you left...my poor old man took me over to her place. He told me, he'll take me to the barber shop and get my first shave. Next thing I know, I have a pair of ruby tits and juicy ass bouncing all over the place, hitting and suffocating me... I didn't know what to grab first, how to grab... hell I freaked out. I tried to escape. Pop was waiting in her kitchen eating from a jar of pickles. He was crying and laughing, laughing and crying and then suddenly he got all serious, stood up in all his Romanian might, grabbed my shoulders and said: now you know how it was like when we tried to invade Russia.

DORU

Shit! Shit! It doesn't fucking work. Virgin Mary...you can't even trust the Asian machineries anymore.

Doru turns the walkie talkie on, some pop music can be heard.

DORU

Leo? Leo? Can you hear me? Leo, it's me Doru. Beep three times if you hear me.

VALENTIN

You know it's all useless.

DORU

It's not! It must work. It has to. Leo promised he will give the other one to our grandson. It's my only chance...

VALENTIN

You'd better hide that thing before someone finds out. I wouldn't like to get in trouble right now. Did I tell you the story with Flora?

DORU

Fuck off! Wait! Shhh! I hear something. Leo? Is it you? Is it you? If my grandson is healthy beep twice, if he said his first word beep three times, beep four times, if he is asleep beep once...

RADIO VOICE

“For the first time in its history, The European Union must take a critical decision in the next days. Romania which was accepted in 2007, risks to be taken out of the union, if the corruption, human traffic and illegal immigration are not stopped.”

VALENTIN

Turn that shit off! I don't want to hear it. They think they got everything at hand. Well let me tell you something...you won't find a woman like Dora in the whole Schengen space. I'm going to bed now.

DORU

Sure! You must be tired! I'll wake you up in two hours, right?

VALENTIN

Two hours and a half, that's what we agreed upon. We each stay awake half a night, and watch out for those racists mother - fuckers. Here, I polished it for you. (he hands him a metal pipe from the dumpster) Good night!

Long pause. Valentin tries to get comfy in the dumpster. Doru gives up on the radio.

DORU

Did you read to him, tonight?

VALENTIN

What? Good night Doru!

DORU

I asked, if you read to him? Did he fall asleep without crying? Come on Valentin, you don't have to pretend, don't take me as a fool – I know for Christ sake.

VALENTIN

What do you know...You don't know anything. Come now...the sooner I fall asleep, the sooner you'll get to your nap.

DORU

Why don't you want to help me? Why can't you simply do me a favor like in the old days? Why can't you sneak me in, just for a second, just so I can see his glowing eyes. Is it too much to ask? Speak with Sophie, she has a warm heart, she will understand.

VALENTIN

I don't know what you're talking about. (*beat, they look at each other intensely*) No, she will not. She doesn't want to hear about Pepe, nor you. He hit her for Christ sake. Your son hit my daughter...and you know why? Because she walked in on him. He was all busy with some Swiss whores. For that your son dragged my daughter in the mud of this city and hit her again and again...

DORU

Like you saw any mud in this city?!

VALENTIN

What are you trying to say? (pause) You think that it was her fault?

DORU

I just think, it's not right that you can see him and I can't. It's not normal.

VALENTIN

Many things aren't. Well, it's no my call. I have to respect the wish of my dear daughter.

DORU

She tried to steal all his money. She forgot to tell you that didn't she.

VALENTIN

It was a long term investment. She worked hard for that money, too.

DORU

Actually we did. I didn't break my bones so your daughter can spend it all on art and fashion.

VALENTIN

I didn't break my back so your son can screw the whole west.

DORU

Like you didn't use to do that back home. That's why you left in the first place...out of shame. And when your woman finally decided to throw out you and your dirty underwear, you took your revenge by dragging Sophie all around.

VALENTIN

That's the sickest lie I ever heard. Who told you that?

DORU

Virgin Mary that's who! We're not the only ones digging in trash, you know...

VALENTIN

Well you can hang out with your other pals from now on. I won't mind. I have stuff to do, people to see, I am all booked you know.

DORU

HELP ME!

VALENTIN

I CANNOT!

DORU

I see, this is how I get repaid.

VALENTIN

Repaid for what...Christ, your blood hit my blood. Do you realize that, Doru? No wonder she doesn't want you to see Iona. To tell you the truth, I wouldn't let you see him, either.

DORU

You wouldn't let me touch my own grandson?

VALENTIN

No, not in such circumstances. Not when you act like this. Actually I feel good knowing she will move to Paris and take Iona with her.

DORU

It can't be. No!

VALENTIN

She bought an apartment, and she promised me, hear that: she promised me, I can come and visit her whenever I feel like it. She will pay of course. I don't have to worry about a thing. I might even fly there.

DORU

She cannot do this. She cannot take away my grandson. I must stop her! I must find her and stop her!

Doru growing more and more impatient

VALENTIN

And how are you going to do that smart ass? You don't even know where she...

DORU

Well, you'd better tell me then...because I won't let her take away the only thing I live for. Tell me Valentin, tell me where she is...

VALENTIN

You think I know. If I did, I wouldn't be here. I always get picked up by one of her assistants. I even have to give something to the guy. Instead of a sleeping pill, I get blindfolded. But that's going to end soon. See (takes out a piece of paper) that's the address in Paris. Rue de...shit...Rue de Something. If I were you, I would look for Pepe, figure something out with him. That's if he is not in prison getting fucked by some Nazis. He surely deserves that.

DORU

Shut up will you! Shut the hell up! You know well enough that she is lying to you.

VALENTIN

My daughter doesn't lie. She wouldn't dare. She knows it's not nice.

DORU

She did it all along, for years and years. She made you beg at every street corner.

VALENTIN

At least she didn't feed me like an animal. Your son used to do that, didn't he. Do you think, I haven't seen him throwing pieces of meat out of his Bentley, for you to catch.

DORU

I shared every piece with you.

VALENTIN

You kept the meat, I got the bones. Nicely done, Doru. Nicely done. A brother's treatment.

DORU

That's it! Get the hell out of here. I don't want to feel your stench anymore. Take your bloody shit and...

VALENTIN

You'll kick me out now...you'll kick me out from my own home. I really want to see that.

DORU

You'll feel it too if you don't hurry. Let me be, it's my territory – mine. MINE!

VALENTIN

See, that's exactly what I am saying. You would break my neck right now, if you had the chance.

DORU

I would for sure.

VALENTIN

Just like in the first day. And why don't you?

DORU

Because you used to be my friend. Because all what I want is see my grandson grow up.

VALENTIN

Law of the Balkans, ha?

DORU

Law of life! I would give my heart away, just so I can hold him in my arms for a second.

Valentin grabs his bag and is about to exit.

VALENTIN

Tuff luck, then. I hope you'll live another hundred years without seeing him, my good old friend. You simple don't deserve it. If Pepe didn't pay, then you have to. I'll send you a postcard from Paris...don't worry.

DORU

I pray that you grow blind and take no joy in seeing him grow.

VALENTIN

At least I will hold him.

DORU

Mother of Christ!

Doru jumps and attacks Valentin. They fight, although obviously they are very weak. In the fight, Valentin manages to take out the pocket knife used in the scene with Leo.

VALENTIN

Just like in school! Just like in school Doru.

DORU

I used to beat the shit out of you. Remember? Of course you don't. You got no brains left. That's what the west did to you.

VALENTIN

You couldn't even write, ass picker.

DORU

You couldn't even read, nose picker. You are just a piece of garbage. That's all. Trash must return to trash.

VALENTIN

You are right, my friend. You are right.

DORU

I love my grandson! I love Iona!

VALENTIN

I love him more! I love you Iona!

DORU and VALENTIN (*when fighting*)

Light of my days!

They fight, forgetting that the years which passed have a saying. They both collapse, lights fade out partially. They might bleed, they might just be tired from so much fighting like kids. They look at each other. They start laughing and crying, crying and laughing. During the conversation, Hantz and Frantz will appear behind the bench. Doru and Valentin lay by the dumpster, watching the stars

DORU

Now we are really fucked.

VALENTIN

Mother of Christ! I feel dizzy.

DORU

You feel dizzy...You cut me, asshole!

VALENTIN

It's just a scratch. Stop whining. We're out of shape, I can tell you that.

DORU

Maybe you...I am fine....maybe a bit out of breath...but I am fine. (beat) Nose picker!

VALENTIN

Skirt picker.

DORU

You're the one to talk...running away from a pair of tits.

VALENTIN

I would say we are talking about different circumstances.

DORU

Do you smell anything?

VALENTIN

Just garbage, a lot of stale rotten garbage.

DORU

Something tickles my nostrils. I think it's death.

VALENTIN

Nah! Death would smell nice. Like grass...

DORU

Hmmm...the one that we used to roll in at my grandpa's house.

VALENTIN

That wasn't as fresh as the one in the churchyard. You can't get grass like that in the west.

DORU

Not in a million years.

VALENTIN

Playing hide and seek in the graveyard. Remember when we found that pair of snakes. You took the slow one, I got the short one. Took care of them for a while, didn't we.

DORU

Hell, I saw mine growing up to be a dragon.

VALENTIN

Oh yeah, but he ran away didn't he. Found him crushed on the road, didn't you.

DORU

Yours didn't do too good either. I feel... I think I will close my eyes for a bit...

*Doru fades out slowly leaning on Valentin.
Valentin watches him. A long pause*

VALENTIN

I did lie to you Doru.

Doru's eyes opening instantly

DORU (abruptly)

You did what? What?!

VALENTIN

I did lie. She swore on God if I tell you anything, I won't be able to see Iona, either. I was afraid. Afraid of God...afraid of her. I couldn't...

DORU

(trying to put his thoughts together)

Ha! I can't say I didn't... Well, that's interesting...now I see. (pause) So what are we to do now?

VALENTIN

Come...I say we go and hold what is ours to hold.

DORU

You'd do that?! Maybe it would be better if we stayed...maybe we shouldn't risk...after all, you could tell me stories about how he is, write to me or something...send me some of his drawings. He does draw, right?

VALENTIN

Yeah, thinks the sky is red, though. (they laugh) Doru, trust me, after this fight, everything else seems a piece of cake. Come, stand up...we'll take it easy. By the next sunrise, we'll be there. Besides...I don't want to have death in my nostrils anymore. It stinks of it.

DORU

You said you didn't smell it.

VALENTIN

Who doesn't.

DORU

You know where he lives?

VALENTIN

From dumpster to dumpster...we must find a path. What do you say?

DORU

Hell, let's go.

*Doru tries to stand up. Valentin helps him.
They both help each other.*

VALENTIN

Easy now!

DORU

Hurts like a bitch! We're not twenty anymore...

VALENTIN

One step...two...mother of Christ, you know where to hit man.

DORU

Three, four!

They take small steps, holding onto each other.

VALENTIN

Iona will grow up strong like his grandparents.

DORU

You think so?

VALENTIN

I am telling you, he has your eyes, and his nose is definitely half mine and half yours.

DORU

A nose with personality. What about his hair?

VALENTIN

Dark, shiny and healthy like yours.

DORU

Oh, you're just saying that.

VALENTIN

No, I'm serious. He got your fiery personality...he's got my creative spirit. I'm telling you he'll make it big.

DORU

Did he speak?

VALENTIN

Not yet!

DORU

Slow starter just like us.

VALENTIN

Yeah, just like us.

DORU

I just wish...

About to exit. Frantz and Hantz appear behind them, at some distance.

FRANTZ

Mein Gott, this is the most beautiful thing I have ever seen.

HANTZ

Shhh!

5. when our grandparents happen to live forever

same setting. Evening. The dumpsters have been cleared. Pepe enters from one side followed by Leo who is holding a metal container. Pepe is dressed in a stylish costume, although what stands out in the whole outfit is the pair of Kelvin Versace flip flops he is wearing. i Sophie enters from the opposite side. Dead silence.

SOPHIE

I do not have a lot of time, Pepe.

PEPE

Sure, of course – I understand. You are a busy woman, now. A busy attractive woman. How is the business going?

SOPHIE

We are expending to the new jewels of the east. Prague, Warsaw, Bratislava. Great great potential.

PEPE

I would sure hope so...after all, it's been a while since you took over my work, my people, my trash.

SOPHIE

You must have forgotten you were the one who disappeared from the face of the earth. The Interpol must have been hunting you down for quite a while. At least they stopped coming at my door. Lost some weight there, ha?

PEPE

walking around and taking a look into the dumpster

I had to, it was either that or...

SOPHIE

Or returning to our mother country dumpster, and you would have chocked at its sight.

PEPE

Got that right. I hate that dumpster. What's worse is twenty something millions still serving it, some with their hopes, others with their disgusting filth.

SOPHIE

Like you would know. It's not as bad as you'd think.

PEPE

Have you been back home lately? (pause) I didn't think so. You know the last thing I remember before my daddy took me away, was the grass. (Sophie smiles) It's not as green as it's here, it will never be in a thousand years. Funny! You know I thought about this day...

SOPHIE

Let's cut the bullshit...

PEPE

I did honest to God. Leo can tell you.

LEO

Oh yes missis Sophie. Pepe has been thinking a lot lately. (pause) about you.

PEPE

This place looks so familiar. It might be the place we kissed for the first time.

SOPHIE

My Pepe hasn't changed at all – how romantic. All what we need is a patch of green grass, juicy kisses, and chocolate, and get our life back together.

PEPE

It could be possible. I never say No to a tempting offer.

Pepe takes out from a package he found by the dumpster, a couple of old ripped apart plastic flowers. He offers them to Sophie

SOPHIE

(pause, she takes out from his pocket a candy rap and offers it to him)
Here, for the road. Do you still think it is romantic to beat a woman? Do you still think it's the law of life or of the Balkans?

PEPE

You know I cared about you.

SOPHIE

Mother of Christ! (beat) Is this the stuff?

PEPE

Yes! Yes! Part of the liver and part of a heart, home delivery as you've asked.

SOPHIE

Fifty thousand you said.

PEPE

A special price for the sake of the good old days. No hard feelings...I would have given it to you cheaper but I never thought that moving to Tahiti can be so pricey.

SOPHIE

At least you'll find the perfect grass. (pause)Have you ever wondered if Iona were your son, what would you do?

PEPE

I don't know...drop the price, find a better donor. The matter of fact is: he is not my son and he will never be...besides we all have to make a living, here. I am glad he will learn from the best.

SOPHIE

He is a smart boy you know. Must have the blood of some lawyer or doctor. I know that for sure. Each night for years, you used to bring into my bed only the cream of the crop and I had to thank you for it. No trash! No trash at all! Only doctors and businessmen...all at European Union standards. Clean shaved, cleaner than you, making their way inside me as you were making your way into their houses.

PEPE

I stole from them, you stole from me, you tried to kill me once, I tried to ruin you. Great memories, I tell you. We're all even, in the end.

SOPHIE

God I can't even hate you enough...

PEPE

But I can spit at you...right? That used to be your favorite line in our arguments, Sophie. Wasn't it? So, do it. What stops you...spit at me for Christ sake! Do it for the sake of our long lost love. Do it for your father.., oh I forgot, you didn't give a shit about him either.

She spits at him

PEPE

Feeling better? It makes for a good farewell. Can I have my money now?

They exchange suitcases.

PEPE

I have included a list of doctors I know in Paris...at no extra charge. That's where you are going, right? You will find that French are somewhat more protective of their trash...so in a way, you might want to start a new life there.

SOPHIE

I just want my son to live, that's all.

PEPE

And he shall, don't worry. This is good stuff I got for you. I admit it's not first hand but organs from homeless immigrants and beggars are not bad either. The dealers are top of the class. Trust me it's all fresh and ready to go. I was told they came from some strong old guys who fought till the last drop. One thing though...

SOPHIE

Good-bye Pepe!

PEPE

It's funny how trash finds its way back to trash.

Sophie is about the exit

PEPE

Till trash shall split us apart?

SOPHIE

Remember my dear husband, there is one difference between our miserable country and this one. Back home some make fortune out of someone's misery, but here – in the west...

Lights fade to black over them

VOICE OF A BOY

Can you hear me now, dad? I think it's the volume which didn't work earlier...

VOICE OF A MAN

Shhh! Keep quiet. Keep your head down and stay quiet.

VOICE OF A BOY

Wow, it's the most beautiful thing I've ever seen.

BLACKOUT