

Down Time

Ella with a video camera films the audience

Ella: The sun is about to come up on the day after the end of the world. I just thought I should shoot it. Not that anybody will see this, once the battery dies these... pictures die with it. I was going to say "images" but it sounds too precious, "images"; the time for "images" is over. This is the time of cave paintings, to be scrawled on the rubble of buildings with spray paint while it lasts and then with our blood, while it lasts. Look at the horizon, scorched earth. And my neighbourhood, my neighbour's faces awaiting burial. Look where the dust has replaced the clouds. Who knows when we'll be able to drink the rain? Hurry up sun, my baby is asleep, when she wakes I'll have no time to take your picture. I'll have to find us food - There it is! it's dim but it's there. There. Caught on tape. The end's first sunrise.

Don at Olivia's front door

Olivia: So, you're back?

Don: For a while.

Olivia: I –

Don: It would only be for a couple of days.

Olivia: I didn't recognize you

Don: I've changed.

Olivia: at first – changed? Why, why are you back?

Don: Very long story.

Olivia: I thought, we all thought you were gone for good.

Don: Well here I am. Why are we whispering?

Olivia: We're not whispering we're talking quietly. I have a baby.

Don: Congratulations.

Olivia: So... that's why I look like this.

Don: Like what? you look great.

Olivia: Liar.

Don: Olivia.

Olivia: I'm enormous, can't seem to lose it.

Don: Nonsense. You look healthy.

Olivia: Healthy. That's a very polite way of putting it. I wear white pants, you could show movies on my ass. So I don't have a guest room anymore. You remember the guest room, that's now the baby's room.

Don: How old?

Olivia: Twenty-two months. So... I don't really have room. "If I'd known you were coming"
ha

Don: OK.

Olivia: I thought I'd never see you again. How long have you been back?

Don: Couple of days.

Olivia: And why'd you come see me? Miss me finally ha? No don't answer that, you'd better go. I don't want David to hear you.

Don: I don't know David.

Olivia: He knows you though. Who you were.

Don: Ah.

Olivia: I don't know I don't know. Why do I want to let you in? Why didn't I slam the door in your face? I can't let you in, ok? I just can't. I can't because I want to. You understand?

Don: I'd better go then.

Olivia: And I didn't recognize you at first.

Don: It has been a few years.

Olivia: It's not that, it's not like I could forget you Don. But honestly? You look like shit.

Don: I've been sick. My heart.

Olivia: Your heart.

Don: Yeah, I know: what heart?

Olivia: That's not what I meant, I meant is it anything serious? What's funny?

Don: Nothing. I'm ok. Take care.

Olivia: Maybe call me. When you're settled. We could have lunch.

Don: Lunch.

Olivia: You could tell me what you've been up to all these years in Europe.

Don: Hm.

Olivia: What does that mean?

Don: It's very odd, being back... Canada.

Olivia: What's odd about Canada?

Don: "Lunch"... Christmas lights. And it's so quiet. Who was I?

Olivia: What?

Don: You said David knew who I was. Who was that? For you to still be so angry?

Olivia: I'm not still angry.

Don: See, I don't remember us ending badly. I thought we just ran our course. You're better off with your David. That's what you needed. See? It all worked out for the best. And happy new year Olivia.

Olivia: Seriously, give me a call, we can talk about... *he is gone* Oh I hate you, I hate you. You got a lot of nerve, think you can just come back here and acting like you've changed, like all of a sudden you're this sensitive - and... and...

Lila

Lila: The funny thing is, I had met him before, years ago at a party in Aspen. He wouldn't give me the time of day. I looked amazing too, I had on this white dress, a Donatella. I looked amazing in that dress. Wouldn't give me the time of day. So in my book he's getting what he deserves. But come here, come look at this. *Enter Don* Look.

Don: Oh. Beautiful. Matisse? I've never seen this.

Lila: "It doesn't exist". Certain pieces of the collection are "not in the catalogue". And he owed Conrad some money so: ta-da.

Don: That's a lot of money he owed Conrad.

Lila: The little putz. Three generations before him build an empire and he pisses it away in ten years. Tried to make changes, "change directions".

Don: Well, the art should sell for millions.

Lila: He needs more than millions.

Don: I should go.

Lila: How were your holidays?

Don: Holidays? ... Eventful. Yours.

Lila: I hate Italy, don't know what all the fuss is. It's pretty enough, as long as you don't inhale. But it's full of Italians. Conrad loves it, though. He loves old art.

Don: And when did Eaton's go tits up?

Lila: You have been away long.

Don: Pillars of my youth, crumbled.

Lila: You don't evolve you go extinct. With the other dinosaurs. And they were stupid, they had an example, remember Simpson's?

Don: Oh that was before my time, Lila.

Lila: Fuck you. So you're back.

Don: For a while. I had to leave, come back. Nonsense with my passport, my visa I have to sort out.

Lila: You're going back then?

Don: Soon as I can. Unfinished business.

Lila: Why? The war's over. After all that action it must be dull, taking pictures of the exposed mass graves and the weeping widows.

Don: Yes. I'm not taking pictures any more.

Lila: Really.

Don: Honestly.

Lila: That's intriguing. I do understand. You really should have won that prize.

Don: It has nothing to do with that.

Lila: Really though. Your photographs were much stronger. I couldn't believe how close you got to it all. You should have won. You were beaten out by politics. But what will you do? For money.

Don: I'll find something.

Lila: Don, all you can do is take pictures.

Don: That's what Conrad said.

Lila: I have something you could do for me.

Don: Oh Lila.

Lila: But we can't stay here.

Don: No. Conrad's home.

Lila: Can we go somewhere? Please?

Don: Don't say please.

Lila: I don't know how you do this.

Don: I haven't done anything Lila.

Lila: I haven't seen you in what, five years? More? And it's not that I've been "thinking of you". But here we are. In this room, so many memories of this room.

Don: You're just bored.

Lila: You have no idea. Conrad wants us to move permanently to the country. He thinks those long walks in the fresh air will be good for his back.

Don: You made that bed.

Lila: I love it when you talk about beds.

Don: Lila, really, how often did we need a bed?

Lila: So, let me change and I'll take you to lunch.

Don: Lunch.

Lila: Celebrate your return. The food over there must have been inedible.

Don: I can't Lila.

Lila: You can't.

Don: Really.

Lila: Really.

Don: I have to go to the bank, cash Conrad's last check. And then I'm going to visit a place to live. Hotels have gotten far too expensive. I'll call you though. I promise.

Lila: You promise. How sweet. I have your promise.

Don in a strange house; enter Ella

Ella: Don't ask. I really don't feel like talking about - Oh... Hello. Who are you?

Enter Evelyn

Evelyn: Oh. You're home. I just got off the phone, it was for you. I told them you were at work.

Ella: Who called?

Evelyn: George something. I just hung up, I -

Ella: Excuse me. *exits*

Evelyn: Why aren't you at work? I'm sorry. That's my eldest. Taking a year off University, save some money. The younger one will finish High School this year, God willing. **Enter Maddy, private school uniform** Oh and here she is. I didn't hear you come in.

Maddy: Where's my ghetto blaster, it isn't in my room, did you sell it?

Evelyn: Well hello to you too -

Maddy: Did you fucking sell it?

Evelyn: Maddy.

Maddy: That's what she does, sells our stuff, anything that isn't bolted down.

Evelyn: Are you sure you left it where it's supposed to be?

Maddy: I'm not fucking four years old Mom.

Evelyn: ... How was school?

Maddy: What? What? "How was school?" What the fuck is this, Disney? Where's my ghetto blaster?

Evelyn: I'm sure I don't know. **exit Maddy** It's very hard. It's very hard. Without a man around. Their father abandoned us. They blame me. I suppose that's normal. Anyway, you're certainly not here to listen to this, I'll show you the room. **As they exit** You'll see that there's a little bathroom back there, no bath but a toilet and a sink... **Maddy enters dressed for exercise, puts on music and begins stretching on the floor; Evelyn and Don re-enter** Maddy.

Maddy: What? I don't have music in my room anymore -

Evelyn: Turn that off please.

Maddy: I need music for my stretches. I'm on the track team. I was taking figure skating too but apparently we can no longer afford it. **Evelyn turns off music** Oh that's fair.

Evelyn: Have you finished your homework?

Maddy: Yep.

Evelyn: I find that hard to believe.

Maddy: It's on my desk in my room, go check. Before you sell it.

Evelyn: It's very hard.

Maddy: Who is this man?

Evelyn: Is that polite?

Maddy: I'm sorry, who are you, sir?

Evelyn: He's looking at the room for rent.

Maddy: What room - Daddy's office? You never told me about this.

Evelyn: Well, these are the kinds of decisions I'm forced to make -

Maddy: The house is paid for.

Evelyn: There's maintenance, there's taxes, heat -

Maddy: He's going to be living here?

Evelyn: That hasn't been decided yet but -

Ella: off Who ate my supper? **reenters** You. Stop the slut yoga and answer me.

Maddy: What, the sandwich?

Ella: My supper.

Maddy: How was that yours?

Ella: You bitch.

Maddy: Food in the fridge is for every one.

Ella: I prepared that.

Maddy: Oh wow complicated - a sandwich.

Evelyn: Why aren't you at work?

Ella: I quit.

Evelyn: Ella -

Ella: I don't want to hear it Mom, it was a piece of shit job there are many more out there, in fact that's all there is for someone like me, piece of shit jobs - now what are you going to do about my supper?

Maddy: Well, I'm digesting it as we speak.

Ella: Make me another -

Maddy: As if.

Ella: while I'm in the shower, I have a million phone calls to make, I have to get to Sasha's, finish the edit -

Maddy: Oh you're such a girl on the go.

Evelyn: Girls please.

Ella: Re-make the dinner -

Maddy: What dinner? It was a sandwich -

Ella: while I'm in the shower.

Maddy: Hardly qualified as a lunch -

Ella: Who's this?

Evelyn: This gentleman is looking at the room.

Ella: What room?

Evelyn: For rent.

Ella: What?

Maddy: She wants to rent out Daddy's office.

Ella: What? When was this decided?

Evelyn: We'll talk about it -

Ella: When did you decide this?

Evelyn: We'll talk later please. I'll make you a dinner to take to your wherever you're going.

Ella: Forget it. No. I'm just going to go. OK? I don't know what's going on. I'm going.

Maddy: You really should take a shower first though.

Ella: Skank. *exits*

Maddy: Ha! She's such a loser.

Evelyn: Maddy could you go somewhere else and do that please, so that I can talk to the gentleman.

Maddy: Where? We used to have a sound system in the basement too. She sold that -

Evelyn: Maddy. Now.

Maddy: Pff. *Exits*

Evelyn: I'm sorry. I'm sure that this has all but convinced you not to take a room in this mad-house. It is very quiet during the day though, when they're out. And you know, with the back door, it's like your own entrance, you need hardly ever see us. And... I don't think I'm asking too much, this is a nice neighbourhood. It's funny, I have the feeling we've met before. And of course I should ask you things about yourself, not references necessarily but...

Maddy re-enters, eating an apple

Maddy: Found my ghetto blaster.

Evelyn: Just about who you are.

Maddy: It was in her room.

Evelyn: And what it is you do.

Maddy: I have no idea how it got there.

Don: I'd like to pay with cash if that's convenient. *The wad of bills comes out, the eyes enlarge...*

"Cedric" in stylishly re-worked army fatigues holding a bottle of water

Don: "Virginity, oh my hymen, where have you gone?... Never to return"

Cedric: Well...

Don: No, on your shirt.

Cedric: What? Oh yes ha

Don: Sappho?

Cedric: Very good. I forgot I had this on. This was last year's theme. We put it on all the t-shirts, the tank-tops. Army surplus. Dirt cheap. Androgynous, very sexy. Not on me of course, you should see it on my daughter.

Don: It looks good on you.

Cedric: Yes, good, not great.

Don: You always were a great fisher of compliments. Stop it, you look terrific.

Cedric: Well, thank you, I'd better, all the hours I spend in the gym hahaha so, so you're back then?

Don: For a while.

Cedric: You were in Europe? Doing what? Taking pictures? And things didn't work out?

Don: Trouble with my visa. I had to come back.

Cedric: So you're going to return?

Don: I think so... How old is your daughter now?

Cedric: Sixteen.

Don: Jesus.

Cedric: What, you thought she'd stay a kid forever? And I'm not introducing you, you snake, you'd be all over her like a dirty shirt.

Don: Hardly, Alice.

Cedric: Oh I remember what you were like. Never looked at me, anyway hahaha and don't call me Alice; I go by Cedric.

Don: I can't call you Cedric.

Cedric: Everyone else does.

Don: Other than that, business is good?

Cedric: Fabulous. We're expanding. We're starting a retail chain. We'll actually have our own stores instead of selling through others. We've opened three already and two more open in a month. And cosmetics, we've started a cosmetics line. So...

Don: So, you and Olga -

Cedric: Don't even fucking talk to me about Olga.

Don: You're no longer partners.

Cedric: You know what a snake is? That's Olga. Honestly, how do people change so much, we couldn't agree on anything, I said "I'm not walking away from this business, it's as much mine as yours", now of course the lawyers are the ones making all the money. I'll buy her out if that's what she wants but no, all this other bullshit, well she can go fuck herself with that new husband of hers. Iago, I call him. I'm sure he's behind everything, I hear his voice every time she opens her mouth, he's like some male Yoko Ono.

Don: So, perhaps I should come back when Olga's here.

Cedric: Olga's married now, you know.

Don: So you just said.

Cedric: Mm-hm. I'm not sure you and she could have had the same... relationship anyway.

Don: It's work I'm looking for.

Cedric: But not taking pictures.

Don: That's right.

Cedric: All you ever did for us was take pictures, you did our first lay-outs. I still think they were our best, by the way. But now, no more photos. Why?

Don: Why? The war's over.

Cedric: The what? The war?

Don: Did I say the war?

Cedric: Sounded like it.

Don: I was speaking metaphorically.

Cedric: You're being most intriguing. Well I don't know what you could do for us besides take pictures, *she begins emptying out her bottle of water* I mean, these days we're more cutting back – not that anything's going bad but it is a little slow, this is such a fickle fucking business, one year they love you, next year you're in the bargain bin, always have to re-invent yourselves and the rent, you wouldn't believe what they charge for rent at a good location – what are you staring at?

Don: What are you doing with the water?

Cedric: What? Oh they bought me the wrong kind. Undrinkable. Have to talk to that girl, “so hard to find good help these days” ha... Look, why don't we go to lunch.

Don: Lunch.

Cedric: I'll take you to lunch and we can talk about your future.

Don: ... Sounds good.

Cedric: Oh my God are you accepting one of my offers?

Don: For lunch? Sure.

Cedric: It's just that I always thought you never liked me hahaha I'm just going to tell the girl.

She exits, Don holds his heart, in pain

Music, projected images: war's aftermath from conflicts around the world; Ella, looking pregnant, performs

Ella: Day 4017. Rained last night, time to get the water. Me and Olaf decided to go the shorter way even if it's through the minefield. I asked Olaf, “remember Olaf, I was but a tit-sucker when the world ended, do you recall why they mined this field so rigorous? Who was trying to stop who from getting across to where?” And Olaf said “Don't quote me on this but I think it was the Suburbans planted it, to protect their belongings from the on-coming hordes”. It was slow going, I stepping only where Olaf stepped, he smells the mines I swear, at times he'd say “there's one, see?” but squint as I might at the muck, I never saw even the hint of something underneath... ‘course when we got through the minefield we had to trudge Suburbia, that's always such a bore, so we played our game where we list things we recall we never see no more, a thing at a time, in turn. Some we recalled were: jacuzzis; egrets; baby showers; rush hour; skeet shooting; Easter egg hunts (I said that one); jawbreakers; expense accounts... And again, after a while we had to agree that the world all but buying it wasn't all bad. Then we had to stop a moment ‘cause of the little one kicking, he was kicking hard but at least he was kicking and Olaf put his hand to my belly to try and decipher the kicks. And neither of us said it, ‘cause from now on we're only to dwell on the positive, but we're hoping this time “he” comes out all right, whole and breathing, ‘cause we've had about enough disappointment in this life. And then we finished our way. And we finally came to where they catch the rain and though the light was dimming the line wasn't too long. Then, of a sudden, one of his rants came on Olaf, it happens when he's around people - he says it's ‘cause he was raised Pentacostal and the Holy Ghost still bites him now and again, though sometimes the tongue he speaks in is ours. So he got the Holy Ghost and he did cry in tongues *about five seconds of gibberish* but then our tongue came in and he did cry: “What did I used to believe? It was: ‘Think Globally, Act Locally’, it was ‘Live and Let Live’ it was, ‘Do Unto Others As You'd Have Them Do Unto You’ it was ‘Compost and buy only organic foods’. And what did they believe? It was ‘Socialize the risks, privatise the profits’ it was ‘Let's Get Back to the Good Old Ways of Thinking’ it was ‘Everybody's Jealous of Us’ and it was their secret mantra most of all: ‘Just Don't Get Caught Don't Get Caught Don't Get Caught’. Well I give the lie to all that, to what I believed and what they believed, I give the lie to all of it

because look where it got us: we all but some of us bought it and nobody could say we hadn't had the two minute warning." And when he came finally down it was dark. And I had to say "Olaf: most of the time they be useful but some of the time Words do more harm than good. 'specially when they get in the way of your feet. 'cause, 'cause of your rant, there ain't but a half jug of drink left to us and the snows are on their way: who knows when we'll next see rain." Peace.

The last projected image: still photo of a child's single shoe among rubble

Sound of applause, music changes, Ella removes her "baby", gets a bottle of water; Don approaches Ella

Don: Ella. Hello. I just wanted to say -

Ella: What are you doing here?

Don: I just wanted to say I enjoyed your performance.

Ella: What?

Don: I enjoyed it. I guess it's part of a series you've been working on?

Ella: Yes.

Don: How many have you done?

Ella: I don't know, seven or eight.

Don: ... Always in these types of venues?

Ella: I don't need anything bigger. How did you ...

Don: I found one of the flyers in the kitchen and I thought I'd come see. What you do.

Ella: Why?

Don: I'm just curious... Anyway... thanks. I did enjoy it. OK. The... the photograph.

Ella: The what?

Don: At the end.

Ella: The shoe. It's from the Balkans.

Don: Yes. A village in the mountains called -

Ella: Trana, yes, I know, I read the caption. I didn't just blindly select a photo.

Don: The thing is, I took -

Ella: You're my mother's border. I thought you were renting the room as an office. I didn't think you'd actually live with us. I mean if she needs the money she should rent the room to someone who really needs it, some refugee or a student at least. So, don't try. OK?

Don: Don't try what? What am I trying to do? In your opinion.

Ella: I don't care what you're trying to do.

Don: What is it with this world? A man says he wants to change, he ought to be given a chance.

Ella: Change?

Don: OK, maybe it's nonsense, maybe nothing can change, it sure seems that way, maybe the world is set-up against change these days, OK, but even still, a man says he wants to try, the least you can do is respond, send a letter, acknowledge it!

Ella: OK, I have no idea what you're talking about.

Don: And you - it's important to accept compliments with grace.

Ella: OK: "Thank -

Don: I mean, your piece wasn't that good. You're very young. Naïve. And this fucking crowd, your friends, preaching to the converted. "Your piece was so powerful" what bullshit. You think you've figured something out "Bad Oil Companies, bad multi-nationals, bad venal politicians". Wow, you're onto them, good for you, now what? But hey, I'm sure if you keep at it - no, actually, it has nothing to do with keeping at it - if you ever get a life, you might create something that isn't just adolescent angst. If you ever find out what life is. Good luck with that. ***Exits***

Ella alone a moment;

after-dinner at the house, Evelyn, Maddy and Don

Don: Let me at least help with the dishes.

Evelyn: You sit back down.

Don: I feel -

Evelyn: Maddy'll do them.

Don: I'm not your guest.

Maddy: "Maddy'll do them", if he wants to -

Evelyn: Maddy. We all earn our keep.

Don: Anyway. It was delicious.

Evelyn: Thank you. *exits*

Maddy: You're just saying that, right? "It was delicious".

Evelyn: *off* Maddy could you change stations?

Maddy: Change what?

Evelyn: *off* The music. Let's hear something else. Put on that classical station.

Maddy: Jesus. *Exits, enter Evelyn with:*

Evelyn: Coffee. And I made an apple crumble. Be ready in a few minutes. *Enter Ella* Well, hello stranger. Have you eaten?

Ella: Yes.

Evelyn: You might've called.

Ella: You were expecting me?

Evelyn: Just would be nice, were we to all eat together for once.

Maddy: *enters* "This better?" *Music by Vivaldi, not the Four Seasons*

Evelyn: Thank you. Sit Ella, join us. Have some coffee. Oh my God, someone get a camera: we're all at the same table. I made an apple crumble. How's the new job?

Ella: Same as the old job.

Evelyn: I wouldn't know how that is.

Maddy: Isn't that a song?

Ella: Well, it's been great, bye.

Evelyn: Please stay.

Maddy: "Meet the new job -"

Evelyn: Maddy.

Maddy: "Same as the old job..."

Vivaldi

Ella: Maddy what the fuck are you wearing?

Maddy: There's clothes for you. Don brought more clothes. I was here first so...

Ella: Where do these clothes come from?

Don: Oh. Friends of mine.

Maddy: Cedric-Sebastian.

Don: They were just starting out when I left. They've done quite well.

Evelyn: Left for where?

Don: Europe. I was in Europe for a few years.

Evelyn: And now you're back.

Don: Temporarily.

Evelyn: Temporarily?

Don: Until my visa gets sorted out.

Evelyn: So you're going back to Europe.

Don: That's the plan. So anyway, yes, Cedric-Sebastian. They're doing very well. They're expanding. Don't know if that's the best idea in this current climate but... I'm doing some work for them. And the clothes, they gave me some of last year's samples. It's nothing. Have a look, see if anything catches your fancy.

Ella: I don't wear those clothes.

Maddy: That's right, I forgot: you're trying to save the world by wearing shit-sacks.

Evelyn: Maddy.

Maddy: There's make-up too. And it says, you'll like this, it's not tested on animals.

Ella: No, it's tested on third world women. "Here, I'll give you a bag of rice if you put this on your eyelids. Oh shit, it's still doing that burning-the-skin thing. Back to the drawing board."

Maddy: Yeah well, anyway, there's make-up. If you decide one time you want to dress up like a girl.

Vivaldi

Don: I'm beginning to think that we've raised a whole generation unable to digest their food without hearing music.

Evelyn: What?

Don: Without Vivaldi suppers would sit like lumps in our stomachs.

Ella: It's become Pavlovian.

Don: That's right.

Evelyn: This is Vivaldi?

Don: Mm hm.

Maddy: My supper still sits like a lump.

Evelyn: Maddy.

Maddy: Music or no music.

Evelyn: You know your classics then?

Don: I studied piano for ten years. Waste of my parent's money.

Evelyn: Ella has a piano in her room. A little one. Her father bought it for her. She never plays it. Speaking of wasting money.

Maddy: I'm surprised you haven't sold it Mom.

Evelyn: Maddy. Where do your parents live, here?

Don: Both dead.

Evelyn: They died young. My parents are still with us and I have a few years on you I think ha. Let's change this depressing subject. Would you like me to turn off the music?

Ella: Of course not, how will we digest?

Vivaldi

Ella: "Cold today, wasn't it?"

Don: Tied the record for cold today apparently.

Evelyn: Really? It didn't feel that cold.

Ella: Have you been out today?

Evelyn: We still don't seem to get the winters we got when I was young.

Ella: Global warming has finally been acknowledged.

Maddy: Yeah right, tied a record for the cold because of Global Warming.

Ella: Climate change is climate change -

Maddy: Oh God no, she's going to go on one of her rants.

Ella: We have wars over oil knowing full well that oil is what's killing us; we know we should be working on alternative energy sources but instead we focus on security, driving Hummers, fucking suburban assault vehicles as though we expect to be attacked again at any moment for our God-given right to consume. We shit in the ocean and then complain that the beaches are filthy.

Evelyn: Really Ella. What are we supposed to do?

Ella: Precisely the point, we're paralyzed. In the face of all this, we don't know how to act. Crime used to be nice and subversive, now it's expected. We expect C.E.O.'s to rob us, gasoline prices to change every half hour, for no reason other than profit, the banks to rape

us with their “greater charges for less service” policy, the least educated person in the country knows we’re being fucked and our collective response is “let’s all bend over”. We acknowledge there are problems, we even know what we have to do to fix them but instead we go see a movie starring Cameron Diaz and say “you know, she’s actually not a bad actress”.

Don: “Leopards break into the temple and drink the sacrificial wine; this happens again and again; eventually it can be anticipated and becomes part of the ceremony.”

Ella: That’s very funny.

Don: Kafka. I’m a wealth of quotes. Having nothing to say myself I spread the good words of others.

Ella: Not exactly what I was talking about but...

Evelyn: Anyway, we’re not to blame. We don’t have a car.

Ella: We’re guilty.

Evelyn: Of what?

Ella: You have a bank account? You’re guilty.

Maddy: ‘Cause I have a bank account.

Ella: You’re exploiting someone.

Don: That’s very true.

Ella: You have a bank account?

Don: Nope. All the money’s under the mattress. You want to see?

Vivaldi

Evelyn: Well I for one think that you make things more complicated than they need be. You get it from your father. Things are simple -

Ella: Mom -

Evelyn: Will you let me finish? I know I’m just an uneducated homemaker but -

Maddy: Mom I’m going to upchuck your “delicious supper” if you keep talking.

Ella: Yes, smile at me, nothing is funnier than someone who actually believes something. Especially nowadays.

Don: Not why I’m smiling. I’m not mocking you.

Ella: What is it then?

Don: You remind me of someone.

Ella: Some bitch from your past?

Don: No, someone good. Someone too good.

Ella: What... what am I supposed to say to that?

Evelyn: Why do you have to say anything?

Ella: What are you looking for?

Evelyn: He paid you a compliment.

Ella: He’s looking for forgiveness.

Evelyn: Forgiveness for what?

Don: There’s only one unforgivable sin. You’re never read Zorba? The one unpardonable sin: a woman calls a man to her bed and he doesn’t go. God will never forgive him that.

Vivaldi

Evelyn: Well. Let’s hope there’s more to it than that. Where are you going Maddy? You haven’t been excused.

Maddy: Don’t push it Mom. *Exits*

Evelyn: I tried. *An oven bell rings off* That’s my crumble. *Exits*

Vivaldi

Ella: So... you were going to tell me something about that photograph.

Phone rings.

Maddy: *off* Ella, for you.

exit Ella; Don alone, Vivaldi; enter Evelyn, oven mitts & the crumble

Don: Fyona...Fyona...

Evelyn: What did you say? Where'd they all go? The crumble'll get cold.

Don stands and touches Evelyn's hand, she begins to melt

Don: Thank you for dinner. You're a good woman Evelyn. You're doing your best.

Evelyn looks at him a moment, drops the crumble, kisses him

Maddy and two friends removing skates

friend 1: I'd just keep rolling out of the way. He was going crazy. You know the big shag rug in the basement? We were on that, totally naked, totally covered in sweat. We had white shag-fluff sticking to us all over. Rolling all over the rug. His fingers in me, I was holding his dick, I thought it was going to explode, then I'd let it go, he'd go to put it in and I wouldn't let him, I'd say "no" but by kissing him, I'd clamp my legs shut or roll out of the way but stick my tongue practically down his throat at the same time, telling him "yes". It was fantastic. As much as I wanted to I wouldn't let him in. I kept waiting for him to say something, like "what's going on?" or "don't you want to?" or even get mad. He never said a word. Guys eh?

friend 2: Don't stop.

friend 1: What.

friend 2: Don't stop. More.

friend 1: Look at her.

friend 2: What happened?

friend 1: My parents came home early from the marriage counsellor's. They must have ended up screaming at each other there, counsellor kicked them out. Anyway we hear the key and then it's the scramble to get dressed, picking shag fluff out of each other's hair. We came upstairs, we looked so obvious, sweaty, dishevelled (I love that word, dishevelled) but my parents are so out of it, we could have come up naked they wouldn't have had a clue.

friend 2: Poor guy.

friend 1: Yeah ha after we said hi to Mom and Dad he disappeared into the bathroom for about ten minutes ha.

friend 2: Why are you torturing him like that?

friend 1: 'Cause.

friend 2: You don't like him?

friend 1: I like him fine but never again. The way guys have treated me in the past, he's going to pay for it.

friend 2: But I thought you finally "found a nice guy".

friend 1: All the more reason somehow.

friend 2: Well I need a cigarette.

friend 1: You're quiet.

Maddy: I was listening.

friend 1: How's "Brian".

Maddy: That's over.

friend 2: Really? His idea or yours?

Maddy: Mine.

friend 2: Really? Details? I so need details these days. I'm living my love-life vicariously through you all.

friend 1: OK, I have to ask: that's a Cedric-Sebastian jacket, right?

Maddy: Yeah.

friend 1: Where did you get it? I thought your mother was crying poor all the time.

Maddy: Oh, I...

friend 1: Well, Maddy, it's been a lot of fun coming out with you tonight.

friend 2: Leave her alone. She's upset about Brian. Hey it said on my calendar that today is Ash Wednesday. Any idea what that is?

friend 1: Did you see that guy taking pictures of us?

friend 2: What guy?

friend 1: More taking pictures of you I think. You know him?

friend 2: What guy?

Maddy: Yeah.

friend 1: Who is he?

Maddy: He's our lodger.

friend 1: Your lodger?

friend 2: You have a lodger?

friend 1: Your Mom really doesn't want to get a job does she? A lodger...

friend 2: How long have you had this lodger?

friend 1: That gorgeous guy lives with you?

friend 2: He was gorgeous too? Why didn't I see him?

Maddy: You think he's gorgeous?

friend 1: Uh, ye-ah.

friend 2: I was too busy falling on my ass.

friend 1: You don't think he's gorgeous?

Maddy: I guess he is.

friend 1: So what's going on?

friend 2: Details.

Maddy: There's nothing to say. He lives in Daddy's old study.

friend 1: At the back?

friend 2: That's like right near your room.

Maddy: So?

friend 1: He's not sneaking down the hall at night?

Maddy: He's like, over thirty.

friend 1: He's sneaking into your M -

Maddy: What?

friend 1: No. He's probably sneaking into Ella's room.

friend 2: Yeah right.

Maddy: She'd like that.

friend 1: Ella?

Maddy: We're all so aware of him. Ella's the worst, trying to act like she's pissed off, that he's "invaded our space" but she can't get her eyes off him when he's not looking. My Mom, it makes sense, she's so brainless, squeezing him orange juice. "A man in the house."

friend 1: And you?

Maddy: Nothing. I'm just... I don't know.

friend 1: I skated right past him, he didn't give me the time of day. His big lens was only for you.

friend 2: I wish I'd seen him.

friend 1: Is he a photographer?

Maddy: I don't know what he is. Suddenly he had a camera with him. All the time.

friend 2: But is he like, all weird and quiet?

Maddy: No. He's... perfect. Perfectly charming. Funny. Nice. Respectful. Just the perfect amount of "I hope I'm not disturbing you in your home". Discretion personified. He bought me these skates.

friend 1: Well, I was going to say -

Maddy: And he knows Cedric-Sebastian. He says they're actually women. He brings home samples for us all the time but he says he doesn't really work for them. He's just "helping them out..."

friend 1: This sounds amazing.

Maddy: Yeah. It does.

friend 2: So what's the big mystery?

Maddy: I don't know. I liked him at first. He's perfect. I don't know.

friend 2: Why is my life so dull?

Don and Evelyn in bed, housecoats

Evelyn: I saw my husband yesterday.

Don: Really?

Evelyn: Across the street downtown. He didn't see me, at least I hope not because he didn't acknowledge me at all. Across the street. He lives alone, have I told you?

Don: No.

Evelyn: No. You've never asked either. He left us the day after the house was paid off. He handed me the mortgage, I had no idea we'd finished paying, I said "aren't we supposed to burn it, have a party?" He said "if you like, I'm tired" and went to bed. Next morning he left the house and hasn't set foot here since. At first he didn't even call, I was worried, I called his office, they said he was there but he wouldn't speak to me. Didn't come home, two nights. So I went to see him. They said he was out or busy or... I caused a scene, in their lobby, I was a mess. They had to escort me out. Finally he called to tell me he'd quit his job. And he cried. Over the phone. Why over the telephone, why couldn't he talk to me? I'm a good listener, everyone tells me that. He wouldn't explain anything. I asked him is there somebody else, he said no and I believe him. He cried, hardly said a word and hung up.

Don: A luxury.

Evelyn: What?

Don: His behavior.

Evelyn: A luxury.

Don: Expensive. Being able to behave like that.

Evelyn: Just quitting, just leaving everything? It costs nothing.

Don: That's not true.

Evelyn: Well it's cost me a lot - sh.

Don: What?

Evelyn: Is that Maddy?

Don: Would you relax -

Evelyn: Sh.

Don: Maddy's in school.

Evelyn: Hello? ... Hello? ...

Don: You said he lives alone, how do you know?

Evelyn: What?

Don: How do you know he lives alone?

Evelyn: One of our friends, he doesn't call them either, but one of our friends ran into him.

He told them he was living alone. And he hasn't given us a dime. What does he want, does he want a divorce? Fine, I'll give him a divorce.

Don: Perhaps he feels he's paid enough.

Evelyn: Paid what? OK he didn't touch any of the bank accounts but he hasn't given us a dime. Almost ten months now. It's like he died. So when I saw him yesterday... maybe I should have run across the street. Confronted him. But I didn't. *kisses Don*

Don: Hm.

Evelyn: “Hm”. Yes. “Hm”. What if he wanted to come back? All of a sudden. What would you do?

Don: Me?

Evelyn: Would you take him back?

Don: I don’t even know him.

Evelyn: You know what I mean.

Don: I really can’t answer that.

Evelyn: You’re being very mean to me today.

Don: Am I? I don’t mean to be mean. I thought we were having a conversation.

Evelyn: First you said his behavior was “expensive”, whatever that meant, and now you say he’s paid enough?

Don: Yes.

Evelyn: If anyone I’m the one’s paid for -

Don: That’s what I meant. Someone had to pay for it... I have no idea what I’m talking about.

Evelyn: And you’re welcome for the café-au-lait in bed.

Don: I didn’t thank you?

Evelyn: I wish someone would bring me café-au-lait in bed.

Don: You won’t let me into your bedroom.

Evelyn: Anyway you’re never up early enough.

Don: I’ll bring you a café-au-lait this Sunday if you want. Stay in bed. I’ll bring it to you. Would you like that?

Evelyn: ... Oh and a letter came for you yesterday.

Don: What?

Evelyn: It’s been in my pocket, sorry, I forgot.

Don: Give it to me please.

Evelyn: Look at him, all intense all of a sudden ... Aren’t you going to open it?

Don: Later.

Evelyn: Who are you?

Don: What?

Evelyn: What’s your name?

Don: Odon.

Evelyn: Odon. Not Don. It says Odon.

Don: When I was a kid I hated the name Odon. So, I made everyone call me Don.

Evelyn: I see it’s from the government. Not from a lady. You were hoping for a letter from a lady?

Don: I once hoped for a letter from a lady. But no longer.

Evelyn: If you’re not going to open it.

Don: Give it back please.

Evelyn: Come get it. No? I’m going to open it... I’m opening it... There. Shall I read it to you?

Don: No.

Evelyn: Apparently certain documents are missing for your application for a visa. You’re applying for a visa. To go back to Europe?

Don: That was the plan.

Evelyn: So you’ll be leaving us.

Don: Are you sad?

Evelyn: Sad, what a ridiculous thought. I’m not sad.

Don: I’m glad you’re not sad. Come here.

Evelyn: No. You've had your fun. I have some cleaning to do. You've thrown me off my routine. I haven't gotten half the work done I'm supposed to. *Don slips his hand into her housecoat* Don't.

Don: Really? Don't? Really don't? Look at me and say "don't" again.

Evelyn: Don't.

Don: Now say it like you mean it.

Evelyn: What fun can this be for you? It's so easy. *Removes his hand*

Don: I've never been interested in conquest. I'm actually a very lazy man at heart. What are you upset about?

Evelyn: I'm not upset. I have housework to do.

Don: So why do I feel like we're having an argument?

Evelyn: You're feeling that, not me.

Don: Good.

Evelyn: Good.

Don: It's just me then.

Evelyn: The girls will be home soon.

Don: If there's something bothering you Evelyn you'd best say it now. Because I won't be asking again.

Evelyn: Why would anything be wrong? I'm an adult. You'll leave when you leave. Now if you'll excuse me.

Ella at her front door, Cedric, in a fur coat

Cedric: But who the hell are you?

Ella: I beg your pardon?

Cedric: Where is he?

Ella: I have no idea, look:

Cedric: Because he's expecting me, he's supposed to be here.

Ella: Well, he isn't, so –

Cedric: He's supposed to take my picture. We set this up. We had an appointment.

Ella: I don't know how many times I can say it –

Cedric: Who are you?

Ella: What?

Cedric: Who –

Ella: I live here.

Cedric: You live here? You... he lives with you?

Ella: He doesn't "live with me", he lives here –

Cedric: He lives with you, he never told me he lived with someone.

Ella: We don't live together, he –

Cedric: He hasn't changed. He'll never change. I can't believe I fell for it, I've known him a long time, longer than you've been born, bitch, and don't expect anything from him.

Ella: Good-bye.

Cedric: Don't you fucking close the door on me – he lives with you?

Ella: I TOLD YOU –

Cedric: DOES HE FUCKING LIVE HERE OR NOT?

Ella: Hang on now –

Cedric: So what are you saying, are you covering for him?

Ella: Will you shut up and listen to me for a minute -

Cedric: Is he in there?

Ella: This is my house, he lives in my house,

Cedric: DON! ARE YOU IN THERE, YOU COWARD?

Ella: He rents a room – WOULD YOU STOP YELLING!

Cedric's coat has opened revealing that she wears only lingerie underneath

Cedric: You tell him - what day is this? Is this Thursday? Then why isn't he here? He said – he invited me. I wrote it down: Picture Taken Thursday. For the catalogue You tell him I came, that he was supposed to be here according to me, you tell him Cedric came – no, Alice, you tell him Alice came here expecting to see him. Not you. You tell him he owes me money.

Ella: I am not his messenger.

Cedric: Why is he with you? Why you? Who are you? Because you're young, you think that'll keep him? You stupid bitch, you have no idea, fine, have him, I hope he fucking ruins your life, because you're young, look at you, look at how young you are.

Evelyn comes to the door

Evelyn: Whatever is going on here? Who are you?

Ella: This is insane.

Cedric: Who am I? Who are you? How many of you fucking live here? What is this place? I can't believe I fell for him, I - You tell him I came, you tell him he's a liar, he was going to take my picture – I PAID HIM! I fucking paid him already. He said he was going to take my picture, he hasn't called, I come here to get what I deserve, what I am owed, you tell him he's a liar, you little bitch. He's with you? With a child like you? I hope he kills you. He will, he will fuck you in the heart, you stupid young thing, he'll kill you. *exits*

Don's room with an Actress

Actress: on cell phone So he goes, what time – as if I know what time, what am I paying him for? So, I go, you tell me and he goes what time is best for you and I go look, what am I paying you for? and he goes, get this, he goes call me when you have an idea. Like, I'm supposed to call him. So I say: fuck him, tell him I'm not doing it and see how he feels then. If he can't even give me a time then – and why am I dealing with this, why did he call me? How did he even get my cell number?... Well, what were you thinking, who is this guy? Don't give out my number - You call him and tell him I don't know what time is best and let him figure it out and call us back and then tell him fuck you we're not doing it. OK?

Hangs up Like, can you believe that? 15% I'm paying him. Anyway, do you think you have it?

Don: Yes.

Actress: I know this is a rush job. I leave tomorrow for Bucharest, I'm shooting this horror movie? I'm this virgin princess trapped in this castle? It's, like the night before our wedding and I don't realize that the guy I'm going to marry, the count, he likes, like, bathing in virgin's blood. Then I find this room full of bones and wedding dresses.

Don: So you decide to fuck the first guy you meet.

Actress: What? Why would I do that, I'm a virgin princess?

Don: Exactly. It would save your life.

Actress: Oh I get it. Yeah. There are other guys in his castle, like, guards and...

Don: Seduce one. You'll be saved.

Actress: Right, cause he, like, won't want me 'cause I'm not a virgin. It'd be a cool ending.

Instead of him accidentally slipping trying to knife me and falling on the unicorn statue...

I'll talk to the director. Anyway I really need these photos for before I leave because I have no idea if they even have photographers in Bucharest. And anyway I so wanted to meet you because, well, actually, we've met before.

Don: We have?

Actress: I've changed. Well, I was, like, ten when we met.

Don: Ah.

Actress: I was with my mother on a shoot. You were shooting my mother. She was just a model though, not an actress.

Don: Say hi to her for me.

Actress: So are you still working in Europe? 'cause I heard you were going back.

Don: You heard that eh?

Actress: I was in Milan last year? Oh my God I so want to go back. Because I don't just act, I got into the acting through the modelling but I'm not a model any more. So, I needed these shots because for this movie, they really liked me but they just want to see if I can look poor, so I'm supposed to look, you know, not too made up. So, that's why I look like this. And yeah, I can see why you chose to shoot me in here. All my photos, even stills from my other work? I look like way too, you know, glamorous or something. Do you think I looked earthy?

Don: Absolutely.

Actress: Like she's supposed to be poor but also, you know, she gets the guy at the end, he, like, realizes that beauty isn't everything? So I looked poor but did I have inner beauty?

Don: You look great.

Actress: You haven't changed, you look just like you looked when I saw you when I was ten. I remember you. So, what were you doing in Europe?

Don: Taking pictures.

Actress: No kidding. You're funny. So, like who, did you shoot anybody famous?

Don: You've heard stories like this a million times. In a town called Bella, oddly enough. It was the beginning of the war and the men weren't prepared, the invaders came so quickly, the town was over-run. First the troops bound the men, separated the women from their kids. They flame-thrower-ed the kids first, before shooting the women, so that all could watch. Some of the men of the village, hiding in the near-by woods could hear the screams. So you could hear wailing coming from the woods, mixed in with the screams of the burning children and weeping men and women and the gun-shots. The troops didn't care about the men in the woods, after they'd killed the women and children they cut the men's hands off and moved on to the next village. The worst picture I took there wasn't of the remains of the women and kids but of the fathers and sons and brothers and husbands. The self-hatred. Calling themselves cowards. Beating themselves with... stumps. One in particular, one man... you wouldn't think that a mouth could be opened that wide. It's amazing how wide grief can open your mouth.

Actress: Ok, so, if that was, like, a prelude to something, wow, you so don't live up to your reputation.

Don: Sorry to disappoint.

Actress: Is that true?

Don: Oh yes.

Actress: You took pictures?

Don: That's what I do.

Actress: I mean you just took pictures? You didn't try and stop them? *Don laughs* How can you laugh?

Don: You're right, I shouldn't.

Actress: You just stood there thinking "Wow what fantastic shots of human suffering"? Stop laughing. Or you could have refused to take pictures, out of protest.

Don: You tell me what good that would have done. "If a tree falls in the forest..."

Actress: Where was this, in Arabia or Africa or...?

Don: The ex-Yugoslavia. After a while there were no more photos of girls on the beach, modelling bikinis or lying by the resort pool. All the hotels were shut. Nobody was creating fashion. I'm a photographer, it's all I can do. For better or for worse. I had to shoot something. I shot what was around me.

Actress: You could have just left.

Don: Wow, you're right. I never thought of that.

Actress: Look, I'm just going to go, OK? Just send the contact sheet to my agent. How much do I owe you?

Don: Oh no darling, it is I who owe you. Would you like me to call you a cab or...?

Opens the door for her, Evelyn is there

Evelyn: Oh. Oh. Excuse me. I didn't know you had company. I just wanted to know if you'd like some coffee cake.

kitchen: Maddy in a housecoat listening to the radio, enter Don

Don: Oh. Good morning. Yogurt eh? No school?

Maddy: It's Saturday.

Don: Is it? You're up early then. I was at a party.

Maddy: You go to a lot of parties.

Don: That I do. You look tired.

Maddy: Thanks.

Don: No, I mean, why didn't you sleep in?

Maddy: This is my house. Why, are you expecting someone?

Don: She's parking.

Maddy: She's coming in. What time is it?

Don: We're going to have breakfast. In my room.

Maddy: I wanted to ask you something.

Don: OK.

Maddy: Why do you watch me skate?

Don: I enjoy it.

Maddy: Why? I suck.

Don: That's not the point.

Maddy: So I do suck.

Don: You show promise.

Maddy: It's not like I'm ever going to do anything with it. Way too late for that. Whatever "promise" I had, it's over. And the pictures, why do you take pictures?

Don: I'm a photographer. It's my trade.

Maddy: I want to see them.

Don: Anytime. Just not right now, OK?

Maddy: Anyway it's not the point, I don't want you to watch me anymore.

Don: OK.

Maddy: You make me nervous. Do you want the skates back too?

Don: Wait a minute wait a minute... did your mother tell you to do this?

Maddy: Like I ever listen to her.

Don: Then why? They're a gift. A present.

Maddy: Yeah, I know what gift means.

Don: No strings attached.

Maddy: Just... don't come watch me anymore. Promise.

Don: I never make promises.

Maddy: And don't take any more pictures of me.

Don: I'll show them to you. You'll see. You look pure and beautiful.

Maddy: Maybe I don't want to look pure and beautiful.

Don: You're right. I should have asked your permission first. I just thought... it's funny. I keep trying and I keep screwing it all up.

Maddy: Trying what? ***Doorbell***

Don: I told her to come to the back door.

Maddy: I'll get it. ***Exits***

Don: No, I'll - ... OK then. I make her nervous. No surprise: everything's always your fault.
Maddy: *reenters* She said she's not coming in. She did. She decided not to come in. She told me to tell you.

Don: Mm-hm. I'm going to bed.

Maddy: I'm right down the hall. My room is right down the hall.

Don: Listen: you're young.

Maddy: You keep me awake. I hear these sounds and they keep me awake. Since you started bringing these friends of yours into the house, I can't sleep. You keep me awake with your noises. I'm a student, I need my rest. What kind of man are you? I mean, I don't care what you do but you're depriving me of my sleep. Can't look at me, eh? What? What's funny? Why won't you look at me?

Don: Do up your housecoat... You want a coffee?

Maddy: I don't want anything from you. *exits*

Don: Yeah, wait a few years.

Don and Lila, in a private theatre booth at a concert, she in a long dress, sitting on his lap, fucking him

Lila: Do you think anyone can see us?

Don: No.

Lila: No?

Don: No.

Lila: I'd love to think they were all watching us instead of her.

Don: We could always draw attention to ourselves.

Lila: That would be crude. I want them to know without knowing.

Don: She's almost done.

Lila: Is she?

Don: Yes.

Lila: I'm not.

The singer finishes, thunderous applause.

Lila: as she gyrates: BRAVO! BRAVO! *For Don, it is finished; applause continues* Are we done?

Don: I am.

Lila: Yes. I can stand then. BRAVO! BRAVO! Wasn't she wonderful?

Don: Breathtaking.

Lila: You're not going to stand?

Don: Yes, give me a moment. Bravo!

Lila: Bravo!

Don: Bravo!

Lila: That was quite the encore. Brought the house down. What does that expression mean, really?

Don: I'm not sure.

Lila: Brought. The house. Down. And it's a good thing. Are you all right?

Don: Sure.

Lila: Don't tell me I wore you out.

Don: How's Conrad?

Lila: Who?

Don: That husband of yours?

Lila: We're separated.

Don: No. Since when?

Lila: Weeks now. You didn't know?

Don: No. Weeks...

Lila: I thought everybody knew. Look, I can kiss you in public. Fun eh?

Don: Mm.

Lila: “Mm.” He says “Mm”. I’m trying to rush the divorce but he’s never in the country.

Don: Was this a mutual thing?

Lila: Hell, no, I gave him the boot. He’s devastated according to all. Search me as to why.

Look at these fucking people. Wanna-be’s. Look at them. At the way they’re dressed. They think they’re at the big party, with their Audi’s and their names in the paper and chalets on the lake and two weeks at the villa in Tuscany. They don’t realize they’re only playing dress-up. Well, I’m sick of it. And I’m good enough to be at the big party. If I wasn’t stuck in fucking Canada.

Don: You must be hungry.

Lila: Why?

Don: We didn’t have time for dinner before. Would you like to go to Ernesto’s?

Lila: No.

Don: Your house then?

Lila: Hm. Let me think. When are you going back to Europe?

Don: What? Oh. Those plans are on hold. We didn’t get a chance to talk.

Lila: About? Oh that, yes. No. I don’t want to talk about that. Money, money, money. You look tired.

Don: Do I?

Lila: You know what I’d like, I’d like to go to your room.

Don: All right. We’re parked over there.

Lila: No, let’s walk.

Don: Walk? You mean like... walking?

Lila: Poor baby, did I wear you out in there?

Don: What do you think?

Lila: We’re quite near your place aren’t we? Then, walk me to your bed. I’m going to be allowed in this time? Your little guard-skank isn’t going to turn me away at the door? Who was that anyway? She embarrassed me.

Don: You know I live with a family.

Lila: Right. Because you’re only passing by. You’re not staying long. You’re going back to Europe, God knows why. God knows when. That’s why you “room” in house with a “family”. I can’t wait to see it. Your “room”. Like we’re in college. I’ll meet your room-mates. We’ll have a beer. It’s the first day of spring.

Don: Nobody informed winter of this.

Lila: You’re cold? It’s not that cold. You’re boring. My god, look at the moon. Big and wet. Dripping its light. Celebrating the equinox. Telling me I’m free. I am free.

Don: Lila you’re acting...

Lila: You’re not going back to Europe.

Don: I’m not?

Lila: You need to find a studio. The demand for you is going to increase. You’ll be back to where you were before, shooting all the women. Was it so bad, your life before? OK so you don’t do coke anymore, we’ve all gotten wiser, you’ll replace that with the gym. You’ll buy a car. Then, you’ll meet a woman and because you’re older, because you are Don, you’re older, you’ll settle down. I can see her, she’ll be young, not too young but younger than you. She’ll be smart too. You’ve probably already met her. You’ve probably already dumped her. And then, guess what will happen:

Don: Here we are.

Lila: Is this it? Oh this is the entrance you wanted me to use last time. It’s very seedy. This is where you live? I can’t believe it. If it weren’t so funny it would be sad.

Don: Come inside.
Lila: What for?
Don: Guess.
Lila: I - no, don't do that.
Don: Look at me and say that.
Lila: I...oh... I... No, I can't I can't I can't.
Don: It's cold out, Lila.
Lila: I feel as though I'm being watched.
Don: There's nobody here.
Lila: You're not used to being refused are you?
Don: Are you refusing me?
Lila: Yes. Yes. Oh yes.
Don: Who wrote this?
Lila: What?
Don: Your dialogue.
Lila: What's wrong with it?
Don: It's... dialogue. I hope you're not planning to write a book with your new-found freedom. Are you coming in?
Lila: I've lost the feeling.
Don: You don't feel like you've lost the feeling.
Lila: Go ahead then. Take me right here. By the rubbish bins in the cold moon-light. You'll have my body but not my soul. Stop laughing. You're dead.
Don: I'm dead.
Lila: I can feel it. There's a ring of ice around your heart. Your heart belongs to another.
Don: What heart?
Lila: I can't make you unfaithful anymore. You'll thank me one day.
Don: What day exactly?
Lila: Judgment Day. When all souls rise to their reckoning. We'll meet then, at the gates of paradise, naked, free of our earthly bonds: time, space, ethics. And we'll fuck in the clouds, wrapping ourselves in the white of the clouds. And when we fuck, all heaven will be fucking with us.
Don: OK.
Lila: OK?
Don: Sounds beautiful.
Lila: Thank you.
Don: Can you make it back to your car by yourself or would you like me to call you a cab?
Lila: What?
Don: I've never forced myself on anyone.
Lila: You're letting me go?
Don: I'll see you in paradise. Adieu.
Lila: How's your heart?
Don: It's fine, why would you ask?
Lila: You're such a sweet man. I don't care what everybody else says, I think you're sweet. Do call me. We'll talk about that thing.
Don: Yes.
Lila: Oh. Oh. What's this? Gray hair. Shall I pull it out?
Don: No.
Lila: *laughs, exits*
Don covers his face with his hands, he looks at the moon, lets out a great sigh, from the shadows:

Ella: What's the matter with you?
Don: Jesus. You scared me.
Ella: You're holding your heart.
Don: It's nothing.
Ella: You do that sometimes. When you think no one's looking.
Don: War wound.
Ella: How many women do you hang around with at any one time? I thought the idea was you find one good one. Quality not quantity. That's what I tried to do.
Don: How's that working out for you?
Ella: My boyfriend is an idiot.
Don: You have a boyfriend?
Ella: Is that so impossible? Why thank you.
Don: You've never brought him around.
Ella: Don't try and cover it up, the last thing in the world you thought was that I could have a boyfriend. You thought I was an enraged lesbian or asexual. Well, just because you can't see it, doesn't mean it isn't there.
Don: What are you doing out here, it's cold.
Ella: Is not. I was waiting for you. I can't wait in the house, Mom is watching the door, oh I shouldn't lie, we all watch the door. So much seems to depend on which door you use to come in. When you use the back door we know what that means. I figured you'd be using the back door with another conquest. I was going to ask you for money. That's why I was waiting out here. I didn't expect the show though. Thanks.
Don: Money.
Ella: My boyfriend needs money actually. He has to "get out of town". I can't believe I know someone who has to "get out of town, lay low for a while till things cool off"... Anyway. I need money. He needs money. For him.
Don: And you're coming to me.
Ella: You're the only person I know with money.
Don: If I had money would I be living in your Daddy's old study?
Ella: You have more than anyone I know.
Don: What did your boyfriend do?
Ella: Does it matter?
Don: You want me to fork over my hard-earned cash.
Ella: Hard-earned, right. He's an idiot. Actually he's brilliant. He's just also very stupid.
Don: Let me guess: he's one of the guys threw the rocks at the cops at the anti-globalization demonstration. Or he trashed the McDonald's window. They caught him on tape, only a matter of time before someone recognizes him, am I close?
Ella: I know, you find us amusing, nothing funnier these days than someone who actually believes in something.
Don: And what do you believe in?
Ella: You wouldn't get it. You're too busy with your brainless woman.
Don: Professor of Macroeconomics. And Wanna-be romance novelist I think. But hardly brainless.
Ella: Oh it's OK. No judgement. I'm brainless too. Most people are stupid anyway. You're probably stupid.
Don: This is a really interesting way to ask for money. You're trying to insult it out of me.
Ella: Do you like this world? Do you think this world is good? Do you think things are as they should be?
Don: Do you think giving money to some unwashed 25-year-old throwing rocks is going to help anything?

Ella: Oh fine. Fuck it, it was stupid to think you'd help. You're too busy toying with brainless women.

Don: Like your mother?

Ella: Don't say that. I know she's brainless but don't say it out loud. She's been through enough.

Don: You don't anything about me. You just pegged me. And because you don't find me attractive you think any woman that does must be brainless.

Ella: Because I don't find you attractive. And why don't I find you attractive?

Don: OK now honestly that's the strangest question I've ever been asked.

Ella: And anyway you've been done with my mother for a while haven't you? You've "moved on". You keep moving on and on and on.

Don: A writer, I can't remember who, once said: nothing gives us the impression of infinity so much as human stupidity.

Ella: Mr. Quotes. Mr. I have nothing to say. Do you ever actually apply any of those gems to your life or do you just use them to pick up women?

Don: I've never given anyone something they didn't want.

Ella: Why do they want what they want, ah, that is the question.

Don: Why do you want what you want?

Ella: You think you know what I want?

Don: Every time I talk to you I get a head-ache.

Ella: You've had that head-ache for years. Nothing to do with me. How much longer are you planning to use the handsome, tortured man full of secrets routine? As long as women buy it I guess. But you know what I think? I think your still waters run shallow.

Don: Here. This is all I have.

Ella: You... you don't need it?

Don: I'll get some more. People have always taken care of me.

Ella: By people you mean women.

Don: Don't be so hard on yourself: women are people too.

Ella: This is quite a bit of money.

Don: Is it?

Ella: Thank you. I'll pay you back.

Don: Don't even think about it.

Ella: Thank you. *Kisses him*

Don: What are you doing?

Ella: Of all the men in the world I would have thought you'd understand.

Don: Is that alcohol on your breath?

Ella: Scandalous. *Kisses him* Isn't this what you want?

Don: What could you possibly know about what I want?

Ella: Can I try and guess? *he kisses her*

Don: You're playing with me now.

Ella: Am not.

Don: So you can justify it, *kiss* so you can say that you were forced to sell yourself to save your boyfriend.

Ella: You know that's not true. *She kisses him*

Don: In the same way *kiss* that you tell yourself *kiss* that his actions were political *kiss* not criminal. *kiss* Now at the risk of sounding totally mercenary: *kiss* What's in this for me? *kiss* You think I need you?

Ella: I have nothing else to offer. *they kiss* There are two different things I'm asking for. *kiss* The money and the kiss. *he laughs* What?

Don: “She offered her honour; he honoured her offer; and all night long it was on her and off her.” Goodnight Ella.

Ella: You’re like an eight year old. You like the girl but you don’t know what to do so you try to hurt her. All right. I’ve told you how I feel. You probably knew it already but, there, I’ve said it out loud. In spite of myself, I should run away.

Don: Truer words never spoken.

Ella: But you’re lying. I’m touching you, I’m not stupid. I don’t believe you feel nothing.

Don: There’s ring of ice around my heart.

Ella: That was the corniest thing she said.

Don: You’re right. I don’t have any heart at all.

Ella: I feel this. And so do you. You’re lying... You walk away from me and you’re committing a sin. You’re committing a sin.

Don: Ella. Please. Listen to me. I am telling you the truth. Don’t ask me for this. Take the money and run to your boyfriend. I have no heart.

Ella: Like I care. *Kisses him*

Evelyn: Don. Don.

Don: I’m sorry, what? What? What is it?

Evelyn: Did you take these pictures?

Don: What pictures? Of what? Let me see them.

Evelyn: No, they’re -

Maddy: I’m naked. Remember?

Don: What?

Evelyn: Did you take them?

Maddy: Mom found them. She found our pictures.

Don: Let me see them. How can I tell if I took them or not?

Evelyn: You would know -

Don: Are they any good?

Evelyn: What?

Don: You’ve never seen my work. I’m a professional. They better be good. Let me see them.

Maddy: I’m naked.

Don: I’ve actually seen a naked woman before Maddy.

Evelyn: She’s not a woman. She’s a child! How can you laugh? You’re sick! She’s a child!

Don: Are you a woman, Maddy? Show me. Show me the pictures that I took.

Maddy: Show him. He doesn’t seem to remember. Show him the pictures. I don’t care.

Evelyn: I’m not going to -

Maddy: Show him.

Evelyn: No.

Maddy: I’m naked. Show him! He took those pictures. He did. Show him, refresh his memory since he doesn’t seem to remember. Look at me! Who do you believe, Mom, him or me? You don’t fucking believe me? Nobody ever believes me. Nobody fucking listens, nobody ever believes me! *exits*

Evelyn: Since you’ve come here, you’ve, what have you done?

Don: I haven’t done anything.

Evelyn: You’re like a disaster, what have you done to my house?

Don: I answered an ad in the paper.

Evelyn: What have you done to my house?!

Don: I haven’t done anything!

Evelyn: My house was falling apart before you came. Now it’s destroyed. And you did it. You. What am I doing with you?

Don: There are several expressions for it.

Evelyn: I don't like men like you.

Don: You have an odd way of expressing that dislike.

Evelyn: Thoughtless and arrogant. How could I be attracted to someone like you?

Don: Don't be so hard on yourself. These are desperate times.

Evelyn: You destroy everything you touch. You find a wounded house and you finish it off. You leave us in shambles. You killed us. You. You!

Ella in bed, housecoat, she reading a letter

Ella: *reads* "I keep remembering the day I bought you the piano. I know I was supposed to be happy about it, you wanted a piano so badly -"

Don: You find it cold in here?

Ella: No. Listen to this: "But I knew that you wouldn't play it, that once you had it you wouldn't play it, that all the wanting, the desire was not real. I need to find out what is real. What I really want. I need to find out what things are really worth."

Don: Have you ever noticed how melodramatic people are in their letters? Perfectly cynical folk go all a-mush when they put pen to paper. It's pathetic how corny our innermost thoughts really are.

Ella: It's from my father.

Don: Really? Wait, I just have to get my other foot into my mouth... I thought it was from your boyfriend.

Ella: How could my boyfriend buy me a piano? Daddy wrote it before he left. I think Maddy got one too. But not my mother. Daddy. I spoke to him last week.

Don: Evelyn doesn't know that does she?

Ella: No. Poor Daddy. He's having trouble with his new girlfriend. It doesn't get any better does it. All you lost little boys and us lost little girls.

Don: So there's this sponge living at this reef. This fish, fascinated, finally can't stand it any more, goes up to the sponge and says: hi. **sponge:** ...hello. **Fish:** Look, I can't stand it, I've been watching you just sit there for years, I have to know: if you could change, if you could be anything else in the world what would you be? The sponge thinks. And thinks. And thinks. Finally he says: Could I be another sponge?

Ella: That's very funny.

Don: What does it take to make you laugh? You always say, "that's very funny", but you rarely actually laugh.

Ella: I smile a lot. Anyway you don't laugh either. I've never heard you laugh.

Don: That's not true.

Ella: It's totally true. I've never heard you laugh. Laugh. I dare you.

Don: Only if you laugh too. Let's laugh together.

Ella: Fair enough.

Don: Ready? One two three:

They try to laugh, eventually succeed

Ella: Sh. Is that my mother?

Don: You're mother's getting her hair done.

Ella: This would break her heart.

Don: Yes.

Ella: It would break her heart. Doesn't make me want to stop though. **Kisses him** If this... goes on I'll have to move out. That would be funny. I'll have to move out of my house so that we can see each other.

Don: That's ridiculous. It's your home. I'll move.

Ella: No. Me.

Don: No, me.

Ella: I have to go to work. I don't want to go to work. Could you write me a note?

Don: Sure. Please excuse Ella from work. She is needed in bed.

Ella: Oh a letter came for you this morning.

Don: Thanks. *He looks at it briefly, puts it down*

Ella: Why are you with me?

Don: One simple reason. I don't agree with everything you say but at least you've never once mentioned Marx.

Ella: That's very funny.

Don: Mention Marx once though and we're through.

Ella: One day you're going to talk to me.

Don: Am I?

Ella: I can feel it. You're going to talk to me. And I'm going to be surprised by what you're going to tell me. When I think of the day you talk to me I get really scared - no, not scared, excited. And do you hear that? Listen.

Don: What?

Ella: That dripping. *Touches his heart* The ice is melting. But look at me. No pressure. No time frame. Just us until it stops. OK? *He kisses her* Why thank you sir. I should shower. I can't serve the customers smelling of man. *exits*

Don: Is this the piano in question? I thought it was just a table. *begins to play*

Ella: *off* Oh my God is that you? That's beautiful.

Don: It's the only thing I can play without totally butchering it.

Lila reading a newspaper; Niece sitting in the corner watching t.v.

Lila: Well, let's see how much money I've lost today.

A Lady friend of Lila's enters, with a large chocolate bunny

Lady: Jesus Christ the traffic.

Lila: Hi.

Lady: Another fucking demonstration downtown.

Lila: What are they protesting?

Lady: Who the hell knows. Oh Lila, I could kill my husband.

Lila: Um -

Lady: He blew the dinner with the Koreans. Last night. Bad enough he had to drag me out with him, as a bonus I get to watch him fuck up. Nobody wants to do business with a man who sweats profusely while eating. I did my part, put on this dress, my tits hanging out. Trying to make a good impression. Mr. Park didn't look me in the eye the whole time. No, but to see Norman, stammering, so fucking obvious that he's desperate, that these Koreans are his last hope. May as well have offered to suck them off under the table. And they saw through it, they sniffed him out, two minutes at the table they're ordering the Foie Gras, they're thinking "Last fucking meal this stiff is ever going to be able to buy us, let's make it a good one." They're on the plane right now, cackling: "What a poor business man." "Yes but what nice tits his wife had." So after the torture, Norm takes me to one side: "Uh hon, heh-heh, just in case, if the bill doesn't pass on the company card, could you cover this one tonight? I'll pay you back, end of the month." By some miracle it passed. Like a fucking kidney stone. And then, worst of all, we get home, he wants sex, comfort, support in his hour of need. Nipped that in the bud right away, let me tell you. Cocksucker. No, how did I do it? how did I end up with - HOLY SHIT! What's she doing here?

Lila: You remember my niece?

Lady: You, you, why yes, hello?

Niece: Hi.

Lila: I was trying to signal you. You were on a bit of a rant.

Niece: Is that a chocolate bunny?

Lady: No school today dear?

Niece: Easter.

Lady: Isn't it just Thursday? My kids are at school... Anyway. How are you?

Lila: Well.

Lady: You've heard the news? About your man? "Don Juan"?

Lila: News?

Lady: He's gone. He's left the country.

Lila: What?

Lady: I went over to see him, for the photos. On your recommendation.

Lila: Yes, yes, go on.

Lady: I get to that house, there are three women, each one with a face like a slab of beef.

They tell me he's gone, disappeared. They say they figure he's left the country. One of them starts in with the "have you seen him? Did he call you?" I told her, "no, I just came to have my pictures done." So her face gets even droopier and she schlumps off. Then the oldest one, I'm assuming it's the mother, starts telling about how he took "photos" of the younger daughter.

Lila: That's not what happened.

Lady: No?

Lila: It was nonsense. They "found" a bunch of compromising photographs of the young thing that he, according to her, took. He wouldn't do that. What would he get out of it? Would he seduce a minor?

Niece: A guy?

Lady: What?

Niece: One of those guys goes digs underground?

Lady: Do you understand her?

Lila: Unfortunately yes. No, a young girl, a teen-ager. Like you.

Niece: Oh. Oh.

Lady: Maybe he liked the cute young thing.

Lila: There wasn't enough life in him to like anybody.

Lady: So you figure he's innocent?

Lila: You know him.

Lady: Not like you do. I wish...

Lady: So why'd he run? Isn't that like admitting you're guilty?

Lila: He didn't run. He just left. Had enough of this place. Gone back to Europe. Actually I haven't seen him in a while. Would like to see him one last time though.

Lady: "One last time..."

Lila: Kick his teeth in.

Lady: What?

Lila: He suggested I buy Cedric-Sebastian. They were doing well for a while but today they're trading at 46 cents. Since they opened those hideous stores they're looking at bankruptcy.

Lady: You went for that?

Lila: Thank God for my Pharmaceuticals.

Niece: Pharmaceuticals are good?

Lady: Never listen to a man.

Approaching crowd noise from outside.

Lady: Oh Jesus, here they come.

Lila: Worst thing about this house, somehow it's on the "demonstration" route.

Lady: Anyway you're selling soon, aren't you?

They watch, noises rise.

Lila: So he's gone. Again. His papers must have finally come through. That's all he was doing here, killing time, waiting for his passport. Having fun. He was fun in a kind of retro way. Nobody else still does business like that. Certainly not our husbands anyway.

Lady: Our husbands. They're too busy losing money. I swear if I didn't have my own investments we'd be in the street.

Lila: With the demonstrators. *They laugh* When are you going to get rid of that man?

Lady: Now now. We can't all be you. We all can't afford your lawyer.

Niece: I learn things every time I come over here.

Lady: Did he ever ask you to pose for him?

Lila: Pose? You mean the photos... oh shit.

Niece: Says here the bunny is three kinds of chocolate.

Sounds of the passing demonstration become deafening becomes

Balkan music; Projected images:

Ella: Day whatever. Olaf's dead. Jane too, she's dead. Helga's dead and Inge and Sven and Helborg. The river's running rancid. The sky's all choked up, from having burned all the churches. It's been a long winter. Churches finally good for something. Warmth by pew. Won't rain though, keeping it all in, the sky's miserable but stoic. Dust storms instead, sandblast the eyes right out of your head, you're not careful. Patty's dead and Petey and Esther. And Bob and Bill and Billy. And Don. Don is dead. Don of the dead. Don of a new age. And Pokey passed on. The baby, of course, came out early, like a shrivelled heart. Hurt like hell, let me tell you. Like passing a pineapple. The only cry was my own. Buried it then with all the others, with Jerry and Flo and Stéphane and Stéphane and Michael, even Michael bought it. "Bought it", oh how clever, what a clever use of that expression, "bought it", get it? All this... leaving. Makes me feel more and more like I'm my mother's daughter. No, fuck that, too confessional. Been a long winter. Me though, I'm alive. Had to eat my left leg but I'm hobbling along. Now it's getting all spring out, April, the idiot, spilling his seed all over. Fuck, another reference. Too clever. Truth. Just say the truth. Without sounding corny. Even the truth though, what is it? I have a quote for you. Nothing is more difficult than not deceiving yourself. It's true. Nothing harder than that.